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## IN THIS ISSUE

The way E. UZUKWU visualised the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops is not the way it is presented in the *lineamenta*. Fr. Uzukwu presents his reasons for this opinion. The *lineamenta* replicates the prevailing practice whereby the general principles descend from Rome and are applied in Africa. The warning contained in the brief historical note of the *lineamenta* that the monocultural stance of the Latin Church undermined the survival of Christianity in North Africa has to be taken seriously. It has important consequences for the localisation of the Church in Africa today and the contextual issues arising from this. He concludes by outlining the conditions on which this special Synod will be a Synod of hope for Africa.

The values of networking are illustrated in CHRYS McVEY's report of the setting up of a Conference of Pastoral Institutes in Asia and the Pacific. Representatives came to the initial planning session in 1986 from pastoral institutes in Australia, Bangla Desh, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Macao, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand. The final statement produced four years later is a testimony to persevering planning and a sign of hope for mission in Asia.

Some readers of the article by Laënnec Hurbon may feel that black slavery in the Americas is past history, so well-known and documented that there is not much point in repeating it? We refer them to the address given by Bishop Francis Joseph of Newark, New Jersey, at the RERUM NOVARUM Centenary Conference in Washington, February 1991. (See Mission Moments in this issue). "Racism is healthier, more insidious and more active today than it has been for decades".... said

Bishop Francis who is an African-American and a member of the Society of the Divine Word.

Another Bishop contributes the fourth article. Bishop J. Holmes-Siedle of the Missionaries of Africa sees small Christian communities as one of the most effective means of evangelization in Africa today.

Mission moments give food for reflection and action. We share with readers the letter written by the Medical Missionaries to the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund. It may stimulate other members to share their concern with the IMF.

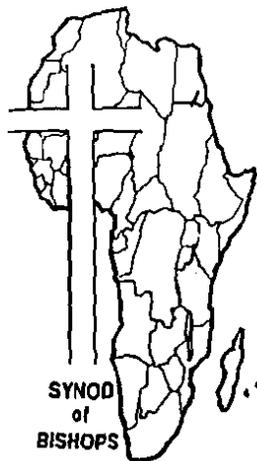
## NEWS

UNDERSTANDING JIHAD. Fr. Justo Lucunza, MAfr. addressed this well attended SEDOS conference, held on March 21, at the Divine Word College. The text of his address will appear in a later issue of SEDOS Bulletin.

ANNIVERSARY. Archbishop Oscar Romero's anniversary was celebrated in Rome at the Church of the Twelve Apostles on March 22. "As a shepherd, I am obliged by divine law", he wrote "to give my life for those I love, for the entire Salvadoran people including those who threaten to assassinate me". Archbishop Romero was shot as he celebrated Mass in San Salvador on March 24, 1980. The two laywomen and six Jesuits brutally murdered last year and the murder of Ita Maura, Dorothy and Jean ten years ago are well known. They are representatives of the continuing martyrdom of many Salvadoran laymen and laywomen whose names never reach the international media.

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## THE AFRICAN SYNOD

A VIEW-POINT ON THE LINEAMENTA FROM  
ENGLISH-SPEAKING AFRICA

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Elochukwu E. Uzukwu C.S.Sp

(Dr. E. E. Uzukwu is Rector of the Spiritan International School of Theology at Enugu, Nigeria. He is Editor of the *Bulletin of Ecumenical Theology* published by the Ecumenical Association of Nigerian Theologians).

Some who desired an African Council and departed disappointed from the 1987 SECAM Plenary Assembly (Lagos, Nigeria) will derive some consolation from the prospect of a Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. Observers at that Lagos SECAM Assembly would remark that English-speaking national conferences were more uncomfortable with an African Council than, for example, the French-speaking conferences. On the other hand, members of English-speaking national conferences like Nigeria (especially Nigeria) would heave a sigh of relief. 'Rome has finally taken the initiative'. They will not now be blamed for taking a course which would set the Church on a dangerous direction as the 3rd millenium approached. It was better that Rome took the initiative in con-voking this Synod rather than that the Bishops of Africa would assume their responsibility.

Generally our experience of being church in this part of the world is a situation where others do the reflexion, take the decisions and help us to apply those decisions. "Marrying a wife for you and providing you with a bed" as the Igbo astutely put it. So the first part of my reaction to the *Lineamenta* will be to focus on

the predictable contribution of the Nigerian Church to the Synod. Secondly, I shall reflect on the *Lineamenta* from the ecclesial initiatives of African local churches which strive to be Latin and local at the same time. Finally, I shall reflect on the problems of the African context which may demand as much ecclesial action and reflection as that sketched in the *Lineamenta*.

### I THE NIGERIAN CHURCH AND THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS

There are three ecclesiastical provinces in Nigeria: Onitsha, Lagos and Kaduna. Throughout the provinces the church's hierarchy is understood as constituting the 'church'. One province may be more dynamic than another but our bishops are all agreed on always 'turning towards Rome'. John Paul II summed up the Nigerian Conference as promoting "orthodox doctrine and approved liturgical discipline" (February 1982). Very little may then be expected from the Conference to 'improve' the *lineamenta*. One should not be surprised that, as a document coming from Rome, it may be treated as sacrosanct.

The docility inherited from missionary times has continued unabated. Local personnel simply donned the dress of the foreign missionaries. Africanization of the church cadre has not introduced initiatives from the local bishop. Rather an unimaginative maintenance of what is "handed down" by missionaries is preferred. This reached a point where the hierarchy needed prompting and prodding by the Roman See to be aware of overdue developments in pastoral initiatives. For example, during John Paul II's visit to Nigeria in 1982, he called for a "new era of evangelization" to succeed the missionary era. This led the bishops to organise seminars on the papal visit and on the theme "new era of evangelization".

Again in recent times when "inculturation" became a talking-point for the Roman church, the Nigerian Bishops' Conference organised a study session in November 1988 to examine "Inculturation in Nigeria". At the study session, it was recommended that the copious guidelines of the church (magisterium) on inculturation should be made known. A decade of inculturation was declared. 1989 would be the preparatory year, and in 1990 inculturation would start.(1) We are in 1991. Inculturation demands initiative, but the Nigerian hierarchy, drilled in cautious application of approved Roman texts and guidelines may not be ready to take the risk involved.

The above examples help us to predict the handling of the *Lineamenta*. The Nigerian Conference did not see any need for an African Council but since Rome is calling a Synod, the Conference will respond. The response will be strong on familiar areas like "Formation of Agents of Evangelization" (nn. 35-37), especially the formation of priests, and areas of on-going religious conflict (dialogue). Rome lays very strong emphasis on formation of priests; vocations are

relatively high in Nigeria and the bishops pay particular attention to priestly formation. Nigeria may have acquired more experience here than some other conferences of Africa. Also the Muslim-Christian conflict has been highly politicized in Nigeria. The state even set up an inter-religious consultative body to deal with it. The interests of the Catholic church are at stake and the bishops from their numerous meetings have reason to speak authoritatively on the issue. Their response in other areas may be vague. "Genuine catechisms" (n.33) may have to wait until a Roman version is out; and inculturation is certainly an area where there is very little experience in Nigeria. In other words from the point of view of the Nigerian hierarchy one may not expect a radical departure from the text of the *Lineamenta*.

#### No Strong Response on Social Application of the Gospel.

It is particularly regrettable that no strong response will come from the Nigerian hierarchy on the issue of the social application of the gospel. This is a result of not converting socio-economic and political happenings to evangelical advantage. The missionary impact on modern Nigeria depended more on social services rendered than on preaching the Word. Early Catholic missionaries were French nationals, and naturally avoided conflict with the English colonial power. The Irish and the Nigerians who continued the work of evangelization were, by their training, effectively handicapped to challenge the state on discrimination based on religion, ethnic origin, and sex. The Catholic faithful was absent from the political scene before and after independence. John XXIII, Vatican II and SECAM pronouncements on Justice and Peace, copiously quoted in the *Lineamenta* (nn. 78-85), are recent phenomena whose impact on church practice is yet to be felt.

But Nigeria's experience of 30 months civil war, the shadow of military dictatorship for over 20 years, along with the suffering, oppression and corruption that came in their wake should have pushed the Nigerian church into undertaking the socio-political and economic implications of embracing the good news of liberation (Exodus; Luke 4). During the civil war the church rendered immense service (charity), but then it lacked the facility to query the structures productive of wars, injustice, discrimination and oppression. Possibly the feudalistic authority structure operated by the church shielded it from the realities of the situation; possibly the high standard of living of ministers in the church and the honour they are given in society distanced them from sharing in the suffering of the people. For, the struggle to overcome oppressive structures necessarily calls for suffering. Thus in the special Synod for Africa the necessary contribution (even leadership role) expected from the Nigerian church on the issues of the social dimensions of the gospel may be lacking.

Despite its size, population, wealth and history, the Nigerian church may have nothing special to produce from its storehouse. There may just be embarrassing noises like the one made in July 1990 when 300,000 residents of a slum area in Lagos (Maroko) were brutally ejected and their residences demolished by government. The hierarchy may support the beautiful statements contained in the *Lineamenta* - another opportunity lost to make the Synod deliberations arise from African experience.

However, despite the limitations of our hierarchy, previous reflections on the inter-territorial level in the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA), of which the Nigerian conference forms a part, may make themselves felt in the Synod. The AECAWA Plen-

ary Assembly in October 1986 at Lagos, reflected on Christianity and Islam in Dialogue.(2) Again in its 5th Plenary Assembly at Kumasi, in August 1989. AECAWA reflected on the theme, Evangelization (Inculturation, Social Communications, Priestly Formation).(3) The in-put in these conferences, the recommendations and resolutions, when brought into the preparation for the Special Synod for Africa, will certainly make the business of the Synod more African in orientation.

## II AFRICAN LOCAL CHURCHES AND THE LINEAMENTA

My assignment is to respond to the *Lineamenta* from the point of view of English-speaking Africa. I am supposed to make a positive contribution and avoid arousing sterile controversy. But I may be allowed the liberty to ask whether this special Assembly for Africa is a Roman affair or the concern of Africa? Without prejudice to the primacy of the Bishop of Rome is there any harm in drawing the theme and subsections of the Synod's *Lineamenta* from the experience of African local churches federated under regional conferences? Such a procedure would recognise the responsibility of African local churches and respect the sense of communion in the Church of God (universal church).(4) The Synod for Africa will then be a celebration where African local churches will learn from the experience of one another, where other churches, spread throughout the world, will learn from Africa and bring their riches to Africa.

In my view, the *Lineamenta* replicates the prevailing practice whereby the general principles descend from Rome and are applied to Africa, thereby continuing the mistaken identification of the Roman church (particular church) with the universal church; whereas true

universality is experienced in the response of each particular church to the gospel and in the communion of the churches, while the Bishop of Rome presides over this assembly of charity (Cyprian).

**Localisation of the Churches;  
"Unity is Verified in Diversity"**

The warning contained in the brief historical note of the *Lineamenta* that the monocultural stance of the Latin church undermined the survival of Christianity in North Africa (nn. 4-5) has to be taken seriously. But even if we blame the North African Church for ignoring the Berber culture we should not forget that Cyprian, Augustine and other Fathers shared the view that the expression of meanings "differ from nation to nation, from culture to culture".(5) In such an important issue as the recognition or non-recognition of heretical baptisms Cyprian insisted that people could feel differently while maintaining communion: "It is necessary that each one of us expresses his or her feelings on this issue; without judging anyone nor cutting them off from communion if they are moved to think in a different way".(6) This balanced view was lost in the Latin church with the total islamisation of North Africa.

The statement in the *Lineamenta* (n.60) that "The Catholic church in Africa will need to pay more attention to and improve its links with, the older churches truly indigenous to Africa: the Pre-chalcedonian Coptic and Ethiopic Orthodox churches", encourages us to suggest that the Synod should itemize the reasons for the survival of these churches and study attempts at true 'localisation' or 'indigenisation' of the Catholic Church in various regions of Africa. The presence of this diversity in the one church is the only argument for the church's catholicity. For, as John Paul II emphasised in Sweden, "unity not only embraces diversity, but is verified in diversity".(7) Examples of

such diverse practices in the various local churches of Africa should, in my view, form a matter for serious deliberation and exchange in the special Synod. Experiences in Zaire in the formation of agents of evangelisation in local theology (especially in the *Faculté de Théologie catholique de Kinshasa*), in the local liturgy (the Zairean mass), in new types of leadership/ministry (the bakambi), in religious life (various rituals of religious profession), should all be brought into the celebration of this Synod. Mention should also be made of experiences in francophone West Africa in the Rite of Initiation and catechetical formation.

East Africa is the main example of a local (regional) church in English-speaking Africa whose experiences should influence the outline for reflection of the Synod. The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA), which embraces national conferences of Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, roots its Christian response in what it calls the localization of the church; a church which has to be "self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting".

AMECEA's Pastoral Institute is a centre for training agents of evangelisation offering in-service training for priests, religious, catechists and other collaborators in the building of the local church. The region has produced a text book for religious education in secondary schools adapted to local conditions; its Assembly conducted a study on polygyny and the East African nomadic apostolate.(8) AMECEA's liturgical experiments centre around the Eucharistic celebration and many Eucharistic prayers have been produced at the Pastoral Institute and are used *ad experimentum*.(9) The documentation of these experiences would indicate how a socio-cultural area has been responding in

Christian way to the realities of its context. In the Synod the church universal appropriates the issues arising from East Africa as the concerns of the church of God; it learns from and challenges the patterns of response of this local church.

The Way I Visualise the Synod is not the Way it is Presented in the *Lineamenta*.

A Synod which is concerned with the affairs of the Roman Catholic church in Africa should not start by piecing together quotes from papal and conciliar documents in order to express contextual African problems. Sometimes one may even find the important voice of SECAM, the continental Conference, too general to be effective. Rather each local church, functioning in a given socio-cultural area, should give testimony on how it is bearing witness to the Christ (cf Acts 1:8). In this way the assembling of diverse practices would confirm the agreement in the faith (see Irenaeus); people would not be required to cross unnecessary cultural barriers except the obvious *skandalon* of the cross (1Cor. 1:23); and the frustrating burden of the church's history in Europe would not have to be borne by the local churches of Africa.

### III CONTEXTUAL ISSUES TO BE FACED BY THE SYNOD

The Roman view-point of the problems of the church in Africa has been outlined in the *Lineamenta*; I have drawn attention to some ways in which some local churches in Africa are functioning in their context - ways which should constitute part of the reflection of the on-coming Synod. In this section I draw attention to a practice which eludes the control of the hierarchy but which may concern the future of christianity in Africa, and, then; I suggest that it may be important for

the Synod to indicate the type of leadership to be practiced by the church in Africa.

#### Well-being and healing.

In Nigeria today, it is hard not to be struck by a trend in christian practice whereby emphasis is laid on the intimate connection between physical well-being and personal well-being. The totality of the person, manifest bodily, is taken very seriously in christian life. Sickness or bodily disorders of all description, misfortunes, infertility, desire for success in business enterprises, need for security from threats of secret societies and robbers, from witchcraft and sorcery, drive Catholics to seek for healing in those centres where this is assured. Some catholic priests have become famous healers. Many Pentecostal and Independent churches have healing as their top priority; and there are traditional healers as well as Moslem healers. Christians of all denominations, practitioners of traditional religion and muslims, all rub shoulders at one healing centre or another. Well-being appears to be the ultimate need or concern, capable of breaking through social, ethnic and religious barriers.

The question is not simply a Nigerian phenomenon but is experienced all over Africa as the activities and writings of catholic ministers like Bishop Milingo and Fr. Hebga would testify, and as the hundreds of Independent African churches of nativistic tendency would prove.(11) (It appears even that the operations of the devil are coming back in Europe).(12) Many catholic priests in Nigeria have devised rites to cater for various aspects of misfortune or paranormal experience. Even in expatriate-run parishes in Lagos, (Nigeria), generous use of holy water, a popular practice in Eastern Nigeria, is introduced at offertory processions. Lay charismatics practice exorcism, preach and perform other activities not in accord with Canon

Law. If pastors are intolerant these leave and form their own 'true Catholic charismatic' fellowship.

One can draw from the experience of the Spiritan International School of Theology, Attakwu, Enugu (Nigeria) to stress the importance of integral well-being in christian life in Nigeria. In 1989 the institution held a Symposium on Healing and Exorcism: the Nigerian Experience. The attendance was very surprising. Over 300 participants registered officially and there were many others who attended without registering. But in 1990 the institution held another symposium on the theme, Human Rights in Nigerian Society and Church. Registered participants did not exceed 80. It seems to me that the need for integral wholeness, felt at all levels of society, to assume practical patterns in christian life should be properly addressed in an African Synod. African local churches and the universal church can learn about and search for wholeness in human life; they can learn to link this wholeness to harmony in the whole universe, physical, psychical and spiritual, despite the fragmentation introduced by modern technical culture and secularisation.

Related to the issue of the search for integral well-being is the popular attitude of 'sick' Catholics to Independent Churches. These churches are classified among sects in the *Lineamenta* (nn. 74-75). The reasons for their multiplication are varied: independence from missionary churches in order to be African; reacting to the racism of European missionaries; preferring organisation and structures more in keeping with the African situation. While not encouraging these splits within the church, the Synod could benefit from their practice of small scale communities which attract Catholics who attend such churches. This contrasts very much with the anonymity of our parishes. Independent churches despite their short-comings could

indicate a mode of African christian response.

#### What Style of Leadership ?

A final point that needs to be tackled by the Synod is the style of leadership to be adopted by the church in Africa. The burden of a feudalistic pattern in church administration which the Roman Catholic church persists in carrying, despite clear signals for the contrary, may break the camel's back if it is not changed. In Nigeria the seminarian on apostolic work, the parish priest, the religious superior, the bishop, each at his/her own level, generally prefers an arrogant exercise of power to service of the brethren. It is no use the *Lineamenta* suggesting that "relations between priests and laity must be rethought in the light of the mystery of communion"; and insisting that "It is important, therefore, that the formation of priests take in account these new demands and prepare them for a task that is complementary to that of the laity" (n.42). The seminarian knows that the whole Latin Church is under the absolute authority of Rome, the priests are under the absolute authority of the bishop, the seminarians under the absolute authority of the rector, the parishioners under the absolute authority of the parish priest. The change must come from practice and involve all levels and not only seminaries.

Lay people are already fighting back. In colonial/missionary times they could tolerate the authoritarianism; but now that they pay for the maintenance of the priest they show that there is a limit to their patience.

Africa, in pre-colonial times, knew two ways of exercising authority - centralization and decentralisation. The experts agree that in both patterns leadership is preferred to rulership.(13) There is no reason why the church in Africa should not drop

the burden of feudalism and authoritarian exercise of power in favour of the evangelical precept of *diakonia* (Mk. 10:45). When reflecting on the violence and abuse of power which has increased instead of decreasing since independence, the Synod may be witnessing to the emergence of a new social order when it adopts more humane structures in church organisation which would respect the dignity of the human person.

#### IV

#### CONCLUSION: A CHURCH THAT IS DIFFERENT

*What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As I live, says the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel" (Ezk 18: 2-3).*

In the special Synod for Africa the world church will gather to celebrate, to share, to learn. In 1885 there was a gathering of European powers in Berlin to partition a brutalized and backward continent. No African was present. Today politically and economically Africa remains the underdog. Christianisation played its own role in the subjugation of Africa despite the liberating role of the gospel practised by Africans. The future is bleak! The economic and political score card predicts worse things to come. Even cosmic forces join hands with demonic dictators to roast the scorched earth and famished limbs.

This special Synod for Africa must speak the words of prophecy to the dry bones (Ezk 37). Our true story must be told by us. The way we lived, the way we received the gospel, the way we tried to make the gospel make sense to us, must become local and transform us. It is the story also of our sufferings and failures: our contribution to our own

subjugation, our sale of our birth right for a bowl of pottage (Gen 25: 29-34), our masks, our lack of courage, our fear. In all this the gospel, the personal life of Jesus the Christ will stand as consoler and judge.

#### Experience of Localisation.

The special Synod is not about the story of the European church. Rather it begins with our experience of localisation, draws in the living water of the gospel and moves forward to bear witness (Acts 1:8). The memory of the Uganda Martyrs may be for our church, the turning point for the dawn of "a new age" of christianity in Africa. If the Synod appropriates their shedding of blood as the "seed of christianity" (Tertullian) in Africa, then the sound of their prophetic voice would inevitably indicate the emergence of a new kind of christian witness in Africa:

- catholics and protestants together, they bore a united witness to the christian faith - liberating christian Africa from the heavy burden of 16th century European Reformation;
- baptised and catechumens alike they took delight in deepening their faith, living it out, doing catechetical work and strengthening their community without the clergy - proclaiming a new kind of church (People of God) where witness and ministry are not based on any feudalistic rank or privilege;
- they were mainly the king's pages, but they resisted him paving the way for a christian revolution at the King's court - the new christianity in Africa refusing to dine with evil at any level of society;
- they purposefully accepted the supreme sacrifice following the Christ with joy - Christ in his members becoming African.

The memory of these martyrs of Uganda (Africa) imposes boldness on the Synod, the boldness of the Council of Jerusalem. (Acts 15) The

martyrs have put paid to the inferiority complex of Africans.

*"By the nobility of their culture, the virtue of their christian living, the leadership of their christian communities, the perseverance in their faith, the unity of their comradeship, the courage of their public confession of their belief in Christ, and above all by the heroism of their death, the martyrs dealt a decisive blow to the myths, the pseudo-scientific theories, the racial superiority with which many foreigners regarded the Africans, their colour, defective religion, and "savage" manners".(14)*

My view is that this special Synod for Africa will be a Synod of hope if it draws from the experience of living the gospel in Africa, if we assume responsibility for the "sour grapes" we ate, if there is encouragement and creative challenge from sister churches. In this way there will be clear emergence of a church in Africa, different, and yet within the one Church of God.

Ref. We are grateful to the editor of *SPIRITUS* for permission to publish this article in conjunction with the forthcoming issue of *SPIRITUS* where it will appear in French. The original is in English. Ed.

#### NOTES

1. See Inculturation in Nigeria. Proceedings of the Bishop's Study Session, November, 1988. Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, 1989.
2. AECAWA Publication, 1987.
3. Publication being awaited.
4. See E. Schillebeeckx, CHURCH. The Human Story of God. New York: Crossroad, 1990. Pp. 146-147. For this use of church as universal, see Gal 1:13 Cor. 1:59. Phil. 3:6.
5. B. Lornegan, "The Transition from a Classicist World-view to Historical Mindedness" cited by M.A. Noll. The Eclipse of Old Hostilities between and the Potential for new strife among Catholics and Protestants since Vatican II" in R.M. Bellah and F.E. Greenspan, Uncivil Religion: Inter-religious Hostility in America. New York: Crossroad, 1987, p. 95.
6. Cited by Y.M. Congar, Diversités et Communion. Paris: Cerf, 1982, p. 38.
7. The Tablet, vol. 243, n. 7770 (17 June 1989), p. 688.
8. I studied liturgical experiments in this region. See Liturgy, Truly Christian, Truly African. Eldoret: Gaba Publications, Spearhead 79, pp. 31-48; see also "Report on Third Workshop on the Apostolate to Nomads in Eastern Africa", Nairobi, Kenya, 2-6 February, 1981; Christian Living Today, Books one and two. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1974; Developing in Christ: Teachers Handbook. London: Chapman, 1981.
9. See B. Hearne and N. Nijere eds, Celebration II. Eldoret: Gaba Publication, Spearhead 42, 1976.
10. See the review of P. Cotterell's book Mission and Meaninglessness: The Good News in a World of Suffering and Disorder. SPCR, 1990. in Expository Times 102 (Jan 1991), Pp. 97-99.
11. E. Milingo, The World in Between. Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1986; M.P. Hebga, Sorcellerie et Prière de Délivrance. Paris: Presence Africaine, 1982.
12. A. Vergote, "Exorcism et Prière de Délivrance" in La Maison Dieu 183-184 (1990), 123-137.
13. M. Portes and E.E. Evans-Pritchard, African Political Systems. London: Oxford University Press, 1940.
14. J.M. Waliggo, "The Religio - Political Context of the Uganda Martyrs and Its Significance", Africa christian Studies 2 1, 1986, 28.

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## THE CONFERENCE OF ASIA-PACIFIC PASTORAL INSTITUTES (CAPPI)

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Chrys McVey, OP

*(Fr. McVey, OP is director of the Pastoral Institute in Multan, Pakistan. We are grateful to him for sending the report of this important meeting held in Yogyakarta in January, 1991, the fruit of a process begun in Manila in 1986. We have edited the report, shortening the introductory portion on the history and evolution of the Conference and leaving intact the final statement - Ed.)*

### THE BIRTH OF "CAPPI"

Manila, May 1986.

The Conference began in May, 1986 when representatives from selected pastoral institutes in Australia, Bangla Desh, Fiji, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Macao, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand attended a meeting in Manila. This meeting centered on two areas for discussion.

1) Issues of church and society involving dialogue, formation for ministry and inculturation. The task of the church in the various regions of Asia was to arrive at criteria for judging these issues in their different situations. The Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) had outlined these issues as follows: a church in solidarity with the poor; in dialogue with people of other religions; a church fully inculturated. The meeting saw that an inadequate and clericalised sense of ministry was a common obstacle to the task of forming people for ministry in these issues.

2) Networking, planning, and coordination. Participants at the meeting then made a number of decisions: to form a loose association, to fund a regional newsletter, to adopt a

research project "The Concept and Practice of Ministry", and to meet in Pakistan in January 1989.

### SECOND "CAPPI" MEETING

Multan, Pakistan, January 1989.

#### Challenges.

This meeting began with challenges:

- how to go further with the topic of ministry and begin to think of CAPPI's role in changing the concept of pastoral work beyond the ecclesiastical?
- how to discover the mutual influence between theology and the social sciences?
- how to train, and prepare others for leadership?
- how to cooperate in such leadership training in different cultural situations?

#### Findings.

The meeting arrived at several findings:

- our experience of ministries is still church-centered and clerical;
- despite recent attempts at renewal, there have been few changes in direction or structure since Vatican II;

- there is still a wide gap between theory and practice in ministry. This we saw as due to:

our own shortcomings as institutes,  
our institutional obstacles,  
the lack of support,  
and the lack of appropriate structures, for lay ministry.

#### Five necessary shifts.

The participants envisioned five necessary shifts in their programmes:

1. In the preparation of pastoral agents, move from church-centered maintenance and concern to kingdom-oriented ministry.

2. In the adoption of a formation approach, move from systematic and dogmatic theology to a practical theology in dialogue with the social sciences, and dealing with issues at micro and macro levels.

3. In the location of ministries move from an introverted, self-preserving interest to wider horizons whose goal is the development of integral humankind and the integrally human.

4. In the exercise of ministry, move from an institutional level to uncharted areas as minority churches in dialogue with local cultures and marginalised groups.

5. In the understanding of ministry, move from the standpoint of fulfilling a mission to a bias for a particular context and to groups, where prophetic witness, critique, and the energising of people constitutes ministry itself.

### THIRD "CAPPI" MEETING

Yogyakarta, Indonesia January 1991.

In preparation for this Yogyakarta meeting a committee of five met in Chiang Mai, Thailand and proposed a study of the work of the Sri Lankan

Jesuit, Aloysius Pieris. He was chosen for his analysis of and creative approach to Asian reality, and as an aid in developing a method for a practical theology.

There were 30 participants at the Yogyakarta meeting, half from CAPPI and half from the Indonesian Association for Practical Theology (APTI). The meeting was thus enriched not only by the number but also by the variety of participants, men and women, clergy and lay, young and older, Catholic and Protestant.

The experience of coming together in Yogyakarta proved to be a kind of baptism. The task was not an easy one for the participants. They experienced difficulty in understanding Pieris. There were different perspectives and not a little frustration. They were aided however, by the very multi-cultural richness of Indonesia, and by the experience of Borobodur, ancient site of pilgrimage and perhaps a symbol of the week's journey. But they were especially aided by the insights and challenges offered in the study of Aloysius Pieris. They came to see new possibilities and found support in each other and new reasons for hoping that the dream might become reality. They drew-up a final statement.

### CAPPI FINAL STATEMENT

Yogyakarta, January, 1991.

#### I. INTRODUCTION

The Conference of Asia-Pacific Pastoral Institutes (CAPPI) held its third meeting from 13-20 January 1991 in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

The goal of CAPPI is 'understanding changing realities' and 'equipping members for pastoral actions through a pastoral action (praxis) as this is affected by faith and culture'.

In order to understand its task

better the Conference studied the work of the Sri Lankan Jesuit, Aloysius Pieris. Pieris uses practical theology as an instrument to understand Asian reality. He was chosen as a model for members in their analysis. They studied the main elements of his analysis and his conclusions. Similarities and differences between his analysis and that of the members of CAPPI were noted. Sharing their conclusions the participants gained a deeper understanding of the work of Pieris and isolated issues relevant to their situation. A certain humility emerged at their own inadequacy in the doing of a practical theology.

#### Asian reality.

Several of Pieris' emphases challenged the Conference notably his view of Asian reality

- where poverty and religiousness are inseparably linked;
- where entry into these two elements of Asian reality is only possible through baptism;
- where 'God talk is made relative to God experience' and where contemplative openness to this experience is required;
- where 'theology and praxis' are one and where inculturation and liberation are two names for the same process;
- where God is discovered by a dialogical experience with God's own people living beyond the church.

These findings were discussed from the different perspectives of the participants. The conference accepted the vision and analysis of Pieris (especially the linking of theology with the social sciences) as a means of understanding a reality that is interrelated and one.

## 2. THEOLOGICAL DIRECTIVES

We see our task as a sharing in discovering God in the human and

worldly situation. This situation has a twofold dimension:

- the socio-economic reality, which in Asia is the reality of poverty and injustice;
- the religious reality, which in Asia means a rich variety of religious traditions.

#### Involvement.

In Asia the socio-economic and the religious are not two separate realities. They are closely linked with each other, albeit in different ways in different societies.

To be involved in these realities is a way of acting that has political implications, and is therefore risky. We believe that God is discovered in the human and worldly situation, both as the mystery present in the depths of the ordinary and as the loving power that liberates us from all that enslaves.

To discover God in a given situation we must genuinely understand the situation itself. We cannot do this without real involvement in people's lives and struggles, without the wisdom offered by the human and social sciences and without the attitude and practice of contemplation.

#### Contemplative Attitude.

A contemplative attitude is a listening attitude. We seek to listen to the stories, images, myths, celebrations of the people, to hear their cries, above all the cry of the poor. This can happen in individual encounter. It can happen also in the community as we try to hear the common story, the common language, to see what binds the community together. To do this we must allow ourselves to enter into the other's language. If language is power, this means divesting ourselves of power.

#### Conversion.

Hence, we are called to kenosis, to self emptying. This means a readiness

for conversion and change, that is, for change of heart and change of social structures. This can come about through readiness to enter into other languages, other ways of living, other religious traditions and experience.

In this process inculturation can happen, but it happens only through involvement.

All this implies that practical theology has its own identity. It implies too an intimate link between practical theology and spirituality.

#### CHALLENGES

We see the following as a task for our centres.

The primary orientation for all pastoral activity is building relationships beyond the church. This "kingdom" dream is what drives us.

This dream leads us to begin the process of necessary change in our pastoral work.

The process of change starts from a thorough understanding of our reality, obtained by observation and a listening that is a contemplative attitude toward the total reality.

Driven by this orientation and aided by our analysis we formed fea-

sible goals, linking the dream and the reality, believing that for adults, change is possible only through experience and that practical theology is analysis and reflection on this practice and experience.

#### AREAS FOR CHANGE

We designated some areas demanding change:

- in formation of leaders, moving from a feudal model to a sharing one;
- in worship, moving from cultic act to a celebration of life;
- in organization, moving from large congregation to smaller communities where relationships are possible and leadership meaningful;
- in evangelization, moving from conversion and conquest to dialogue and common search;
- in spirituality, moving from introverted and other-worldly to involved and incarnational;
- in communication, moving from indoctrination to shared learning.

Aided by the vision of Aloysius Pieris we came to see new possibilities and found in each other both challenge and support.




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## THE SLAVE TRADE AND BLACK SLAVERY IN AMERICA

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Laennec Hurbon

*(This is a slightly shortened version of Laennec Hurbon's article which appeared in the December 1990 issue of Concilium, 1492-1992, The Voice of the Victims, edited by Leonardo Boff and Virgil Elizondo. We have omitted the notes for reasons of space. The full text is available in SEDOS Documentation Centre - Ed.)*

### SLAVERY IN THE NEW WORLD: A RUNNING COST OF MODERN CIVILIZATION

From Greco-Roman antiquity to the European Middle Ages, slavery did not change its nature in the regions of Asia or Africa or the New World. Often perceived as an archaic form of exploitation of human beings by human beings, the phenomenon is trivialized when it is measured only by its effects, the social degradation of the individual, racism, economic profitability, and so on.

The history of the slave trade and the slavery of the Blacks which began with the discovery of the New World is still part of our modern world and of Western civilization. There is a great temptation to dilute the event in universal history and thus to excuse the modern Western world a confrontation with what in fact is part of its own memory. Perhaps it is because Europe failed to consider the specific nature and the novelty of slavery in the Americas that it was so little prepared to recognize the possibility - inscribed at the very heart of its development - that it would produce other catastrophes like Auschwitz or the Gulags. In fact from the sixteenth century onwards, we see in slavery the relaunching of a system which, while remaining in continuity with

the Middle Ages, extends over three continents, over a long period (four centuries), and is aimed solely at economic profitability. Far from being a mishap for modern civilization or a simple historical accident, slavery in America bears witness to the foundation of this civilization and is even part of its running costs.

### FROM INDIAN SLAVERY TO THE BLACK SLAVE TRADE

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, theologians, jurists and canon lawyers argued violently over the right of Spain to reduce the Indians to slavery. The practice of slavery however was by then already well advanced. In 1495, 500 Indians were captured and sent as slaves to Spain. On 2 August 1530, Charles V proclaimed the illegality of Indian slavery as a result of the stubborn defense of the Indians by de Las Casas, but it was too late for the Indians. The *encomienda* as a system of forced labour used to develop the gold mines meant certain genocide for the newly-conquered people. The Indians were thought to be unsuitable for slavery but there was never any debate, whether legal or theological, over the Blacks of Africa. The myth of the son of Ham, who was under a curse, was in circulation at the end of the Middle Ages, and this

authorized first Portugal, and then Spain, to draw slaves freely from the 'Black Continent'.

In 1434 the Portuguese bought cargoes of slaves from North Africans in Africa for general domestic and agricultural work and for the sugar cane plantations on the island of Sao Thomé. And in the New World, while there was tearing of hair over the barbarism or the idolatry of the Indians, in 1503 'negro' slaves were working alongside the Indians. They would fill the gap when the Indians disappeared. It was all very well for Las Casas, having indicated the suitability of the Blacks for slavery, to regret having been an accomplice in the slave trade, but by then the damage had been done. The powerful interests of the crown and the church presided over a practice of conquest in the face of which the very question of legality slowly disappeared.

#### 'L'asiento'.

Portugal was in the vanguard of the slave trade all during the sixteenth century through 'l'asiento', the monopoly granted by the crown to a company to trade in Black slaves. Spain disputed Portugal's possession of the lands of the New World and appealed to the Pope to arbitrate. So it was that in 1517, 4000 slaves were sold and deported to Hispaniola and Cuba.

In the footsteps of Spain, Holland, France and England vied with one another to take part in the trade. Chartered companies were created in a headlong rush. In 1635 the *Compagnie des Indes de l'Amérique* was instructed by Richelieu to provide slaves for the Caribbean islands. In 1651 England in turn founded the Guinea Company, and later, in 1672, the Company of Royal Adventurers. In the eighteenth century the country ended up by dominating the triangular trade through Liverpool, the greatest port in Europe for ship-

ping negroes.

But how did people get slaves? First of all by establishing forts and bases all along the African coasts. At that time Africa, called variously the Gold Coast, the Slave Coast, the Pepper Coast, the Ivory Coast, was simply an immense depot of ebony and slaves captured on raids carried out in the interior or in the tribal wars encouraged by the slavers.

Local potentates reinforced their power and sold both prisoners of war and their own subjects whom they considered to be delinquent. Any means of responding to the European demand for slaves was legitimate. Little by little real negro states were founded and consolidated: Dahomey, Congo, Ashanti, South Africa, and Guinea.

#### A demographic cataclysm.

The consequences of the slave trade were catastrophic for the African continent. It is now reckoned that over four centuries, around 11,700,000 slaves were deported to the three Americas; some writers talk of thirteen, even fifteen, million. Add to these, those who died during the wars of captivity and during the crossing. According to C. Coquery-Vidrovitch, the average mortality rate was 13%.

During the eighteenth century, England alone provided between two and three million slaves for its own colonies, for those of France and Spain, and for Virginia. In the same period France transported around one million slaves on 3321 ships. In 1774, black slaves in the southern United States already numbered 500,000. And it is reckoned that around two million slaves were at work in Brazil in 1798.

There was not a single English, French, Spanish, Dutch or Danish colony which was not provided with slaves. In 1788 Jamaica was the most

prosperous of the English colonies with 256,000 slaves, while St. Dominique was the greatest source of wealth for France with 405,828.

These impressive figures indicate that the African continent must have undergone a real cataclysm at a demographic level. The young, male and female, were captured in the largest numbers. Slaves over forty were usually rejected by the traders, though their demand for negroes was never completely satisfied. So Africa must have undergone an acceleration in its decline. Craftsmanship, weaving, metalwork, agriculture, dropped into second place in the face of a trade which led to the domination of a slave system in the majority of states. As a result, when Europe finally agreed to give up slavery at the end of the nineteenth century, one in four Africans were slaves.

The calvary of the Atlantic crossing took around forty days. Sometimes between 400 and 500 slaves were chained two by two at the feet and stacked up in holds (like lines of books). Hunger, diseases like scurvy, dysentery and so-called 'putrid fever' made the slave ships floating tombs. Even in the eighteenth century, on a single ship (the Iris) 131 slaves died out of 966; there are other examples of 110 out of 442 or even 193 out of 401. One may not ask any question about ill-treatment since by definition the slave, a piece of livestock, was open to any excess on the part of his or her proprietor.

#### THE INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY

The institution of slavery was the negation of the protection of law and of rights to human beings. Justification for it was provided by positive laws laid down by modern states that arose in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What were the motives for this institution? What objectives and what interests did it serve? What contradictions does it

reveal in the modern Western world and also in Christianity, which would prove to be a key factor in the ideological justification of slavery?

An abundant literature has already taken stock of the conditions of the daily life of slaves in the New World. The slave was a slave for life, and any children were destined to slavery. It was the very empire of death, a slow death, even if the life-span of the slave, virtually throughout the Americas was estimated at seven years. Work under the supervision of a taskmaster was from sunrise to sunset and was enforced by the discipline of the whip. Any attribution of paternalism to the masters is without foundation as they had to work rigorously for the degradation of the slaves, to reduce them to what was considered their natural condition. In 1666 Fr. Dutertre full of commiseration, slaver though he was, reports that 'of fifty who die one buries only two in a shroud; people bring them covered with their own filthy rags or wrapped in a few canna leaves'.

Tortures reserved for rebellious or lazy slaves were not evidence of the particular cruelty of some masters, but simply part of the structure of the daily practice of slavery. To apply a red-hot iron to the tender parts of the slave, to tie him to a stake so that insects gnawed him to death, to burn him alive, to chain him, to set dogs or snakes at his heels, to rape negresses, served above all to express absolute domination. This is seen too in the branding of slaves, changing their names, mixing races with loss of all kinship, in short producing among them a cultural amnesia from which they emerged zombies, living dead, totally subjected to the caprices and humours of their masters.

The modern state did its utmost to relieve the master of having to think about this absolute domination or to assume responsibility for it. State

and mercantile interests were supreme; one could only question this by questioning the legal and ideological system set up around it.

The slave trade presupposed a general accord within the European nations between the church, the state, the nobility and public opinion. The slave was seen as a slave or prisoner whose death penalty had been commuted to a social and legal death. Slavery no longer provoked any questioning. Still practiced in Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and later in the fifteenth century, it had an arsenal of justifications to back it up. But as a result of the new experience of the slave trade in the New World, modern European states tested not only their expansionist capacities but also their internal efficacy. They were an authority which could subordinate religion to itself and give it the pedagogical task of producing human beings.

#### The Code Noir.

Numerous disciplinary regulations, decrees, ordinances came from the great cities demonstrating their continuing interest in the survival of the institution of slavery. The French Black Code, the *Code Noir* of 1685, deserves special attention. The aim of this code was to establish the order of slavery and reinforce it through the apparatus of the state. Republished in France in a new edition edited by Louis Sala-Molins, who describes it as 'the most monstrous legal text produced in modern times', the *Code Noir* was seldom mentioned by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. It even fell into oblivion, though for two centuries it gave French slavery its essential structure.

In the *Code Noir* the slave has no rights. He is a 'thing', in the sense that Roman law gives to the term. Paradoxically it submits the slave to the royal tenderness and the piety of the master who is to feed him, clothe

him, support him, provide for his religious instruction, dispose of his offspring and avoid 'barbarous and inhumane treatment' (art. 26). Pretending to protect the slave, at the same time it declares that the slave cannot in any instance bear witness or complain in person before the courts against the excesses of the master (art. 30). This situation is not at all, however, that defined by Roman law.

The objective of the institution of slavery is in fact to convert to Christianity infidels or pagans living under the empire of Satan. 'All the slaves in our islands shall be baptized and instructed in the Catholic religion...' (art. 2). Christianity serves the state by proclaiming to the slave his state duty, which is obedience to his master. The Blacks can only give thanks to providence for their deportation to America. 'Their servitude,' writes Fr. Dutertre in the seventeenth century, "is the principle of their happiness, and their disgrace is the cause of their salvation."

#### The Ideological cover.

A century later, in 1776, a disciplinary rule stated: 'Public security, the interest of the masters, the salvation of their souls, are the motives which must prompt the missionary to work at the religious instruction of the negroes with all the greater zeal. Conversely, meetings of slaves who attempt to go back to their African religious system are forbidden. They are regarded as occasions of rebellion. The maintenance of the ideological cover of slavery, i.e. forced conversion, also seems to have been an obsession with the administrators. Generally speaking, the clergy performed their role well enough. In fact the clergy themselves owned slaves although some priests who protected runaway slaves or were too zealous in their instruction were rapidly deported and put on ships home.

As far as the state was concerned, the most important thing remained its complete hold over the life of the slave. Christianity, had at the same time to perform a civilizing work, to serve as a place of access to Western culture. The parameters of that culture claimed to define humanity. However, for slavery to be maintained, the necessary logic was that slaves were unsuited to Christianity, that they were sorcerers and barbarians and basically flawed by their biological constitution. The 'negros' were suitable for slavery because they were a degraded species. To the myth of Ham was gradually grafted on an anthropology of the 'negro': savage and barbarous, cannibalistic, lazy, polygamous, prone to human sacrifices and with no taste whatsoever for freedom. A vast literature circulated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, disseminating in Europe such an image of the Black as to render Western public opinion insensitive to the hell of slavery.

#### FROM SLAVE RESISTANCE TO ABOLITION

Slavery in the New World was a tightly-knit system. The slaves had two primary ways out of it. Either they could leave their bodies to their masters and rejoin Africa symbolically or spiritually. Suicide, abortion, the rejection of care or food, and infanticide are the first expressions of a great rejection. Or, as an alternative, they could flee individually or collectively ("marooning"). Wherever possible, slaves tried to escape the power of their masters. Real slave republics were formed in Brazil, in Jamaica and in Guiana.

From the seventeenth century onwards, every regulation coming from the administrations or the capitals was aimed at the systematic repression of "marooning". Some articles in the *Code Noir* are simply lists of a panoply of punishments to be imposed on the runaway slave.

Rumours of poisoning, revolts accompanied by burning of the plantations and sugar factories, haunted the sleep of the masters throughout the eighteenth century, especially in the islands.

#### St. Dominique.

Soon, in the wake of the French Revolution, St. Dominique, France's most popular colony, with more than 400,000 slaves, offered the spectacle of the first major successful slave revolt. An insurrection sparked off during the night of August 15, 1791 was the inauguration of a long struggle lasting thirteen years, in the course of which the political genius of Toussaint Louverture emerged. But the general freedom proclaimed on St. Dominique in 1793 was not ratified by the Convention until 1794, and was then put in question again by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802.

#### A new culture.

From the depths of their dereliction, the slaves were able to find within themselves the resources to express their dignity. Little by little they undertook the underground construction of a new culture in which they could recognize themselves. Thus for example Voodoo in Haiti, Santeria in Cuba and Candomble in Brazil, trance-cults inherited from Africa, form a regional creation with rich mythologies in which one can see a reinterpretation of lost Africa, and also of missionary Christianity.

The "blues" and negro spirituals still bear witness to a will to life and hope at the heart of imprisonment in slavery. Perhaps, too, the Black Americans have written a new page in the history of Christianity, by having been able to make the churches places of struggle for the recognition of their human rights.

While England succeeded in declaring the slave trade illegal in 1807,

under the pressure of its Parliament and Protestant petitions, France followed, reluctantly, only at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. From this date until 1845, no less than twenty Franco-English treaties were signed before the achievement of the official cessation of traffic in slaves and abolition in France (1848). But illicit trading continued strongly with the southern states of the United States, with Brazil and Cuba, until 1870-1880. In fact Cuba was the last colony to proclaim abolition, in 1880.

#### Economic interests.

The vicissitudes of abolition show the degree to which the slave trade and slavery were bound up with the economic interests of the great powers and what can well be called reasons of state. The vigorous polemic launched by Clarkson and the English Protestants, particularly the Quakers, and then by Abbé Gregoire and Victor Schoelcher in France against the anti-abolitionists, in fact came up, not only against widespread prejudice against the Blacks in public opinion, but above all against the European concern for expansionism. Abolition was only achieved at the point when it was possible to keep intact the prosperity of the colonists and the riches brought to Europe by the slave colonies.

Certainly with the theories of natural law developed in the seventeenth century, with Enlightenment

philosophies like those of Kant or Rousseau, and with the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789, slavery was shown to be a scandal and a crime against humanity. But if we are to understand its long duration, two factors need to be taken into consideration: the tendency to sacralize the state through reasons of state thus undermining the universality of the principles of equality and freedom; and the tendency to make Europe the judge of all the other cultures, as a result of which a racist ideology with pretensions to being scientific, underwent a spectacular rise, especially in the nineteenth century.

#### Inalienable human rights.

Are not the freed Blacks, having become poor peasants, workers, unemployed, living in the shanty towns, household servants or migrant workers, still victims of racism? Yet again, the quest for equality and freedom is the challenge of today, - a challenge to open up an horizon on which the humanity of humankind can appear. In our efforts to achieve this, should we not detect in the movements of rebellion set off by slaves both a practical implementation of the struggle for inalienable human rights and also a pointer to a dream which has yet to be fulfilled. In the midst of the many varied contemporary struggles for freedom, the realization of that dream should be regarded as the duty of humankind.

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## SMALL CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES IN EASTERN AFRICA

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Bishop J. Holmes-Siedle

*(Bishop J. Holmes-Siedle examines the results of his 17 years experience with Small Christian Communities. The Bishop is a member of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa and has just been appointed to the diocese of Dabanga in Tanzania. The LUMKO Kit to which refers in this article is available for consultation in SEDOS Documentation Centre. We are grateful for this to the Sacred Heart Missionaries who direct the LUMKO Institute and who presented this complete LUMKO set to the Centre. It is an extremely valuable collection of aids to many aspects of mission work, tested over a period of many years, and designed for involvement of the lay people at all levels as the Bishop testifies. - Ed).*

### AMECEA Bishops.

I would like to write freely and frankly on certain aspects of our methods of apostolate, especially on the policy decided upon by the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of East Africa (AMECEA), concerning the formation of small christian communities (SSCs). In their meeting in 1973 and again in 1976 at Zomba, the bishops discussed in depth the question of the laity. They were very conscious that the question of the participation of the laity had never really been solved. The old problem of our paternalistic approach, by which the bishops and the priests did practically everything while the laity did very little, had not seriously been faced.

They came to the conclusion that they must find a system by which the laity really became involved in the running of the Church. Of the different systems proposed to them, they decided that the formation of SCCs was the most suitable at the present moment. This is not to say that it was the only method nor that it is necessarily the best, but at least it existed and in certain places had succeeded in making the people

more self-supporting, more reliant on their own efforts and more self governing in religious matters. It was also much recommended at the Second Vatican Council.

### "LUMKO" FOR A SELF-SUPPORTING LAITY

When we priests heard of the AMECEA bishops' resolution, the reaction of most of us was to support them wholeheartedly in their efforts to implement their courageous decision. And since most of us were rather ignorant about this movement, we felt that we had a duty to study it in some depth.

My own experience was as follows. At Zomba, a religious sister made me a present of one of the kits of LUMKO. I read this and came to the conclusion that it was the answer to our prayers. This was something I had wanted ever since arriving in Africa. I ordered the other available LUMKO literature and from then on my whole approach to the laity apostolate changed radically.

First, however, I had to satisfy myself that this was what the

Catholics themselves wanted. Was this going to be another system imposed from above or did it really correspond to the desires of the people themselves? My Bishop asked me to work on SCCs in order to see what the local reaction would be. This I did full-time for 10 years. Hence the "SOTIK SCC TEAM".

#### Lay Participation.

The conclusion of our investigation was extremely positive. We gave 300 3-day seminars which were attended by 19,000 lay people. Normally you would expect the people to be numerous on the first day, then less numerous on the second, diminishing on the third day to a mere handful. The contrary happened. We concluded that this movement was very acceptable to the people. It could truthfully be said to come from below rather than from above, not surprising when you come to think of it, because the idea of community is deeply rooted in the people's customs.

#### Clergy - religious participation.

Our second conclusion was that, although the movement concerned the laity and the initiative came mainly from them, the cooperation of the bishops, the priests, the sisters and the catechists was essential. This cooperation had to be well-informed so that the hierarchy and the parish staffs knew exactly what the SCC was. This of course presupposed that all studied the existing literature and profited from the various courses being held in the dioceses.

#### SCCs SUCCESS OR FAILURE?

What are the results of the campaign which was supposed to have been launched at the request of the bishops themselves?

#### Success

On the credit side there are the enthusiastic efforts of some bishops, first of all to understand thoroughly the implications of the new methods and then to propagate them. Certain bishops and religious congregations went so far as to finance the distribution of the more useful of the LUMKO kits and booklets to those parishes which guaranteed to use them. Some bishops faithfully attended the seminars and brought with them many priests and religious sisters.

Knowing that attending seminars does not guarantee the success of SCCs, there were priests who organized a follow-up among the participants. These priests have indeed had their reward. Where the cooperation of the parish staff has been complete, the results in many places has been quite astonishing. Some parishes have experienced a veritable renewal.

#### Failure.

But where this cooperation did not exist, where the local priests did not do their homework nor even bothered to follow the courses given in their parishes, the results have been a big zero. When this happens it is customary to blame the SCC system, but in fact it is usually not in any way the fault of the SCC method. It reminds me of the remark of G.K. Chesterton who when asked why the Catholic Church had failed, replied: "Christianity has not failed. It has never been tried!"

*Salva reverentia*, not all the bishops have honoured their collective resolution to organize SCCs in their dioceses. If you chance to see the reports of the bishops' conferences, you will be surprised often to notice that affairs of the SCCs are rarely mentioned. - astonishing when you consider it is the official policy

of the Church in East Africa. It is possible also to visit dioceses where you discover after some discreet inquiries, that the people have not the faintest idea what a SCC is all about! It is my conviction that unless the SCC is organized on diocesan and even national level, it will never really take root.

One wonders also whether our numerous religious sisters are informed about the SCC method and really play their part. I personally have met very few who are interested in spite of the fact that they could be really useful in helping the people to organize themselves. An entirely new field of apostolate would be open to them. Some more discreet inquiries will quickly reveal that most seminaries do not include the organization of the laity in their syllabus. The result is that many future priests know nothing about it.

#### Resistance of the Clergy.

It is possible that the resistance of some bishops and priests comes from the fact that they think this system will make them lose some of their authority. My reply is that if they really get involved with their laity they will be respected more and more. Real authority is not obtained by imposing oneself by force but in cooperating with the people in their legitimate desire to work for God's kingdom.

I remember an incident in a village called Kamaura. We gave a course there and were disappointed that practically all the participants were women. We returned there three years later and, to our great surprise half the audience consisted of men. I congratulated them, whereupon a man stood up and said: "Three years ago, we men did not attend such meetings. But then our

parish priest organized the SCCs with us and we men realised that we had a role to play. Since then we come to all the meetings". This remark summarises all that I have been writing about. We organize SCCs to help the laity to see that they have a role to play.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR A FRESH START

I will take the risk of becoming a *persona non grata* by the following suggestions:

- that the bishops at diocesan level organize courses for all the priests of their areas;

- that they consider the possibility of introducing mobile teams which could organize seminars at local level in order to educate people on how to run the SCC. I am sure the priests would be gratified to see what large numbers of people attend such meetings;

- that all priests and sisters would feel in conscience bound to update themselves on SCCs. The ideal would be for them to order the more useful items of the LUMKO literature (i.e. all the booklets and kits N. 18, 19, 20, 3 and 10). They are in English. We have tried unsuccessfully to get them translated into Kiswahili. Order them from LUMKO, 59 Cachet Rd, Germiston, S. Africa. Payment must be in foreign currency.

In conclusion, I think that the 1976 decision of the AMECEA Bishops was one of the most far-sighted resolutions they have ever made. In my opinion the implementation of that decision has been less brilliant, but there is still time to rectify your past mistakes.

Ref. Petit Echo. 1991/1. Missionaries of Africa, C.P. 9078, 00165 Rome.



growing apathy and the marginalization of the simple people." A majority of the population refuses to continue "believing in anybody or anything whatsoever". Even trade unions, popular movements and political parties are no longer capable "of reaching the people."

For this reason, the Church appeals to all Brazilian citizens, urging them to get involved in the unjust situation of 53 million Brazilians who suffer from malnutrition, hunger and need. The question is: "How can a prophetic spirit be rekindled, hope restored and solidarity and dignity fostered?"

In its declaration, the CPT demands that the administration of President Collor de Mello, as well as the élite of Brazilian society have to be called to account. It accuses the government of attending only to the wishes of the wealthy classes.

The commission suggests: "It is necessary to go into the streets and the houses, into the factories and the communities, in order to rouse the anger and indignation of the whole population against such inhuman and degrading conditions."

Ref. Information, Missionszentrale Der Franziskaner E.V. Godesberg. No.3, March 1991.

#### RERUM NOVARUM CENTENARY

(U.S.A.)

(Extracts from an address given by Bishop Joseph Francis of Newark, N.J., at a meeting in Washington, February 24-27, 1991, on the Centenary of RERUM NOVARUM. He was one of 5 Bishops and Cardinals to speak on recent U.S. Bishops' Social Pastoral letters. Bishop Francis spoke on the Pastoral on Racism, "Brothers and Sisters to Us" issued by the U.S. Bishops in 1979. He was chairman of the committee that wrote the Pastoral).

Rerum Novarum was written when African Americans were just emerging from the most

savage form of institutional injustice experienced by any group of individuals in the history of this country - in this country which profited most from the institution of slavery. Yet society and the church saw no evil, heard no evil and spoke no words of condemnation. Except for a few brave souls among the Quakers, there was nothing but silence and acquiescence - the situation was compounded by the fact that some prominent religious orders of men and women were themselves slaveholders. Other minorities, especially Native Americans, fared as badly.

"Brothers and Sisters To Us". In essence, the pastoral states what the church had never before stated so explicitly:

"Racism is an evil which endures in our society and in our church.... Racism is a sin: a sin that divides the human family, blots out the image of God among specific members of that family and violates the fundamental human dignity of those called to be children of the same Father. Racism is the sin that some human beings are inherently superior and others essentially inferior because of race. It is the sin that makes racial characteristics the determining factor for the exercise of human rights."

The challenge of this pastoral is more urgent now than it has ever been. Racism is healthier, more insidious and more active than it has been for decades. It has come out of closets in places where we least expected to find it. It is manifested in the conduct and expressions of young high school and college students, particularly in the East and the Midwest. Some prominent university and college professors and administrators openly deride the intelligence of African-Americans and other minorities, and espouse the notion that these minorities are incapable of learning.

Young African-American college students are leaving predominantly white universities for black colleges - because they are afraid and feel they are shortchanged educationally. But I must say that young African-Americans are also leaving the Catholic Church in very large numbers.

The U.S. government, including the judiciary, is overturning constitutional guarantees which were won at the cost of tremendous suffering and determination. White hate groups have captured the sympathy and imagination of large segments of our population, including Catholics. Catholic students in many parts of this country flee from integrated Catholic schools, and some of the most violent racial incidents have taken place in Catholic enclaves. Catholic institutions, including dioceses, continue to deny African-Americans and Hispanics leadership positions and promotions.

One thing is quite clear. The Catholic Church is losing the brightest and the best of its young Africans and Hispanic Americans. We have witnessed the events that took place in Washington a year ago. Whether we agree or not, the media coverage that attended the founding of Imani temples in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia and New Orleans cannot be simply dismissed as a passing fad. Much of the dissatisfaction has to do with the church's response to racism.

Ref. Origins, Vol. 20; No. 40; March 14,

#### A LETTER TO THE I.M.F.

(ENGLAND)

From:

Medical Mission Sisters  
41 Chatsworth Gardens  
Acton, London, W3 9Lp  
England

To:

Mr. Michel Camdessus  
Managing Director  
International Monetary Fund  
700 19th Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20431  
U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Camdessus,

This letter comes to you in the name of the Medical Mission Sisters. We are an international Roman Catholic religious congregation of

almost 700 women. For 65 years our professionally trained members have been working in the field of health care in the developing countries. We currently have Sisters working in India, Pakistan, Indonesia, Philippines, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Zaire, Ghana, Ethiopia, Brazil, Venezuela, Nicaragua and Peru.

The purpose of this letter is to join our voices to the cry of poor people. We can no longer remain silent as we watch the health status of peoples decline.

We speak from settings of urban and "bush" hospitals in the service of marginal people, primary health care projects in rural villages and urban slums, community development and nutritional endeavours. In addition to professional involvement at the local level we are members of regional, national, and international organizations for the promotion of health.

We see that there are causal linkages between IMF adjustment programmes and human misery. We observe that the usual experience of countries seeking to implement IMF conditionalities includes: reduction of services and subsidies available to the poor, cuts in medical, educational and social programmes, and less food available and at higher prices (due to export promotion for hard currency).

The human cost of these debt repayment schemes are obvious to us as we daily and year after year accompany people in life and death situations. What we see is increasing malnutrition, a higher incidence of disease, and more deaths especially for women and children.

Correspondence and on-going work reports from the "field"

give the following examples which re-capitulate our growing preoccupation.

From a rural hospital in Africa we hear: There were more than triple the number of deaths from meningitis compared to last year. Anemia due to malaria is increasing and many young children come in heart failure due to anemia, which is often irreversible."

One of our members in Latin America writes: "The price of medicines is increasing at a galloping rate, sometimes doubling in price overnight... Most infectious diseases are on the increase as people earn less, eat less, and work longer hours. The body suffers and the mental stress from trying to survive from day to day is reaching alarming proportions.... The majority of people who are sick do not have money. The result is that most people simply live with sickness."

The out-patient statistics from still another rural hospital in Africa show that the incidence of upper respiratory tract infections (not TB) has doubled from 1987-1989.

Sociologists have observed a debt-death link: the more interest payments a nation is sending to Western banks, the lower the average life expectancy of its citizens. (1) In the 40 least developed countries, per capita spending on health has dropped by 50% (2) We have noticed that health services suffer to a greater degree than sectors regarded as being more economically productive.

In 1988 Third World nations paid back to the rich nations and multi-lateral lending institutions \$43 billion more than they received. Several countries have interest

charges in excess of their annual foreign earnings.

We see that many governments are faced with a terrible dilemma--whether to meet the needs of their people or the demands of creditors. We view this problem as one of social and moral dimensions.

We therefore request your institution in dialogue with the banking industry to consider granting total debt write-off by creditors. The survival of many of our world's peoples depends on your action.

Thanking you for your attention to this matter and awaiting your response, I remain

Yours sincerely,

Sister Sarah Summers  
Superior General

(1) Sell R., Kunitz S. "The debt crisis and the end of an era in mortality decline". Studies in Comparative International Development, 1987.

(2) UNICEF, 1988

cc: Mr. Barber Conable  
President  
The World Bank  
Washington, D.C, 20433  
U.S.A.

(The Medical Sisters wrote in similar vein also to the President of the World Bank. Both letters are courteous and informed. In a covering letter to us, Sr. Summers asks if other missionary societies would consider writing to the World Bank and the IMF. Their members are very often in a position to be aware of the disastrous effects of IMF and World Bank policies on the poorer section of populations in developing countries).