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CONTENTS:

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|---|----|
| 1. A new vision for China
A meeting of scholars in Beijing, April 27, 1989
Arnold Sprenger | 3 |
| 2. Great Britain, Ireland, the U.S. and Australia:
the Church's response
Michael Y. Allard, SVD | 11 |
| 3. African Culture: a Challenge to the Church
Laurenti Magesa | 19 |
| 4. Missionaries of the "First Hour" in Latin America
Carlos Pape, SVD | 26 |
| 5. Mission Moments | 28 |
| 6. News/coming events | 31 |

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IN THIS ISSUE

Readers of SEDOS Bulletin will be interested, we believe, in FR. SPRENGER'S analysis of the thinking of a Chinese scholar LIU XIAO FENG whose book was the subject of discussion at a meeting of Chinese scholars in Tienanmen Square even as events there were moving to their tragic conclusion. Liu's book questions deeply the accepted values of the traditional Chinese cultural heritage. It also critiques the understanding of European cultural values widely accepted by Chinese scholars in the past. Chinese thinkers, he maintains, have seen the European cultural heritage solely in terms of the scientific and positivistic materialistic thinking of the 19th and 20th centuries without any reference to the deep religious roots of this culture.

Great Britain, Ireland, the U.S. and Australia might seem to have little in common at first sight. MICHAEL ALLARD, SVD however, draws attention to many similarities. Even if at times Ireland does not fit too easily into this "foursome" it is surprising how many common elements there are in the political, social, economic, religious and cultural aspects of all four countries. This analysis is a background document for the coming SEDOS Research Seminar in May, 1991 which will examine how the "1st World" affects mission today.

We are grateful to Fr. Sprenger and Fr. Allard for permission to include their studies in this SEDOS Bulletin.

The third contribution to this issue comes from Africa. Again we offer it as a background paper to the preparations for the coming Special Meeting of the Synod of Bishops for Africa. Fr. MAGESA refers, as do many others, to Pope Paul VI the author of AFRICAE TERRARUM, the Pope who canonised the Uganda Martyrs in 1964, the first Pope to visit Africa in 1969 and, while there, to say at Kampala "You may, and you must have an African Christianity". The time is now long overdue, said Fr. Magesa in his address, to translate into action Pope Paul VI's words. The coming special meeting of the Synod of Bishops will be an occasion for assessing African Christianity and a powerful stimulus to answering Paul VI's call.

There is a review by CARLOS PAPE, SVD of a book by Romeo Ballan, MCCJ on the first missionaries to Latin America. This is the first in a series of contributions which we hope to present in the SEDOS Bulletin in preparation for the 4th Plenary Meeting of the Conferences of Latin American Bishops which will be held in Santa Domingo in 1992.

Mission Moments present a choice from the extraordinarily rich items of news which come to our Documentation Centre about, the efforts to make known the person of Jesus Christ and the good news of his message.

Two important SEDOS meetings will take place in February, one on developments in South Africa, the other on the Missionary Outreach of the Oceanian/Australian Churches.

A NEW VISION FOR CHINA

A MEETING OF SCHOLARS IN BEIJING, APRIL 27, 1989

Arnold Sprenger

(The following is an edited version of Arnold Sprenger's account of the significant issues raised at a unique discussion held in Beijing. Sprenger's article has copious footnotes. The original text is available at SEDOS Documentation Centre. We are grateful to Arnold Sprenger for permission to publish this edited version in SEDOS Bulletin - Ed.)

I. Introduction

It is April 27, 1989. Troops of the Chinese Liberation Army have moved into Beijing to prevent students from staging another massive demonstration. At 9.00 a.m. scholars from such diverse fields as literature, philosophy, religion, sociology, etc. have assembled in the Academy of Social Sciences to hold one of their regular discussions. In spite of the tense situation about twenty people have answered the invitation to the meeting of the Academy's Institute of Literature. The topic of this morning's discussion is the book *SALVATION AND LEISURE* by Liu Xiao Feng.

Soon the scholars are engaged in lively discussion. They do not always agree with the theses of the young author, but they admire him for his rich knowledge and his courage to discuss religious questions about China and the West that have been taboo for many Chinese scholars. It soon becomes apparent that quite a few participants do not really feel at home in matters of religion. They are ready to admit this and are surprised to see how deeply issues in their own fields of study are connected with religious questions.

The discussion begins to focus on the issue of values in China and on questions of ultimate concern. In view of the student demonstrations

and the 70th Anniversary of the MAY 4TH MOVEMENT the question arises: What may have been missing in China during the last seventy years? Could it be that Science and Democracy should have been joined by Religion?

Participants in the discussion know that Liu Xiao Feng has been writing a series of articles on Christian theology for the monthly *DU SHU*. They know too that these articles are especially well received by young intellectuals who are beginning to discover entirely new values in the realm of religion. Should this not be taken as a signal to Chinese intellectual circles? Such are some of the issues raised in this unique discussion.

II. SOME PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

1. Questionable Views of Modern Chinese Intellectuals

In the introductory passage to his book, Liu Xiao Feng confronts what he considers misconceptions on the part of Chinese intellectuals. He disagrees with the cliché that the basic elements of Chinese cultural tradition are social ethics and aesthetics whereas the West has almost exclusively concentrated on such phenomena as rational analysis, social changes, rationalization of the natural world, scientific methodology and scientific achievements.

He accepts the view that the web of Confucian and Daoistic thinking has permeated Chinese history, provided the morals for social life and supplied Chinese culture with a transcending aesthetics. He is also aware that rational analysis, logical thinking and the scientific spirit are very important aspects of Western culture. It is obvious to him however, that these aspects are but part of Western tradition. The Greeks excelled in rational and scientific thinking but at the same time they cherished deeply their spiritual world. The Hebrews and Christians put even greater emphasis on spiritual values. Rationality and religion are thus the two forces that have been instrumental in the development of Western culture.

The spiritual-religious tradition of the West. It is deplorable, he states, that modern Chinese thinkers have not, or only superficially, looked at this phenomenon. Since the MAY 4TH MOVEMENT they have concentrated on the study of Western science and technology but ignored or even rejected the spiritual-religious tradition of the West. Certain Confucianists have even proposed an exchange between China and the West in which China accepts the scientific-technological knowledge and know-how of the West and offers to the West the Chinese ethical and aesthetical values which may save western culture from disintegration and what they consider to be its present nihilistic tendencies. The author scoffs at such ideas and asks pointedly how Confucianists can offer to "save" the West when China finds herself presently in total cultural disarray. With its 5000 years of cultural heritage it is unable to stand the test of modernization.

He seems to agree that the problems of our present technological age can only be solved at the place where they originated. A solution to these problems and much needed reforms can only be expected through

serious consideration of the European cultural heritage.

Judaeo-Christian ethics. Lui thinks it was a grave error that after the MAY 4TH MOVEMENT China gave little or no consideration to the spirit of Judaism and Christianity contained in Western cultural tradition. This was all the more deplorable since in the Judaeo-Christian ethics and religion the value of salvation has played such an important role. In Judaeo-Christian spiritual tradition people equipped with free will may embrace evil; they may exchange darkness for light; the angel may become a devil. But people may likewise turn from darkness to light, they may long for salvation that is promised to them.

Through his suffering in love, Jesus Christ established the basis for salvation, for the defeat of evil and of all dark powers by rejecting an absolute foundation for human values which based ethical values on society and on human thinking. What makes the error even much graver is that it prevented Chinese scholars from establishing a sound basis for comparing Chinese and Western cultures.

2. Conditions for a Dialogue with Traditional Culture and between Different Cultures

A dialogue with traditional culture or between various cultural traditions is different from a study of cultural history which is concerned with facts and the interpretation of facts. In a dialogue with traditional culture(s), we accept historical facts. We then enter into a question-and-answer process, preferably with historical personalities on the basis of our present-day consciousness. We accept for example, Hamlet and Qu Yuan and their works as facts. But we then begin to ask them questions which are our common concern and we try to

answer the questions raised by them. In other words, we face the facts of cultural history and shun wishful (ideological) thinking. However, we do not treat these facts as dead relics but bring them back to life in a meaningful exchange of experiences and ideas.

Such a dialogue with cultural history or between different traditional cultures will result in meaning for the future. Tradition moves in front of us; we inherit it but we also produce it by dialoguing with its philosophers and sages. However, all this presupposes that there are generally or commonly recognized meanings of cultural values. It also presupposes an attitude where neither the cultural history is condemned in its entirety nor criticism of any kind is flatly rejected.

A common language has to be established for dialoguing with cultural history and among different traditional cultures. What do expressions such as culture, democracy, religion, heaven, hell, faith, etc. mean for Chinese and for Westerners? When talking about Christian salvation, a common language, i.e. a common understanding of the questions involved is needed. We are not dealing here with preference for either the Chinese or Western languages; neither will translation from one language into the other be of much help here.

Christianity's dialogue with cultural heritage. Liu Xiao Feng suggests that Christianity has time and again entered into a dialogue with its cultural heritage in the course of its long history. Because of the many and often rapid changes in cultural consciousness and because of the growth of scientific thinking in the West, Christianity had to re-examine and to reclarify again and again traditional concepts and values, and their linguistic expressions. This process is still continuing in our own time. Bultman's "demythologization" is a fitting ex-

ample and is discussed at length by the author.

The various anti-tradition campaigns of the 20th century in China have scared many Chinese. Bultman's work shows that many more and much more dangerous anti-tradition campaigns were launched in the West especially against Christianity which is an essential part of Western culture. He refers to such movements as the Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Historical Criticism, 19th century Historical Relativity and others which threatened to destroy the basis for religions as well as for general values.

A common language. Liu Xiao Feng suggests that life itself provides the common language for a dialogue between different cultural traditions. Common experiences such as deep joy and suffering, hope and despair, good and evil, love and hate, and basic human relationships such as between man and man, male and female, man and nature, or sinful man and God provide the basis for a language that is understood by people of all times and all cultures. People of diverse cultures and people of different cultural epochs may differ considerably in their assessment of certain cultural phenomena. When it comes to basic values, however, they will readily understand each other across cultures and epochs if they are dealing with "ultimate concerns".

3. China and Alien Cultures

Liu Xiao Feng turns our attention to yet another question important for a dialogue between the cultures of China and those of the West. He asks whether culture is so bound to race, place and time that it could only be appreciated in that context. In other words, is it reasonable to accept a foreign culture, to accept Christian values in particular, in China? Liu's answer to the question is that reason cannot judge values such as love, happiness, freedom,

justice, salvation. We cannot reject the love of the Christian God just because he is not part of our local national culture. The author finds himself in disagreement with the many Chinese intellectuals who at the beginning of the 20th century were occupied with the study of Western culture. They derived from this study an anti-Christian bias which would only confirm them in their own anti-religious attitude.

The question that should determine the acceptance of elements of an alien culture is: are they valuable or not? In a special article on Rahner's theology, Liu deals with this question in greater detail. The concept of God, of the father of all mankind, is of great appeal to him. God is not the God of some particular race, place, and time. He is the father of all human beings and thus the absolute basis of truth and of democratic values. Jesus is not the Messiah of a particular race or nation; he has wrought salvation for all humankind.

For many Chinese, the Christian religion is still an alien religion and the Christian God is still an alien God. Chinese tradition is at odds with these Christian phenomena. Many Chinese are still occupied with their race, geography and tradition rather than with the question of the highest truth. The mandate their culture has bestowed on them is not to become more human but rather to become Chinese! What the Chinese lack - so Liu Xiao Feng maintains - is a deeper understanding of general social and anthropological realities and relationships.

III. Questions of Ultimate Concern

1. Chinese Tradition and Absolute Values

The question arises whether the individual person truly has the power (almighty power?) to solve his or her own problems and those of social his-

tory. What is meant by the Chinese "perfecting one's self", which leads to perfecting one's family, then to perfecting one's country, and finally to achieving world peace? Is there any objective standard to judge the situation? They are faced here, Liu points out, with the real danger that such historical problems as suffering, injustice, and evil may be side-stepped or overlooked by this ideal rationalistic ethics. It seems that no road is leading from the Confucian world of values to the real world of humankind; the two are separated by a vast abyss. Natural science had no chance to develop in China since Confucian personal ethics did not distinguish between its philosophy of life, its view of nature, and its view of history. The West, however, always distinguished clearly between such fields as science and theology; religious knowledge was never lumped together with historical and scientific knowledge.

Confucian principles. Liu questions three basic Confucian principles:

1. every individual person is one with history;
2. every individual is one with social order;
3. every individual is one with the heavenly principles.

Confucianists may call history the Road of Humanism travelled by the sage kings. This road (Way of the Kings, *wang dao*) was revealed to them by Heaven (the objective laws of history). Individual persons have to conform to this Way of History, have to follow the sage kings if they want to become perfect. Liu cannot but pose the following questions:

How can it be proved that the old kings received revelation? How can we say that there is only one royal road and that each individual must unconditionally follow it? Is it permissible to make of history a rationalized ethics? Should we welcome the prospect of seeing every individual person's will in conformity

with the Way of History or should we reject it as a terrifying prospect?

The Confucian virtues were meant to make the individual person one with society in intention and result. Individual persons had to follow the established rules of etiquette, had to be one with their family clan, their country and their king. They could never step outside these given frameworks to determine their own lifestyles. Questions that arise under such circumstances are:

What about the values of the individual, notably his or her freedom? How could one be sure that the values of the country and the will of the king were a sound basis for mankind's happiness and ideals?

The role of the individual amounted thus to little more than to serve as an instrument in the hands of the king and in the grip of the country. Wars of liberation and revolutions have turned again and again into nightmares for individual persons without ever liberating them. How many poets and philosophers were killed by the kings? How many soldiers were used to kill people for the king?!

Chinese humanism turns out to be an ambiguous term. It sounds beautiful, but what constitutes the fundament on which the values of the individual are based? If the will of the individual person is not to succumb to evil inclinations, it must be guided on a legal basis. But respective laws ought to be grounded on absolutely reliable principles. Can the king and/or the country provide such a basis?

The Biblical God. China never had anything in its literature like the Old Testament where the relationship between mankind and God is described in most intimate terms. For Confucianism in the Han period, Tien had become the universe. The concept of a personal spiritual being was no longer alive and it has never since been re-captured. Only the ancient Chinese knew a spiritual, personal

God but his influence in Chinese spirituality has been weak and is in no way comparable to the powerful impact the biblical God had, and still has, on the Western world.

With the influence of a spiritual, personal God on the wane, Confucianists began soon to emphasize the will of man as the realization of God's will. That is why men will become extremely powerful, almost almighty, in no need of anything from outside elements or factors. In many discussions, the strength of the human will and the greatness of the ethical person were glorified. Liu Xiao Feng feels compelled again to raise some pointed questions: Does the will-power of such an ethical person make that person peace-loving? What are the ethical values of that person? Are they reliable? The will of the Christian ethical person is grounded in God. Man can never replace God. However, in Chinese literature we find many expressions claiming that man has virtually replaced God. God does not speak. All power, all decisions have been entrusted to the king or the country.

Limits to knowledge and enquiry.

Another problem resulting from the Confucian view of man (personal ethics) is the limits it imposes on the domain of inquiry and knowledge. Complacency with the individual person's knowledge prevented many scholars from searching for further knowledge, from raising questions, from delving into such problems as first principles as the Greeks and Christian philosophers did. The latter discovered that men/women are contingent, open-ended; that they are not absolute masters of themselves and their lives; that their doubts lead to new insights and new knowledge. The Chinese sages did not appreciate this approach. They saw little value in doubting any given knowledge and in analyzing new situations. They preferred to acquire and pass on knowledge handed down by the authorities of history and society. Thus they thought they knew all that

there was to know concerning heaven and earth and fate.

2. Chinese Tradition and the Phenomena of Suffering, Fear, Evil, Sin

Liu Xiao Feng deplores the fact that in the Confucian ethical system there is little or no concern for suffering, man's weaknesses, temptation, despair, death and the like as there is in Christianity where God has sent his own son to save people. In China there is no God who hears the cries of the suffering people. None of the three hundred poems in the Book of Odes deals with suffering and death. What do they really have to say about man? Why does Confucianism show so little interest in tears and blood? And why is there so much talk about joy and serenity?

Daoism does not accept the present world as it exists. According to Zhuangzi, man is without the concept of sin, but is full of suffering and unable to escape death. By rejecting history, by rejecting culture and established values, man can overcome these products of cultural history. Once he has freed himself from all these phenomena and has achieved harmony with nature, he will enjoy peace and happiness. In this state of mind he is beyond time and place, good and evil, love and hate, life and death.

Salvation. Christianity accepts the world as it is, but not unconditionally. For Christianity the world is beset by sin, evil, and suffering. Liu puts special emphasis on the concept of original sin. People cannot free themselves from sin; they are in need of grace. The Daoist relies on himself to escape from misery and suffering. Christians do not rely on themselves and therefore turn to a spiritual power - God. Without God, people cannot be saved, they do not even know what they are to be; reason and nature can provide only vague ideas and impressions.

God's love and salvation through Christ are the absolute conditions of the Christian to accept this world, - not just the beauty of life but also all happenings, people's sinfulness, all kinds of suffering, even death. Salvation through Christ encourages us to face sin, evil, and suffering; to identify with the "useless", the "weak", the "sick", the "outcast" of society; to look at the woes of an unhappy society and lead beyond. In an article on the theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, Liu shows how the theology of God's redemptive power and love is applied to modern politics, history, ethics, and business.

3. The Christian Virtues of Love, Hope, and Joy

Liu's reflections on religious values culminate in his praise of Christian love. God is love and this love is creative. God has given us a share in God's creative love. This is evidenced in the incarnation of Christ and in his crucifixion and death for humankind. The cross of Jesus Christ has become the symbol of God's love of man and is therefore the sign of hope for all humankind.

In an article on Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Liu castigates the "wisdom of secular man" which despises Christianity for its preoccupation with suffering and sin, and which ridicules the Christian "Way to Heaven" as an escape from the realities of this world. Liu feels that this "secular wisdom" with its emphasis on happiness in this world, is little concerned about the suffering and despair in this world. Such wisdom can never reach a height where it would sing the praise of suffering, where it would look at love as something truly great. God has given us Christ who came into this world to suffer and thereby destroy and reject everything that endangers the values of human life. God has suffered and is still suffering in Christ. It is

not a glorious suffering! - but a suffering for our freedom, peace, and happiness and therefore a suffering that deserves the highest praise. What distinguishes Christianity from all other religions and certainly from all secular wisdoms is that God has come in Christ not in his power but rather in weakness and suffering to help us, to be with us. He has come in love. That is the message of Christ's suffering.

The problem of suffering. No rational ethical system will ever face up to the problems of suffering, emptiness, absurdity, despair, and death. Neither will it find an answer to the phenomena of evil and sin in human nature. God sent his son into the world so that we could be redeemed and share in God's redemptive love. In this context Liu raises some important questions: Why did the Chinese fail to develop the concept of personal sin? Why do we find in Chinese poetry hardly any traces of the evil in human beings, of human failures and human sinfulness? Did the Chinese poets never realize that the evil in cultural history is man-made? Why is there so little praise of the holy in Chinese poetry and so much praise of personal achievements.

In a discourse on love, Liu Xiao Feng projects a new vision for man/woman. Love is creative, it transcends everything, it destroys evil in us. God's gift of love liberates us from our sinfulness (selfishness), creates a new world in us. God forgives us our sins; we in turn learn to forgive. Love is compassionate, it endeavors to enhance life and love in the suffering. Love creates joy which finds its culmination in the joy of the Holy Spirit given to the lover and the beloved.

IV CONCLUSION

Liu Xiao Feng's publications suggest that many of his ideas coincide with those of a Christian. His understanding of the Christian God

has set him on a road to new vistas, has provided him with an intellectual and spiritual foundation on which he projects his new vision for China. His religious ideas help to explain why, in discussing many cultural and traditional issues, he sides with the Christian West against his own cultural traditions. At times it seems to make him prone to partiality and over-simplification with regard to certain problems. His writings are not free of sweeping statements. They reveal a certain impatience with his own people and traditions. They tend to overlook or at least underrate certain values in the Chinese heritage and the religious seeds which the Chinese soil contains.

Questions for the Chinese heritage

Looking back at developments in China during the last century, one feels compelled to ask whether Liu Xiao Feng is not justified in being impatient with his people and taking a critical look at the Chinese heritage. How far has China advanced beyond the manifestos and slogans of the MAY 4TH MOVEMENT seventy years ago? Why is it that after decades of revolutions and blood-letting China is still in the tight grip of a socio-political system that promises peace and prosperity but produces horrible cultural revolutions instead, and employs tanks to "quell" peaceful demonstrations? Why is it that values such as human rights, freedom of the press and freedom of speech are so difficult to establish in China? Does the traditional Chinese value system lack basic elements conducive to successfully coping with problems of our modern society?

No matter how we judge Liu's analysis and discussion of certain phenomena of the Chinese cultural heritage, he should be credited with directing our attention to basic questions that have been overlooked or were taboo for too long in Chinese intellectual circles. This young

writer certainly deserves to be supported in his basic thrusts.

Questions for the western heritage.

For those familiar with the intellectual and educational scene on mainland China as well as in Taiwan, it is rather obvious that the concept "European Cultural History" has been shaped mainly by the scientific and positivistic-materialistic thinking of the 19th and 20th centuries. Expressions such as the dark, backward, superstitious and/or dogmatic Middle Ages are still making the rounds in China. It seems to have escaped the consciousness of the intelligentsia in China - possibly under pressure from the country's leadership - that a wealth of information is available not only on such fields as medieval art, literature, music, law, the universities, rational philosophy and science, but also on ideas such as bi-polarity of power (temporal vs. religious); of progress (moving towards a goal, a phenomenon which underlies western technological civilization, the sciences and many political movements); conscience and the value of the individual person (an element of unrest which transforms the history of the world); a new "work ethos" *ora et labora*; the town as a juridical, autonomous entity where the guilds or corporations came into existence and developed an ethics of work and wages, established rationality in finances, business and accounting and set up special centers for culture and learning. Thus were laid the foundation for our modern western society.

The so called "dogmatic" medieval world was, in fact, a pluralistic world in which the diverse entities and mutual relationships were directed towards a transcendent/divine origin. This pluralism is the basis of the enormous dynamism and vitality of European developments. It made pos-

sible the searching mind and the freedom needed for the searching mind to operate.

Liu Xiao Feng, in European cultural history, is not only familiar with the cultural richness, pluralism, and fertility of the European Middle Ages, he knows also about the religious metaphysical roots of these phenomena. He is aware of the fact that it was not so much the Renaissance and Humanism which established modern subjectivity and dynamism, but rather religious ideas such as the medieval problem of sin and grace, of human sinfulness and the omnipotence of God, of the individual human being standing before almighty God. Liu holds that an absolute value-system can only be established if it is founded on belief in the Christian God. Human nature cannot be based on natural/practical phenomena such as rationalism (Descartes, Kant), creation of tools (Marx), biological powers and processes (Darwin), strength of will (Nietzsche), psychological abilities (Freud), or any other features extolled by humanisms, old and new.

The true value of the human person will only be revealed if men/women are seen in their relation to God, who is love and the origin of all love. Only the love between God and us makes us radically different from all other animals. For Liu Xiao Feng it is this love of God, so concretely revealed in the cross of Jesus Christ, that illuminates our earthly life and re-evaluates all our values and value systems. It amounts to a new vision for China, provided it comes to a dialogue between China and the Christian West where language is based on common experiences of ultimate concern.

(In editing this text we have attempted to use inclusive language except where the author, Liu was dealing with some historical aspects of Confucianism. Ed.)

GREAT BRITAIN, IRELAND, THE U.S. AND AUSTRALIA: THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE

Michael Y. Allard, SVD

(AN ADDRESS GIVEN TO THE 10TH GENERAL CHAPTER OF THE MISSIONARY SISTERS,
SERVANTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, AUGUST 1990 - Ed.)

Introduction

All four countries have an anglo-celtic common element and they always had close ties, through language, religion, law, commerce and tradition. Australia might seem the most remote of the four but the Australians themselves consider their country to be "geographically in the

South and close to the East, whilst culturally and economically belonging to the North and the West". In this presentation I will try to give a synthesis of the common and divergent characteristics of these countries. I will then consider the church's response on the local level and develop briefly aspects of the church's response on the universal level.

I

COMMON ELEMENTS AND MAIN DIFFERENCES IN THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, ECONOMICAL, RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL ASPECTS OF THESE COUNTRIES

All these countries have a political organization that could be labeled as white, liberal democracy.

	U.S.		U.K.		IRE.		AUS.	
Ethnic groups	White	80%	White	96%	White	99%	White	85%
	Black	11%	English	82%	Irish	99%	Asian	4%
	Hispanic	6%	Scottish	10%	Other	1%	Abor-0	1%
	Asian	2%	Irish	2%				
	Nat. Amer.	1%	Welsh	2%				
			Asian-0	4%				
<hr/>								
Religions	Catholic	32%	Catholic	8%	Catholic	94%	Catholic	24%
	Protestant	65%	Anglican	85%	Anglican	4%	Anglican	26%
	Jewish	3%	Presbyt.	5%	Other	2%	O.Chris.	24%
			Other	2%				
<hr/>								
GNP Per-capita	\$19,197		\$10,861		\$6,207		\$11,203	
<hr/>								
Literacy rate:				99%				

COMMON ELEMENTS AND MAIN DIFFERENCES

All four are so called "first world", rich and powerful countries, Ireland less so.

1. Among the most economically powerful nations of the earth. They control the mass media. The U.S. is a major supplier of food to other countries.

2. The real deficit for 1989 in the US = 206 billion dollars.

3. U.S. and U.K. are also major sources of arms sales. The U.S. defense budget for 1989 = \$300 billion. They are often accused of being imperialistic countries.

4. In these countries materialism, consumerism, urbanization, money and sex play an important role.

5. In U.S., U.K., IRE & AUS, the inner city slums, poverty and violence are part of life; 33 million in U.S. are really poor.

6. These countries are open to immigration and, except for Ireland, are literally flooded with immigrants.

7. All four countries have their ill-treated minorities.

8. U.S., U.K., AUS, are now countries with changing faces.

9. In U.S., U.K., AUS (?) there are serious problems with pollution, smog, acid rain and poisonous material.

10. They are countries with serious family problems. Families have few children - they have reached "zero" growth. In Australia, for example, 25% of all children are born out of wedlock. 40% of all marriages end in divorce. The divorce rate in England and in the U.S. is now close to 40%

11. Children's issues are added to these problems; mono-parental

children, children that move from one parent to the other, the problem of abortion, families with only one child, the drug problem, mobility problem, a growing number of old people, etc.

12. In all four countries action groups raise a number of social programmes and social issues. Justice and Peace groups are numerous. These countries are amongst the leaders in the defense of human rights and the integrity of creation (Amnesty International, Green Peace movement, etc.)

13. U.S. and U.K. are technologically very advanced and amongst the leading countries in medicine, genetic research, etc.

II.

THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE ON THE LOCAL LEVEL TO THE NEEDS OF THESE COUNTRIES

There are two preliminary remarks. In all these countries the church is still using the parish as a pastoral approach but this no longer responds to the needs of today's christians. Workers, young people, the very poor, immigrants, intellectuals... are difficult to reach in this secularized world.

Church attendance in these four countries is still among the highest in the world today. Christians also participate a lot in the various institutions of their local churches.

We will now examine the part played by various categories of Christians.

1. Baptized Catholics

a. From a "Catholic sub-culture" to the main stream. Contrary to what happened in "catholic countries" the churches of Australia, the U.S., and the U.K., as minority groups, found their identity in two very effective ways - by opposition and by 'buffer' institutions. Protestant or Anglican majorities combined with increasingly

secularized cultures, motivated Catholics as a minority group to 'stick together'. The 'buffer' institutions were the parish and school structures with their accompanying support systems, e.g. the Catholic press, Catholic groups, Catholic unions, etc. In the sixties, Catholics moved out of the lower socio-economic bracket of their respective societies and many became impatient with the narrowness of the Catholic sub-culture.

b. Away from the poor. Having moved out of the Catholic sub-culture, middle-class Catholics in the U.S., Great Britain and Australia also moved away from relative poverty and from the poor. The clergy followed. I believe "that the mainline churches do not 'resonate' with the sounds and problems of life in Australia... They are comfortable with middle-class society, not really in touch with the spiritual emptiness of millions of Australians, uncritical supporters of the symbols of the culture..." ("The Australian Church - A Case Study", Gerald Arbuckle). U.S., and to a certain degree British Catholic hierarchies, are much more critical of the "cultural values" than are the Australian and Irish hierarchies.

c. Individualistic Catholics. Most Catholics still remain very individualistic in their religious outlook. Lay people have a poor appreciation of their vocation and mission as the church sees them. They understand their vocation largely in a personal and individual sense rather than in the sense of 'communion'. Consequently, they place a higher value on salvation than on mission. The spirit of Vatican Council II has not yet sufficiently affected the fundamental attitudes of many of the clergy nor the great majority of the laity. The church is not seen as communion, herald and servant, but rather as preserving the images of sacrament and institution.

d. Well educated and well informed. As they joined the middle and upper-middle classes, Catholics of these countries became better educated. They are now among the best intellectually formed Catholics in the world and continental Europe has not quite realized this yet! Those who chose to remain within the framework of the Church, became much more mature and sure of themselves than before. In the 1950's Catholic intellectuals became intensely selfcritical and were boldly exposing the limitations of the Catholic ethos and polity. The decade of the 1960's was one in which no assumption (especially those most confidently assumed) went unchallenged. The most "saleable" authors for Catholics in the U.S. and in Great Britain during these last few years were Raymond Brown, Avery Dulles, Hans Küng, Carl Rahner, Richard McBrien, Edward Schillebeeckx, Yves Congar, Leonardo Boff, Jan Sobrino, Gustavo Gutiérrez, etc. In addition to their well-informed Catholics these countries have some of the best universities in the world today.

e. Critical. This development of course has caused, and keeps on causing, difficulties with the local clergy and with Rome. Bishops and priests, who were so used to the exercise of authority as of right, found themselves being questioned by educated laity who quoted the documents of Vatican II; religious Sisters quickly undertook updating and priests and bishops increasingly found themselves 'confronted' by Sisters who knew more contemporary theology than they did. More and more Catholics refuse to be passive recipients of the faith. They want to participate, to be taken into account, to be consulted, to have the right to think for themselves.

f. Public in their disagreements. Last year, for example, on Ash Wednesday, more than 4,500 U.S. Catholics signed a statement that

appeared as an advertisement in the New York Times. Titled "A call for Reform in the Catholic Church", it was subtitled "A Pastoral Letter from Catholics Concerned about Fundamental Renewal of Our Church". It appealed for reform and renewal of church structures. Among reforms called for are the incorporation of "women at all levels of ministry and decision making", an opening of "the priesthood to women and married men", extensive consultation "of Catholic people in developing church teaching on human sexuality", a call for "open dialogue, academic freedom and due process", "justice within the church", etc. More and more in the U.S. and England, when people do not agree, they are not afraid to say it publicly.

g. Ready to participate. Vatican II's emphasis on the Church as the People of God having Baptism as the foundation Sacrament of mission, stimulated new interest in ministry. Catholics in these four countries are happy about this new attitude of sharing responsibilities with the hierarchy. They are still suspicious however, about the new Roman strategy that lets them participate in these ministries:

- it is being done now, when there are no other choices, priests and religious being on the 'endangered species' list;
- they believe that while they are being asked to share in the work, the clergy will keep all the major decisions to themselves;
- in spite of some superficial changes a considerable number think the church is more clerical today than it was twenty years ago.

h. Generous in their participation. Catholics of these countries help the local and the universal church generously, giving time and money, encouraging missionaries, participating in pressure groups for justice and peace etc.

2. Women in the local church

"The church is a patriarchy. To say that is not to espouse a position of 'radical feminism'. It is to state a self-evident fact." (Sr. Nadine Foley, OP, USA) (1)

Any serious historian will agree with Sr. Foley on this. During and following Vatican II there were some openings towards a greater participation of women in the church yet, for a great number of women in the four countries these openings are few and progress comes very slowly.

Paul Collins of Australia writes: "Because the hierarchy of the Church is entirely male, and until recently, theology was a male vision, roles of women in the Church were defined entirely by men... Women have been categorised by men of the Church in terms of their sexual activity - virgin, mother, harlot... The destructive limitations of these definitions have alienated and marginalised many women." (2)

It would be a serious mistake for the church and for Rome to underestimate the importance of the feminist movement or to try to defuse it with superficial and token changes in the field of canon law and pastoral practice. If the church succumbs to this temptation, it may have to pay the same price that was paid 100 years ago for underestimating the demand of the European proletariat for justice and equality.

3. Youth in these churches

Young people are not always easy to reach. Today more than ever, the church in these four countries would like to be closer to them but it does not seem to succeed. The world the youth live in is now threatened by nuclear war, damage to the ozone layer, the greenhouse effect, Aids, unemployment, violence and uncertainty about the future. As an

escape, the temptation to resort to suicide, drugs and alcohol increases. In the midst of all this, the most common religious response youth hear is, "Go to Mass on Sunday. No wonder they say the Church is irrelevant."

(3) Experts suggest that at present 90% of our young people are out of contact with the Church. In the U.S., Australia and Ireland, the impression is that the church is doing very little for the youth because it does not know how to reach young people. It seems to be almost completely out of touch with them.

4. Bishops and Bishops' Conferences

In the U.S. and England, less in Ireland and Australia, the Bishops are very vocal and they participate more and more in the democratic process of the country. The U.S. Catholic Conference Administrative Board says that "The church's participation in public affairs is not a threat to the political process or to genuine pluralism, but an affirmation of their importance." But religion and politics, once thought to be topics never raised in polite conversation or public debate, have become part of daily discourse at every level of society. The church's role in the political order includes the following:

- Education
- Analysis of issues for their social and moral dimensions
- Measuring public policy against Gospel values
- Participating with other concerned parties in debate over public policy.

During the 1980s, the U.S. bishops gained new respect as a moral voice. Their pastoral letters on peace in 1983 and on the economy in 1986 drew the attention of Catholics and non-Catholics throughout the world and added to the public policy debate on these issues.

"Americans", said P. Every Dulles to the bishops of the U.S., "are generally accustomed to, and set a high value on, freedom and independence. They expect communications to be free, frank and open. They expect their public officials to explain why they take the positions they do and to be accountable for their actions. When an official decree comes out, Americans generally respect and obey it, but if they think it is wrong they will publicly state their opposition and work for a change."

A good number of problems between the Vatican and the Catholics of these four countries is often a question of "form" or "style" rather than a question of content. The U.S. bishops conference has been outstanding for its effort to involve theologians and lay experts, frequently including representatives of non-Catholic traditions in an open process of consultation. Among the main issues for the near future, the USCC Board mentions the following: abortion, arms control and disarmament, capital punishment, civil rights, education, family life, food and agricultural policy, health, housing, human rights, immigration and refugee policy, mass media, national conflict in the world...

5. Religious in these countries

All through the history of these countries religious institutes have played an important role in "the answer of the church". Today, like the church itself, they are trying to find their right place in a world that needs change, conversion and adaptation.

a. Vatican II crisis. Vatican II brought changes that affected the religious more than any other single Catholic group. The crisis of the post-Vatican II era coincided with major problems of secularization, post-war affluence, sexual freedom, individual affirmation, technological

development, easy travel, family break-down, urbanization, etc.

b. Decline of vocations. In Ireland, twenty years ago, 227 girls entered the 101 sisters' institutes. This dropped to 75 last year - 33% of what it was in 1970. Missionary institutes are suffering most from decreasing vocations. In the U.S., from 1965 to 1975, seminarians in religious congregations dropped from 22,230 to 6,579 - a 70% decrease. From 1977 to 1982, the trend continued religious seminarians decreasing by 57%.

c. Expectations and frustrations. Murray Moffat, an Australian priest from the archdiocese of Brisbane says that, last year, at the four Sunday Masses, he asked people in church: "How do you see the role of the priest in the parish?" Here are some of the replies:

Friend, teacher, prayer, storyteller, focus of faith, listener, preacher, spiritual leader, adviser, challenger, fellow-human, one who understands, one who leads from the center, community developer, coordinator, facilitator, fair, consistent and equitable, shepherd, advocate, real, one who encourages, mediator, seeker of justice, prophet, delegator, source of optimism and hope, leaning post, member of the community, etc.

According to a study issued by the US bishops' Committee on Priestly Life and Ministry, many U.S. priests and religious feel "trapped, overworked, frustrated". The image of the priest and religious has been tarnished in many of these countries and it is now popular and lucrative to take priests to court for sexual child abuse, pedophilia, homosexuality, alienation of affection, etc. All this adverse publicity makes it more and more difficult to be a priest and a religious.

d. Renewal and refounding out of chaos. While they are losing members

and searching for a new identity, the religious communities in these countries (like all those of Western Europe) are hoping for a miracle of renewal. The major elements of this renewal or refounding of religious life are based on:

1. the centrality of Christ
2. rediscovering of charism
3. new religious identity
4. frontier and periphery work
5. prophetic calling
6. rediscovery of poverty
7. new meaning of "commitment" and "covenant".

III. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE ON THE UNIVERSAL LEVEL

These four churches offer something original, prophetic and profoundly human to the needs of the universal church. This is well illustrated for example in Monica K. Hellwig's "American Culture: Some Challenges to the Church", and Paul Sieghart's article in "The Month", Feb. 1989. They emphasise the following challenges.

I. The legal system

A significant aspect of American culture which is or can be a gift to the Church is a legal system derived from British Common Law. It is a system based on the equal standing of all before the law, and on strong rules of due process...

Perhaps the greatest potential contribution of American culture to the Church in terms of legal systems is in procedural principles that are devised to guarantee justice for all. Such are: the strong presumption of innocence...; the right to confront one's accusers and cross question them; the right of access to records concerning oneself kept by public authority; the right to have conflicts tried by the norms of properly promulgated and publicly accessible laws and regulations; the right to

hear judgement given and explained; the right of appeal... These are a guarantee of respect for the dignity of the human person... These civil guarantees of justice find little echo in the procedures of the Church.

The defects of the roman system of law "can be traced to two historical factors:

- (1) The influence of late Imperial Roman law whose exponents had every political motive for supporting His Imperial Majesty's claims... - a very autocratic system;
- (2) The second factor is the deeply-ingrained fallacy that advancement in the hierarchy somehow correlates with saintliness...

American and British cultures have challenged, and will continue to challenge, the institutional church's legal code and legal system as being somewhat less than truly human and therefore certainly not a positive step towards the welcoming of the reign of God into the affairs of the human community...

2. Freedom of Conscience

Basic to the very existence of these countries is freedom of conscience. The pilgrim fathers and pioneers had, in many cases, experienced the effects of religious dogmatism and intolerance wielded by the civil power. European history runs red with the blood of those killed for their faith and their convictions... As is well known the official teaching of the Catholic Church long resisted the separation of church and state under the general rubric that error has no rights. Vatican II accepted the basic human right of freedom of conscience in religious matters. John Courtney Murray persevered against all official discouragement and reprimand and managed finally to bring the arguments in favor of religious liberty into the debates of the Council.

3. Freedom of Speech and Assembly

In a somewhat similar vein, American, British, Irish and Australian life and traditions are based upon a deep commitment to freedom of speech and assembly, extended to include the free expression of opinion in the press. This guarantees critical reflection, a public hearing even when it comes from groups in opposition to those who hold power, and even when it expresses unpopular minority opinions. It is clear that freedom of speech and assembly, extended to include freedom of the press, academic freedom and so forth, makes the life of any society more untidy, less predictable, more complex to guide and govern. This experience could be of great importance to the universal church. There are obvious dangers for any society that suppresses minority opinion and silences critics or those who offer alternative policies and interpretations. These dangers are particularly threatening for a worldwide society (like the church) because an autocratic central authority is necessarily very limited in its access to information and to full understanding of local cultures and events.

4. Modern Experience of Democracy

"It is well known that the earliest official responses from the Catholic church to modern realizations of democracy were not favorable. There was a fear of chaos and even more pressingly a fear that opposition to the traditional monarchic structures and their remnants would necessarily involve the rejection of church authority and of faith itself." It may well be that the continuous discomfort of many Americans, and Australians with the authoritarian pattern of church structures becomes a particularly valuable contribution and a prophetic challenge to the same Church.

5. Optimistic Spirit of Enterprise

Another positive factor of the contemporary American and Australian ethos which seems to be theologically significant is "the optimistic spirit of enterprise" in these cultures. "As we look about us we see a keen interest in invention, economic and technical development, advances in communication, data retrieval, analysis and all aspects of education and of health care".

There has been a subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, tendency on the part of the Vatican to view these aspects of American life as very wordly. We could reflect on Genesis 1 and 2 where human beings are presented as co-creators with God. American, British, Irish and Australian education encourages critical evaluation in all fields rather than memorization and acceptance on the authority of teacher or text and it invites its young people to be creative and to look for

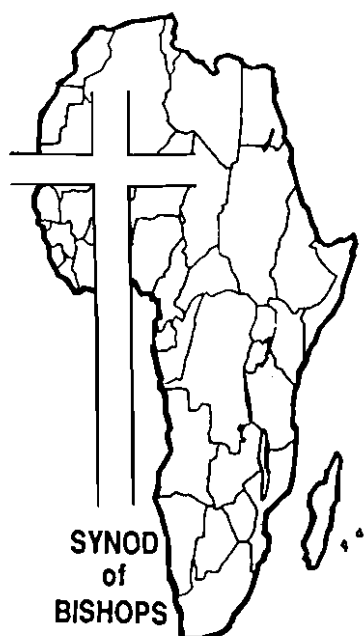
"something new and something better"...

Conclusion

I am convinced that each local church has something special to offer to the people of God, to the church and to the world, something that will enrich us all if we can receive it critically but with open minds and open hearts, as a gift of God to us.

I hope that these reflections will help you in your deliberation and reflection.

- (1) "The Nature and Future of Religious Life" Sr. Nadine Foley, OP
- (2) Reflections on the major issues Brisbane Archdiocesan Assembly (July 1989)
- (3) "How to win back our 'lost' youth", by Fr. Paul Traynor, C.P. Reflections on the major issues, (Brisbane Assembly, 1989)



AFRICAN CULTURE A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

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I. THE SPIRIT OF CHANGE

The 1960's were momentous years as far as the Catholic church in Africa is concerned. With the coming of independence and nationhood for the African colonies, protectorates and territories, there began to emerge among Africans at large a heightened sense of cultural identity and pride. Then came the Second Vatican Council. Soon African theologians began to be vocal about the need for what they called variously "contextualization", "concretization," "accommodation," "adaptation," "indigenization," "localization," "incarnation," or "Africanisation" of the church and theology in Africa. Even Pope Paul VI joined in the chorus paying glowing tribute to "traditional African values" in his 1967 message to the people of Africa and, two years later in 1969, urging African bishops assembled in Kampala, Uganda, to construct "an African christianity" suited to their people's worldview.

There were other catalysts for African cultural pride working during the sixties. Among them, the mass media deserve to be noted as more and more people acquired access to radio and television. An increasing number of African theologians, priests and religious became familiar with recent findings in depth psychology and

sociology. Foreign missionaries in Africa and overseas, and even some theologians and theologies abroad, began to shift their views perceptibly on non-European, and specifically African, cultures. In almost every significant quarter of the church, people began to realize that there was need to reconsider and re-evaluate previous assumptions concerning the African peoples and their worldview. The bishops of Africa expressed it a little later in their report to the 1974 Synod on evangelization in Rome, "War is being waged on religious colonialism in Africa".

The previous situation

Missionary christianity of the sixties and before, could not be accused of taking African culture seriously except as an object of ridicule and total extirpation.

Cameroonian theologian F. Eboussi Boulaga is only one among legions of African thinkers who have pointed out the predominant missionary language in relation to African culture in the circumstances then prevailing. Besides being a discourse of ridicule or "derision" and "refutation" of the whole spectrum of the African worldview, Boulaga argues, missionary discourse also entailed the aspect of "demonstration"

of the excellence of the missionary culture, which then meant only Western culture. The superiority in every respect, not only of the Gospel, but of the - "christian culture" of missionary evangelizers over African "paganism" had to be established at all costs. In the mind of the European missionary to Africa before the 1960's what Acosta had declared as being the Spanish missionary onus in the New World in the sixteenth century, applied with equal force to Africa. Acosta had pronounced himself in the following terms:

While it is not permitted to constrain barbarian subjects to baptism and the christian faith, it is licit and desirable to suppress their idolatrous cults even by force, that is, to destroy their altars and their temples, and to banish their devilish superstition -- things which, all of them, are not only an obstacle to the grace of the Gospels, but contrary to the natural law as well. ...

Missionary theology and pastoral practice up till the 1960's, therefore, saw it as their bounden duty to implant the form and content of the churches and religiosity of Europe. In Africa they sought to replace African religiosity with their own, as if the two were not only different but irreconcilably contradictory. It was a mistake. But this is now an old song and it need not detain us long. It is recalled here not for its own sake but for the sake of what it says about the present and future of the church in Africa for if one does not learn from history one is bound to repeat its mistakes. Put briefly the challenge African culture brings to the church today is a demand for RESPECT for the African worldview and values contained in the culture of the African peoples.

II. THE NATURE OF THE CHALLENGE

Against perpetual adolescence

The most fundamental and comprehensive problem between African culture and the church is attitudinal

- considering the African church today as a young church. The most significant manifestation and summary of this attitude is the African church accepting and internalizing this conception and description of itself. Even though the church may appear to be self-governing and self-propagating, these appearances will not be radical realities. At bottom, the African Church will remain adolescent, not yet adult, not yet mature, not yet self-sufficient, unable, in the final analysis, to manage its own home. It cannot be, and cannot be allowed to be, fully itself in the essential areas of the expression of religious belief and in organization. Superior western knowledge, leading often to ridicule, refutation and the requirement of conformity under the theological and institutional tutelage of others will remain substantially the same. Only the semantics and adornments will be different.

Inculturation

Contemporary expressions allude to inculturation and small christian communities, but these seem to be largely on the theoretical level. Both the official or institutional African church and the "mother" churches do not mean by this, taking real, meaningful and effective action to change the face of the church here. In fact, in those areas that are most significant for inculturation (apart from the rather superficial displays of monkey skins or local textiles, wooden chalices, drums or handclapping in liturgies) no real inculturation will be attempted, for example, with regard to Eucharistic prayers, communal prayers in general, the species of the Eucharist, the liturgical calendar, forms of ministry, ecclesiastical organization, forms of sacramental rites, catechesis etc.

Putting it rather crudely, yet more truthfully, one would have to say that inculturation is still a

charade for foreign cultural dominance or imperialism in the church in the name of Catholicity. The weapon to achieve this is moral force, instilling in people a feeling of betrayal of their faith and the church by suggesting and calling for meaningful inculturation. Aylward Shorter has correctly remarked that the use of force, be it physical or moral, "is a violation of human rights, since people have a right to their own culture and a right to develop it in the way they wish". This applies equally validly to the church. In faithfulness to Christ, the people of God in a given area have the God-given privilege of developing the expression of their belief and the organization of their church in the way that fits them as cultural beings. There is no want of theological and historical testimonies for this assertion.

Testimonies to a respectful attitude

St. Paul. In his speech before the Council of the Areopagus face to face with stark idolatry in Athens, Paul's pedagogic style was nevertheless judicious. "Men of Athens, I have seen for myself how extremely scrupulous you are in all religious matters, because I noticed, as I strolled round admiring your sacred monuments, that you had an altar inscribed: To An Unknown God." And then he introduced his central point, the heart of the Christian message for a culture which does not know explicitly the God of Jesus Christ: "Well, the God whom I proclaim is in fact the one whom you already worship without knowing it" He accepted the Athenians as they were, at the religious point he found them. Only then did he let the word of God work to transform them. That was two thousand years ago. How about in modern times?

Libermann and Lavigerie

Apart from the words of Pope Paul VI already referred to we recall

for example, the instructions of Fr. Libermann, Cardinal Lavigerie and many another pioneering founder of missionary organizations for Africa. Whatever happened to their acute foresight and insight for the process of evangelization? These were people who were concerned to see the church in Africa mature as quickly as possible and in a healthy way through the respectful agency of the men and women they sent to evangelize the continent.

Thus Libermann instructed his missionaries:

"Do not judge at first sight and do not judge by what you have seen in Europe. Free yourselves from Europe, from its customs, from its spirit! Become Negroes with Negroes. Do not form them in a European way, but leave to them what is their own. Let your attitude towards them be that of slaves to their masters..."

Similarly Lavigerie:

"You should let the elders tell all the old legends the whole history of the tribe, the origin of mankind and of the world, the original revelation and, in general, everything which the Christian doctrine of the unity of the human race could confirm..."

What a contrast to the demands of Acosta! The African church at every level has to take its culture seriously, "to protest relentlessly against the continuance of a patronising attitude" from whatever quarter. (W. Bühlmann in *The Missions on Trial*)

The meaning of inculturation

Much of what has so far been projected as positive in African culture has been received in a passive manner in the African church. Passive goals are intentional, but rarely followed up in implementation. Active goals, on the contrary, are normally not only intended and stated, but they are aggressively sought. In the church we can be mesmerized by our theology and pastoral plans

concerning inculturation of the church in our continent and do nothing to actualize them. Theology and plans though necessary, will not achieve inculturation of themselves. Unless we take action and risk possible mistakes, nothing will happen. We must take seriously the aspect of praxis. If thought is to be an agent of change, of inculturation, it must arise out of and lead to concrete action. The two are vitally intertwined.

"Syncretism"

Leonardo Boff, the Brazilian Franciscan, has called this action-thought process of inculturation "syncretism," which he has defined as the "law of incarnation." The terminology may frighten some, Boff observes, especially the privileged in the church. But it is a normal and natural process for those whose eyes are open to how Christianity or Catholicism is lived in practice, "amid conflicts and challenges, in the midst of people who live their faith together with other religious expressions, on a level that understands Catholicism as a living reality and therefore open to other elements and the attempt to synthesize them..." (**Church: Charism and Power; Liberation Theology and the Institutional Church**)

By whatever name, inculturation or what Boff calls syncretism, is a fundamental of the life of the church. It happens on the popular level as soon as "faith is expressed in its socio-cultural state as a religion." As the historian of christianity, John Mary Waliggo from Uganda has shown, it has been part and parcel of the church from the very outset. The problem in every instance of inculturation has been the unavoidable "conflict among cultures," for faith is always introduced in a place as a religion, and therefore more or less as a culture.

The particular problem for Africa, however, has been that western culture in official or establishment christianity, within which the christian faith was first introduced here, has tended to be overwhelmingly dominant in relation to African culture. Officially, faith in Christ has been obstinately prevented from being expressed as a religion in the socio-cultural environment of this continent, in its language, its symbols and values. Official church policy has found it easier to expand the reigning western ecclesial system than to allow and prepare for the birth of another. This is what must change.

III. A WAY OF PROCEEDING

The paradigm of the firstborn son

Because the African church's search for meaningful inculturation is mainly a problem of relationship between cultures and structures, Zairian theologian Benezet Bujo (**African Christian Morality at the Age of Inculturation**) has proposed the symbol of "firstborn" son, significant in many African traditions, as a paradigm to deal with the issue. Despite its other shortcomings, such as its apparent exclusion of women in the equation, it is still useful. It incorporates the major values, beliefs and procedures of the majority of African peoples in matters related to our topic. Very briefly it is as follows.

Designated by the dying father as heir and guardian of the family, the "firstborn" son not necessarily chronologically, but rather psychologically and morally superior to the others in the father's estimation, has the responsibility among many African peoples until today, of passing on valuable items of his father's property to all his brothers. These may be a piece of land, a head of cattle, a house, and

so on. In so doing, because property symbolizes life, the firstborn son transmits to the family, through those gifts, the life emanating from the father. The firstborn does not then interfere unduly in the life of his brothers. He lets them be. He allows them, each in his own way, to take care of their father's property, increase it, and pass it on in turn to their descendants.

Our Proto-ancestor. A similar way of procedure, according to Bujo, should determine the relationship between all the churches, "between the pope and his brother bishops, ... between priests and bishop, between priests and other members of the People of God, especially the laity...

"We all bear within us our greatest gift, the proto-ancestral life bequeathed to us by Christ Jesus. He makes us all co-responsible, each one in his or her own situation. To examine ourselves in respect of the cultural message of Jesus, the Reign of God, in order to train ourselves in a behaviour which does not betray our Proto-Ancestor (who is Jesus), is a task assigned to (all of) us and must be done in fraternal dialogue."

To paraphrase Bujo, the African church must be fully permitted to examine itself freely and responsibly in respect of the message of Jesus, received here in Western culture, and to train itself about how to be faithful to that message of Jesus in Africa today. The time is now long overdue to translate into action Pope Paul VI's "you may, and you must, have an African christianity," uttered in 1969 in Kampala.

Archbishop Zoa of Yaounde, Cameroon, has described the kind of action that marks the church as a mature local church. According to Zoa, this third stage of inculturation is where the culture, that has been evangelized (or accepted the Gospel), strives "to re-express, reformulate the Gospel message according to its way of thinking, understanding and cultural setting." This effort covers

all areas and levels of christian life: church government and organization, liturgy, sacraments, prayer, spirituality, and so on. I introduce here a few examples to stimulate reflection.

1. A question of language

Language, the self-expression of a culture reveals above all, how a linguistic community understands itself and the universe around it. Not only is it a tool of communication, it is also a means of incorporation into community and into its particular social, political and religious worldview. In a real sense, thought and action are determined by language. Because language influences one's worldview and is in turn influenced by it, we can say that the sum total of a culture is its language. To kill a language is to kill a culture.

The issue of language does not, for us, involve inter-cultural communication. "Meaning across cultures" is possible, and is, in fact, necessary if any one particular culture is to overcome its limitations and grow. In today's "global village" inter-cultural communication is inevitable. The issue here is about the almost total domination by the christian western world's religious signs, symbols, images, metaphors, myths over their African counterparts. This not only makes a genuine understanding of christian realities difficult for Africans; it alienates them in two ways. It contributes to killing their culture by suppressing their language and it renders impossible their full participation in the christian mysteries. They are forced to live schizophrenically. Anthony Gittins is right when he observes in reference to Western christianity's attitude to other cultures: "Our language and our listening, our relationships and our teaching have been impregnated with power and the control of initiatives, with righteousness and certainty." (Gifts and Strangers)

Liturgical examples. In English we "love with the heart," but in many languages in West Africa one must "love with the liver." The gravity of linguistic/cultural control in religious terms will be seen if one proposes that for some West-Africans, devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus might be replaced by devotion to the Sacred Liver of Jesus. This would be considered ludicrous, if not actually sacrilegious by the majority of western and western-trained christians, including the people in question in West Africa. But, should one symbol be absolutized? Suppose for these people the heart was a seat, not of love, but of hate? Suppose the stomach, not the heart were considered the "source" of thought, intentions and values. What would the devotion to the sacred "heart" of Jesus be saying to them? The case is not as hypothetical as it might seem. Take the instance of beating one's breast at the *confiteor* beginning the Mass. This has long been suggested, formerly mandated, to my own people as a sign of confessing one's sinfulness and asking forgiveness. In actual fact, the opposite is true for us: beating one's breast is not a sign of humility, remorse and penance but one of challenge and defiance! When people struck their breasts which meaning was foremost in their minds? Imagine how alienated people must have been by this small action alone!

Apply this simple example to the prayers, sacraments, and other areas of christian life. Do we in the church have no alternative to transplanting or translating? Can we not also genuinely inculturate?

2. Ecclesiastical Organization.

It is not possible to have genuine small christian communities in Africa while retaining intact the present system of church government. After two decades of promoting small communities as an official pastoral priority of the dioceses of Eastern

Africa (the AMECEA region), the evidence is crystal clear that the two realities are as contradictory as having your cake and eating it too. There are some reasonably authentic small christian communities on the continent but where these few exist significant adjustments have been made in local church government. The main obstacle to the realization of a meaningful ecclesiology of small christian communities was expressed in a small survey made in 1987 by Joseph G. Healey, MM. One of his respondents pointed out that the main obstacle to the growth and maturity of these communities as authentic local churches was as follows: "Much of the endeavour has become 'clerical-centred' with little and at times, no initiative at all from the laity. There has been over supervision of SCCs due to fears ... of the emergence of 'splinter groups' and 'schisms'."

Granted, that some of these concerns may be legitimate, "oversupervision" is not the answer. It portrays in local terms the attitude of tutelage we have referred to. Most seriously of all, it stresses ecclesiastical rank at the expense of everything else. This effectively bars other members of the "people of God" - all of whom, by baptism, enjoy a fundamental equality with their leaders (ministers) from putting at the service of the Body of Christ the charisms, given them by the Spirit of God.

Elements of participation, sharing and cooperation found in African culture, should challenge the official African church to reconsider its outlook on the organization of SCCs. They are not autochthonous churches, branches cut off from the tree. They must remain united with the tree, with other christian communities, the parish, the diocese, the universal church. But, neither are they to be submerged with the tree so that they are not distinguished as branches. A measure of autocephalousness is necessary for a small community to

qualify as a small christian community. The principles of unity in diversity, and of subsidiarity in pastoral praxis and organization apply very directly here.

3. Sacraments and Sacramental Life

There is such great potential in some aspects of African culture for living the christian faith that one wonders why the theological and pastoral attitude seems to be one of "Could anything good come out of Nazareth?" There is no longer skepticism today about the significance of the African rites of passage such as birth, naming, puberty, initiation, fertility, illness, healing, death, in relation to the christian sacraments. The relevance is not merely extrinsic, adopting methodologies of instruction from African initiation rites. The value of initiation rites is intrinsic to the sacraments, not only a matter of form but of substance. The symbols and images, even if they have to be modified to fit current times, offer elements which can help to make the sacraments formative and transformative of christian life. Viewed from the African perspective the whole life of a christian, becomes a movement towards adulthood. The culmination is ancestorship in union and communion with Christ, the Proto-Ancestor.

Celebration of the sacraments should dispose the christian, "to build up the body of Christ," - among other related things, to practice charity. In Africa, this aspect of the sacraments must be seen in terms

of hospitality, an important "part of the African way of being in the world," in the words of E.E. Uzukwu. (**Religion and African Culture**) Uzukwu points out, for a slightly different purpose, three elements of African hospitality which, to my mind, are central to an African appreciation of the meaning of the sacraments: (a) making welcome, (b) integrating or forming community, and (c) contributing to the life of the community or sharing.

The transformative power of these elements in traditional African social life is very well known. Even though hospitality was relatively restricted in scope to certain categories of people, its praxis continually expanded, solidified and transfigured the individual, the family, the clan and the ethnic group by infusing them with new individuals, and so with new ideas and practices. In fact, the success of the work of evangelization in Africa depended and still largely depends on this aspect of African culture.

The deepest meaning and purpose of the christian sacraments is nothing other than this transformative power which is such a characteristic feature of African social life - and quite different from the idea of an individual personal encounter between the communicant and Christ as presented to us in the past by a western theology of the sacraments.

(This is a slightly abbreviated version of an address given by him at Nairobi, in August 1990 to a convocation of Divine Word Missionaries from various African countries).

MISSIONARIES OF THE FIRST HOUR

Carlos Pape, SVD



(Preparations for the Fourth General Meeting of the Conference of Latin American Bishops in Santo Domingo in 1992 is taking place amidst much controversy about the celebration of the 5th Centenary of the arrival of the first ships from Europe. Following is a review of a book about the missionaries of that 'first hour' which was to be so decisive for the future history of the continent - Ed.)

"I have come to take away their gold" - was the arrogant answer which Francisco de Pizarro, the conqueror of Peru, gave to the friar who protested the abuses of the Indians by the conquerors.

"The great Lord who sent us (the Pope) wants neither gold nor silver, neither does he want precious stones. He wants and desires only your salvation" - the Franciscans tried to explain to the chiefs and wise Aztecs from Mexico.

"Salvation" and "gold", two elements which must be always kept in mind if one wants to understand the historical process of the European expansion on American soil. They are the two basic motivations which influenced the life of the continent from the time of the so-called "discovery" in 1492.

Romeo Ballan, an Italian missionary in Peru and one of the or-

ganisers of COMLA IV (Fourth Latin American Missionary Congress) to be held in Lima in February 1991, had the happy idea of presenting in his book, "Missionaries of the First Hour", some of the protagonists in the harsh confrontations that arose out of these two motivations - gold and salvation - in the first 100 years of the encounter between the two worlds.

Among those "great evangelizers of the New World", (the subtitle of the book), we find personages who are very well known, for example, Bartolomé de las Casas, Pedro Claver, Martin de Porres and Rosa de Lima, the only woman included in this historical selection. There are others whose names are not generally known beyond the frontiers of a country or wider geographical area, and there are those, not few in number who, up until the present time, remain unknown even to those persons who are "well versed" in Latin American ecclesial affairs. One of the undeniable merits of the work of the Combonian Father Ballan is precisely that of having brought light to bear on the stage where the lives of 30 protagonists of that "first hour" unfolded.

This work is not one of scientific research, but rather a book for a wide readership, prepared on the occasion of the Vth Centenary of the Evangelisation of America. It deserves to be widely circulated. Over 20 authors have participated in the writing of the book. This affects the style of the narrative and is responsible for the unequal value of the different sections. Nevertheless, they all succeed in situating those early missionaries in a true historical frame and surrounding them with a climate of human authenticity and deep religious conviction. With a few exceptions the accounts are convincing.

The Evangelisers are presented as truly prophetic people in their commitment to the cause of the native American men and women. Their commitment was to a salvation which was not restricted merely to hope in a world to come, but which began in the effort to achieve, here and now, the basic requirements of social justice and the dignity of every human person. Even admitting the negative aspects which may have accompanied the "Sacred Experiment" of the Jesuit Reductions in Paraguay, or the initiative of "Pueblos Nuevos" of Vasco di Quiroga, the first bishop of Michoacan in Mexico there is no doubt that such initiatives were the fruit of an authentic effort to promote the indigenous people. Conditioned by the spirit of the epoch it is not to be expected that all were sufficiently clear regarding the connection between the cross and the sword.

They were sensitive in face of human suffering and oppression. They were the ones who, from the very beginning, radiated that light which accompanied the conquest and colonization of the American territories whose history, very rightly, has been characterized as a history of "grace and of sin", "of lights and of shadows". For us today it is incredible that during the period of evangelisation of Latin America the arrival of hundreds of thousands of African slaves transported under in-

human conditions could have gone uncondemned.

The author was not searching the past for archaeological discoveries, but rather for signs of hope from which to draw inspiration for the present and courage for the future. Yet it is true that one who does not know the history of the past is condemned to repeat its errors. The point is made in this anthology of the first evangelisation in Latin America. What happened there in the XVIth century has not simply been buried under succeeding ethnical and cultural layers of history which, in the course of 500 years, have been superimposed on the reality of that time. Millions of indigenous peoples, still direct heirs of those who were despoiled and deprived in the first hour, keep alive the memory of that first invasion. On the other hand, in the course of 500 years, Latin America, more than other continents, would become the melting pot of new peoples, the "mestizo" who now inhabit a great part of the continent. In them converge the racial and cultural characteristics of their own origins in Latin America itself as well as those who came from Africa and Europe.

The prophetic witness which those great evangelisers embodied in their lives, needs to be perpetuated in the complex contemporary cultural reality, which continues today to reproduce and to prolong social contradictions and structures of injustice fundamentally established in that "first hour".

Let us be grateful to God that the greater part of the Latin American Church today understands this need. It does not want to hear the accusation from the Lord: "Poor you, who build monuments to the prophets after your parents killed them".

(Ballan, Romeo MCCJ. MISIONEROS DE LA PRIMERA HORA: Grandes evangelizadores del Nuevo Mundo. Madrid, Editorial Mundo Negro, 1990. Pp. 288)

MISSION MOMENTS

PEACEMAKER AND PEASANTS KILLED

(PERU)

"You are to die because you have been sowing peace, bettering the people's social conditions and offering them cakes." This was the accusation brought against Sr. Maria Augustina Rivas, a Sister of Charity of the Good Shepherd, RGS, before she and six peasants were shot dead in Peru by a squad representing "Sendero Luminoso". The group was gathered into the center of town and shot one by one, the sister being the last. Sr. Augustina was teaching women how to cook at a Social Promotion Center opened by the Good Shepherd Sisters.

PARTNERSHIP IN MISSION

Damian Byrne OP, Prior General writing recently to the Dominican Brothers and Sisters reminds them: ... Preaching today must include the four priorities - Theology, Evangelization, Justice and Communications. The Chapter at Avila in 1986 developed in particular Justice and Mission. The recent Chapter at Oakland in 1989 calls attention to the fact that the four priorities are inextricably interwoven. You cannot accept one and omit the others.

The Dominican Preacher's Charter is outlined by Paul VI in Evangelii Nuntiandi. When Paul VI writes about

"preaching by witness, by word and through individual communication of the Gospel from person to person" he describes Dominic's programme....

The first followers of Dominic the preacher, were women. It is significant that the first brothers took as patrons of the Order, Mary Magdalene, the apostle to the apostles, and Catherine of Alexandria, the student and professor of philosophy. There are countless examples of great women preachers in our history, Catherine of Siena, Rose of Lima, Margaret Hallahan, and the many foundresses of the Sisters' Congregations.

Recent Dominican Chapters, of Walberberg in 1980 and Rome in 1983, made significant contributions to the importance of preaching by sisters. Walberberg asks the brethren to form preaching teams with the sisters not just to help each other, but to make our preaching effective in peoples' lives.

The Chapter at Rome in 1983 urged a wider and more frequent collaboration between brothers and sisters in apostolic work, especially in the office of preaching, teaching theology and in the development of new methods of preaching. The sisters and brothers working together is itself a witness, a preaching. We may talk of the dignity of women, but our words will have no weight unless we are seen to be an Order in which men and

women work together with mutual respect and without fear.

It is important to acknowledge that we have a long way to go and part of the problem is an exaggerated clericalism among some brothers who are not comfortable preaching with women.

According to Canon Law the homily at Mass is reserved to priests and deacons. This is a cause of irritation and sadness to some but there are many other places and opportunities to preach. We are called to be creative and flexible in preaching. If Catherine of Siena went to Raymond for spiritual direction, she in turn became his directress. A Dominican woman preaches the Word out of her experience of being a woman. In many ways, the priest may be seen in a sacral role which can diminish his effectiveness, whereas sisters are seen as fellow Christians who have nothing else to give but themselves and the Gospel.

Ref. I.D.I. Dominican Information, December 1990.

ITA, MAURA, DOROTHY, AND JEAN TEN YEARS LATER

(NICARAGUA)

There are deaths that inspire a kind of awe - a gall one feels in the presence of evil so vast it can only be described, pitifully, as the

absence of God, who at times turns his face toward the sun. Surely, he did 10 years ago, Dec. 2, 1980, when Salvadoran national guardsmen gunned down Sisters Ita Ford, Maura Clarke, Dorothy Kazel and laywoman Jean Donovan.

Let us dwell for some moments in that darkness of Dec. 2, 10 years ago, when Ita, Maura, Dorothy and Jean, returning from the San Salvador airport in a white Toyota van, were ordered to stop by national guardsmen, who then drove the van toward San Pedro Nonualco, past a pine field where four other guardsmen were waiting. The men ordered the women to get out of the vehicle. The men then raped at least two of the women. Finally, the women were gunned down. Ita's and Jean's bodies were badly bruised; Jean's face had been crushed by a bullet.

The profundity of the evil at work that evening is evident in the banal way the perpetrators treated the whole affair. Remember Alexander Haig's blame-the-victim explanation, that the women ran a roadblock?.. It is here that the Christian story speaks most strongly. Jesus, too, was tortured, a fate dished out by the powerful everywhere, every day.

These were ordinary women, not playing at being heroes; they were committed to their mission which they continued knowing the constant dangers.

"I can not quite put my finger on it," Jean wrote not long after arriving in El Salvador, "but something inside me is different."

"Will I be faithful?" wrote Maura, wondering whether danger might touch her.

"If a day comes when others will have to understand," wrote Dorothy, reflecting on the prospect of death, "please explain it for me."

"He who is committed to the poor must run the same fate as the poor," said Ita, reading from one of Archbishop Oscar Romero's sermons less than 24 hours before her death.

The women's lives and, finally, their deaths have convinced me that at the Judgment, God will not ask us what we have done or what we have failed to do. No, the Great Spirit will ask one question only. Who are your people?

Some of us will have an answer. Some of us will fall silent. The four women who gave their lives for their people, will know exactly what to say.

Ref. Demetria Martinez in the N.C.R.

IVTH LATIN AMERICAN BISHOPS CONFERENCE - 1992

(SANTO DOMINGO)

"New Evangelization; Human Promotion; Christian Culture" is the Theme approved by Pope John Paul II for the IV General Conference of the Bishops' Conferences of Latin America which will be held in Santo Domingo in 1992 because of the 5th Centenary of the beginning of the evangelization of the New World. The news was announced by the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. According to this Commission's communique, the

formulation of the Theme, quoted above, is accompanied by the motto: "Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and always."

Ref. FIDES, Dec. 12, 1990

POVERTY AND THE POOR

(ROME)

Sr. Annemarie Reisch SSsP, Superior General at the General Chapter of the Holy Spirit Sisters, September, 1990:

- "It seems that our attitude toward poverty and the poor in our societies, more than anything else, will be a decisive factor in determining whether our congregation has a future or not".

Ref. Worldwide SSsP Information Service. Nov. 1990

A BROADER MEANING OF MISSION

(U.S.A.)

"The United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) provides a forum for the sharing of ideas on current developments and emerging trends in mission theology and practice. The speakers at our Conferences are present to stretch our minds. As a result of this year's Conference in Chicago we now realize that the term "mission" has a broader meaning, including both home and foreign evangelization endeavors. We see that mission is in all six continents. We realize that the West is fast becoming dechristianized and needs a second evangelization. Will

the second evangelization come from the South or from the East?"

Ref. Intercom, Dec. 1990

ON HEARING THE WISDOM OF THE PEOPLE

(U.S.A.)

Extracts from the keynote address by Bishop M. Clark of Rochester, N.Y. to the Nov. 29 - Dec. 2 Symposium, "The Wisdom of Women", in Arlington, VA.

Demands of Inculturation

"The church is most alive when she is expansive and inclusive, when she stands in dialogue with the time and culture in which she is enfolded,... when she expresses fully the truth she bears in language which speaks to the people of the age"....

"In the concluding part of my talk, I want to express some hopes I have for the church as we move toward the year 2000. My experience of ministry in our local church has shaped these ideas. The women of our church have been much a part of that shaping. I expect that they will play an even greater part in our ongoing conversion..."

I hope for a continuing renewal and re-establishment of our rich Catholic tradition of the local church...

I hope that we will find more satisfactory ways to honour and be enriched by the wisdom of the people of God, especially as that wisdom is born of and relates to their daily experience of the faith...

I hope that we as a church will become more expansive and inclusive in our ways

of thinking and acting and... will be unafraid to explore fully and courageously the questions which are active in the hearts of so many of the people of God...

I hope that the church under the leadership of whoever is successor to Peter and at his request, will be willing fully and carefully to hear the wisdom of the people as they express their convictions about some of the issues which cause tensions in the church today. Permit me to mention five of them:-

a) the area of regulation of birth... b) the question of abortion... c) the requirement of a commitment to lifelong celibacy in those who wish to be ordained priests in the Latin church... d) the question of the suitability of women for ordination to the ministerial priesthood... e) a process for the selection of bishops which will provide for a clear, public and significant contribution by the local church in which the person named will be serving....

"Insofar as we appear to be unable or unwilling to wrestle with the real questions which are alive in both the minds and hearts of faithful people, our capacity both to nourish their faith and to proclaim the Gospel to others is diminished".... "To declare a matter closed does not ... stop the questioning of the faithful."

Ref. Origins, Dec. 20, 1990

"SPIRIT OF UNITY - RECONCILE YOUR PEOPLE"

(CANBERRA, AUSTRALIA)

Without communion there can be no Spirit, and, without the Spirit, there can be no

communion. At the heart of the gospel then is the fact that God's life-giving Spirit comes to us in mutuality and in community. It is this foundational truth that provides the basis for the third sub-theme of the forthcoming VIIth Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Canberra: "Spirit of unity - Reconcile your people!"

The prayer to the Spirit of unity for reconciliation brings together, in a single expression, the yearning of the church for its wholeness, the essence of its missionary vocation and the content of its hope, rooted in the eschatological fullness of God's purpose to unite all things in Christ. Baptism and Eucharist, the two constitutive events of the church, singularly proclaim that God in Christ has inaugurated a new creation in the midst of this old world of alienation and brokenness, fashioning a new people. Entry into the koinonia of the Spirit breaks all barriers and brings people into an inclusive community.

The experience of one's identity as a member of this "new humanity" through baptism in the early missionary context would have been so dramatic that many of us would not fully recognize the power of the sense of community in the early church.

Ref. International Review of Mission. Vol. LXXIX
No.316, Oct. 1990

NEWS

SEDOS NEW MEMBER. We welcome the re-admission to membership of the MARIANHILL MISSIONARIES approved by the Executive Committee, at its 16th January meeting. The Superior General is Fr. Yves la Fontaine, CMM. Address: via S. Giovanni Eudes, 91, 00163 Roma; Tel. 6258560.

HAITI GROUP. The SEDOS Haiti group has received a letter from the President of the Haiti Conference of Religious. The letter draws attention to the election of Fr. Jean-Bertrand Aristide as President of Haiti and asks for any assistance the group can give in drawing attention to the particularly sensitive situation in which Fr. Aristide finds himself.

Canon 287 states that "clerics are not to have an active role in political parties... unless the need to protect the rights of the Church or to promote the common good requires it in the judgement of the competent ecclesiastical authority". We commend Fr. Aristide and the ecclesiastical authorities to your prayers, that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit in whatever decisions they may make concerning the situation in Haiti.

JUSTICE-PEACE. INTEGRITY OF CREATION.

Fr. Sean McDonagh, SSC, addressed a capacity audience on the Integrity of Creation on January 22, at the F.S.C. Generalate. A highlight of the day-long workshop was the slide presentation "A Stations of the

Cross" on the death of the rain forest at the conclusion of Fr. McDonagh's talk. This is available through CAFOD who prepared the slides in collaboration with the speaker.

TWO IMPORTANT SEDOS MEETINGS.

Casimir Paulsen, CMM will be the speaker at an important meeting on the present developments in South Africa. This will be held on February 11, at the SVD Collegio. Later in the month, on February 26, there will be another important meeting - again at the SVD Collegio on the mission outreach of the Oceania/ Australia/New Zealand churches.

Neither of these areas receive much publicity in the media at this time but both are highly significant for the future of mission. What happens in South Africa will directly affect the future of the whole continent. The so-called Pacific Basin is the fastest growing area of the world's population and commerce. There are now more international flights across this area than there are across the Atlantic. A team of SEDOS members having experience in Oceania/Australia/New Zealand will present the "up-date" on the missionary significance of this area.

CEPAC (Episcopal Conference of the Pacific) includes the 14 island dioceses of Oceania, from Guam to the Marquesas, and is organised in three regions: North, Centre and French-speaking. CEPAC's Justice-Peace-Development Commission had already organised meetings and discussions on Catholic social doctrine for this year, without knowing that the Pope intended to proclaim 1991 the "Year of the Church's Social Teaching".

COMING EVENTS

SOUTH AFRICA UPDATE

Speaker: Fr. Casimir Paulsen,* CMM
SVD Collegio - 4.00 p.m. February 11, 1991

**MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE
OCEANIAN/AUSTRALIAN CHURCHES***

TEAM PRESENTATION

SVD Collegio - 4.00 p.m. February 26, 1991

**MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE
ASIAN CHURCHES**

SVD Collegio - 4.00 p.m. April 10, 1991

**SEDOS RESEARCH SEMINAR:
PROPHETIC MISSION IN A
CHANGING WORLD**

Speakers:

Fr. Bryan Hehir* - Edwina Gateley, VMM
Villa Cavalletti, Frascati May 17 - 21, 1991

Please note: *There are some important changes between this and the December, 1990 SEDOS Bulletin notice of COMING EVENTS. Fr. Bryan Hehir is not a Jesuit and it is the OCEANIAN MISSIONARY OUTREACH which will be the theme of the February 26, meeting at the SVD Collegio. Casimir Paulsen (spelled correctly) is a member of the Marianhill Missionaries who have rejoined SEDOS as of January, 1991. Welcome!)