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In this issue: Women ministers influenced profoundly the course of the recent SEDOS seminar on ministries. This issue contains a short excerpt from an address given in 1980 by Pearl Drego, one of the resource persons at the Seminar.

There is a look back to John XXIII's momentous decision to convene the second Vatican Council. A new model of our religious universe emerged there and we still have difficulty in adjusting to it. John Kobler sums it up in his description of the Church as the "people of God". He draws some conclusions and practical implications from this vision of the new humanity. But the expression should not leave us unaware of a possible implied colossal arrogance. Are the people of other faiths not also Gods children? "God's chosen peoples", the challenging title of Walter Bühlmann's recent book is a reminder that all women and men are God's people.

The Church of the poor is a controversial concept but there is no controversy about whether we should listen to the voice of the poor. V.Cosmao describes how they announce the gospel to us. Do we listen? A returning lay missionary in England finds himself in jail for protesting against nuclear war recalling Archbishop Hunthausen's "Our nuclear war preparations are the global crucifixion of Jesus". There is a note on Shamans in Korea, a selection of books, and I hope you will enjoy Murphy's Decalogue.

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Coming Events:

Please note the fixed dates of our Seminars each year.

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| 1. One day Seminar: | Last Wednesday of October, (October 31, 1984). |
| 2. General Assembly & Seminar: | 2nd Tuesday of December, (December 11, 1984). |
| 3. Residential Seminar-Villa Cavalletti. | 3rd week of March, (March 19-23, 1985). |
| SEDOS Executive Committee | April 17, 15.30hrs., SEDOS Secretariate. |

News:

SEDOS New Member: Welcome to the St. John of God Order (Fatebenefratelli) whose application for membership of SEDOS was approved at the Executive meeting. The Superior General is Fr. Pierluigi, Marchesi, OH., and their address is Isola Tiberina 39, 00186 Roma. (Tel. 587.32.08).

CWME Appointment. Eugene L. Stockwell is Director of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches with effect from January 1, 1984. He succeeds Emilio Castro who addressed the SEDOS General Assembly of 1982. At the WCC Headquarters in Geneva he will be collaborating with Sr. Joan Delaney MM. with whom he hopes to visit Rome in May. The following note is taken from Eugene's editorial in the April issue of the International Review of mission:

Years ago, as I struggled to lead a tiny Methodist congregation in up-country Uruguay, word reached me that my father had just been elected a bishop. I wrote to congratulate him and commented that now he had an enormously wide and important ministry at hand, compared to which my work in a small congregation seemed but little. By return mail came the only angry letter I ever received from him. He wanted me to know in very clear terms that all Christian ministry, anywhere, is critically important if faithful to Jesus Christ. What position we occupy is of limited importance; how we honour Christ in our own corner of the world is crucial. In my new "corner" I want to do that. Eagerly I seek your sharing of your story with me that all of us may be nurtured for our common witness and struggle under God.

SEDOS Executive Committee met on March 24, at Villa Cavalletti immediately after the Seminar. The Committee made a first assessment of the Seminar with particular reference to content methodology, resource persons and follow-up.

Difficulties of language, membership of small groups, need for more theological input from Africa, Latin America and Asia, weak linkage between the shared experiences and theological reflection, need for more emphasis on the mission dimension, need for discussion in the assembly and other suggestions were dealt with. The general assessment was very positive.

The Committee's later assessment will be combined with those of participants' and studied in preparation for the coming years' programme. The committee members will decide on topics for coming Seminars at their next meeting on April 17, 1984, by which time they will have analysed the suggestions received from participants at this Seminar. (Further suggestions will be most welcome).

They also decided to contact two SEDOS member Societies with a view to asking for their co-operation in seconding some of their Kenyan or Tanzanian members to the Conference on World Religions and Peace which will be held in Nairobi in August 1984.

SEDOS SEMINAR-MARCH 1984
MINISTRIES IN A DYNAMIC LOCAL CHURCH
MORE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Women ministries influenced profoundly the course of the recent SEDOS Seminar. Among the resource persons were four women: Catharina Halkes from Holland, professor of feminsit theology at the University of Nijmegen; Pearl Drego from India, Director of the Transactional Analytic Centre for Education and Training in Delhi; Sister Sara Casanova Lozada from Columbia, responsible for a parish of indigenous Indian people in Ecuador and Sister Graciella Estrada from Mexico, a community leader in Guatemala.

The texts of their contributions at the Seminar will appear in a later Bulletin with the full Seminar Report. Meanwhile we reproduce here a short excerpt from an address on the topic **WOMEN IN THE CHURCH** given by Pearl Drego at the Second Bishops' Institute for Missionary Apostolate (BIMA II) held at Trivandrum in November 1980. It already drew attention to the thinking which is emerging around the use of the terms "laity" and "lay ministries" and which was evident at the Seminar.

"I believe that there will never be a new emerging laity without a new emerging woman. Only a strong movement of women, a radical change in their task in Church communities will carry the laity out of their present doldrums.

Somehow the age of lay responsibility is over. Topics like "The Role of the Laity in the Church" which were aflame in the 1960s are like dead wood in the 1980s. Like the liturgical movement, the zip has faded from lay movements as lay movements. This does not mean that the laity are inactive. Lay men and women are active, but their identity is no longer that of "laity" in the Church. They are professionals, or parishioners, or leaders, or counsellors, or writers. They are not clergy, they are the people of God; but somehow the term laity does not have a potent meaning anymore. It is a fallen symbol.

So I am reluctant to speak of a new emerging laity or even of lay women in the Church. The bonding between women in the Church, whether lay or religious, will soon be stronger than the division between laity and religious.

"The man-woman dynamic in the Church is a symbol of the hierarchy-laity syndrome. The relationship of domination between women and men in Christian communities has functional connections with the patterns of domination between laity and clergy. Both sets have conceptual links with the polarities of: nature-grace; body-head; ruled-rulers; powerless-powerful; unredeemed-redeemed. Women and laity fall within the former member of the polarities, in line with the powerless, while men and clergy fall within the latter member.

A women's revolution will certainly affect all the aspects in the life of Christian communities and in ecclesial power structures. The domination of nature as earth, the domination of rich over poor, the domination of men over women, the domination of West over East is carried over into the relationship between non-laity and laity in the Church. We need Church communities that can understand this relationship without becoming violent and aggressive, that can take up responsibilities rather than rake up grievances."

THE CHURCH WHICH CIVILIZES BY EVANGELIZING

John F. Kobler, C.P.

(Extrait d'un livre que John va publier sous le titre "The Third Copernican Revolution: The second Vatican Council in the Light of the History of Ideas (La troisième révolution copernicienne: Vatican II, à la lumière de l'histoire des idées). L'auteur considère rétrospectivement Vatican II comme une ligne de partage des eaux dans l'histoire du Christianisme. Les évêques nous y ont donné un nouveau modèle de notre univers "religieux". Ils y ont reformulé le Corps Mystique du Christ dans le sens d'une Eglise centrée sur l'homme. C'est ce qu'exprime la formule de l'Eglise, Peuple de Dieu.)

When the Second Vatican Council occurred (1962-1965), I must admit I had absolutely no comprehension of what transpired there. Without intending any disrespect, its "pastoral constitutions" - even the doctrinal ones-were synonymous in my mind with "fuzzy theology."

It is only after years of personal reflection that I have come to some fundamental understanding of what did transpire at Vatican II. For me, these basic insights have fallen into a paradigm revealing the Council's great work, and this has allowed me to integrate my own thinking and religious values in a reasonably constructive way and oriented my life for the future. Allow me, then, to share some of these thoughts with you.

THE HUMAN PROBLEM

The generic essence of Vatican II may be summed up in two Latin words, *Humanae Salutis*. This is the title of the document by which John XXIII convoked the Council in 1961. Taken by itself, the phrase *humanae salutis* is susceptible to a wide range of meanings: human salvation, welfare, or merely safety. In each instance, however, the focus and emphasis is on the human person. This document is well worth reading again, but let me summarize here my comprehension of it.

Pope John XXIII formulated his outlook on today's world with this simple observation: "Today the Church is witnessing a crisis under way within society." As formulated by the Holy Father this crisis existed outside the Church and was one of global proportions. This was not some sort of new, unknown problem, but simply the long-standing one of cultural and intellectual fragmentation which dated from at least the period of the Enlightenment. Since the turn of the century, a long line of Western intellectuals had discussed various aspects of this growing problem: Oswald Spengler, Edmund Husserl, Christopher Dawson, Arnold Toynbee, Barbara Ward, and others. In the postwar era, modern technology and rapid demographic changes had simply aggravated the process of fragmentation and polarization. Toward the end of his life, Martin Heidegger added drama to the issue in an interview later published under the title, "Only a God Can Save Us."

Generally, any discussion of this modern global crisis lends itself to easy rhetoric. Consider, for example, the growing danger of nuclear war, the dehumanizing aspects of atheistic materialism, the selfish pursuit of sensate values by the affluent, and the ongoing proliferation of social concerns issues. Eschewing such "gloom and doom"

talk, Pope John put his finger on the main critical issue in the modern world: unbridled technology outstripping man's moral capacity to handle it. "This is why modern society is earmarked by a great material progress to which there is not a corresponding advance in the moral field.

THE CHURCH SITUATION

In 1961, however, Pope John XXIII did not think this lack of moral progress applied either to the Church or the generality of Catholics:

Then, if we turn our attention to the Church, we see that it has not remained a lifeless spectator in the face of these events, but has followed step by step the evolution of peoples, scientific progress, and social revolution. It has opposed decisively the materialistic ideologies which deny faith. Lastly, it has witnessed the rise and growth of the immense energies of the apostolate of prayer, of action in all fields. Thus, though the world may appear profoundly changed, the Christian community is also in great part transformed and renewed. It has, therefore, strengthened itself socially in unity; it has been reinvigorated intellectually; it has been interiorly purified and is thus ready for trial.

Given the above situation where the pope found himself leading a Church already "in great part transformed and renewed," and where the world was in such dire moral need, Pope John recognized an enormous opportunity for spiritual good: "While humanity is on the edge of a new era, tasks of immense gravity and amplitude await the Church, as in the most tragic period of its history." The biblical imagery that immediately came to my mind is the Story of the Good Samaritan: the Church coming to the assistance of wounded humanity. This outlook received confirmation from Pope Paul VI who, in his closing address at the Council, said: "The old story of the Samaritan has been the model of the spirituality of the Council."

The point of the story is that the Samaritan's adjustments in his journey make absolutely no sense unless viewed in terms of his caring for the wounded man lying by the roadside. Correspondingly, John XXIII's concept of Church renewal and reform makes absolutely no sense unless viewed in terms of serving wounded mankind. This may be called the ultimate practical goal of the Council.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

To the eye of faith, today's empirical data regarding secular historical and social change become the "signs of the times." John XXIII gives us some insight into how he understood this somewhat enigmatic phrase:

The bloody wars that have followed one on the other in our times, the spiritual ruins caused by many ideologies, and the fruits of so many bitter experiences have not been without useful teachings. Scientific progress itself, which gave man the possibility of creating catastrophic instruments for his destruction, has raised questions.

Again, the Holy Father is simply interpreting within a religious frame certain well-known secular facts. As early as 1952, Robert M. Hutchins, as spokesman for scholars associated with the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the Great Books Program, enunciated six things that were known about the future. These were in substance:

1. the increasing impact of modern technology and communication on global unification;
2. the growing danger of nuclear war and possible world destruction;
3. the fact that no nation was any longer safe from modern weaponry;
4. the imperative need that there was for international dialogue and collaboration in a world increasingly destabilized;
5. the ongoing need to moderate competing sovereign states by world law;
6. the fact that time was running out for mankind to resolve such issues;

When such secular facts were filtered through our traditional Catholic paradigms of religious truths and values-especially our awareness of Christ's gift-hope-they became "signs of the times," pointing to creative opportunities for spiritual good, and stimuli for responsible Christian action.

TOWARD AN EMPIRICAL METHODOLOGY

Whatever the creative opportunities for spiritual good in the above situation, we must keep in mind the Pope John was talking about secular facts and secular problems. Today's world crisis has developed over centuries, and in their grasp of such modern secular facts and problems, whole nations are polarized politically, economically, culturally and intellectually. Why, we may ask, did the Holy Father feel it was necessary for the Church to get even more involved in such complex social problems which-in so many peoples' minds-seemed to be identified with tenaciously held political, economic and other opinions? Here I must let the Holy Father speak for himself.

The supernatural order...must reflect its efficiency in that other order, the temporal one, which on so many occasions is unfortunately the only one that occupies and worries man.

This is an extremely important quotation, since John XXIII was obviously groping for an empirically perceptible expression of spiritual truths and values. In a quite real sense the Holy Father wanted to develop a form of religious "pragmatism" that would function in a wholesome and constructive way. By entering into the world marketplace, so to speak, John XXIII hoped to demonstrate the value and reasonableness of the supernatural order in human terms which all men of good will could understand or at least "resonate to."

The Holy Father goes on to say:

Though not having direct earthly ends (the Church) cannot, however, in its mission fail to interest itself in the problems and worries of here below. It knows that by vivifying the temporal order with the light of Christ it reveals men to themselves; it leads them, therefore, to discover in themselves their own nature, their own dignity, their own end.

This is an extraordinarily sophisticated expression of religious pedagogy, even though it has a long tradition in Church theology. Certainly such notions inspired the social encyclicals of Leo XIII and Pius XI. Maritain's Integral Humanism would also be a product of this line of thinking. What the Holy Father is talking about is a process of natural "revelation," not religious revelation in a technical sense, as found in the Scriptures or elsewhere. He is describing a process of growth within the human consciousness whereby a man comes to appreciate his own authentic humanity. Scholastic terminology describes this as knowledge by connaturality; more modern parlance sometimes seems to call this "consciousness raising" or "conscientization." At any event, what the Holy Father intends is a merely natural, human process, but one with profound implications of attitudinal change and a felt-resonance with authentic human values. Hence, his emphasis previously on the need for an empirically perceptible demonstration of religious truths and values.

THE GENERIC PASTORAL PLAN

In Pope John's mind, today's problems of mankind needed a global spiritual catalyst for their solution. Hence he was calling a General Council of the Church to focus on three things:

1. the type of mind, heart, and action that Catholics would need to help in the task of building a human future;
2. a program to help set the house of Christianity in order and to heal-as far as possible-the divisions among Christians themselves;
3. the promotion among all men of good will of a stable and humane world peace.

The above three pastoral goals are, to the degree they impinge on the minds, hearts, and actions of Catholics, internal to the Church and constitute Catholic renewal-at least in a narrow, technical sense. Such goals, however, lose much of their intelligibility unless seen in relationship to John XXIII's ultimate practical goal *ad extra*: the remedying of mankind's global crisis. After all, the Holy Father judged the Church already "in great part transformed and renewed." The creative challenge, as he saw it, was to place this rich moral force at the service of mankind to help men discover their authentic humanity and construct a viable human future. While the Holy Father may have set the bishops the overt task of spelling out what it means to be a believer in our tumultuous twentieth century, he was simultaneously asking them to grapple with the very elements of any civilization: "What does it mean to be a human being?"

Unless this wholesome balancing of conciliar objectives is constantly kept in mind, internal Church renewal and reform are in constant danger of falling into a massive process of merely religious introversion. The very complexity of Pope John's quest for an "empirical methodology" exposes less-than-careful thinkers to some very naive formulas of renewal. In the past two decades these have been often enough, shaped by "historical primitivism" (return to a Golden Age), scientific reductionism (psychoanalysis, historicism, sociologism, and so forth), or the politicization of religious ideas. The characteristic of such tendencies is, generally, the ideal of a "faith enlightened by reason."

JOHN XXIII'S INFLUENCE ON THE COUNCIL

Aside from his administrative leadership both before and during the Council, Pope John XXIII influenced the work of the Council Fathers in

at least five significant ways:

1. He formulated the Councils ultimate practical goal, as we have described this above. This goal, external to the Church itself, had the natural purpose of assisting mankind in its ethical progress or moral development during a time of critical global crisis. This is an essentially humanistic objective, and the religious or charitable activities of the Church act by way of dispositive causality to help men grow in an appreciation of their authentic humanity. Only per accidens does this enterprise have any implications for evangelization. The Good Samaritan, after all, did not assist the injured Jew simply in order to convert him to his own religious outlook.
2. Pastoral Theology. Pope John XXIII also outlined the broad contours of what we today call "pastoral theology." Within the context of the Council's ultimate practical goal, this is theology largely functioning as a discernment process. The Holy Father's perception of the "signs of the times," and his wholesome religious response would be a good example of this. More properly, however, pastoral theology serves the internal needs of the Church, as a constitution such as *Lumen Gentium* would well illustrate. Its fundamental purpose is to equip modern-day Catholics to achieve the Council's general pastoral plan, described previously, which in turn is subordinate to the ultimate practical goal of the Council. In short, pastoral theology structures a "formation program" or blueprint of applied Christianity in order to equip Catholics to serve the ultimate practical goal of the Council.
3. The Pope also set the parameters of orthodoxy for this type of pastoral theology in his well-known opening speech to the Council Fathers. That abstract norm is doctrinal integrity or theological integralism.

This principle was further affirmed by the bishops in their Message of Humanity: "We shall take pains so to present to the men of this age God's truth in its integrity and purity that they may understand it and gladly assent to it." Traditionalistic as this norm may appear on the surface, it is right here that the Council Fathers displayed their greatest creativity in their effort to achieve "a step forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciousness in faithful and perfect conformity to the authentic doctrine."
4. Communio. The Holy Father endorsed and encouraged the intellectual process enabling the concept of *communio* to become the comprehensive and vital theme orchestrating the Council. *Communio*, as I am using the term here, ranges through all levels of being, from inanimate minerals to the circumincessions of the Trinity. Perhaps the nearest secular counterparts of this religious concept would be the scientific paradigm of planetary ecology, or, perhaps, the concept of "synergetics" put forward by Buckminster Fuller.

The intellectual key to this concept of *communio* is the distinction between "ad intra" and "ad extra" first formulated by Cardinal Suenens, but later proposed by Archbishop Montini on the floor of the Council, December 5, 1962, in a "programmatic and influential speech." Much like the concept of theological integralism that we discussed above, this distinction can be interpreted in an unimaginative and separatist fashion. However, within the dialogical context of the

Council, with its effort to establish a vital correlation between authentic doctrine and authentic humanity, to balance the pope's humanistic (ad extra) and pastoral (ad intra) goals, this distinction becomes the basis for the ongoing intellectual dialectic that easily lends itself to classical phenomenological method. The substance, therefore, of the Council's documents, their authentic meaning, "is only in the relation."

5. Pacem in Terris. Lastly, Pope John himself, on April 12, 1962, offered a pilot demonstration-model for conciliar methodology when he issued his encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. Perhaps the best extended commentary on this "phenomenology of peace" would be that of Cardinal Maurice Roy. Prior to Cardinal Roy's commentary, the editors of *Herder Correspondence* had called attention to the Holy Father's use of non-formal concepts to discuss the issues taken up by the encyclical. In the context of existentialist European phenomenology, non-formal concepts generally mean something quite specific. They are a conceptual *via media* between what we call subjective and objective ideas.

THE COUNCIL AT WORK

Under such creative religious leadership we can say-at least in retrospect-that the bishops lived up to John XXIII's expectations of them. With the guidance of the Holy Spirit their deliberations at the Council have become a great watershed in the history of Christianity. In the light of today's problems the college of bishops posed a very disturbing question: "Church, what do you say of yourself?" Just as the first Christians sorted out their memories of Christ after his resurrection and formulated the Good News of his mission in the context of their first-century world, so the Church today has done essentially the same thing but in the context of a twentieth-century world at a crossroads of history.

Every now and then such a great rethinking of reality takes place in human history. Perhaps one of the easiest to understand is the one which took place in scientific circles back in the early sixteenth century when Copernicus said the planets revolved around the sun rather than the earth. The implications of this new mathematical model of the universe were mindblowing for physicists of that time. With a stroke of the pen, Copernicus had rendered all previous notions of celestial mechanics obsolete. The universe had not changed, but the change in human perspective had been so drastic that physicists realized they had to rethink totally how the universe operated.

THE NEW MODEL

What the bishops have done is to provide us with a new model of our religious universe. The Church has not changed, but our perspective of it (i.e., our visual gestalt) has been radically. Formerly, this was totally God-centered and Christ-centered, as the Church's self-description as the Mystical Body of Christ reminds us. But in an age when the nature and dignity, indeed the very existence of man, is in serious jeopardy, the bishops have dramatically reexpressed these God-given truths in a way we need to hear. In a very thoughtful and prayerful way they reformulated the Mystical Body of Christ as a man-centered Church. And that is what is meant by the Church as the "People of God."

A man-centered Church? Preposterous! "That's secular humanism," some will say, "some fuzzy-minded Religion of Humanity and Secular Love." The shock is understandable. The reason for it has been well expressed by Pope John Paul II: "In their thinking and outlook, people past and present have been and are still inclined to separate and even oppose theocentrism and anthropocentrism." But such an attitude is not part of our integral understanding of Christian doctrine. As the Holy Father also says: "The more the Church focuses her attention on human beings, however, or the more anthropocentric her work becomes, the more firmly it must be grounded and be carried out, in its anthropocentric dimensions, by being ordered to the Father in Christ Jesus."

The "reconceptualization" of the Mystical Body of Christ as a man-centered Church can only be accomplished through the phenomenological method in which non-formal concepts serve as a via media correlating authentic doctrine and authentic humanity.

THE VISION OF THE NEW HUMANITY

What does the term "People of God" really imply if we comprehend it as an empirically grounded phenomenological construct derived from the Church's traditional self-understanding? It is the projection of a kind of new vision of Mount Tabor: mankind transfigured into the image of Christ, alive with his life, and hearing anew God saying: "This is my Son, my beloved."

Is this an eschatological projection? Of course it is. But an eschatology of an utterly new type. Under the symbolism of the People of God, the Church is really projecting her vision of the new humanity, a quite empirical, flesh-and-blood reality necessary for the survival of the world and the construction of a sustainable future. It radically portrays the Church at the service of mankind. Yet the religious ontology that structures this new availability of the Church to mankind ever remains the ordering of values that inspired Christ as he washed the feet of his apostles. Joseph Ratzinger has ably captured this dialect by his Logos/Shepherd distinction.

SOME PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

From these reflections, certain broad lines of thought become more apparent to us:

1. What Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council have been trying to tell us is that modern secular man is obsolete. And here I am referring especially to the ideas of economic materialism that have shaped the direction and values of our civilization since the time of the Industrial Revolution. The world of "modern" man, the world most of us grew up in and took for granted, came to an end effectively on August 6, 1945, with the destruction of Hiroshima. It has taken us an awfully long time to realize this point. From that day on, rich and poor, saint and sinner, believer and atheist have all been living on "death row." If ever we hope to deliver ourselves from this curse, all of us—regardless of our state in life—will have to develop some new ideas, values, and ways of acting. And that is what the Council means by its call to spiritual renewal, *aggiornamento*, "coming of age," growing up to the new realities of human existence.

2. Since the ultimate practical goal of the Council is really to aid mankind during a time of decisive global crisis, the program of Vatican II is a monumental effort in civilization-building. The Council's call to the Church and to mankind is a twentieth-century version of the Exodus: God's new call to his People to leave a civilization increasingly dehumanizing for a "new frontier" for mankind.
3. The most important challenge facing Catholics today is the need to develop a Christian anthropology, one that incorporates the theological blueprint outlined in the Council's documents and that is incarnated according to the diversified cultural requirements of the various peoples around the world; This is a necessary stepping-stone to achieve the Council's ultimate practical goal, and this theme has been repeatedly emphasized in the writings of Pope John Paul II as well.

Ref: Review for Religious, Vol. 42, No.6, Nov.-Dec. 1983.

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*One day I asked my grandfather:
"Grandfather, where is God?"
He looked at me sadly
But never said a word.
My grandfather died in the fields
Without a priest or a doctor.
And the Indians buried him
Playing bamboo flutes and drums.*

*Later, I asked my father:
"Father, what do you know of God?"
My father became very serious
But never said a word.
My father died in the mines
Without a priest or a doctor.
And the Indians buried him
Playing bamboo flutes and drums.*

*My brother lives in the hills
And he never sees a flower;
Only sweat, malaria and snakes
And the life of a wood-cutter.
Let no one ask him
If he knows where God is!
Such an important gentleman
Has not passed near his house!*

*I sing along the roads
And when I am in prison
I hear the voices of the people
Who sing better than I,
Saying that God cares for the poor.
Well, this may be true or not,
But I know for a fact
That he dines with the mine-owner.*

*There is something on earth
That is more important than God:
That no one should spit blood
Just to let others live better. (Atahualpa Yupanqui (Argentina))*

Ref: Volunteer Missionary Movement. Newsletter 38, March 1984.

DIEU PARLE PAR LES PAUVRES

V. Cosmao

SECT. III LES PAUVRES ANNONCENT LA BONNE NOUVELLE

(What exactly does "Church of the poor", "Option for the poor" mean? Different contexts seem to entail different understandings of what the option means. Mgr. Cornelio de Wit in his homily at one of the Eucharistic celebrations during the SEDOS Seminar on Ministries in March 1984, pointed out one interpretation about which there appeared to be no conflict, - the Church of the poor will listen to the voice of the poor. This excerpt from an article DIEU PARLE PAR LES PAUVRES calls our attention to the fact that the poor announce the good news. Do we hear them?)

Enracinée dans la Parole de Dieu, la parole qui s'élabore en théologie de la libération n'est intelligible qu'à l'écoute de la Parole de Dieu. Les pauvres qui se libèrent n'ont pas grand chose à dire et ce n'est pas leur parole qu'on entend directement dans les informations qui circulent. Ils se libèrent, ils s'organisent pour vivre humainement, en fils de Dieu. Ils s'abandonnent à Dieu. Ils laissent Dieu parler à travers eux, à travers ce qu'ils font. Et Dieu parle. Mais qui peut l'entendre?

C'est l'Eglise universelle qui est mise en demeure de se mettre à l'écoute de cette Parole de Dieu. Par là même elle est mise en "crise". C'est une heure de vérité ou de jugement. S'il n'est d'Eglise qu'instituée et structurée, l'institution et les structures s'accroissent mal d'être perturbées par l'irruption d'une parole de Dieu qui paraît subversive. Il arrive qu'une telle parole soit exclue ou refoulée aux marges, identifiée à tort à une parole purement subversive. Mais la parole subversive qui se fait entendre dans la pratique des pauvres est constructive: dans la société et surtout dans l'Eglise; elle construit l'Eglise car elle rassemble en communion ceux qui l'entendent et la disent et cette communion se réalise en Eglise; s'il arrive que certains hommes d'Eglise ne s'en rendent pas compte, il en est d'autres, établis pour veiller à l'Unité, qui s'en portent garants, au risque de leur vie, eux aussi, car cette Eglise est d'autant plus dangereuse qu'elle se veut dans l'Eglise universelle. Mais que les gardiens de l'ordre soient à leur poste n'est pas le plus grave: c'est leur fonction.

Ce qui est le plus redoutable, c'est la surdité sélective de ceux qui n'entendent qu'un discours politique là où c'est une parole de Dieu qui s'exprime, une parole qui dit Dieu à l'oeuvre dans l'histoire et les sens que donnent à leur mort et à leur vie ceux qui croient en Dieu selon la pratique et la prédication de Jésus.

Une telle parole est "impensable" inintelligible, dans un univers culturel où par contre-coup tout "sujet" est comme déterminé à se considérer lui-même comme "objet", produit de l'histoire et non sujet historique. Ceux qui se lèvent à l'appel de Dieu se veulent les sujets

de leur histoire et seuls peuvent les entendre ceux qui, découvrant leur transcendance dans leur ouverture à la Transcendance de Dieu, se veulent aussi les sujets de leur relation à Dieu. Si c'est Dieu qui parle par les pauvres, sa Parole, à nouveau, est créatrice et libératrice. Elle peut ressusciter les morts, y compris ceux qui "meurent" de n'avoir plus d'horizon vers lequel marcher, de n'avoir plus de sens à leur vie, parce qu'ils ne savent plus qui ils sont, parce qu'ils ne savent plus qu'ils sont fils de Dieu appelés à être assez pauvres, eux aussi, pour pouvoir se perdre en Dieu.

La bonne nouvelle qu'annoncent les pauvres, bonne nouvelle qu'ils entendent parce qu'ils sont affrontés à la mort, est celle de la victoire de la vie, de la vie dont ils créent à nouveau les conditions, de la vie dont ils savent qu'ils y naissent si on les tue.

De ce point de vue il est significatif que, née d'une relecture de l'Exode, la théologie de la libération ait progressivement trouvé son pôle dans la Pâque du Christ, parcourant tout le chemin qui avait été nécessaire pour penser la vie en termes de libération de la mort et non plus seulement de la servitude. Les oignons d'Egypte, il arrivait aux fils d'Israël de les regretter, comme il arrive qu'on préfère la servitude à la mort. Face à la mort il ne reste plus d'autre choix que la vie. Et c'est dans le choix de la vie que se trouve la fine pointe de la théologie de la libération.

Dieu Vivant - suscitant des vivants pour la vie éternelle, pour conduire l'histoire de telle manière qu'elle débouche sur la vie éternelle - est l'interlocuteur des pauvres qui ressuscitent d'entre les morts, car ceux à qui Dieu parle ainsi sont bien de ceux que le monde, comme il va, condamne tous les jours à mort. Ils sont des peuples et c'est comme peuples, sujets de l'histoire, qu'ils ressuscitent. Ils sont un peuple en marche peuple de Dieu.

Leur parole a, dans son humilité, l'assurance nécessaire pour briser les carcans des monde clos à toute Parole de Dieu. Parce qu'ils veulent vivre, ils desserreront les verrous des structures qui les empêchent de vivre. Ce que n'a pas pu réaliser le levier du pétrole, leur montée en conscience et en organisation le rendra peut-être pensable et possible: la construction d'un système de rapports entre les peuples où la vie soit possible pour tous.

Cette libération des pauvres, victimes du désordre du monde, appelle ceux qui y vivent ou en vivent à une conversion qui passe par la transformation des structures qui font du sous-développement des uns l'effet du développement des autres. Mais si cette conversion doit trouver, d'une manière ou d'une autre, sa réalisation politique, qui reste à inventer, c'est bien d'une conversion vers Dieu qu'il s'agit, d'une, conversion qui aboutisse à une reprise en compte de la relation à Dieu.

Annonciateurs de la bonne nouvelle, les pauvres qui se libèrent sont les envoyés de Dieu auprès de tous ceux qui à leur tour sont assis dans les ténèbres, dans une nuit collective de la foi dont on peut parfois se demander ce qui la distingue de l'enfer qu'est l'absence de Dieu: dans cette nuit, ils disent la présence agissante de Dieu, le souffle de l'Esprit qui, à nouveau, suscite la vie.

Quand on a eu la chance, ou la grâce, d'entrevoir le doigt de Dieu dans un mouvement historique comme celui dont les théologies de la libération font, à tâtons, l'interprétation, il n'est rien de plus désespérant que de voir se multiplier les malentendus à son égard, malentendus qu'engendre sa réduction politique ou l'impuissance à en saisir la pointe théologique ou théologale.

Le Mystère de l'Incarnation est d'une telle réalité que tout ce que dit et fait Dieu a des effets politiques qui peuvent être analysés, et donc réduits, politiquement, et que tout enjeu politique où la vie de ceux qui meurent est en question peut être à l'origine d'une parole de Dieu.

L'Histoire de l'Eglise s'est déjà jouée, pour longtemps, en Amérique latine quand les défenseurs des Indiens ont perdu la partie au XVI^e siècle. Plaise à Dieu que, cette fois-ci, la parole qui renaît du grain semé en terre à cette époque porte son fruit de salut et d'intelligence!

Dans un monde dont les contradictions se durcissent tous les jours, il y a là-bas, et ailleurs dans le Tiers monde, une lueur d'espérance. Il est urgent de guetter dans la nuit cette lueur, de la suivre dans ses révolutions: elle est peut-être cette étoile qui conduisait les Mages au berceau du Fils de Dieu.

La nuit se fait plus noire. Peut-être cette lueur annonce-t-elle un jour nouveau, un "jour" où Dieu viendrait à nouveau se manifester puisque les pauvres, dont Il est l'interlocuteur, sont en marche.

Les signes de sa venue et de son Royaume sont toujours les mêmes: les aveugles voient, les boiteux marchent, les morts ressuscitent, la bonne nouvelle est annoncée aux pauvres.

Ref: Foi et développement, 115 Mars 1984. Centre Lebret, 39, bd Saint Germain, 75005 Paris.

ACTION FOR PEACE

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE AS DIVINE OBEDIENCE

Ray Towey

(Ray Towey is a medical doctor who worked as a volunteer lay missionary in Africa. He contributed this personal testimony of his involvement in mission in Europe on his return from Africa, at the first General Assembly of the Volunteer Missionary Movement (VMM) of which he is a member. The Assembly was held in London, December 1983).

(Ray Towey est un médecin ayant travaillé comme missionnaire laïc en Afrique. A son retour d'Afrique, il donna son témoignage personnel sur son engagement missionnaire, qui se prolonge même en Europe. Il le fit lors de la première assemblée générale du Volunteer Missionary Movement (V.M.M.) à Londres, en décembre 1983. Il fait partie de ce mouvement de missionnaires volontaires.)

We are the first generation since Genesis with the power to virtually destroy God's creation. We cannot remain silent in the face of such danger.... We fear that our world and nation are headed in the wrong direction.... Peace making is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith." (U.S. Bishop's Pastoral Letter: 'The Challenge of Peace' 1983.)

If anyone had told me when I returned from Africa in February 1982 that I would spend Christmas 1983 in Pentonville prison as a prisoner for peace I would have considered them totally mad! Yet, by a sequence of connections on 22 December 1983 at a London Magistrate's court I was found guilty along with 3 friends of behaviour liable to cause a breach of the peace.' My subsequent refusal to be bound over to keep the 'peace' resulted in my imprisonment for 7 days. Despite the scandalous conditions of hygiene in the prison it was for me a time of joy, contentment, meditation and prayer of which I am most thankful.

In many ways my experience as a member of VMM in Africa prepared me to take the steps which led to prison. My time in Africa was one of learning and discovery, both about mission and health care and the gospel values which enable the Church to make its special option for the poor. With the poorest of the poor as the centre of our ministry, primary health care gives a structure of hope for alleviating the carnage of human life, especially among the mothers and children who died in our hospital and who died in the surrounding villages without ever reaching us. To communicate these ideas which were no more than fundamental justice was my prime commitment on return to England.

Only a few weeks after my return home the Falklands War erupted and in the name of justice a Task Force was sent to the southern hemisphere. Over 100 health workers accompanied this armada of death in order to heal the wounds of war. Ironically a re-fuelling station on

the way was Sierra Leone, one of the poorest countries in Africa. If the Falklands War justified a Task Force then for the malnourished millions what a Task Force is needed and what a judgement for our inaction!

The Falklands War, the overwhelming exuberance of my fellow country-men in support of it, and the courageous words of peace by Pope John Paul II in the midst of it all spurred me on to work for peace. Understanding the medical consequences of nuclear war and faced with the coming of cruise missiles in 1983 I knew that as a doctor and a Christian I had to do more for peace and justice than I had ever done before.

The decision to commit civil disobedience required painful discernment, a prayerful study of the Church's teaching and specific Christian witnesses, and a reflection on the life of Jesus. The heroic witness of Franz Jaggerstatter, an Austrian Catholic executed for his refusal to join Hitler's army as recounted by Thomas Merton, was very moving. The lives of Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker Movement in the USA (who practised civil disobedience in the 1950s against civil defence preparations for nuclear war) and Martin Luther King were described by the US bishops as having 'a profound effect upon the church of the United States.' They had chosen to disobey human laws in order to be faithful to God's law.

I soon came to see that in regards to nuclear war preparations civil disobedience is divine obedience.

Hence last October I was arrested along with 3 other members of Catholic Peace Action, a small affinity group, during a service of Stations of the Cross on the steps of the Ministry of Defence in central London. We chained ourselves to a large cross and the pillars to convey our Christian faith. We also recalled the words of Archbishop Hunthausen: 'Our nuclear war preparations are the global crucifixion of Jesus.'

I pray that every Christian heart and every Christian community was publicly declared to be 'nuclear free'. It may well be that only the Church can stop the arms race but whether it chooses to do so is another question. The responsibility falls upon each one of us to act for peace, whether we are bishops, religious or lay.

Ref: Action For Peace. A personal testimony by Ray Towey (Group 26)

- end -

SHAMANISM AND HEALING

From an address given by Dr. Laurel Kendall, June 25, 1983

Joan Sauvigne, MM.

(Un certain nombre de difficultés rencontrées en mission dans le contexte de l'inculturation et du dialogue avec les religions ancestrales sont illustrées dans ce court récit des Soeurs de Maryknoll, en Corée.

Sr. Joan Sauvigne attended the lecture of Dr. Kendall. It was based on field work done in a place she called Enduring Pine Village, a prosperous rural community north of Seoul. She lived with one of the Shamans there during her research.

She believes that there is an underlying ideology of affliction and healing in the shaman's "diagnosis and cure". No household or family maintains itself at a static equilibrium. Even the ordinary events of birth, death, and marriage alter this equilibrium: people pass in and out of the household and the changes demand other internal readjustments. Life requires transition but unresolved transitions bring about supernatural dangers because they defy social order; they render the whole situation unstable-things are not settled into their proper "place". Harmony must be restored.

At such a time, a shaman will be called upon to act as mediator to ward off illness or avert a calamity. Suicides, tragic deaths such as drownings, moving from one house to another, marriages, disregard for Korean "contamination" beliefs associated with birth and death and many other types of disasters can require the mediation of a shaman.

For the Korean family a prolonged illness means prolonged expense and money drained out of the house. It also means the loss of an able-bodied family member's labour. The family desires the cheapest, quickest and most effective medicine. When a sickness lingers, Koreans grow weary of "western medicine" and consult a shaman who tries to find out the supernatural causes at the root of the affliction. Dr. Kendall remarked that many times a shaman will encourage a patient to follow appropriate medical treatment. But if she (the shaman) "divines" it to be a supernatural problem, a "Kut" may be suggested.

The shaman can restore the harmony between the spirits and the family and the sick person. This is always done with the whole family. Even family fighting, adultery, malaise, inability to hold a job and any kind of convulsions may be indications for intervention by a shaman. Sometimes, as in a case of hysteria, a short-term type of "therapy" can be done to help the patient because of the care and concern of the whole family. The patient is never left in isolation. In terminal illness, though there is no hope for recovery, the patient knows everything possible was done for him and will die in peace and reconciliation with the other family members. Individuals occasionally have vulnerable or "bad" years and during this time must be cautious and avoid certain events. Should great misfortune occur, the person and family can

inquire with a shaman into possible causes of the difficulties-at that time the shaman may discover that the individual is in a "bad year" and further measures can be taken to ensure safety and restore harmony.

"RIVER VOICES"

Joan Sauvigne adds the following: "While we were in Seoul for Dr. Kendall's talk a "Kut" was taking place in a small village near Nok Dong in Chollanamdo Province. (A "Kut" is ancient, pre-Christian, buddhist ritualistic embodiment of a sense of contact with the Spirit world that still maintains a hold on the imagination and Spiritual life of the people).

When I came on June 26, I passed through the village and the place was crowded-everyone including police pressed by the river which runs alongside the mainroad.

Arriving in Nok Dong, I found it difficult to get anyone to take me across to SoRokDo island where we live. Finally a man with a huge boat took me across, no small boats were going. I didn't know what was going on. Then I heard the story of the "river Voices" in Hak Dong village. It seems this "loud crying" was heard from the river, the people couldn't sleep at night. Three years ago a woman drowned there (a bad omen); last year a huge water snake was caught and eaten. The pharmacist became sick after eating the snake meat and his son was killed by a car right by the river a short time later.

The people had begun the "Kut" at midnight; the voices continued but a young college student disappeared the night of the "Kut". He and friends had ridden their bikes from Nok Dong. He was hot, he took off his shirt and watch, put them on the bank of the river-and three days later his body was washed up.. He was a Christian. After his funeral, the "river voices" stopped! And also they found the footprints of a woman by the footprints of the dead man at the spot where he "fell" in. The story is, the restless soul of the woman who drowned three years before "took" the young man!

P.S. Barbara Pavelka, MK Lay Missioner, and I went to the river three days after the "Kut" when the young man's body was found, and we heard the river voices-really did!"

Ref. KOREA NEWS, (Maryknoll) September 1983 No.31.

MURPHY'S DECALOGUE

Leonard J. Bowman

1. If anything can be misunderstood or misinterpreted, it will be, and in the most grotesque possible manner.
2. The person with the most serious of intentions is liable to make the most serious of misinterpretations.
3. The more grotesque the misinterpretation, the more tenaciously it will be defended.
4. If anything is essential to the meaning of a religious tradition, that is what will be forgotten.
5. The religious leaders of a tradition are liable to be among the first to forget and the last to remember.
(5.1. Eventually someone will remember, 5.1.1. but only partially.)
6. Given a key word in an authoritative tradition, the word will remain constant and its meaning variable.
7. Given a new religious expression, its wisdom will tend to be overlooked by later generations, and its folly perpetuated.
8. The clearer and more sensible the expression, the less trustworthy the insight.
9. For any religious tradition, what is obvious to the scholar will be incomprehensible to the believer, and vice versa.
10. The inner thoughts of simple believers contain more wisdom than the tomes of theologians.
10.1. No one knows the inner thoughts of simple believers.)

Ref: Cross Currents. Vol.33, No.1, 1983.

- end -

 BOOK NOTES

J.M. Ela - R. Luneau

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Leonardo Boff

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