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In this issue: The selected bibliography on Justice and Peace is not meant to be exhaustive. It is a useful tool for the increasing numbers of those who are being given special responsibility for this area in their Societies.

Emilio Castro is no stranger to SEDOS. Many will recall his address on the CWME Document "Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation" given at the SEDOS General Assembly in December, 1982. The article on conversion, which we print here is the editorial from the July Issue of the International Review of Mission of which Emilio was editor and which dealt with the theme of conversion in different continents.

If the population of the world were imagined as a village of 1,000 inhabitants there would be 585 Asians, 158 Europeans, 142 Americans (58 North; 84 South), 110 Africans and 5 Oceanians. And there would be 300 Christians, 150 to 170 Muslims and 3 to 4 Jews, descendents of Abraham. The other great world religions would have 110 to 125 Hindus, 60 to 75 Buddhists and 75 'animists'. There are some other interesting statistics to be found in *Quelques Chiffres*.

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*THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE SEDOS BULLETIN, JUNE 1ST, 1984  
WILL BE A SPECIAL ISSUE CONTAINING THE FULL REPORT  
OF THE RECENT SEDOS SEMINAR ON MINISTRIES IN A DYNAMIC  
LOCAL CHURCH.*

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JUSTICE AND PEACE  
A SELECTION OF  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES

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*(Questa collezione di materiale da fonti su giustizia e pace non è completa. Siamo molto grati a Padre McDonnell di aver messo questo a disposizione di SEDOS. La collezione è stata fatta nel novembre del 1983 ed è in ordine alfabetico secondo i titoli dei documenti. Vi chiediamo di mandarci altri titoli di simili documenti. Speriamo di poter aggiungere più tardi un'altra selezione da fonti spagnole ed italiane. Ed.)*

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1. ACTION FOR INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE & PEACE: This is a guide to setting up and animating the movement for peace and justice at parish-community level. It provides information on publications, periodicals, areas for special study, organisations and groups. The contents on p.5 could serve as a basis for organising a small resource centre and organising the material collected according to the different sections of the contents. Available from: Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1 7AF.
  
  2. AMERIQUE LATINE: Published by CETRAL, 35, rue des Jeuneurs, 75002 Paris. A quarterly review that deals with the social, political, economic and cultural situation in Latin America. Very informative and useful.
  
  3. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER: A monthly report on prisoners of conscience. Oftentimes it includes a special report on the human rights situation in various countries, or it takes human rights in reference to defenceless groups such as children and women. Available from: Amnesty International Publications, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, or your local Amnesty branch. It is published in French also. Amnesty also publishes an ANNUAL REPORT which reviews the human rights situation country by country.
  
  4. ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: This bibliography is in J. Holland & P. Henriot, SOCIAL ANALYSIS: LINKING FAITH AND JUSTICE (New York: Orbis, 1983, in collaboration with The Center of Concern). Both the Center of Concern and Orbis Publications are deeply involved in justice and peace issues. A good justice and peace resource centre should have every title listed here, and should be on the mailing list of both organizations.
  
  5. ANSCHRIFTEN DER IN DER ZEIT VOM 3.7.-27.10.78 BESUCHTEN DOKUMENTATIONS-ZENTREN. A listing of European documentation centres which could serve as resources for gathering information relevant to justice and peace issues. It is easy to write a letter to

these centres asking to be put on their mailing list to receive ongoing information on their publications, holdings and activities.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE ON JUSTICE AND PEACE ISSUES TODAY: In SEDOS Bulletin No.11, July 1981.
7. BASIC DOCUMENTS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, edited by Ian Brownlie. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. This is a handbook of sources on human rights containing introductory notes. Among the issues dealt with are those of economic justice, labour relations, freedom of expression and the protection of privacy. It includes documentation on major international agreements, regional developments, the work of the International Labour Organization, United Nations Organizations, declarations on human rights emanating from Latin America, Asia and Africa, etc.
8. BRIEFING: A monthly publication of the North-South Institute, 185 Rideau St., Ottawa, Canada K1N 5XB. Free of charge, and published in both English and French. Deals with the North-South dialogue, problems and issues.
9. CENTRE FOCUS: NEWS FROM THE CENTER OF CONCERN. A monthly newsletter published by the Centre of Concern, 3700 13th St., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017. Free of charge, and well worth getting. The Centre is an independent, interdisciplinary team engaged in social analysis, religious reflection and public education around questions of social justice with particular stress on the international dimensions. Very reliable and one of the foremost organizations in the field.
10. COMMUNICATION RESEARCH TRENDS: A Quarterly Information Service from the Centre for the Study of Communication and Culture. The Centre is an international service for communication research. It includes a supplement on RESEARCH TRENDS IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATION. Lately it has been dealing with the human rights aspects of developments in the communications media and technology. The Supplement also has been dealing with the implications of this for the Church. The treatment of information as a commodity that can be owned, sold and bought, and therefore controlled is becoming a human rights issue at both the individual, collective, national and international levels. The same goes for the technology connected with the collection, storage and diffusion of information.
11. DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION EXCHANGE: A bimonthly publication, available free of charge from Development Education Exchange, FAO, 00100 Rome. It informs on selected materials available through a network of groups, institutions, governmental and non-governmental development agencies within the UN system. It makes information available on content and method of developmental education and on active programmes in this field. Very useful, because it gives an abstract of the material and tells you how to get it. Published in both English and French.
12. DIRECTORY OF FUNDING SOURCES FOR JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, compiled by Sean J. Healy, S.M.A. Available from Irish Missionary Union, Orwell Park, Dublin 6. Just published, 1983. Its listing of

organizations is international in scope.

13. DISARMAMENT: A periodic review by the United Nations, and available free of charge: Department for Disarmament Affairs, Room DC2-853, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017. It is intended to serve as a source of information and a forum for ideas concerning the activities of the United Nations and the wider international community with regard to arms limitation and disarmament issues. Available also in French.

14. DISARMAMENT FACT SHEETS: Available free of charge from Department for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations, New York, NY 10017 or Palais des Nations, Ch-1211, Geneva 10. It deals with selected questions of disarmament and arms limitation that are under active consideration or the subject of studies in U.N. bodies and other forums. Essential information, no matter how little is our confidence in the efficacy of these organizations and debates.

15. DISARMAMENT NEWSLETTER: Newsletter of the World Disarmament Campaign, United Nations, New York, N.Y. 10017.

16. THE FOURTH WORLD JOURNAL: Available in English from New/Fourth World Movement, 172 First Avenue, N.Y., N.Y. 10009, and in French from Fourth World, Pierrelaye, France 95480. This is an international movement that concerns itself with the problems and rights of the marginalized, abandoned and defenceless people of the so-called developed world. They are the poor trapped in the existing economic and political system. A good example are the gypsies in Europe, and the itinerants in Ireland.

17. GENERALATE NEWS & NOTES: Quarterly newsletter of the Commission Justice & Peace, UISG/USG (Unions of Superiors General, male and female). Available from Executive Secretary, Via Aurelia, 476, 00165 ROMA. Very informative in regard to initiatives, information, publications, meetings dealing with justice & peace issues.

18. THE GOSPEL OF PEACE AND JUSTICE: CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING SINCE POPE JOHN: Edited by Joseph Grenillion and published by Orbis Books, Maryknoll, New York 10545, 1976. This is a source book of contemporary Catholic social teaching. It can serve as an authoritative guide and study aid for individuals and groups. The index is excellent.

19. HUMAN RIGHTS/DROITS DE L'HOMME, Jean Schlick and Marie Zimmermann, Strasbourg: CERDIC, 1982. A valuable international bibliography covering the period 1975-1981, and thoroughly indexed.

20. HURIDOCs: Human rights Information and Documentation System, International, P.O.Box 206, London WC2E 7JR, or Hans Thoolen, Nieuwegracht 94, 3512 LX Utrecht, Netherlands. This is a new organization, recently founded, which aims to promote documentation work and the free flow of human rights information all over the world. It will also be useful in helping human rights organization set up information and documentation systems. It would be worthwhile to be on their mailing list.

21. THE HUMAN RIGHTS HANDBOOK: Compiled by Marguerite Garling, London, Macmillan, 1979. This is a guide to British and American International Human Rights Organizations. It gives their history, terms of reference, activities, publications and services offered. Invaluable to those who need to seek assistance or who wish to give help, but do not know where to turn. The listing is selective, and deals mainly with organisations in the U.K. and U.S.A., but does include two detailed sections on international non-governmental organizations and international inter-governmental organizations.
  
22. HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNET: This is an international communications network and clearinghouse on human rights covering more than 90 countries, over 2000 individuals and organizations dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights. Address: Human Rights Internet, 1502 Ogden Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20010, USA.
  
23. NORTH AMERICAN HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORY: Published by Human Rights Internet (see No.22). States and Canada active in international human rights. This includes organizations concerned with the broad range of human rights; organizations focused on specific rights; organizations focused on Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean; professional associations; governmental and inter-governmental bodies, offices and agencies.
  
24. HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORY: LATIN AMERICA, AFRICA, ASIA. (See No.22). A directory of organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, concerned with issues of human rights and social justice.
  
25. HUMAN RIGHTS DIRECTORY: WESTERN EUROPE. (See No.22). Like the preceeding No. 24, it gives a country by country listing. All three directories are thoroughly indexed for easy retrieval of information.
  
26. HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNET REPORTER. This is the quarterly periodical of the Human Rights Internet (No.22), which aims to give an update on issues and situations of human rights and social justice all over the world, country by country.
  
27. IDEAS AND ACTION: A monthly bulletin published in English, French and Spanish, by the Freedom from Hunger Campaign/Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Address: FAO, 00100 Rome, Italy. It is free of charge. Deals with food, rural development and health care in the 3rd World.
  
28. ILO INFORMATION: By monthly bulletin of the International Labour Organisation, International Labour Office, Bureau of Public Information, CH 1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland. It is published in 15 languages and is free of charge. Deals with labour issues around the world. It also includes a special AFRICAN SUPPLEMENT. The Organization also has many other publications on labour issues, such as working conditions, etc. Of special interest is their YEARBOOK OF LABOUR STATISTICS.

29. LADOC: A bimonthly publication of Latin America Documentation.

It is published by Latinamerica Press, Ladoc, Apartado 5594, Lima 100, Peru. Excellent in the sense that it provides a great range of documentation giving a picture of what is actually going on in Latin America from a Justice and Peace and Human Rights perspective.

30. MIGRATION TODAY. Published by the World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney - 1211 Geneva 20, Switzerland. Free of charge. Its aim is to provide a clearing house of ideas, resources, documentation and action in regard to the migration process and to provide a means by which Churches can share their efforts to defend and promote the rights of migrant workers.

31. NEWS NOTES: MARYKNOLL JUSTICE AND PEACE OFFICE: New York, Maryknoll, 10545.

A monthly publication, available free of charge. Provides information on action, documents and resources in the field of human rights, justice and peace issues around the world. It also encourages action and participation on the part of the reader, and tells you what to do, what is available and how to get it.

32. ON THE MOVE: Periodical of the Pontificia Commissio de Spirituali Migratorum atque Itinerantium Cura, Città del Vaticano. Published in Italian with translation in French and English in smaller print. Useful source for reflections and documentation on the ministry to migrants.

33. NORTH-SOUTH. Published by the North-South Institute, 185 Rideau St., Ottawa, Canada K1N 5X8, in French and English. A monthly. Again deals with the North-South dialogue.

34. PONTIFICIA COMMISSIONE, IUSTITIA ET PAX: Palazzo San Calisto, 00120, Città del Vaticano.

It is well worthwhile being on their mailing list to receive their publications. The Commission also has a magnificent library and documentation centre which is open to the public for research. A few years ago they published a useful series of WORKING PAPERS. No.1 was entitled: THE CHURCH AND HUMAN RIGHTS: Recently, they published a series on the SOCIAL TEACHING OF JOHN PAUL II. In 1982, they published a useful source book in collaboration with the World Council of Churches: PEACE AND DISARMAMENT: DOCUMENTS OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, presented by the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs. Documents of the ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, presented by the Pontifical Commission 'Iustitia et Pax'.

35. PROFILE: A series of profiles on the countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America, published collectively by a number of organizations, among them Trocaire (Ireland), and Catholic Institute for International Relations, 22 Coleman Fields, London N1. Very useful material. Recent issues have been devoted to Indonesia, Guatemala, South Africa and Zimbabwe. It would be worthwhile being on the mailing list of CIIR, as they offer a lot of other material as well. So also, Trocaire - Irish Catholic Agency for World Development, 169 Booterstown Avenue, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

36. PCR INFORMATION: REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS: Available from World Council of Churches, Programme to Combat Racism, 150 route de Ferney, P.O.Box 66,

1211 Geneva 20. It is an occasional publication whose primary purpose is to provide churches, support groups and individuals, with background documentation and analysis on major issues in combating racism.

37. PROMOTIO JUSTITIAE: An excellent publication of the Social Secretariat S.J., Borgo S. Spirito 5, c.p. 6139 Roma, Italy. It is published in English, French and Spanish.

38. REFUGEES: Newsletter of the Refugee Service of the Commission on Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Services, World Council of Churches, 150 route de Ferney, 1211 Geneva.

39. REFUGEES MAGAZINE: Is a supplement to the monthly newspaper REFUGEES. Available free of charge from United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10. Published in English and French. Gives a lot of useful information.

40. RELIGION FOR PEACE: A newsletter on inter-religious dialogue and action for peace issued by The World Conference on Religion and Peace, 777 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Free of charge.

41. REPORTS: Concerned with the field of international development. Published in English, French and Spanish, and available free of charge from the Communications Division, IDRC, P.O.Box 8500, Ottawa. Canada K1G 3H9. Concentrates on five sectors in the field of development: agriculture; food and nutrition sciences; health sciences; information sciences; social sciences and communications. Well produced and includes good visual documentation.

42. THE RIGHT TO BELIEVE: A newsletter published by Keston College, Heathfield Road, KESTON, Kent BR2 6BA, England. Concerned with human rights in the field of religious belief, and concentrates particularly on the situation in communist dominated countries.

43. SOCIAL ANALYSIS: LINKING FAITH AND JUSTICE. Revised and Enlarged Edition. By Joe Holland and Peter Henriot. Published by Orbis and Center of Concern (see nos. 11 and 18 above addresses). An indispensable tool for engaging in action for human rights, justice and peace.

44. THE STATE OF THE WORLD ATLAS: Michael Kidron & Ronald Segal. London; Heinemann, 1981. (ATLAS ENCYCLOPEDIQUE DU MONDE. Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1981). Indispensable for getting a picture of the hard facts and figures of the world situation, presented in the form of maps and graphics. Covers all the relevant areas: the aggressive state; arms and the state; natural resources; economy; governments; business; ideologies; labour; society; environment; symptoms of world crisis; dissent, etc.

45. UNCHR FACT SHEET: Presented on a country by country basis. See No.39 above for address. Available free of charge.

46. UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION DIRECTORY FOR NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES: Published in 1981 by the Un Non-Governmental Liaison Service, Palais des Nations, CH-1211, Geneva 10. Gives a structured presentation of development information and development education resources available to NGOs. Many areas are covered such as agrarian reform; apartheid; liberation movements; children; disarmament and development; education and literacy; environment; food; health; housing; human settlements; migrant workers; new international economic order; new international information and communication order, nutrition; peace research; primary health care; refugees; transnational corporations, etc. The list alone shows how vast is this whole area of human rights, justice and peace in the world.
  
47. WAR, PEACE AND VIOLENCE/GUERRE, PAIX ET VIOLENCE. International Bibliography/  
Bibliographie Internationale 1975/1981. Strasbourg: CERDIC Publications, 1982 (9, Place de l'Université, 67084 Strasbourg).
  
48. WORLD MILITARY AND SOCIAL EXPENDITURES 1982. By Ruth Leger Sivard, and Published by World Priorities. Available through WMSE Publications, c/o CAAT, 5 Caledonian Road, London N1 9DX, England. By means of maps, graphics and statistical tables it gives us a picture of the staggering situation of the modern world and shows up the obviously immoral imbalance between military and social expenditures. Published annually.
  
49. WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY 1982. An annual publication of the U.S. Committee for Refugees, 20 West 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018. Besides documenting the world refugee situation, it lists international organizations concerned with the refugee problem. Needless to say, this listing is incomplete. It does not even include all the material that comes to our Centre. However, I would like to add two sources of Catholic Church documents on human rights, justice and peace. They are:
  
50. LA DOCUMENTATION CATHOLIQUE (a bi-monthly, Paris: Bayard-Press, 5, rue Bayard, 75393 Paris)..
  
51. ORIGINS (a fortnightly, Washington, D.C.: NC Documentary Service NC News Service, 1312 Massachusetts Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005).

Both these periodicals give a good selection of the documents, pronouncements, etc. of the Pope, bishops, and bishops conferences on peace and justice issues.

It is also recommended to get on the Orbis mailing list for information about their publications which are almost always on 3rd World, Liberation and Justice and Peace issues.

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## CONVERSION

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Emilio Castro

*(Emilio Castro ha scritto questo primo articolo della introduzione in uno degli ultimi numeri della rivista "International Review of Mission" prima di passare la responsabilità al suo successore Jean Stromberg, il quale ora è direttore della Commission for World Mission and Evangelisation (CWME) del World Council of Churches (WCC) ed editore della rivista. Nell'assemblea generale di SEDOS nel dicembre 1982, dove Emilio Castro ha parlato, è stata notata una considerabile affinità tra l'approccio alla missione e alla conversione della CWME e le istituzioni missionarie di SEDOS. L'edizione "luglio 1983" della "International Review of Mission", dalla quale abbiamo preso questo articolo, contiene contributi interessanti dai vari continenti sulla conversione.)*

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"The proclamation of the Gospel includes an invitation to recognize and accept in a personal decision the saving lordship of Christ."

In this very simple phrase, Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation declares what should be obvious for every Christian preacher. The proclamation of the gospel is not a disinterested story-telling. We tell the story of the gospel with the public hope that decisions will follow. To open the word of God, to announce its meaning to the human community, is an exercise of hope in the action of the Holy Spirit that could provoke the miracle of a response of faith, even to our very limited testimony of Jesus Christ. Notwithstanding possible misunderstandings, of which we are going to talk later on, we need to open this consideration of the topic of conversion in the *International Review of Mission*, affirming that the Christian gospel is an offer, an invitation, a call to people to respond personally and socially to God.

Conscientization: Paulo Freire has taught us the importance of the process of conscientization, a process through which people come to understand their own predicament and recognize the forces that are at work in their lives and in the life of society, and as a consequence become protagonists both of their own destiny and the destiny of their community. Applying the same phraseology, we could say that conversion is the moment of conscientization, of awareness, of a personal relationship with God in Christ, an invitation to enter with him into the actual task of transforming this world according to God's will.

The cross and resurrection express better than anything else the content of our new loyalty in conversion, loyalty to the crucified Christ, loyalty to the kingdom of the risen Christ. Conversion is a changing of perspective, assuming a relationship both with the historical and the living Christ as point of permanent reference. Conversion means to be incorporated into the new dimension of being a co-worker of God in his kingdom.

### WARNING VOICES

Psychological Factors: As a psychological fact, conversion is well known in other religions and even in political movements. Different schools of psychology could explain the mechanism which produces this particular experience. The distinctiveness of Christian conversion is not in a psychological manifestation, but in its central point of reference. Jesus Christ is perceived as the focus of integration of the personality, and God's kingdom is conceived as the centre of meaning for all human history.

To be Christian is not to be a new person in him/herself, it is to be a new person in Jesus Christ; it is not a different psychology, it is a different relationship. For this reason, the Christian teaching explains that the work of the Holy Spirit is necessary to produce conversion, because it is the Holy Spirit that allows the actualization of the yesterday, the Jesus of history, and leads us today into the encounter of the living Christ in the middle of the struggles and dreams of people.

Conversion is an awareness of God's grace, God's will, God's love, God's law, a response manifesting itself in faith, repentance, obedience and community.

Having affirmed quite clearly the centrality of the expectation of conversion in the mission of the Christian church, we are now ready to listen to many voices that warn us of an overemphasis or easy use of this word. Let us be aware of the religious enthusiasts who, in the name of a radical religious experience, lead people astray! After the experience of Jim Jones, the North American preacher who brought his whole congregation to Guyana, and who shared with his congregation in a tragic collective suicide, we must be very humble in providing evidence of human conversion through the intensity of emotion experienced by one or many members of a group. Jim Jones remains the dramatic evidence of contemporary religious fanaticism, even in the name of Christ.

Psychology helps us understand the control techniques of the human mind which have been developed by sectarian religions. Psycho-social studies reveal the mechanism of submission of the personality. This manipulation of mass psychology or of the individuals is a well-known temptation to every charismatic Christian leader.

Exploitation? Other critics refer to an old phenomenon, well known from Christian mission everywhere in the world - the exploitation of a situation of weakness of the recipients of our proclamation. The phrase "rice Christians" was coined in China and referred to people who professed Christianity in order to receive the advantages granted by the churches. A similar phenomenon can be observed in Asian refugee camps where people waiting for a visa to go to the U.S. are easy prey to the call for conversion with the expectation that this will speed up the granting of the longed-for entry visa.

Muslim friends go so far as to claim that Christians should stop all diaconia services in relation to Islamic groups because they see there only a manifestation of a proselytist drive. As Christians we reject this-accusation immediately; our desire to share the gospel

with people in need is not an attempt to abuse them, but to share with them our profound convictions. We must be aware, however, that, seen from the perspective of secular people or of other religions, this is proselytism and creates new stumbling blocks to people coming to real and living faith in Jesus Christ.

How do we respect the freedom of the person in an unfree situation? Part of the difficulty is that this modern missionary diaconia is done in the name of and with the resources of an economically powerful church or Christian organization. How to convey in those circumstances the image of Christ, the powerless one, who had only his life, which he surrendered for the salvation of humankind? This model, built into the central core of our faith, should be the basic criterion presiding over our service. Do we render our service in the spirit, after the model, of the crucified one?

Sociological Factors? In certain cases, a sociological analysis will interpret conversion as the simple passage from the control of a religious or cultural groups with a certain set of values to the control of another group with a different set of values, but with the same mechanism to control and limit the free expansion of the person. This is particularly true in sectarian groups where the control of the community over the behaviour of its members is such that people accommodate to the expected behaviour without much freedom in choosing the way in which they will respond to the living Christ, not only inside the new Christian community to which they adhere, but especially in relation to the present problems and needs of the secular society.

Political Factors? A very important point of criticism and a warning to our emphasis on conversion comes from highly explosive political situations where conversion means a change of socio-political loyalties. It is a move from one tribe to the other, from one political community to the enemy community; conversion then is considered a betrayal of the tribe, culture, family or nation. In this issue of the IRM, this problem is described particularly in terms of what is happening in India. Should conversion always mean the visible belonging to the historical church, or could conversion in relation to the living Christ be developed inside one's own cultural and religious tradition? What is pleaded for here is sensitivity to the issues raised, and not an imposition of solution practised in countries where a Christian background can be assumed easily onto situations where the majority of the population sees in these practices an aggression on their cherished values.

What is there in the Christian call to conversion - i.e. to centre life around Jesus Christ, the historical and the living one - that could make people better citizens of their society, better members of their families? What is essential, what is secondary? And how do we best point to Jesus Christ in highly critical, polemical situations? A great deal of sympathy should support all those who, in India, Egypt, the Middle East, etc., try to find ways to present Jesus Christ in a manner that does not jeopardize, but, on the contrary, preserves the life of the community.

We need to be aware of all these criticisms and be humble in the appraisal of our evangelistic work; we need to be called back time and time again to the essentials for conversion - a living relationship with Christ, a disposition to serve the neighbour and the community, a desire

to participate in the life of a worshipping community.

"Conversion happens in the midst of our historical reality and incorporates the totality of our life, because God's love is concerned with that totality. Jesus' call is an invitation to follow him joyfully, to participate in his servant body, to share with him in the struggle to overcome sin, poverty and death" (Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation).

In God's own time: Trust in God's own time-should help us to come to terms with our impatience, which can degenerate into an imposition on the weakest of our society. All these warnings, however, should not distract Christians from the central fact that to be Christian is to be in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Conversion will always be an ambiguous phenomenon because it happens in the realm of human life and historical reality. There are no final claims to be made by Christians, there are no final pretensions for us; the basic attitude is to point to Jesus Christ with the hope that, by contemplation of the crucified one, the non-pretentious non-crusading, non-imperialistic character of our evangelism can be understood.

#### WHAT IS CONVERSION?

The word conversion - to turn around - is used especially in the Old Testament for calling the whole people, the nation, to change its ways. While there are some examples of personal conversion, generally the emphasis is on collective conversion. The sins of Israel are those that need to be repented in order to overcome the historical judgement looming on the horizon. In fact, we are social beings, we are influenced by and do ourselves exert influence on the total community. Inside the Covenant relationship between the people of Israel and God, this call to turn back-even to turn forward - was a call to fulfil God's will, to live in God's love, to respect God's law. The broken relationship of the Covenant needed to be restored by a public act of repentance of the people, accompanied by a clear manifestation of a change of loyalties in their daily life. This prophetic call to repentance and change remains the responsibility of the church vis-à-vis the total community. Like every individual, the community, too, needs moments of a new beginning, of a common awareness, of a rejection of the paths of yesterday, and the opening of a new period of hope and construction.

In nations that were permeated long ago by Christian teaching and tradition, the call to national conversion reflects a situation very similar to the Old Testament-the church, the prophet, reminding the community of the central values of God's justice which prevailed in the attitude of the founders of the nation, values which need to be brought back to the centre of the attention and loyalty of the whole community.

Whether it is in South Africa, calling white Christians to repent of their racist ways; whether it is in socialist countries, calling for an affirmation of the eternal value of the individual person-the church's vocation involves an evangelistic proclamation of repentance and change of the whole community. The church that evangelizes, inviting people to faith in Christ, will give clarity to its call if, simultaneously, it shows in its internal life the signs of the new

life and publicly calls the whole community to turn to the basic demands of God's justice.

In particular today, a church that is not concerned with the gap between rich and poor among the nations, the question of nuclear peace, racial equality and community of love and respect between man and woman, a church that is silent vis-à-vis these and other challenges of our present human situation, will have much difficulty in being credible when it announces the gospel of the kingdom of God, inviting people to repent and to enter into the service of that kingdom.

In this period, when the mass media play such an important role, this prophetic, collective call to conversion provides the overall context in which the individual call will be understood as having concrete historical meaning. As our Lord Jesus cried over Jerusalem, as the prophets cried over the sins of Israel, so Christians are called to cry over the sins of their respective nations with the same passion and to be always in the proclamation of the "year of the Lord" the year of grace where repentance and a new beginning are possible. While, due to the pluralistic character of contemporary society, much of this calling to collective or national conversion must necessarily be phrased in very secular terms, the voice of the church, however, should be clear in identifying the roots of its concern for the changes in the ways and the behaviour of the total community - "so says the Lord".

It is because there is a vision of the kingdom and an understanding of God's will manifested in Jesus Christ, that churches are under the moral and spiritual obligation to call the total community to change their ways and to comply with God's will.

The sad reality of human sin: The experience of conversion uncovers the sad reality of human sin. In the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), the actual moment of conversion occurs when the father embraces the returning son and he cannot finish the discourse he prepared. He surrenders with the recognition, "I am not worthy to be called your son." After Jesus' conversation with Zacchaeus, the latter confesses, "If I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19). The breaking of the Covenant in the Old Testament was the fundamental manifestation of the human tragedy in the perspective of the prophets. The self-centredness of our life, the closing in ourselves, has destroyed our relationship with God and the relationship with our neighbours.

The language of the New Testament, which describes conversion as passing from death to life, from darkness to light, cannot be understood from outside the experience of conversion. In fact, many people who, socially, are "decent" citizens, are talking about this passing from death to life. It is, in the Christian interpretation of the situation, the action and presence of the Holy Spirit working in each one of us enabling the recognition of our sin and then empowering the acceptance of forgiveness and the beginning of a new lifestyle. In the actual encounter with God's grace, the awareness of sin is awakened. It is also the Holy Spirit who produces repentance, the profound realization of the wrong done, commitment, and the search for sanctification.

The Holy Spirit inspires Christians to overcome the past, entering into historical projects of justice and reconciliation. Sin is the human presupposition of the conversion experience, recognized a

*posteriori* by those who experience conversion. Grace is God's pre-supposition, awakening the sense of guilt, but simultaneously granting forgiveness and the power to try again. To announce the Holy Spirit at work is not to introduce a magical dimension to our human situation.

The Spirit also works through historical agents-the love of a friend, the face of a child, the social turnover of the whole community, etc. Through chosen historical methodology, the Spirit reaches every human life with this call to conversion, with this empowerment for conversion. Conversion is the word that indicates both the seriousness of the concern and the hope with which the Christian faith looks at the human predicament. If something as radical as conversion is needed, it is nothing less than the direct action of the Holy Spirit that is presupposed. It indicates the seriousness of our human sin; at the same time, it points toward the unlimited grace of God who works time and time again to renew the Covenant and the relationship of love.

A Dynamic Process: "Conversion as a dynamic and ongoing process 'involves a turning *from* and a turning *to*. It always demands reconciliation, a new relationship both with God and with others. It involves leaving our old security behind (Matt. 16:24) and putting ourselves at risk in a life of faith.' It is 'conversion *from* a life characterized by sin, separation from God, submission to evil and the unfulfilled potential of God's image, *to* a new life characterized by the forgiveness of sins, obedience to the commands of God, renewed fellowship with God in Trinity, growth in the restoration of the divine image and the realization...of the love of Christ...' (Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation).

"While the basic experience of conversion is the same, the awareness of an encounter with God revealed in Christ, the concrete occasion of this experience and the actual shape of the same differs in terms of our personal situation. The calling is to specific changes, to renounce evidences of the domination of sin in our lives and to accept responsibilities in terms of God's love for our neighbour. John the Baptist said very specifically to the soldiers what they should do; Jesus did not hesitate to indicate to the young ruler that his wealth was the obstacle to his discipleship" (Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation).

Conversion brings with it concrete demands for change and action. In his book of conversion, Jim Wallis describes beautifully what this means especially for the North American reader. We could speak of the fruits of conversion - "By their fruits you shall know them" -, but only if the fruits are seen as integral parts of the plant and not simply as consequences thereof. In the realm of the Spirit, a plant without fruits is a contradiction in itself! The cost of discipleship-taking upon oneself the cross-is an essential part of the proclamation of the gospel. Not that we announce a new law, but, yes, that we indicate that the fellowship offered by Christ-his baptism-implies a struggle with him for the kingdom and its justice in the very concrete circumstances of daily life.

"Lord, what do you want me to do?": Conversion always implies the question of the Apostle Paul, "Lord, what do you want me to do?" And the evangelist should not be hesitant to indicate what in his/her knowledge is implied in a concrete manifestation of

the living Christ, calling us to join him in the struggles of the world and in the struggles of his kingdom. We need special help today to understand the structural realities which impinge upon our neighbours beyond our personal possibilities of helping them. Love of my neighbour, assuming his/her situation, which is basic to the experience of conversion, should find ways of expressing itself not simply in a face-to-face relationship, but also through the intermediary structures of reciprocal support in society.

What is fundamental is to give specific historical content to the notion of "turning around", "new birth", etc., by pointing to the world which is eagerly waiting for the "manifestations of the children of God". A "conversion" which is closed in upon itself in the sense of personal, internal bliss, is a denial of real conversion to him who gave his life for the salvation of the world.

Personalizing Character: The fundamental value of the experience of conversion is its personalizing character. When the Apostle Paul says to his readers in the first chapter of the *First Letter to the Corinthians*: "For consider your call, brethren; not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth..." (I Cor. 1:26), he is pointing towards a wonderful reality: Those who are nothing in the eyes of the world are called by God and empowered not only to respond to him, but also to work with him for his kingdom.

"Each person is entitled to hear the Good News. Many social forces today press for conformity and passivity. Masses of poor people have been deprived of their right to decide about their lives and the life of their society. While anonymity and marginalization seem to reduce the possibilities for personal decisions to a minimum, God as Father knows each one of his children and calls each of them to make a fundamental personal act of allegiance to him and his kingdom in the fellowship of his people."

A Personal relationship with God. God is a living God, active in human history. From there, God calls and invites us to change the course of our life and, with him, to attempt to change the course of the life of the whole community. Conversion makes every person a protagonist in God's kingdom. The importance of the awareness of a personal relationship with God in Christ is visible in crisis situations of the world today, where Christians are called to give account of the hope that is in them under the pressure of horrendous human suffering. There, when the word "resistance" has a deeper meaning, the awareness of the presence of the risen Christ, the awareness of belonging to God's kingdom, makes all the difference. Even death, then, becomes the path towards resurrection.

"The experience of conversion gives meaning to people in all stages of life, endurance to resist oppression, and assurance that even death has no final power over human life because God in Christ has already taken our life with him, a life that is 'hidden with Christ in God' (Col. 3:3)" (Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation).

Ref. International Review of Mission. Volume LXXII No.287, July, 1983.

## QUELQUES CHIFFRES

*(It is often difficult to grasp the significance of statistics on a global scale. In this selection the world is imagined as a village of 1,000 inhabitants and relative members fall into manageable proportions.)*

*The figures given here indicate the approximate number of adherents of the great world religions, the breakdown of population by continent, and a telling point is made regarding the numbers of the poor.)*

Peut-être le fait paraîtra-t-il étonnant, mais il est presque impossible de préciser combien d'êtres humains se rattachent à telle ou telle grande religion. On ne sait pas, à des millions près, combien d'hommes réellement sont musulmans ou bouddhistes, combien sont sans religion, etc. Ceci s'explique à la fois par la difficulté de cerner en chiffres les croyances religieuses diverses et par l'impossibilité de savoir ce qui se passe réellement dans l'immense Chine, ou dans bien des pays du bloc soviétique. Aussi, bien peu d'experts se hasardent-ils à donner des chiffres, en constatant combien ceux-ci peuvent être illusoire.

Malgré tout, il faut tenter d'approcher quelque peu la question, en acceptant d'avance une marge d'erreur inévitable. Voici d'abord les données qu'il est possible de rassembler actuellement: nous parlerons en millions d'hommes (=m.) sur une population du globe qui tourne actuellement autour de quatre milliards et demi. En terminant, nous regrouperons ces données religieuses, en réduisant la terre entière à un petit village de mille habitants.

**Descendance d'Abraham:** En comptant les Juifs du monde entier (nés d'une mère juive), on arrive à un total de 15 m. environ, dont moins de 4 m. vivent en terre d'Israël. Il est plus délicat de cerner les croyants musulmans: les chiffres peuvent varier entre 600 et 800 m., surtout répandus en Asie et en Afrique; on remarquera que 120 m. seulement sont arabes et que les autres musulmans ne les sont pas. Une large majorité est sunnite, mais 10 à 12% sont chiites (comme en Iran).

**Chrétiens:** Des données plus précises peuvent être obtenues pour les chrétiens, en n'oubliant pas qu'on désigne ainsi les baptisés dans l'une ou l'autre des grandes traditions chrétiennes, regroupant entre 1.200 et 1.300 m. d'hommes et de femmes. Il semble intéressant de donner à ce propos quelques chiffres par continent:

	Monde	Europe	Afrique	Amérique	Asie Océanie
Catholiques	769 m.	270 m.	58 m.	370 m.	71 m.
Protestants	302 m.	117 m.	47 m.	100 m.	38 m.
Orthodoxes	172 m.	140 m.	25 m.	6 m.	1 m.
Total	1.243 m.	527 m.	130 m.	476 m.	110 m.

Dehors de la Descendance d'Abraham: Dans les grandes traditions religieuses en dehors de la descendance d'Abraham, le père des croyants, on peut faire état des chiffres suivants, qui sont approximatifs:

- entre 480 et 580 m. d'hindouistes,  
dans la grande tradition de l'Inde; ce seul pays regroupe  
près de 700 m. d'habitants ...
- entre 250 et 350 m. de bouddhistes,  
dans la ligne spirituelle du Bouddha (5<sup>me</sup> siècle av. JC);
- environ 350 m. d'animistes,  
parmi lesquels on peut compter les Confucianistes (150 m.)  
et les Shintoïstes (50 m.), Confucius ayant vécu en Chine  
(vers 550/480 av. JC) et le Shintô étant la religion nationale  
du Japon (antérieure à l'introduction du bouddhisme).

Bien entendu, les chiffres ici rassemblés ne font que donner une idée d'ensemble. Rappelons d'ailleurs ces estimations impressionnantes: il y a dans le monde environ 360.000 naissances par jour (soit 250 par minute!) et 140.000 décès par jour (soit une centaine par minute!); une simple soustraction montre que la terre porte chaque jour 220.000 êtres humains en plus.

#### A LA DIMENSION D'UN PETIT VILLAGE

Les grands chiffres, bien souvent, ne nous disent plus rien; mais si par hypothèse nous ramenons le globe terrestre à la dimension d'un petit village de 1.000 habitants, tout se réduit bien sûr proportionnellement et les chiffres retrouvent une taille modeste qu'on appréhende plus aisément. Faisons donc un tout rapide de notre village-terre.

On y distingue couramment cinq grands quartiers (les cinq continents), mais ces quartiers sont loin d'avoir la même importance:

- il y a 585 Asiatiques,
- il y a 158 Européens,
- on compte 142 Américains (58 au Nord, et 84 en Amérique Latine,
- on compte 110 Africains,
- en enfin 5 Océaniens.

Chrétiens: Parmi les "villageois" de cette terre, on peut dire que moins de 300 sont chrétiens, soit environ 170 à catholiques, 65 à 70 protestants, 35 à 40 orthodoxes, et quelques autres.

Héritiers d'Abraham: Si l'on remonte aux héritiers d'Abraham, il faut y ajouter 3 ou 4 juifs, et encore entre 150 et 170 musulmans (à peu près); si l'on additionne les trois branches des Juifs, de Chrétiens et des Musulmans, on approche de 450 villageois sur 1.000.

Grandes Traditions Religieuses: En comptant les grandes traditions religieuses en dehors de celles-ci, on ajoutera entre 110 et 125 hindouistes, entre 60 et 75 bouddhistes et autour de 75 animistes; le total des hommes religieux qu'on peut rescenser s'élève donc autour de 700 villageois.

Les Autres: Quant aux 300 autres, on peut seulement dire qu'ils sont sans religion ou qu'ils professent une religion qu'on ne peut déterminer. Ce tour d'horizon, si imprécis soit-il, donne une certaine image concrète de notre vaste terre, où nous sommes appelés à être de plus en plus solidaires: ne sommes-nous pas tous du même village?

### LA PAUVRETE

Or nous savons aujourd'hui que, si 460 villageois ont déjà connu vraiment la faim, 180 à 185 parmi eux sont prisonniers de la pauvreté et vivent dans un dénuement complet (dont une centaine sont déjà à l'ombre de la mort, sous le seuil de la survie: un sur dix!). Comme le dit solennellement l'Evangile, "ce que vous avez fait à l'un de ces plus petits qui sont mes frères, c'est à moi que vous l'avez fait!" (Mt 25,40). Dans une perspective de ce genre, tous les hommes religieux ne sont-ils pas appelés aujourd'hui à unir vigoureusement leurs efforts? Et plus largement encore, tous les hommes de bonne volonté? Hâtons-nous: toutes les prévisions actuelles disent que nous serons, dans ce même village-terre, entre 1.350 et 1.400 au seuil de l'an 2000... Combien y aura-t-il alors d'hommes religieux?

Ref. Compiled from Lumen Vitae, 1983, No.3 and Euntes Vol. XVII, 1984, No.2.

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"Il nostro tempo ha bisogno di riscoprire la forza di Dio che parla, coinvolge, provoca, chiama ed attrae alla comunione con Lui... Oggi non bastano le *teologie*, i *discorsi su Dio*, per quanto importanti siano. Occorrono esistenze che gridino il primato di Dio, uomini che trattino il Signore da Signore, che si dedichino alla sua adorazione, che affondino nel suo mistero, per testimoniare che Egli è l'Assoluto". ( John Paul II ).

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BOOK NOTES

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*Parig Digan*

CHURCHES IN CONTESTATION

New York, Orbis Books, Pp.214. \$10.95

*Teofilo Cabestrero*

MINISTERS OF GOD, MINISTERS OF THE PEOPLE

New York, Orbis Books, Pp.130. \$6.95

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*Hugo Echegaray*

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New York, Orbis/Dove, Pp. 122. \$7.95.

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