

85/3

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IN THIS ISSUE:

Contributions to this and the following two issues will deal with aspects of Justice and Evangelisation as a preparation for the coming SEDOS Seminar at Villa Cavalletti.

We are grateful to SEDOS members for permission to publish extracts from their internal magazines regarding this topic.

Coming Events - Over ...

## COMING EVENTS / NEWS

### JUSTICE AND EVANGELISATION:

A SEDOS Residential Seminar at Villa Cavalletti, Rome, from March 19 - 23, 1985.

Registration by completed forms or telephone should be made by March 5, 1985.

Enquiries to SEDOS Secretariate: Tel: 571350

### APARTHEID and the "IAMS" Conference in Harare

An informal meeting at which Willie Jenkinson will speak on his impression of the Sixth Conference of the International Association for Mission Studies held at Harare, Zimbabwe, January 8 - 16, 1985, and his experience of Apartheid in South Africa in preparation for the Conference : On Tuesday, March 26 at 16.00 hrs. in SEDOS.

### IMPRESSIONS OF SUDAN

An informal meeting at which Giuseppina Tresoldi, General Assistant to the Comboni Sisters, will speak on her two-month visit to Sudan: On Tuesday April 4 at 16.00 hrs. in SEDOS.

### NEIGHBOURHOOD GROUP MEETINGS:

Meetings in preparation for the SEDOS Seminar on Justice and Evangelisation will be held between March 4 and March 8. Hosts will contact neighbours by telephone.

### PORTARE CRISTO ALL'UOMO

Rome 18 - 21 February, 1985.

### BRINGING CHRIST TO MAN.

This International Congress will take place on the campus of the University on the Janiculum from the 19th through the 21st February 1985, the official opening being on the 18th February.

The treatment of the theme, taking into account the field of interest of the three Vatican Secretariats - for non-Christian religions, for the unity of Christians, and for non-believers - will be structured according to the following titles, corresponding to the three successive days: Dialogue, Witness, and Solidarity.

### MARYKNOLL SISTERS:

Congratulations to Sister Luise Ahrens, President, and Sister Suzanne Moore, Vice-President of the newly elected Central Governing Board of the Maryknoll Sisters.

## STATE-WIDE STRIKE OF SUGAR CANE WORKERS PARAIBA - BRAZIL

Sr. Mary Ellen Rigby, SCMM

*(In preparation for the coming SEDOS Seminar this issue of the Bulletin deals with the topic of Justice and Evangelisation as lived in some concrete situations of mission.)*

*Readers of the Bulletin will recall the efforts made by the small fisher folk of Kerala last year and how, what seemed to be a successful agitation was eventually thwarted. In South Africa recently a commercial enterprise dismissed 6 000 workers. The following week they recruited 6 000 more with little difficulty in the poverty stricken "homelands". In another case in South Africa a "successful" strike maintained for twelve months against great intimidation and eventually upheld in a court of law had a similar unhappy end. Within six months the 300 workers concerned were gradually moved to another factory belonging to the same Company. The factory was then closed.*

*The enormous difficulties encountered by workers when they challenge employers in so-called "Third World" countries is illustrated by this extract from a letter of a Sister of Charity sent to her Generalate.*

*In all these cases the workers were supported by the Local Church).*

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"... a first in the history of Paraiba. In Varzea Nova this involved at least 700 people that we know of (men, women and children).

During the strike everyone in our house was working day and night in support of the workers. During the day - a constant flow of people in and out of the house: workers concerned about threats made by plantation owners; workers concerned about how they would manage food for their family the following week; workers needing information regarding strike laws and also meetings with various support groups in the area.

At night there were meetings with the strikers to organise pickets, decide on plans of action and generally to encourage all to maintain a firm stand.

At dawn, in groups formed by more conscientious strikers, we walked the streets and isolated areas of the town trying to convince those we met not to go into the fields until the strike was resolved. Thanks be to God there was not any violence in our area.

At the end of the week there was the organisation and distribution of a small food supply for each striking family.

After 8 days the plantation owners agreed to let the courts decide on the workers demands. The courts ruled in favour of the workers ! We had a great victory celebration in the streets. While dancing with several

people linked together arm to arm one of the members of our youth group said to me: "This is like the victory dance led by Miriam when the People of God reached the other side of the Red Sea".

This joy was short-lived, however. When the workers returned to the fields they found that very little had changed and in many cases they were subjected to even more abuses.

It has now been over a month since the court ruling and the owners are not abiding by the law. We are trying to organise the workers, make them aware of the legal help available to them etc. But we are encountering a great deal of fear - many don't come to the meeting."

December 1984.

end

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## MAY YOUR KINGDOM COME

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From a letter of the General Council  
of the White Fathers

*(This extract from the letter sent to all members begins with the context of injustice and poverty as experienced by Mgr. Tchidimbo of Conakry and Cardinal Nascimento of Angola and goes on to examine what an option for the poor can mean to members of Missionary Institutes to-day. We regret that, due to pressure of space, we indicate only the opening thoughts of the three main sections in the body of the letter which is a very valuable reflection on Justice and Evangelisation).*

After eight years of imprisonment in what he calls "the great Babylon" Mgr. Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo, at one time Archbishop of Conakry, wrote a letter of thanks to Sekou Touré eight days after his liberation.

In an article of "France Catholique-Ecclesia" of May 1984, he wrote in a language that reminds us of St. Paul:

"The only real enemies of the Christian, as of the priest, are those who can kill their soul (Mt. 10, 28). Contrary to what one would quite naturally be inclined to think, prison was a time of grace for me. As a matter of fact, neither the eight years confinement and silence, nor the bolts on my door, nor the fortress of our concentration camp succeeded in separating me from Christ, and through His Person, from the particular Church entrusted to me. Quite the contrary, I was filled with all the hopes of the small Church of Guinea, just as much as I was by the foul air which I breathed. I was steeped in all these material and moral miseries. Every moment I felt my life throbbing in unison with its life, while my 'internment' gave more independence of mind to myself and no doubt greater weight to my reflections.

There you have what concerns myself and my relations with Sekou Touré, the relationship of a priest with a person to be saved from eternal death ..."

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"Science has developed vaccines to immunize us against diseases but there is no immunization against man's inhumanity to man. The great shadow over our global village is social sin". So speaks another son of Africa, Cardinal Alexandre do Nascimento of Lubango, Angola. He goes on: "Charity and justice are interconnected. By all means give water to the thirsty but teach them also to make wells of their own. Then insist that their governments distribute those wells equitably and provide equal access to all ..."

I am not here to pass judgment upon the First World. We cannot make global generalisations. I do not wish to imply that the Third World is just and the First World is unjust. I know well that within the same nation, the same city of a so-called developing country in the Third World, we find selfish people exploiting others, people in power and authority working for personal profit. The Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is a challenge to all people whether they live in the First, Second, Third or Fourth World ... It is the duty of the Christian community to remind the world of the priority of ethics over economics and politics, the primacy of the person over things and the superiority of spirit over matter" (Origins, Nov. 1st 1984).

These days our attention is being drawn once again to these questions of poverty, unjust distribution of wealth and the duty of the christian community to do something about it and work for a world community where universal brotherhood is no empty word.

One senses a spirit of the prophets at work.

But we also see how people, indeed we ourselves, find it a difficult message to effectively implement in our own lives.

To be near the poor and identify with the poor is not an easy matter.

Because to be poor, materially poor, means:

- not having an assured income, not having enough to eat or being reduced to eating the same thing day in and day out;
- not having the money to go to hospital, or buy medicine and as a result seeing a child or a wife die unnecessarily and prematurely;
- being dependent on anonymous administrative structures for obtaining water in the village, or a place in school, or a dispensary and not getting them;
- waiting for buses, if there are any, which do not come because they have broken down and who cares;
- living 10 in a room, with no electricity or water.

Material poverty is often misery, making the poor unnecessary victims of inhuman conditions and therefore anti-evangelical situations. Poverty means death, physical death and moral destruction.

To say in all sincerity "we opt for the poor" has nothing romantic but is more like facing the "take up your cross and follow me". We have no right

to idealise poverty. In our pastoral, theological and spiritual reflections we may never forget that material poverty is a harsh and destructive reality.

How could one possibly say today: "Blessed are you, Ugandans, who are insecure, because God's security and peace will be yours " ?

And yet this is what Jesus did say in the sermon on the Mount: Blessed are the poor, not because they are poor, insignificant, but because theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. And they are heirs because they have no possessions, prestige or worldly affairs preventing them from hearing the message of Christ.

Sometimes people contrast "the poor in spirit" of Matthew with "the poor" of St. Luke. In fact there is no difference or contradiction because the Gospel makes it abundantly clear that one cannot be poor in spirit when one has a lot of possessions; it is much harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle (Mk 10,25). The Beatitudes are not speaking of a blissful existence of the poor as poor, they are relating blessedness to the harsh reality of the Cross and of suffering. They are to be situated at the heart of the Christian mystery of the cross and resurrection and this is never a pleasant experience humanly speaking.

Making a call on us to commit ourselves to action in favour of justice is introducing us to the mystery of the Cross. The life situations with which we are confronted show us the truth of this. The confreres who have been expelled from Burundi know by experience that they are not so much victims of a political measure against expatriates, or even of a certain anticlericalism, but it is because they carry a message that says that all men are children of the same Father. This message of equality of all before God is an embarrassing witness to the actual unjust state of affairs. The Gospel is indeed a permanent and powerful accusation against injustice and sin.

1. The Struggle Against The Powers of Evil. It is not for nothing that Luke placed some texts of Isaiah as the inaugural speech of Jesus, when starting his ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth.

To bring good news to the poor means to liberate them from their bondages.

Jesus came to establish a state of affairs on earth where the poor would no longer be poor, the hungry no longer hungry. He came to do away with what prevented this state of affairs from being realized. To say "your Kingdom come" is the same as saying "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6,10). He came to say that values of the Kingdom are different from, and opposed to, the values of this world. And when he included the Cross as a necessary step to establishing the final victory of the Kingdom, then his message, humanly speaking, became an impossible message. Jesus knew that he was preaching his message in a world where evil reigns.

The disciples of Jesus must realise that they are working in the same situation and under the same conditions.

To pray "your Kingdom come on earth" means to work and to struggle

for a world where God's values are the basis for our conduct, against the powers of Satan, against the Herods, the Caesars, the Caiphases of today....

2. The New Order. The Kingdom of God has no future if it has no present. Those who seriously attempt to live by the values of God and who centre their lives in Christ, already constitute the Kingdom now, because Christ is in their midst.

Christ knew that he was to be a sign of contradiction, that the world would separate into those who accept him and those who do not. Even if one leaves aside the discussion on implicit or explicit recognition and acceptance of Christ, it is nevertheless clear by the set of priorities and values ruling a man's and society's conduct whether one is following Christ's teaching or not --- by the fruit you shall know the tree.

The new order of Christ is in contradiction with the order of evil --- there is no compromise, and one cannot hope for a peaceful dialogue. Because Christ proposes not only to change the way of evil, but wants to block or destroy the forces of evil at work and one cannot expect the other side to take that kindly.

It is therefore very important to understand how the structures of evil are at work today. A neutral means (like money) or a legitimate desire (like possessing property) can become satanic, i.e. an evil drive making these into greed. A natural drive for recognition as a person or as a group or as a society, can become through evil motivations, an obsession for prestige, status, over-protection of interests through legal structures of privilege and directed to perpetuate them at the expense of others. Hence the important distinction to be made between the means and the forces or motivations that can make these means into instruments of injustice. Failing to make such a distinction could make one fight only the means (and their political expression) and forget to go to the root cause which lies in the hearts of men, because it is the heart (in the biblical sense) that makes things and people bad or good....

3. Conversion of Heart. Conversion means turning away from sin and committing oneself to Christ. It is often said the poor are evangelising us, and in fact one way of understanding this is that effectively committing oneself to the poor and to their needs may be the starting point for a more thorough conversion. Bishop Romero of San Salvador recognised that his becoming more aware of the needs of the ordinary people changed his life fundamentally --- even to the point of giving his life for the people. Often the poor help us to see and recognize sin in our lives and in the world. They help us to make the step from intellectual apprehension to a real recognition, which includes the effective desire to do something about it.

An obvious social sin today is that millions of people die of hunger or undernourishment whereas others have too much at their disposal. TV. makes us "see" the problem, but the rich, like the rich man in the parable, do not see or understand in the biblical sense i.e. recognize this as a sin against God for which mankind carries the guilt and should, with a stronger social and political commitment, come to a solution where unnecessary deaths can be avoided. It is clear that con-

version implies a commitment to work for change, changing the world order into God's order.

The prophets often speak about conversion, and for them this means both the interior conversion and the social or communal conversion, as two inseparable aspects of the one call. To purify social weaknesses is just as important as purifying personal weakness. Conversion therefore is a process which requires constant testing and examining.

When it comes to the examination of the social conscience, of political and economic programmes which translate that conscience and when we reflect on what we can do to improve these, we may become discouraged and feel powerless as individuals in the face of such huge problems. This frustration may lead us to absolving ourselves from doing anything, or make us grow bitter and full of interior aggressiveness, feeling that mankind is being violated without being able to do anything about it.

This is the reality in which we live....

Conclusion. Like all apostolate, the more we become involved in this aspect of evangelisation, the more we feel the need to turn to God:

- when we feel frustrated and confused,
- when we succeed in reconciling factions,
- when we feel angry in the face of so much human suffering,
- when we see christian dedication and heroic virtue at a level unknown at large,
- when we feel unable to speak or to act,
- when we are faced with human inertia and red tape.

In Jesus God came to dwell among us:

<i>"I am the Way, the Truth and the Life"</i>	Jn. 14,6
<i>"I am making all things new"</i>	Ap. 21,5
<i>"For God nothing is impossible"</i>	Lk. 1,37

Contemplation enables us to return to the source of life, to retain the fundamental peace that comes from the conviction that Christ conquered sin and death and rose to Life.

(Reference: Petit Echo, 1985/2)

via Aurelia, 269; 00165 Rome.



## MISSION

### EXPERIENCES OF THE MEDICAL MISSION SISTERS

*(In their magazine 'INTERCONTINENT' of January 1985, 18 Sisters expressed their own personal view of Mission and its costs. We give here a selection of these views with their kind permission. Editor).*

Mission is very much on our minds during this time of preparation for Chapter. How shall we define mission for ourselves? for the Society? How does the Church define its own mission in these times when it is so evident that structural injustice oppresses people everywhere and the Gospel imperative to bring Good News, liberation, justice, and freedom urges us to very practical solidarity with the poor who press us on all sides. No longer is that phrase from the Constitution about involving ourselves in the transformation of the world theoretical and distant.

It is the responsibility of every Sister to come to grips with her own definition of mission. It is the responsibility of the 1985 General Chapter, after consultation with the membership, to clarify our Society vision and mission.

NETHERLANDS - After approximately 40 years in our Society, MISSION means to me:

Listen -- Listen -- Listen -- to the inner voice implied in our Constitution, and try to do what that voice says.

I get only an indication.

Persons -- circumstances help me to understand that inner voice -- and my mission.

The implications of mission: to be open -- interested, especially in people and their needs.

The COST: Looking at mission in this way has given me -- a lot of struggle -- sorrow -- and deep joy. I am thankful.

... Sr. Monica Klijn,  
Venray.

PERU - MISSION is to live right now, with all the people here, close by, and with all those people out there, some place. It is really to care for, be concerned about, and have compassion for ... each one of them. But most of all, it is to have faith in one another. Faith in one another bids us live, let's us grow, and makes us feel loved.

The COST is that lifetime project of learning to love myself, that is, get rid of my handy masks, my egoism, my fear of being discovered, so that I may have the capacity to accept love and have faith in the other.

I just want to say that it is very difficult to put into one paragraph what I would like to say about mission, its implications and its costs.

... Sr. Pat Gootee,  
Arequipa.

SOUTH INDIA - For me, MISSION is a self-actualizing process. I try to empty myself in a creative and dynamic way of involvements and by being with people in their joys, and struggles, and on-going transformation. I came to realize the implications of this only after leaving my institutional style of life. Then, I felt that I was using only set responses for set situations rather than being creative and more deeply and personally involved. Now as I work among alcoholics and their families, reaching out to them through intervention and counseling techniques, I feel that much of my hidden self is being fulfilled. There is so much more meaning and rich feeling about life for me. My energy is never lacking, but only increasing as more and more people are touched at a deeper level. There is so much of self-realization and self-fulfillment in mission ....

It COSTS more than hours of duty, as so much of my time, idea exchange, communication and relationship goes round these broken families - almost more than with one's own community members. So there is a longing to meet and relate with my Sisters off and on, as the basic belongingness cannot be overlooked nor postponed. Mission is indeed enriching and its costs are also demanding.

... Sr. Joan Chunkapura,  
Changanacherry.

NORTH EAST INDIA - My mission experience is the answer of my call to the religious life ... accepting God as our Father.

When I look back, there was a time when I was very business minded, enthusiastic about taking risks, and challenged to achieve many things in the best possible manner. I am glad those longings have gone away from me. The words, Our Father, have become very meaningful in my life in the last five or six years because of the input I received from my superiors, especially the major ones, also because of the various reflections and sharings I have had with different groups in varying situations. Once it struck me and I recognized my own privileges, and at the same time, realized the number of unprivileged people who live isolated from human contacts, and long to be loved and cared for ... this realization urged me to enter into such places. But I realized my own barriers in accepting them as mine, even though I was doing many things for the people....

In Nagaland, it took me thirteen months to put my feet firmly on the ground. Once that was over, I opted for the unprivileged group of people in far villages. In the interior village, people live almost like animals, and the animals themselves, live very freely in their houses....

The Nagas are very independent by nature, but very, very hard working and generous. Their independence never allows them to be submissive to anyone. Children, at the age of 14, are considered as equals in the family. Their nature of equality and freedom challenges our own patience, perseverance, simplicity, and humility. They are very vocal and open, and sharp, often. They are not afraid of anyone, so they speak things as they see them. Their life with us has given me an awareness that people's appreciation for the amount of work is very momentary, but, on the other hand, they value and appreciate the quality in which we live and work ....

In this atmosphere, to be effective in our mission, we must have a community of people committed to the cause for only then, will we be accepted by the people. Once they accept us, we can be sure of their support in all our undertakings. Unless we build up this relationship, they will cut away from us. That means we are ruining the spirit of our mission.

... Sr. Rosaline Muriken,  
Nagaland.

BANGLADESH - a tiny, crowded, recently independent country carved out of and fenced in by a corner of northeast India; struggling to overcome unemployment and inequity, disease and disaster, illiteracy and poor nutrition, violence and political upheaval.

To be in mission here is to take on, to the extent that a foreigner can, the vulnerability and insecurity that this implies, joyfully and with hope. This calls for a constant reflection and discernment about the meaning of one's presence and service here.

It calls us to a deepening of prayer and awareness of the Church's role in health and healing. In a Muslim, yet increasingly materialistic society, healing relationships and inter-religious 'dialogue of life' must be an integral part of our daily encounters....

... Sr. Patricia Travaline,  
Dhaka.

U S A - MISSION, being present, God through me, to those around me. I work in a low-income, high crime area of New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S.A. Some difficulties are the sights, the filth, the rats, the bad smells, powerlessness, injustices, the agony of only being able to help a few.

My cross is my natural repulsion when I find these poor people laying "spaced out" in the streets, and doorways, and halls; living for weeks in the clothes on their backs. I have prayed to the Lord to take this feeling away, but He does not.

It makes me very aware that He is doing the work, not I. I try not to get in the way. The reward is the beautiful people I find in the midst of all this.

... Sr. Doris Mackin,  
New Orleans.

INDIA - About MISSION ! I have thought about it but find it difficult to put into words.

Mission has meant a gradually deeper understanding of the Incarnation and the Mystical Body ... a deepening and daily dying to self and an opening to the Truth ... not according to my ideas and rationalization. Perhaps as "Mary pondered all this in her heart" ... I am doing the same and understanding His mission through me ... if I can be still enough to listen. The realization of Mission being beyond my understanding, is also there. It is not what I do but who I am ... presence in its deepest sense. The events of our time bring home to me my own violence, and, perhaps, after these riots, mission has focussed much more ... as the peace and love of the Spirit. We are all needy as regards to healing, me first and all my brothers and sisters.

... Sr. Blanche Fernandes,  
New Delhi.

KENYA - MISSION. Yes, I feel sent by Jesus of Nazareth: I feel my whole humanity is at His service, so He can use me for His mystery. I feel I am a witness to the love of God, our Father, for all those I meet, being constantly open to the promptings

of His Spirit, Who guides me from within. I do this in truth to myself and responding to whatever comes my way, day by day. God is at our service. Jesus was God's Servant with whom the Father was well pleased. Mission is embodying a fragment of God's truth for others. It seems to me that service sums it all up. We must be simple instruments for God to use us....

... Sr. Dominica Dogge,  
Kakamega.

ETHIOPIA - Our MISSION is one with that of Christ, who did not choose to complete it alone, nor in any one age or generation. To the disappointment of the majority of His followers, He chose to work through what is considered weak and foolish in this world, to become an apparent failure, to die in agony, while His enemies gloated over His ignominious death as a criminal. In actual fact, His life had a shattering impact on the whole of creation, and His death not only brought life to the world, we have yet to learn the full scale of His victory. Because of it, we weak ones are able to respond to His call, to continue His presence among His people.

As "wounded healers", we offer ourselves to be used and abused, deprived, doomed perhaps, as He was, to apparent failure. In all this we will lose heart, feel useless and confused, find ourselves without consolation in prayer, our love rejected, misunderstood. This has a familiar ring. "The servant is not greater than the master". These obstacles are a sure sign that we are on the right road and in the best of company....

Like Mother Dengel, we respond to the glaring need in front of us, with compassion. It is a question of survival. There is a daily threat, spreading rapidly to other continents, if not to the basic necessities of life, then of being crushed by the evil forces operating between opposing ideologies. The MMS must now be "opportunists" for Christ, called to the exercise of faith and hope in the service of a very confused world, threatened by a sweeping tide of destruction. There never was a greater need for letting our light shine. Let us pray for the spiritual calibre to glorify God by using to the full and, in a practical way, whatever healing gifts He has planted in our hearts and hands.

... Sr. Mary Evens,  
Attat.

U S A - (Georgia) - Being in MISSION in Southland U.S.A. has been an education in what happens to medical care when hospitals, laboratories and paramedical services are owned by corporations, while medical care aid from the government is disappearing. Health service is changing into medical business and the poor are not really part of that business.

In this setting, I am an alien. My professional goal is health maintenance and prevention of sickness. The medical business depends on sick people to use their facilities. This dichotomy has made me search deep within myself to discern the meaning of my call from God to be here.

Being here has also meant an experience of spiritual poverty. We have Mass in our chapel once a month, and drive 30 to 40 miles to a weekly Mass or other sacraments. Spiritual input in the form of retreats, seminars, etc. are 40 to 250 miles away. This has called for a strong communal bond among those missioned here.

... Sr. Mary Kirkhoff, Richland.

KERALA - My life in Poothura with the fishermen community made me much more aware of the great injustice in society and the disparity between rich and poor. It was interesting to note how every powerful group made use of this poor people for their own gain. As people came to greater awareness about their conditions and rights, the frustration and anger toward the system was obvious. The challenge to bring about the values of the Kingdom and the healing dimension in our mission, was very great. The different implications and struggles in living out our mission -- like conflict with the hierarchy, joining with other groups, developing local leadership, isolation from others, etc. -- all these were the real experience of our mission. I also experienced a greater need for personal healing and forgiveness.

Since our whole aim is to bring about the Kingdom of God, we cannot be satisfied only with the structural change of society, nor can we be satisfied with comfortably staying at the level of identification with the people. It has to be effective in bringing about the Kingdom of justice, love and peace. One question which struck me in all my varied involvements is "how to strike the correct balance ?"...

... Sr. Miriam Kuruvinakunnel,  
India.

PAKISTAN - ITS COST ? Part of the cost is the effort I must make to speak the language. I can do little in any of my involvements without it. My lack of fluency is often a cause of despondency for me. Since the population of Pakistan is about 98% Muslim, my pastoral work in the hospital is, of course, mostly with Muslims. For me, this has meant finding my way, looking for the best approach to pastoral work in the situation, and having to go slowly and accept mistakes and learn from them. It means accepting the frustration of being a woman in an Islamic society where women are, in many ways, second class citizens and have little freedom. This is part of the culture and is, therefore, true for Christians also....

... Sr. Daphne Norden,  
Karachi.

WEST GERMANY - ... When I left Africa, I took for granted that life in Europe was similar to what it was in the past. Although I knew all along that Europe was generally not Christian anymore, it struck me so forcibly when I returned that God's living presence was not a reality for so many people. Christ, for some, was mostly an historical figure. Among the five hospitals I worked in during my training (four were Catholic), there were only two doctors and one psychologist who were believing Christians. I remember a patient who talked to a colleague of mine about believing in God's Providence. The doctor examined her thoroughly to see if there were any other "paranoic symptoms". I remember the shock that I experienced at a social gathering among my colleagues, listening to their conversation about how one could kill oneself without much pain if one ever had an incurable disease.

When I consider the kind of mission in which I am now involved, I realize that I come into contact with people whom the Church no longer reaches. I have a cross section of patients ranging from age 9 to 70 years, male and female. I also have school children as patients. In the whole country, there are only 25 doctors who are specialists in pediatric psychiatry. My other patients are workmen and women, academic

people, priests, and religious. Some people come only because they know I am a religious, while others come because they do not know....

... Sr. Ruperta Amon,  
Essen.

U S A - (Washington) - MISSION: to make Christ present means that Christ continues to suffer in me.

How is that COST expressed in my life:

- . isolation from my MMS family;
- . immersion in a culture completely different from my own, in spite of being in my own country;
- . realization that the Local Church is not responding to the Gospel imperative of serving the stranger and the oppressed;
- . living in a country dedicated to freedom while, at the same time, realizing that our government is responsible for so much oppression of peoples in other countries as well as toward the poor in our own country;
- . living surrounded by the sex revolution and trying not to be judgmental;
- . seeing feminism, as understood by some young women, carried to extremes and seeing what should promote freedom, promoting license;
- . it means being unpopular at times in order not to compromise my own integrity.

The cost is to struggle without apparent success in the face of seeming, insurmountable obstacles; to try to imitate the simplicity of the people with whom I am struggling, but, at the same time, to face the duplicity in my own life -- inward and outward. Like the Zen Koan, the cost is the joy of mission, knowing that "I complete in my flesh what is lacking in the suffering of Jesus". (Col. 1:24).

... Sr. Tina Pascullis,  
Washington, D.C.

VENEZUELA - I have been here in Barquisimeto for a little over a year and a half. Therefore, my experience of mission in Latin America is brief. I did have some experience in Germany before coming here. I realize, more and more, that our mission involves our whole life. As we live out this mission, we enter into the lives of others.

Living here in Venezuela, I am more and more touched by the people. The people here are very open, expressive, and outgoing. Through my home visits, I have come to know a lot of families in the barrio, and I am especially struck by the hospitality and generosity of the poor people. Again and again, I have the experience of entering a home as a stranger, but when I leave, it seems to me that we have known each other for years. Although very often I can't change their situation, it means much to them to accompany them, to take an interest in their lives, in their joys, pains, burdens, and hopes. On my visits to the people in the barrio, I realize more and more that any kind of preventive health care is not a goal for the people. Very often the root of illness is not seen. Therefore, I find it very important to show people the root cause of illness, and then help them to fight against sinful and unjust structures...

... Sr. Christina Aust,  
Barquisimeto

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CONDEMNATION OF APARTHEID

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INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MISSION STUDIES  
WITH CONFERENCE, HARARE, ZIMBABWE, JANUARY 8 - 14, 1985

(The following statement was approved by an overwhelming majority at the Conference in Harare).

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The I A M S meeting at the University of Zimbabwe in January 1985 to discuss "Christian mission and Human Transformation", cannot avoid facing the question of apartheid.

In the name of our common humanity we reject the apartheid system, under whatever guise it may be presented.

In the name of God and our common Christian faith and in solidarity with all Christians and others in South Africa committed to a costly struggle against apartheid, we join the growing chorus of Christian voices that reject apartheid as a sin, and consider it a Christian obligation to oppose it. Therefore, as one consequence of our conviction, we affirm that there can be no place in the IAMS for organisations or individuals as long as they support apartheid.

Aware of our complicity as Christians, many of whom live in countries that invest in and profit from apartheid, we pledge to do whatever we can to combat apartheid through our churches, our denominations, our communities and our governments.

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## A CRISIS OF VALUES

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*(The National Conference of Brazilian Bishops held its 22nd General Assembly from April 25 to May 4th, 1984, in São Paulo. A working paper analysed the multidimensional crisis - social, economic, political and cultural - that has engulfed their country since 1980. The paper deals with the economic recession in Brazil, now in its fourth year, and the efforts to alleviate foreign debt obligations. The most sinister result of the recession is the scourge of increasing hunger among the poorer people.*

*The paper goes on to underline that - "What is at stake is in essence, the primacy of rights over interests, of ethics over politics. At stake is a cultural crisis, fundamental and widespread. The crisis has not arisen suddenly. It is the result of a slow process which may be described as an ethical turnabout. The Church is especially concerned over this crisis of values".*

*In the short excerpt which follows the paper examines in some detail the nature of this crisis of values. Editor).*

... The crisis of values is not manifested only within the confines of the family. It extends throughout all of society, corroding the social fabric, with the three scourges of violence, the sale and use of drugs, and corruption.

At the same time, these problems are mere consequences of a much wider process that constitutes the most serious pastoral challenge facing the Church today: the appearance of a cultural milieu that excludes all transcendence.

The fundamental challenge is the fact that modern civilization is using the vast potential offered by science and technology in alternative forms of energy based on the harnessing of nuclear energy, biogenetic sciences with their frightening ethical implications, and in the field of data processing.

People of the modern world are less and less interested in knowing they are made in God's image and more and more interested in remaking the world in their own image. Their project includes the organization of the world - including the family, the natural environment and now even outer space - in terms of scientific rationality.

**REDEMPTOR HOMINIS**      Meanwhile, as John Paul II has warned in his encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, this immense cultural accumulation created by human beings threatens to turn back and work against them. The new evangelizing challenge to today's Church is to fearlessly confront this culture of immanence.

We believe this is the meaning of the Holy Father's insistence on the seriousness of the cultural crisis. Since the time of Leo XIII, the Church has confronted and continues to confront the so-called social question. We have the impression that today, as a result of the initiative of John Paul II, the Church is challenged to face what might be called the cultural question.



To think that the stance by the Holy Father implies a retreat of the Church from its pastoral commitments in the social realm would be to totally misconstrue papal directives on this matter. The pope leaves no doubt that the social exigencies of faith are incomparably more serious and demanding than any ideology or doctrine, whether of the left or the right. He insists on their decisive urgency.

The Church must continue in its efforts to carry out the social commitments of its faith. But now we must understand that these commitments rest on ground that is unstable and convulsed by seismic tremors provoked by the moral crisis. The divulgence of a hedonist, anti-transcendent understanding of human nature, the seduction of consumerism assaulting the Third World, the arms race, and the belittling of ethical imperatives all demand that the Church invest its pastoral energies in the formation of new human beings capable of expressing their faith and Christian values in contemporary culture and of evangelizing that culture today, because tomorrow will be too late.

#### THY KINGDOM COME

The meaning and the nature of the Kingdom of God has not changed. It is a Kingdom in which the poor, the peaceful, the pure of heart, those who weep, those who hunger and thirst for justice will be satisfied. It is a Kingdom that must begin here and now, on this earth and in this historical moment, because in heaven there will be no more sorrow, death, pain, hunger or thirst.

Today's pastoral challenge for the Church is this: Is it possible to bring about such a Kingdom in a contemporary culture characterized by the rampant consumerism and hedonism reflected in the communications media, in the midst of a rapidly escalating arms race, and the multifaceted political, economic, and social crisis engulfing us and causing the hunger of millions?

The challenge is great but not impossible. It calls for great effort, so great that it is still difficult to conceive of all its dimensions: movements for justice, liberty, and the defense of human dignity have emerged from all sides. Humanity is discovering its common bonds. Indications of the yearning for transcendence, emerging from the depth of the same cultural immanence, are beginning to be seen.

What rings most true to the human heart is precisely that which awakens the possibility for transcendence in the midst of this cultural immanence. It is the beauty of the paschal message announcing to everyone that only the crucified and risen Christ, the *Cristo Redemptor Hominis*, can reveal to us the mystery of human potential.

(Reference: World Parish, Maryknoll,  
Vol. 24, December 1984, No. 221).

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## DOMINICANS STUDY THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO WAR AND PEACE

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Edward van Merrienboer, O.P.

The international Dominican community is now in the process of an extensive study of their present and future relationship to the issues of war, peace and military service. These questions have been considered by individuals and local communities but this is the first international study being done within the Dominicans for the purpose of developing a policy for their future involvements. The last General Chapter of the Dominicans charged their Master General with the task of conducting this study. The actual text reads as follows:

We commission the Master of the Order to establish a commission to clarify the following:

- a) the relationship of the Order to the Church with the armed forces.
- b) the relationship between our option for justice, peace and the poor and the connection of the Order and the Church with the armed forces.
- c) the efficiency of ministerial service within the armed forces themselves.
- d) the possibility of establishing new forms of pastoral service for the military that would not involve our integration into the military structure.

The results of this study are to be shared with the entire Order. The Master General, Damian Byrne, O.P., has given this task to the nine Regional Promoters of Justice and Peace for the Dominicans and the Special Assistant for Justice and Peace. Already, this study is well underway. All the provinces and congregations have been contacted for basic information about their situation in each nation where they serve. Now individual brothers and sisters are being asked to share their reflections about their involvements and their hopes for the Dominicans on this topic in the future. In addition, they have been asked to make suggestions about policy directions for the Order which will be considered at the next Dominican General Chapter in September 1986. Because of the vast diversity existing within the community in regard to culture, national policy, theology and church thinking (e.g. over seven National Conferences of Bishops have issued pastoral teachings on this topic in recent years), this personal consultation is essential to the project.

In May 1985, a group of experts on war and peace will meet in England to examine the responses which have been received up to that time and start their work of formulating policy directions for future consideration by the Chapter. Their work will not be completed until mid-1986.

Richard Kliem, O.P., Director of Social Communications for the Dominicans, has taken responsibility for the communications aspect of the project. He is now designing various methods to communicate the

results to the Dominicans. Slide shows, tape recordings, texts and television are some of the methods he will employ. All the materials will be produced in French, English, Spanish, Italian and German.

A special dossier is now being prepared which will include substantive materials by Dominicans for a deeper understanding of this urgent question. It is hoped that it will include a critical comparative study of the various pastoral letters from the Bishops' Conferences, the contribution of Dominicans in history to the development of ideas concerning war and peace, and present experiences of Dominican men and women around the world, involved in the peace movement and military service. All of these materials will be made available to the general public for their study and discussion.

For further information please contact:

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Piazza Pietro d'Illiria, 1,  
00153 Roma,  
Italy.

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NORTH - SOUTH  
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JOHN PALL II AT EDMONTON, CANADA. SEPT. 17, 1984

The Second Vatican Council, following the whole of Tradition, warns us not to stop at an "individualistic" interpretation of Christian ethics, since Christian ethics also has its social dimension. The human person lives in a community, in society. And with the community he shares hunger and thirst and sickness and malnutrition and misery and all the deficiencies that result therefrom. In his or her own person the human being is meant to experience the needs of others.

So it is that Christ the Judge speaks of "one of the least of the brethren", and at the same time he is speaking of each and of all.

Yes. He is speaking of the whole universal dimension of injustice and evil. He is speaking of what today we are accustomed to call the North-South contrast. Hence not only East-West, but also North-South, the increasingly wealthier North, and the increasingly poorer South.

Yes, the South -- becoming always poorer; and the North -- becoming always richer. Richer too in the resources of weapons with which the superpowers and blocs can mutually threaten each other. And they threaten each other -- such an argument also exists -- in order not to destroy each other.

This is a separate dimension -- and according to the opinion of many it is the dimension in the forefront -- the deadly threat which hangs over the modern world, which deserves separate attention....

(Ref: Quoted in Bulletin of Oblate Network of Justice and Peace,  
December, 1984.)

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ISLAM FACING MODERNITY: JULY 1 - 19, 1985

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WEEK 1:     LOCAL SITUATIONS.

Reformist movement in Egypt; Modernist trends: Turkey and Tunisia.  
 Wahhabism: Saudi Arabia; Mawdudi's ideology: Pakistan;  
 Ba'th and secularism: Syria and Iraq; Indonesian Pancasila;  
 The Muslim Brothers; Khomeiny and his Islamic Republic in Iran;  
 Qadhafi and his ideology; Islam in black Africa.

WEEK 2:     BASIC THEMES.

What is Sharia in classical Islam? Implementation of Sharia today;  
 Modern ways of Qur'an interpretation; Family law; Human rights in Islam;  
 Islamic worship and the challenges of modernity; Is there a Revival of mysticism?

WEEK 3:     ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Muslim minorities in Western Societies; Christian minorities in Muslim countries;  
 Approaches to Christian witnessing; Theological assessment of Muslim religious experience;  
 Current documents about dialogue and mission; Evaluation and conclusions.

ENQUIRIES TO: Pontificio Istituto Di Studi Arabi e d'Islamistica,  
 Piazza di S. Apollinare, 49, 00186 Roma.  
 Tel: 656 11 31 / 656 15 92

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MISSION STUDIES AT WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL UNION

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The Washington Theological Union, a Roman Catholic school for ministry, has inaugurated an interdisciplinary program designed to stimulate creative and comprehensive reflection on the mission of the church in a pluralistic world.

COURSE OFFERINGS 1985 - 1986

Christianity in Dialogue with Other World Religions	Cultural Anthropology for the Minister
Franciscan Mission and Spirituality	The Church and the Hispanic Community
The Challenge of Islam	Theology and World Hunger
The Theology of Missionary Experience	Spirituality and Social Justice
Missiology (Cross-Cultural/Intra-Cultural)	Religious Symbols and Cultural Hermeneutics

PASTORAL INTERNSHIPS IN THE THIRD WORLD - for interested students the WTU can provide intern-ships abroad in Jamaica, Mexico, and africa.

ENQUIRIES: Rev. William McConville, OFM, PhD., Program in Contemporary Mission, Washington Theological Union, 9001 New Hampshire Avenue, Silver Spring, Md. 20903-3699, U.S.A.