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IN THIS ISSUE

This issue contains the texts of the conferences given by Donal O'Mahony, OFM.Cap at the SEDOS seminar on the INTERNATIONAL DEBT AND ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS held at the Divine Word College on November 5, 1992.

The texts of the conferences on A LOOK BACK TO SANTO DOMINGO given at the SEDOS General Assembly on December 14, 1992 will be published in full in a later issue of the SEDOS Bulletin.

This issue contains also the text of the Executive Director's Report to the SEDOS Annual Assembly.

Mission Moments are from Bangladesh, Peru, Mauritius and Uganda.

NEWS

We are happy to announce the appointment of the new Executive Director of SEDOS. He is Walter van Holzen, SVD. Fr. van Holzen has been for many years in Paraguay and is at present in Benin, West Africa. He will take up his appointment in February, 1993.

Bill Jenkinson, CSSp., completes his service in SEDOS as of December 31st, 1992. He will take up an appointment at the Generalate of his Holy Spirit Congregation in Rome as of 1st April, 1993.



We wish all our SEDOS Bulletin readers a very happy Christmas. May the Light of the World brighten your lives with peace and joy at Christmas and throughout the coming year.

Buon Natale

Joyeux Noël

Frohe Weihnachten

Happy Christmas

Feliz Navidad

Nollaig faoi shonas
Zalig Kerstfeest

God Jul
Manuia le Kerisimasi

Glückliches Neues Jahr
Heureuse Nouvelle Année

Prospero Año Nuevo
Blian faoi mhaise

Gelukkig Nieuwjaar
Happy New Year

Hamamas bilong Nupela Yia
Bom Natal

Felice Anno Nuovo

INTERNATIONAL DEBT AND ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS (1)

SEDOS SEMINAR, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1992

Donal O'Mahony, OFM.Cap

PART 1

RELATIONALITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

There are two key words in my vocabulary which are pivotal to the subject of international debt and ecology - relationality and responsibility.

Relationality

The word relationality conjures up an active dynamism that rarely fails to evoke inside me a sense of excitement. It is an awareness that someone or something is actively signalling to commune. It can be a person in a room full of persons or a baby in a cot. It can be a single star in a night-sky full of stars or it can be a freshly fallen leaf among a carpet of leaves. It can be the breathing lungs hidden inside the heart of a mountain ridge or the rounded pregnancy of an ocean swell as it approaches welcoming shores. It can be a tall tree standing in its aristocratic stiffness or a delicate flower bending in its sinewy littleness. It can be Jesus of Nazareth beckoning: 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened' or, it can be the Father contemplatively inviting creatures to share in the implosive love of the Trinity.

This movement to communion, to be fruitful, needs to be reciprocated, otherwise it remains at the level of the unconscious. That is why it should be activated by us on a regular basis. It is all part of the process we call the direct divine-human covenant of relationship.

The experience of relationality can be emotionally felt. It is a deep mutual sharing of oneness with the other which is quite different from any intellectual conception of unity. It inspires and awakens creativity in people as well as deeper commitment to compassion. That is why we say it is a key term when linking the international debt to the question of ecology. In the debt-ecology equation as we will see, creativity and compassion, which truly flow from relationality, are often lacking.

Responsibility

The second pivotal word is responsibility. This is a much more sober word; so sober, indeed, that one tends to deepen one's voice when pronouncing it - "re-spon-si-bil-i-ty." It is a monitoring word. It frequently stops us in our tracks. It asks us to think, to check - to check especially the excesses or defects involved in the conscious or unconscious process of relationality. Responsibility, we might say, is the protector and corrector of relationality. It is an important word in every ethical and moral consideration. But, Oh! how easily it can become an autocratic or boring word when it is disconnected from the integrating dynamism of relationality. That is why the word responsibility when used by government ministers or banking executives to defend their lending policies

towards the South, can sound sometimes so hollow, autocratic and boring.

However, these two terms are important in the debate concerning international debt and ecology. Just as there is a clear relationship between North-South; urban-rural; sacred-secular; body-spirit; so there is a relationship between international debt and ecology.

A CHILDHOOD MEMORY

May I tell you a childhood memory, as a kind of parable, to illustrate the connection between relationality and responsibility? There are two children in our family. My sister, Mary, is one year younger than I am, and we have always shared a very special relationship. Among my vivid childhood recollections is playing a game with my sister in our back-garden. The game consisted in looking for isolated daisies and putting them beside other daisies so that they might not feel separated or apart.

Now, a daisy, for those of you who come from other climates, is a small wild flower with white petals shaped like a chalice and an orange or yellow centre. In fact, if you invert a daisy, and put it over your head, it becomes a replica of the sun with rays pouring down all over your head and body. Just try it sometime; you will feel its warmth (as my sister and I often did in the garden!). You can also hear the waves of the ocean if you place a sea shell to your ear. How soon we lose these feelings as adults?

Mary and I would spend a whole morning (to the delight of my mother, I'm sure!) plucking isolated daisies and transplanting them. And we did all this with such high purpose and upright motive. In fact, we were exercising a version of relationality. What was missing, of course, was its co-relative word, **responsibility**. My sister and I did not understand that in plucking the isolated daisies and propping them up against others, we were acting

irresponsibly. First, from a relational point of view, we destroyed the dignity of the isolated daisy by imposing upon it a relationship of dependency as we had to lean the uprooted daisy against a standing one! Secondly, from an aesthetic and ecological point of view we destroyed the balance in the garden by uprooting the daisies the way we did. And thirdly, precisely because we imposed a relationship of dependency on each of the isolated daisies - a relationship of weakness - my sister and I consolidated our lack of responsibility. Indirectly we caused those unfortunate daisies to slowly close-up, roll over and die.

CREDITOR-DEBTOR NATION RELATIONSHIP

Does any of this suggest a possible parallel to the international debt and ecology? Perhaps, what my sister and I were doing with the daisies, the creditor nations and banks of the world are doing to debtor nations? With upright motives (well, more or less!), the creditor nations of the world are irresponsibly diminishing the dignity of debtor nations. They are doing so by some unsound ecological transplanting, effected in part by the mechanism of inhuman economic adjustment programmes. These programmes are imposed at the behest of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and based on western economic models.

A relationship of dependency invariably follows as the burden of debt increases. So does ecological degradation as the need to earn foreign exchange grows in the debtor countries: a) through the exploitation of valuable non-renewable resources; b) through the rising accumulation of pollutants; c) through the falling stocks of groundwaters, forests, fish, soil; d) through reduced investment in human resources (education, health care, shelter). All of these are part responses to adjustment policies imposed on them. Let us take two concrete examples.

Environmentally Destructive Examples

1) Forests - The rain forests are being destroyed and indirectly the habitat of the rarest fauna and flora in the world. One of the motivating reasons for such destruction is to get more foreign currency by acquiring grazing ground for cattle to satisfy the food restaurants and hamburger outlets of the North. The climatic changes that such deforestation is causing, and the catastrophe it is creating for thousands of native Indians who have had their homes in the forests for centuries, can hardly be overstated.

2) Prawns - A very different kind of example can be found in Negros and some provinces in Mindanao where a new export phenomenon is threatening the eco-system. This is the craze for prawns, which is being encouraged by the government in the Philippines to raise more foreign exchange. Prawns constitute one of the country's fastest growing and most lucrative export products. Prawn exports rose almost 8-fold from 1980 to 1987. But a recent study, conducted by the internationally known scholars Robin Broad and John Kavanagh, has shown that fresh water supplies are rapidly diminishing on the islands - in some places they have been reduced by 30 per cent.

The reason is that since prawns are raised on a large scale basis, huge turbines are used to pump as much as 25,000 gallons of water per minute into prawn ponds. At the same time saline levels have risen in areas where water tables have been pumped dry of fresh water. If this continues unchecked, land in Negros Occidental will eventually be ruined and become unsuitable for agriculture and even aquaculture. So, while the prawn culture has been hailed as the saviour of the export economy in the Philippines, it could become a major destroyer of the eco-system. Here is a classical example of where an IMF structural adjustment policy should be replaced by a sustainable development policy, and the debtor country be compensated accordingly for loss of income, by the IMF or the International Environment Fund.

THE PROBLEM IS NOT SIZE

Before proceeding further, I will say something about this international debt and how it came about. In 1980, the Brandt Report on the North-South crisis was issued. This report warned not only that the world economy was already in recession, but that it was going to get worse. Ten years later, the conclusions of the report are more dramatically verified.

While most of the First World industrialised countries were able to cushion aspects of this world recession - in great part by transmitting it to the South through the mechanism of international trade and finance - the Third World was virtually put into a position of insolvency. In 5 years, the total foreign debt of developing countries almost doubled, from 650 billion dollars in 1982 to 1,190 billion dollars in 1987.

In some ways this is an enormous sum of money, but compared with the size of the world economy, it is relatively small. Consider, for example, that the top 200 multinational companies have an annual turnover of about 3,000 billion dollars, nearly twice more than the total international debt of all the Third World countries combined. The size of the debt in the Third World need not be, by itself, a problem for the developing countries. In fact, it has been shown that in the 19th century, the United States and Canada had even larger debts with respect to the size of their economies.

What is unique to the present international debt is that it is in great part immoral in its origin, and certainly immoral in its consequences. Immoral in its origins, because these debts were often entered into by military governments or dictators and the money used for reasons other than what they were marked for. Immoral in its consequences, and this is the sin that cries out to heaven, because of the high rates of interest which the people must pay the First World countries. The outflow of capital has grown so heavy that it is cancelling-out the positive benefits of aid, both from governments

and development agencies. The net transfer of capital out of the developing world is now about 20 billion dollars per year; that is, the equivalent of every man, woman and child in the developing countries paying 5 dollars per year to the people of the First World. It is this perverse flow of resources from the poor to the rich which is making it impossible for many countries in the South to even begin to think of producing durable technologies and products to meet the real needs of their people - technologies and products which do not use up primary resources or degrade the natural environment.

ORIGIN OF DEBT CRISIS

To understand how all this happened, it is necessary to go back to the origin of the debt crisis. After the rapid rise in oil prices in 1973, the big commercial banks in the United States, Europe and Japan were flooded with dollar deposits - so-called petrodollars - made by the oil exporting countries which suddenly found themselves with abundant cash resources. The private banks became desperate to find new clients to take these deposits, for, as all bankers know, money at a standstill not only fails to generate profit, but actually loses value through inflation. Private banks began to encourage the bigger and apparently more stable countries in the developing world to borrow heavily for development purposes. They were particularly attracted to countries like Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Chile and Venezuela in Latin America; Nigeria and Zambia in Africa; South Korea, the Philippines and Indonesia in Asia.

As private banks were not going to risk giving loans to poorer countries, so the World Bank set up a new "soft-loan arm" for poorer countries. Long-term loans were given to them at lesser interest rates, with repayment of up to 50 years. The World Bank's task is to encourage long-term investment in economic reconstruction and development, while the International Monetary Fund was originally set-up to tide over short-term cash-flow problems. However,

it became apparent by the early 80's, that little of the enormous mountain of debt being acquired by the developing countries had been used to promote the social and economic development of ordinary people. The huge debt was already becoming a monster whose appetite could only be satisfied by more and more loans. And the money was often being used irresponsibly. For example, the Marcos regime in the Philippines and some of the military governments in Latin America were quite corrupt, permitting and even conniving in massive capital flight, and so bringing no development to their respective nations.

Examples could be multiplied. Huge amounts of borrowed money for social development were spent on armaments; more, on the purchasing abroad of expensive consumer goods. Some countries were carrying out grandiose projects, such as the construction of luxury blocks of apartments in Chile. Others developed multi-billion dollar projects based on untested technology. In the Philippines construction of a nuclear reactor had to be abandoned, when it was discovered to have been located on a dormant volcano, but only after millions of dollars had been used up.

WOMEN AND INTERNATIONAL DEBT

In a very harrowing way, economic pressures as a result of the international debt, have placed enormous burdens on women in the South. Because of the increased migration of the male work force, following IMF adjustments, millions of women have been left as heads of their households with the task of providing for dependents. Many women have been incorporated into wage-labour employment under the most unfavourable conditions and wages. Above all they have to bear the brunt of the economic and emotional consequences connected with structural adjustments policies, increased infant mortality, malnutrition, and the reappearance of diseases that were once eradicated.

Thailand's debt, to take an example, rose from 125 million dollars in 1980 to 20 billion dollars in 1988. In a desperate attempt to earn dollars to pay interest on this snowballing debt, the government borrowed yet more money. With this money it developed its tourist industry, one of the main features of which is prostitution. Tourism has now overtaken rice as the largest foreign exchange earner in Thailand. Between 700,000 and 1,000,000 bar-girls and prostitutes are said to operate in Bangkok alone. Poverty is the "push factor" which draws so many of these girls into this branch of tourism. Such are the indirect consequences of the international debt to human lives.

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter, *Centesimus Annus* (1991), made a telling point in highlighting this destruction of the human ecology. In one passage, the Pope says:

Although people are rightly worried - though much less than they should be - about preserving the natural habitats of the various animal species threatened with extinction because they realise that each of these species makes its particular contribution to the balance of nature in general, - yet, too little effort is made

to safeguard the moral conditions for an authentic human ecology.

Sadly, the issue of foreign debt is often treated as if it were purely a financial problem. It lacks both the concept of **relationality** and **responsibility**. As a result, social and ecological consequences have been largely ignored; even when not ignored, little has been done by way of solution. Indeed, creditor nations continue to ask debtor nations to do what they themselves have not done: open their economies, liberalise their markets, privatise and reduce state intervention to an absolute minimum.

Meanwhile, the North is selling to the South technologies often out of harmony with sustainable development and also out of harmony with nature and the community. And even if sometimes the technology is appropriate, the products they are producing are inappropriate. An aspect, perhaps least reflected upon, is the transmission to the South of Northern un-ecological cultural lifestyles, personal motivations and status structures, including the advertising industry. It all sounds so bleak, if not hopeless, but there is evidence of the beginning of change.

PART 2

TOWARDS A BEGINNING OF CHANGE

Today, the whole world is faced with a dilemma which it has never before had to face: an essentially open world economic system is pushing against a closed terrestrial ecological system.

People in the rich countries may continue to bemoan national deficits, trade deficits, corporation deficits, international deficits. All these deficits were manageable as long as the Earth was not in deficit. Now it is the earth which is definitively and irreparably in deficit, in its air and water and soil and in all its life systems. It is no longer enough to call for an "efficiency revolution" as the North often did in the past. Efficiency is still important

but what matters now is the overall scale of the world economy with respect to nature, not the more efficient allocation of resources. To use an image: even if the cargo on the boat is distributed more efficiently, the boat will sink when its weight surpasses a certain limit.

Paradoxically, the connection of ecology to the international debt is now strengthening the bargaining position of the South. Debtor countries, when re-negotiating their current debt situation are appealing to the enlightened self-interest of the North concerning the overall ecological problem. Such motives are usually more effective than

moral appeals, of which there have been plenty in the past. Already, at the UNCED conference, in Rio de Janeiro, the countries of the South were using this new leverage to good advantage. Ecological degradation, after all, has no political boundaries. The felling of rainforests and consequent climatic changes can be as destructive to the North as to the South.

AN IDENTITY OF INTEREST

Consequently, a situation now exists where there is "an identity of interest," at least in an operational sense, on both sides, North and South. In many of the debt reduction schemes, one gets the feeling that the North is already taking this "identity of interest" into account. And this makes us think that there is some evidence pointing towards the beginning of change. At the UNCED meeting in Rio de Janeiro in June (1992), for example, governments of the world, with the exception of the United States, pledged their support to link development and environment.

Recent writings and commentaries by economists, bankers and financial institutions also give grounds for hope. For example, The World Bank brought out an excellent report on poverty less than two years ago. According to commentators, it was not only very well researched, but very fair and objective in its presentation. Today, it is quoted more by people on the political left than the political right.

Again, at the UNCED meeting, Kenneth Newcombe, the World Bank coordinator for the new Global Environmental Facility (GEF), admitted openly that the Bank had financed environmentally destructive projects in the past. "But now," he added, "we have adopted strict environmental impact assessments on all World Bank projects." He went on to illustrate this by saying, "we have pledged never to finance the building of roads through virgin rain forest."

TOO NARROW A PERSPECTIVE

The countries of the South, however, have another power which can strengthen their arm in dealing with the debt

problem. They know that as major borrowers, they comprise an important element of total bank finances. Banks, even governments, cannot afford to face any major defaults with equanimity. While it may be true to say that banks are not as vulnerable to individual defaults by developing countries as they were in the 80's, yet if there were a major default by a number of countries, the world's banking system could quickly go into crisis for they would find themselves in a position whereby they would have lent out more than the sum of their assets. (cf. *Debt And Danger* by H. Lever and C. Huhne).

The key word responsibility should, therefore, be invoked in such a scenario. Any serious de-linking from the North, at least in this manner and with this speed, would most probably lead to a crash in their already depressed economies. This, in turn, would do irreparable damage to both North and South. It could also lead to many forms of piracy and terrorism.

NEW ANGLES AND PERSPECTIVES

There is a widespread call today for the South and the North to approach their respective problems from new angles and perspectives. The old confrontational way of approach has to yield to, or at least include, new and more constructive ways of thinking. We will first examine what this might signify for the South.

It is now widely accepted that if developing countries are to advance and prosper, they must rely to a large extent on helping each other. In other words, the South - South link must be fostered and developed. A crucial requirement of such collective self-reliance is an expansion of mutual trade. Little progress has been made here. One obstacle seems to be the formidable complexity of the negotiations that would be needed to establish new trading and monetary arrangements for the 100 or so countries concerned. But this is a technical question and could be solved if good will were present.

One imaginative suggestion is that developing countries as a whole might

take the essentially simple step of creating a new currency and allocating it among themselves. This new currency could be used in part-settlement of transactions between them. Substantial benefits could accrue to developing countries from the adoption of such a proposal. (Frances Stewart develops this further in *North - South and South - South*).

In the short term, this could give the South an incentive to switch trade away from developed countries and towards each other. Countries with spare capacity, particularly in the manufacturing sector, would then find new markets; countries with a shortage of foreign exchange would find a new source of credit. In the longer run, as the incentive to build up new trading links between developing countries bore fruit, there could be increasing scope not only for mutually beneficial specialisation for the achievements of economies of scale, but also new strength for the bargaining position of the South in its trade relations with the North.

However, the developing countries need to face up to their own internal problems of corruption. Political patronage, financial mismanagement, and the adoption of inappropriate technologies and environmentally unsound policies must all be tackled, if the South - South link is to be an effective option.

INDUSTRIALISED NORTH THE GREATEST DESTROYER

Major challenges face the developed countries also. They too must try to see the debt-ecology question from new angles and perspectives. It is no secret that the industrialised North is the greatest destroyer of the world's resources with its capacity to produce luxuries with capital-intensive technologies. The nations of the South are dependent components in this. It is their resources which are used or sucked away by the industrial trading houses of the rich world.

Cars

Take, for example, the ever-increasing problem of car ownership. Apart from statistics like 322,305 people injured in car accidents in one year in England and over 5,000 killed, which in itself is an enormous disregard for human ecology, the car also remains one of the single biggest consumers of the planet's nonrenewable resources: energy, plastics, metals, chemical solvents and paints. We tend to concentrate debate about car pollution on vehicle exhaust. But this emphasis overlooks the pollution emitted through the entire car 'cycle': mining for the raw materials used to make cars; pumping crude oil from the ground; transporting it around the world and then refining it into petrol, which then has to be transported to petrol filling stations; manufacturing car components, car accessories and cars themselves; pouring used lubricating oil into sewers; setting up car, and car tyre, dumps.

By the time a car leaves the production line it has already generated a long trail of pollution. Then come the roads through built-up areas of cities and throughout the countryside and the demolition of houses and families uprooted to accommodate cars in city car parks. But it does not stop there. Cars also contribute to global warming; desertification (stripping of trees and vegetation when mining); concretization (when land is smothered by concrete or asphalt); deforestation (in construction of new roads); decarbonation (from oil going into sewers). So the pollution emitted by vehicle exhausts is just a fraction of that which is released throughout the car cycle. The saying is absolutely true: "There is no such thing as a green car."

Meat

It is not only in the area of producing luxuries, that the North is being ecologically destructive, but in the day-to-day way we eat, especially those of us who by choice eat a lot of meat. The South may have the excuse of raising cattle to get foreign exchange, as a

requirement of servicing their international debt but no such excuse exists in the North! The raising of cattle contributes in a major way to the ecological destruction of humankind and nature.

I have just received a gift of John Robbins' new book, *May All Be Fed*, from an American friend I met in Rio. John Robbins is a fascinating person. He turned away from the family owned Baskin-Robbins ice-cream business which, is the largest in the United States, and founded Earthsave which is dedicated to the transition to more healthful and environmentally sound food choices. It is said of him that he has single-handedly turned the attention of America to the politics of food and diet. Although he is still a young man, his life and work have been the subject of major articles and television programmes.

FOOD FOR ALL

In his book published in 1992, Robbins points the way towards a new ecologically centered diet that can help resurrect both body and soul and restore a proper relationship to the planet. But in addition, he compassionately shows that it is possible to eliminate world hunger, not only in the distant future but today, by saying goodbye to our meat diet. And he does so with all the gentleness and humility of a mystic.

"There are few places," he writes, "where the spiritual, political, personal and ecological dimensions of our lives meet as fully as they do when we sit down to our breakfasts, lunches, and dinners." His conclusion is that "a reduction in meat consumption may well be the most potent single act we can do to halt the destruction of our environment and preserve our precious natural resources."

Here are some quotations randomly selected from his book:

- The livestock population of the United States daily consumes enough grain and soybeans to feed more than

five times the entire human population of America.

- Malnutrition is the principal cause of infant and child mortality in developing nations. In Guatemala, as in many Third World countries, much of the land and other resources for food production is given over to producing meat. Yet 75 percent of the children there under five years of age are undernourished. The meat produced does not go to those in need. Only the wealthy can afford it. The rest is exported.

- In almost every country in the world, more and more forests are being cut down to clear land to grow cattle feed or to graze cattle. Prairies, grasslands, and rangelands are being destroyed by the overgrazing of livestock. Cropland soils are eroding under the stress of producing the grain needed for a meat-based diet rather than for a plant-based one.

- Twenty-five years ago, livestock consumed only 6 percent of Mexico's grain. Today, the figure is over 50 percent. This is the same trend we see throughout the Third World.

- Cattle and other livestock are devouring much of the grain produced on the planet. It needs to be emphasized that this is a new phenomenon, unlike anything ever experienced before.

- I had assumed that the great quantities of grain exported by the United States went to feed hungry people. But I was wrong. Two thirds of all the grain exported to other countries from the United States goes to feed livestock rather than to feed people.

- In country after country, the demand for meat among the rich is squeezing out staple production for the poor.

- An acre of prime land annually yields 40,000 pounds of potatoes, or 40,000 pounds of onions, or 30,000 pounds of carrots, or 50,000 pounds of

tomatoes, or 60,000 pounds of celery. But if that acre of land is used to produce beef, the yield is a paltry 250 pounds.

- If Americans reduced their meat consumption by only 10 percent, enough grain would be saved to feed sixty million people. That is close to the total number of people who die of hunger-related disease each year. (What if everyone in the North did the same; what if everyone in the South did the same?)

John Robbins, with thorough documentation, goes on to expose the commercial and political forces that cause the affluent to suffer heart disease, osteoporosis and other diet-related diseases, and also to cause the poor to be deprived of a basic human right - ample, wholesome food. I recommend the book. It helps us also to understand in a very down-to-earth way that while the world's environmental problems may be interlinked, its roots ultimately lie in the rich countries in the way we live.

PRIORITIES FOR CHANGE

As a first priority, the North must cut down on its high consumption levels in order to reduce its overbloated use of world resources. The monstrous economic machine of the North must be changed if the depletion and contamination of resources, pollution, proliferation of toxics, as well as climate change threats, are to stop. The irony is that this over-production of goods is channelled to satisfy the luxury wants of the elite; little is going towards fulfilling the real and human needs of the poorer majority.

The power of the rich countries of the North to pursue their own interests, without the poor having the power to place a check on them, must be singled out as yet another contributory cause of ecological degradation and the existence of the immoral international debt.

So, if the words **relationality** and **responsibility** mean something, the

North should be able to say to the South: 'We have a mutual problem.' We belong together as part of humanity. The overriding principle is that we can only all survive by developing responsible relationships. Together, then, we should ask:

How can we responsibly adjust the present unequal relations and have real partnership to save nature and thus ourselves?

How can we mutually review the behaviour performances of the major economic institutions, including the transnational corporations, the international banks, the World Bank, the IMF and GATT?

Can we make these institutions more accountable to the public? Can the decision-making processes in these institutions be opened up to equal participation by people from the North and South? Can local communities have the opportunity to participate in the design of development programmes in the South?

Can immediate institutional arrangements be made to equitably share the adjustment burdens so that (for example) the incomes of the bottom 20 per cent of households are increased to above poverty line, while incomes of the top 10 per cent are reduced by a large percentage?

One thing is sure. There are no simplistic answers to the problems of international debt and/or its connection with ecology, in spite of the rhetoric one sometimes hears. Emotional arguments about cancelling all debts in one fell swoop are not, in my opinion, the way forward.

Four Steps to Change

Any satisfactory medium-term solution to the debt at the North-South level should, however, involve immediately the following four steps by the creditor countries of the North:

- Alter the terms of the debt so that the basic transfer becomes positive.

- Reduce the net present value of the debt.

- Improve the foreign exchange earning capacity of the debtor country, but on the basis of environmentally sound management of natural resources and concern for the poor.

- Reduce interest rates for the debt.

As religious, there is an onus placed

upon us to address this issue, not just in its economic and monetary dimensions but, as Pope John Paul II reminds us, to address its social, political, ecological and human ones too. All people, whether from the North or the South, must understand that the resolution of the debt-ecology nexus is a major challenge in the struggle to build new paths towards a more just and sustainable social and environmental order.

PART 3

THE GROWTH-DEBT-ECOLOGY LINK

Today, the incessant cry of governments, at the instigation of their economic advisers, is that we need more growth, for without growth there can be no new jobs. That is how the industrial and economic system works. I need a job to earn money so as to be able to consume sufficient goods in order to keep other people in jobs. Since everybody wants to live better next year, the system requires incessant growth to sustain it even though such undisciplined growth, like a cancer, is already eating into our Earth and threatening destruction of the planet.

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

Jonathan Porrit, Director of the Tree of Light Project at the recent Earth Summit in Rio, referred to the enormous influence that academic economists are having on politicians today. This elite group is determining agendas in world, regional and national politics and prioritizing what is appropriate. Porrit said that he has never met a group of professional people who are more out of touch with the real world than economists. They weave dreams about international finance, stock markets and capital transfers. They still try to measure wealth in the public sphere by Gross Domestic Product (GDP), though often, in private they will admit that when taken in isolation it is not a useful norm of measurement. Yet, publicly at least, GDP remains the hallmark for

measurement in the economic profession, and economists continue to influence governments in this way of thinking.

Economic growth remains the starting point for the policies of every government. The fact that growth still remains a primary goal for all countries is one sign among others that our brave new world of *green awareness*, should not be exaggerated. Awareness may be growing. That is true. But it is still skin-deep. It is still more about effects than causes. More about palliatives than cures. It is true that governments and people have become aware suddenly of the greenhouse effect and the danger to the ozone layer. It is fashionable for them to blame CFC's because refrigerators and hair sprays and the like represent tangible costs and can, with a little ingenuity, be modified. The real problem however, is much deeper. The problem lies in the extravagant way we live and the still more extravagant way we hope to live next year.

"ECONOMY OF ENOUGH"

Let us forget pollution for a moment. Just think that every percentage point of economic growth adds hundreds of thousands of centrally heated homes, cars, supermarkets and washing machines; more roads, more acres of fields under concrete. To maintain this growth the North needs to sell more to

the Third World, so that it too can grow. That means that energy demands are all the time increasing. China, which contributes 9 per cent of the world's carbon dioxide through its coal burning, expects its energy demand in the year 2030 to be six times what it is at present. India and Brazil, with faster growing populations, have comparable hopes. Russians and East Europeans are in an even great hurry. They cannot wait to get their roomy refrigerators, cars and supermarkets. Western governments, bankers, businessmen and technologists are all eager to help them. But, we ask: what government, which economists, whose bank, will have the courage to stand up and say: we must switch over from an "economy of affluence" to an "economy of the enough"?

As long as our economies continue to function on the basis of uncontrolled growth, it will be impossible to stop the rapid increase of environmental damage being done to the planet. As long as we continue to measure progress by Gross Domestic Product, we will continue to diminish the Gross Earth Product. When we destroy species, when we exhaust the biosystem, they are finished! No power in heaven or on earth can restore extinguished species or fully purify, in historical time, our poisoned aquifers.

Responsible relationships (those words again!) between people of the North and the South and between the peoples of the world and planet earth, demand that once 'the economy of enough' is achieved, it should stop and instead direct itself towards betterment of quality. That is different from growth as we commonly define it. It means that in addition to devising technologies, practices and products that are durable, safe and satisfy real needs, so as to minimize wastage, the "economy of enough" would direct itself also to minimizing the use of non-renewable resources, and introduce alternative renewable ones. In other words, it would concentrate on developing a democratic, technically advanced sustainable society.

A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

Is such a democratic, technically advanced sustainable society possible? A future sustainable society is possible, if we are far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either our physical or our social systems of support. In a sustainable society, population, capital, environment and technology could be balanced so that the per capita material living standard is adequate. The following three principles would be operative in such a sustainable society:

- Rates of use of renewable resources would not exceed rates of regeneration.
- Rates of use of non-renewable resources would not exceed the rate at which sustainable renewable substitutes are developed.
- Rates of pollution emission would not exceed the assimilative capacity of the environment (cf. *Beyond the Limits*, Donella H. Meadow, Dennis I. Meadows, Jorgen Randers).

Features of a Sustainable Society

A sustainable society is something that is positive and modern. It is not necessarily a zero growth society. That concept is as primitive as is the concept of perpetual growth. Rather, a sustainable society would discriminate among kinds of growth and purposes for growth. It would ask what growth is for, who would benefit, what it would cost, how long it would last, and whether it could be accommodated by the earth. After that, quality rather than quantity would be its principal criterion. In other words, a sustainable society would be less interested in growth and more interested in sustainable development.

A sustainable society would not paralyze the poor. First, the poor would not and should not stand for such oppression. Second, keeping any part of the population in poverty would destabilize society. Therefore, for both practical and moral reasons any

sustainable society must be just, fair and equitable.

A sustainable society would not experience the despondency and stagnancy; the high unemployment and bankruptcy, that current market systems undergo when their growth is interrupted. The difference between the transition to a sustainable society and present-day economic recession is like the difference between braking an automobile and crashing it into a brick wall. A deliberate transition to sustainability could take place slowly enough so that people and businesses could find their proper places in a new society.

A sustainable society need not be rigid or centrally controlled. It would need, of course, rules, laws, standards, boundaries and social agreements, as does every human culture. But rules for sustainability, like every workable social rule, would be put into place not to remove freedoms but to create or to protect them. Rules for sustainability could permit more freedom than would ever be possible in a world that continues to crowd against its limits.

Finally, a sustainable society could and should be democratic, evolving, technically advanced, and challenging. It would have plenty of problems to solve and plenty of ways for people to prove themselves, to serve each other, to realize their abilities, and to live good lives - more satisfying lives than any available today (cf. *Beyond the Limits*).

DEBT AND THE DEVELOPED WORLD

I have described the international debt and how it is contributing to the destruction of the environment. Yet rarely, in my opinion, do we extend the logic of our condemnation to how debt in a developed society is contributing to ecological degradation. Debt is the engine which is driving most of the growth in the developed world today. And growth is the greatest destroyer of the environment.

Debt is perhaps one of the least thought-through questions confronting us today.

Consider an individual in our developed society today who has borrowed money to buy a car. Paying the interest on the debt will mean increasing work to produce more so as to pay off the interest on the debt. In so doing the person is becoming part of and is subscribing to *growthism* - which, as we have already indicated, is the prevailing economic policy in governments, for achieving progress.

Forget the planet. Forget the international debt. Forget a sustainable society. Forget that every pound's worth of growth involves an increasing proportion that goes into solving problems generated by the same growth, such as traffic congestion and pollution. Forget all that for the moment. Just reflect on the question: Do we, as individuals living in modern society and reared on the practical wisdom of borrowing capital when buying something like a car (even if it is only advantageous for tax purposes!) - do we realise that we are, by that very fact, being sucked into the *growthism* system that is so destructive of our planet?

Consider the farmer who borrows money from a bank. In producing a level of turn-over which would produce an income for his family, he now must produce sufficient income to pay for the bank manager and his family. There is no other choice. By increasing output to ensure repayment of the debt incurred, the cycle of destructive growth continues.

Consider a company that borrows money to expand its activities within the market. Inevitably it has to fund the payments on that borrowing. The only way to do so is to increase economic activity. It has to produce more, or else go into bankruptcy. The company borrows more capital, and a cycle of debt begins at the expense of the planet.

Consider modern government - most governments in the world, indeed probably all of them, have massive levels of national debt. A certain proportion of GDP of every country is devoted to servicing the interest on the national debt. The more the government borrows, the more it has to grow to pay off the interest payments on the debt incurred. In 1988, Dr. Peter Raven gave a lecture to the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in which he stated that governments and peoples are able to deal with suicide, homicide, and genocide, but they cannot deal with biocide (the killing of the basic life systems of the planet) or geocide (the killing of the planet itself).

Interest

Interest on incurred debt is also playing a major role in our economic system. Borrowing with interest seems "neutral." But it is not. It always favours the rich. This last point can be illustrated. Take the simple fact of the ordinary person who makes arrangements for a housing loan. He/she must pay back the bank loan and then pay back the interest on the loan. This will easily multiply into three times the original amount. The consequences of this quasi-principle - the one who possesses little has to pay interest to the affluent - effects enormously the distribution of prosperity in the world. One can extend that logic to the interest on borrowings being paid by the poor countries to the rich. It becomes clear how interest always favours the lending countries and/or the rich.

Recall also that the poor countries also pay a hidden "secondary interest" which further favours the rich. It is the poor country that exports its raw materials to the North, which is not capital-intensive, and imports its consumer goods, which are capital-intensive. In other words, included in import prices are not only the costs of the raw materials and labour, but the cost of capital, in the form of interest. This pattern maintains the dominant position of the money-lending countries.

DEBT WITHIN INDUSTRIAL COUNTRIES

Do not separate the phenomenon of economic growth from the problem of indebtedness; nor the problem of indebtedness from that of ecology. It is shallow thinking to speak of the international debt as if it were unique to the South. Debt wherever it raises its head, is probably the major cause of destructive economic activity in the world today, and its adverse effect on the planet is enormous. The dominant economic system of the world is based essentially on loans as a means to growth, and growth is the instrument causing the pillaging of the earth.

If I were to ask any person whether he or she would prefer to maintain the rat-race or change it in order to save the planet, the response would be, "Save the planet!" We prefer to have clean air rather than more cars, wholesome food in three varieties rather than industrialised food in 300 varieties, less money in return for less hassle. Unfortunately, none of these choices are on offer. The system of growth which depends on borrowing, does not allow it. While governments and business people are working themselves to death in striving for more and more growth to pay off borrowings, the depleting Earth has less and less to give, and is slowly dying. A long road has yet to be travelled before a true mental change can happen, namely, from the concept of an 'economy of growth' to a concept of an 'economy of enough.' Yet that is the road it seems we will all have to travel.

THE PHENOMENON OF DENIAL

What I have been saying is not new. The link between personal borrowing and the destruction of the planet is not novel. The basic facts of the evil of *growthism* are known to millions of people, especially in the industrial North. Yet, we still try to deny its reality. Social psychologists call this state of mind: the phenomenon of denial. It is a sequential process according to Jonathan Porrit.

INTERNATIONAL DEBT AND ECOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS (2)

SEDOS Seminar, 5th November, 1992

Donal O'Mahony, OFM.CAP

PART 1

1. EARTH SUMMIT AND GLOBAL FORUM '92

INTRODUCTION

Two conferences occurred simultaneously at Rio de Janeiro, the Earth Summit and Global Forum '92. These important conferences on the environment and development were conceived two-and-a-half years earlier. In the words of the Secretary-General of UNCED, Maurice Strong: "It has taken the whole of human history to get to the point where we can bring all the leaders of the world together... if we do not succeed in addressing questions of the environment and development here, there will not be another opportunity in our lifetime."

Official representatives from 178 nations were present at the opening of the Earth Summit on June 3, 1992. "Never in history," they were told, by Maurice Strong "will so much depend on what you do or what you do not do - for yourselves, for others, for your children, for your grandchildren, and for life in all its varied forms."

NGO's who attended had to play a passive role and could not interject or ask any questions of the speakers. Indeed, by comparison to the Global Forum '92, the Earth Summit was downright dull. However, it did offer some educational insights as to how governments operate when negotiating across cultural differences.

Approximately 30,000 persons from 165 countries were present at Global Forum '92. 7,650 institutions and organizations were officially registered. In addition, there were 700 exhibition stands covering every possible aspect of ecology and development. The United Nations also made available 210,000 day passes for the general public over the two week period. 367 meetings were staged in 22 large tents. There was a very high degree of participation. Guest speakers came from many parts of the world; following each lecture there were open discussions. Everyday there were also "special interest" meetings, evaluations and yes, occasionally even protests.

EARTH SUMMIT: UNFULFILLED HOPES

The hopes of the Rio Earth Summit were not fully realized. Even before the meeting began, the agenda on the negotiating table was less ambitious because of the deep disagreements exposed during the two-and-a-half years of preparation. For example, a proposed earth charter had to be dropped because it tried to do too much. Instead, there was a watered down Rio Declaration - a kind of 10 commandments, except in this case there were 27. Yet, this Rio Declaration turned out to be better than most expected and it has many excellent

principles. In signing it, the signatories accepted that "polluters themselves must pay." Another significant principle stated that: "Peace, development, and environmental protection are inter-dependent and indivisible" (No. 25).

The consequence of the clash between an essentially open world economic system pushing against a closed terrestrial ecological system, was clearly evident in the discussions which took place around subjects like the ozone layer, the "greenhouse effect", acid rain, air pollution, indoor pollution, garbage, hazardous wastes, nuclear waste, water and sea pollution.

List of Dishonour

The headline "Earth Summit Winds up in Compromise" is a fair summary. The five leading contenders in the list of dishonour, compiled by nominees from the environment and development NGO's were:

- The United States clearly singled out as the worst performer by the public at large, as well as by the NGO's. The final blow came when President Bush refused to sign the Bio-diversity Treaty which would commit governments to protect endangered plant and animal species. The reason given was, unashamedly, that it might harm U.S. business and jobs. The diplomatic world said that President Bush "was placating the U.S. 'right' during an election year, and in so doing was abdicating leadership of the world-wide environmental movement, just at a time when the issue was moving towards centre-stage"

- Saudi Arabia, for trying to remove the atmosphere chapter from "Agenda 21" and all references to "renewable energies" (e.g. solar energy, wind energy etc.). Saudi Arabia wants the world to remain dependent on oil.

- Japan, next on the list of dishonour, mainly for hiding behind the back of the U.S.A.

- Malaysia added because it kept using the argument of national sovereignty to jeopardize the conservation of forests and the rights of indigenous peoples.

- International Atomic Energy Agency, for successfully keeping nuclear power out of the conference documents.

The Earth Summit succeeded in raising the environment into prominence as a grave international issue at world-wide level. Among many governments, it now ranks in equal importance with finance and defence. Only a few years ago, anything to do with environment would have been slotted under "Other Business." A process has been set in motion in Rio which contains seeds of hope for the future.

Major Texts Adopted

The Earth Summit adopted three major texts:

- 1) Agenda 21 - a comprehensive blueprint of nearly 800 pages for global action in all areas of the environment and development. Its 40 chapters, divided into over 100 programmes, cover all aspects of the relationship between the environment and the economy. It also aims to reshape human activities in order to minimize environmental damage and ensure that development is sustainable.

- 2) Rio Declaration on Environment and Development - a set of 27 principles designed to govern the economic and environmental behaviour of individuals and governments. If implemented, they are capable of effecting real transformation.

- 3) Statements of Principles on the Management, Conservation and Sustainable Development of All Types of Forests. For the first time, there is the beginning of a global consensus about forests.

In addition, there were two legally binding conventions signed by more than 150 countries. A United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, geared to reduce the greenhouse gases threatening to change the world's climate. It did not however contain the binding deadlines originally planned for. A Convention on Biological

Diversity was also adopted. The wealthier countries were criticized for not committing more resources to this; the U.S.A. refused to sign it.

GLOBAL FORUM '92: CREATIVE ALTERNATIVE

Global Forum successfully provided an open forum for 7,650 institutions and organizations from all over the world. These NGO's, moreover, displayed a degree of mutual acceptance and support that one can only marvel at. Maurice Strong, UNCED Secretary General argued forcefully against those who said that Global Forum was an unnecessary extra by replying: "Without the Global Forum, '92 the Earth Summit would lose its legitimacy."

A number of memorable events which occurred during Global Forum '92 were:

1) **VIRGIL OF PRAYER.** 10,000 people from 25 different religious affiliations participated together in an all-night prayer vigil. The Dalai Lama told the great gathering that "only spiritual peace can lead to a bright future." It was heartening to see among the very few Catholic presences at the vigil, the 80-year old Dom Helder Camara from Brazil, who led the throng in a "Prayer for the Earth."

2) **THE EARTH PLEDGE.** This took the form of a "citizens' treaty" to promote common ecological security. Hundreds of thousands of ordinary people signed this pledge, thereby committing themselves to live an ecologically responsible life.

3. **AN ALTERNATIVE TREATY TO THE EARTH SUMMIT.** This is a document worked on by NGO's throughout the two weeks. It is a very comprehensive, consensus document, which offers strategic ways to approach environmental and development issues. Each subject in the treaty had two elected coordinators - one from the Southern hemisphere, the other from the Northern - responsible for steering it through the Forum.

4. **THE GAIA.** The arrival of the GAIA, a replica of a Viking longboat, was one of the highlights for the young people at the Forum. This ship had sailed 17,000 miles from Norway to Rio de Janeiro with a cargo of messages for the leaders of the world from hundreds of thousands of children. On the sails of the GAIA, were printed the words: *Keep the promises... for a better world for all children.*

5. **TREE OF LIFE.** It was the centre piece of Global Forum '92. More than a quarter of a million messages from individuals all over the world were pinned to the tree in the shape of leaves. They called for more care and reverence for the earth.

Negative Aspects

Several negative aspects deserve comment. First, the near total absence of the "official" Catholic Church. Apart from the prayer vigil, there was little evidence of any formal Catholic presence as such. So it was not unreasonable for some people to ask, why the Catholic Church was represented at the Earth Summit. The Forum levelled strong criticism at the Church for its alleged blocking of any statement at the Earth Summit linking population explosion to poverty and environmental degradation.

Second, the lack of any real debate on the military. The world's military industrial complex got off light when one considers that since the introduction of carpet-bombing during World War II, it has been exercising a massive onslaught against the environment. Since a plutonium device was first exploded in New Mexico in July 1945, there have been over 1,900 nuclear tests both in the atmosphere and underground. The explosive force of some of these tests in the United States was about 40,000 times the force of the Hiroshima bomb.

Third, the international presence of gay people at the Global Forum was not a problem - they had a right to be there just as every other group had -

but the backdrop to their exhibition stall had some very explicit "blown-up" pictures of homosexual behaviour. It was the only offensive element encountered among the exhibits.

Conclusion

Overall, Global Forum '92 was for me a most profound experience. Rarely have I felt so at-one with so many people from diverse national, religious and racial backgrounds. I was acutely aware that the crisis and the solution to the Earth's ecological problems ultimately lie in people learning to live in harmony with creation, and in the case of believers, in accordance with the laws of God.

The whole ecological crisis is somehow a symptom of the spiritual crisis of the human person. The survival of the planet, and the future of the children who live on it, will depend on how people can develop the virtues of simple living and sufficiency; how they will share love and compassion with each other. Above all, it will depend on how people learn to listen again to the Voice of the Earth speaking to them through people, events and creation. Accords and treaties will ultimately have no transformative effect unless we rediscover the essential truth that life is relational. This reality was palpably present in an exceptional way at the Global Forum; it constitutes a new ground for hope.

PART 2

THE "NEW STORY" OF THE UNIVERSE: A CONTEMPORARY SPIRITUALITY

To understand the new story of the universe and the radical shift in consciousness that is now taking place, we need to understand where the shift comes from. This involves a re-telling of the "old story" of the universe, and the kind of spirituality which accompanied it.

THE "OLD STORY" OF THE UNIVERSE

Our present ecological problem is dealt with in a most imaginative way by a Greenpeace recruitment leaflet. Taking the Earth as 46 million years old, it contracts this timetable to human proportions by likening the Earth to a 46 year old human person. Nothing is known about the first 7 years of life and only a little about the middle span. At the age of 42 the Earth began to flower. Dinosaurs appeared when the planet was 45. Mammals arrived 8 months ago. In the middle of last week, man-like apes (excuse the sexist language!) evolved into ape-like men. On the week-end, the last Ice Age enveloped the Earth. This is a time-

scale summary of what has happened to planet Earth.

Human beings - Greenpeace says, continuing the analogy, have been around for 4 hours. During the last hour they discovered agriculture. The Industrial Revolution began one minute ago. During 60 seconds of biological time, we have made a rubbish heap of the planet. In the contracted timescale, it is only during the last 60 seconds that an ecological crisis has emerged.

An Ecological Crisis

There are many reasons for the ecological crisis, but the foundational ones are due to a flawed philosophical and scientific account of the story of the universe. Sufficient to say, it was René Descartes in the 17th century who today shoulders most of the blame. It was he who invented new mathematical forms to express the logic of nature thought to be "static." He created the split between mind and body, which still haunts people's psychological lives - a split which emphasizes the mind

and de-emphasizes the body. His famous dictum still stands: "I think; therefore I am."

CREATION "OBJECTIFIED"

This split within the human person was also projected outward. Outside the mind, Descartes saw everything that existed as a multitude of separated, independent competitive objects, not an intricate network of inter-dependent systems. The human mind looked at the unchangeable world outside itself, convinced it had the capacity to discover its universal laws. The human person became the veritable "objective" observer. Very quickly the human person became a dominator. Some see a further connection in relating the domination of nature to the domination of women. The division between mind and matter allowed scientists, with the supportive help of Newtonian physics, to treat matter as dead. This gave them free reign, morally as well as physically, to do virtually what they liked with the sub-human world - exploiting and manipulating it, servicing their greed and avarice.

Relationality and Objectivity

The concepts of relationality and responsibility had no meaning in the vocabulary of this new science. Only the concept of objectivity was real. Objectivity detached from relationality marked the real beginning of the ecological crisis. By the end of the 19th century, Europe and North America were moving full steam ahead toward the domination of nature and the exploitation of its apparently unlimited riches.

The impressive results of the Cartesian-Newtonian method is evident. The world has been enriched by it in many ways. The method's "original sin," however, was to allow technology and science to dominate nature for its own sake. In the process, the presence of God was removed from creation, and we went on to claim mastery over creation, often for the sake of indulging in avarice and greed. Note that this

doesn't mean giving thumbs down to technology and science. Domination is the problem.

When encountering nature, we have always had to tread the precarious path between mystery and mastery. It is not technology and theology that need to be reconciled. It is rather the two attitudes of mystery and mastery which are to be held in tension. The mastery of nature must always be held within the mystery of worship. Otherwise we lose both mastery and mystery. This was a conclusion arrived at by Metropolitan Mar Gregorios in his excellent book, *The Human Presence*.

A SPIRITUAL CRISIS

The spiritual crisis of the industrialised North had its origins in the mind-matter split. The great scientist, Isaac Newton, thoroughly assimilated Descartes' view of matter. He understood the universe to be like a giant clock, which operated in a predictable fashion determined by God - an infinitely wise clockmaker. God wound the clock at the beginning of creation and it went on ticking steadily and reliably. Subsequently, Newtonian physics, with its separation of mind and matter, unconsciously influenced our understanding of God.

God is seen as the static observer of a mechanical world. People could give God extrinsic glory, but could not "affect" Him. As George Maloney, SJ., says, people so objectivized the living God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that He really did not need them or even care much for them. Is not this the perception and experience of many people concerning God today?

Consequences of the Cartesian-Newtonian Story

Most of the piety of the past hundred years had its roots in this Cartesian-Newtonian story of the universe. We can include Darwin here as well. He understood the evolution of the species in terms of external environmental forces in a world of dis-

connected objects. This explains why people spent much of their prayer-time pleading with God to intervene concerning this or that. After all, hadn't they a right to expect this from the original Master clockmaker!

The split between mind and matter also contributed to the absence of any sense of excitement concerning God. He was more looked to as the "Uncaused Cause" or the "Almighty" or the "Omnipotent One" (How many of our formal liturgical prayers still speak this language!), than as a personal, loving and immanently present God wanting to reveal Himself to us through everything that is.

It was this dualism of Descartes and Newton that encouraged, indirectly at least, the various kinds of extrinsic forms of worship and dogma which became the "formation programme", as it were, for religious and spiritual development. There was and is a heavy dichotomizing between soul and body, matter and spirit, sacred and secular, heaven and earth, nature and supernature. These, and much more stem in great part from that flawed story of the "old universe" handed on to us through Descartes, Newton and Darwin.

A God of Love and Compassion

In saying this, I hope I am not sounding too harsh about the past; or worse, that I am being cynical! No, it just seems to be incredible that this form of spiritual living could have connected with any real feeling for the biblical God of love and compassion, who is nearer to us than we are to ourselves. Even a lyric sense of wonder and amazement before God's creation was missing! The devout writer, Thomas à Kempis, summarized the piety of the times when he said: "Unless a man is clearly delivered from all love of creatures, he cannot fully attend to his Creator" (111:31).

Despite the dominance of this form of spirituality, a little group of visionaries always strove to maintain a more holistic view of the human person and life. They are the poets and artists who

lived with intuitions, feelings, and strong passions of the heart. How beautifully some of them captured the presence of God in nature. By way of example there are the following lines from G.M. Hopkins.

*And the azurous hung hills are His
world-wielding shoulder,
Majestic-as a stallion stalwart, very-
violet-sweet!
These things, these things were here
and but the beholder
Wanting; which two when they once
meet,
The heart rears wings, bold and
bolder,
And hurls for him, O half hurls earth
for him off under his feet.*

THE "NEW STORY" OF OUR UNIVERSE

So much for the "old story" of the universe in its philosophical, scientific and spiritual manifestations. But there is a "new story" in our world today, which has its scientific roots in the physics of Einstein, especially his theory of relativity. Its religious foundations are still being worked out by, among others, the "Process School" of theologians. Its ecological foundation is based on an exciting new cosmology which takes special account of the modern insights of physics, and a dynamic spirituality that is found in the Eastern Church and the old Greek Fathers.

Let me begin by referring you to some books which will provide background material for my understanding of this new spirituality, they are:

The Universe is a Green Dragon - A Cosmic Creation Story, by the physicist, Brian Swimme; *A Purpose for Everything - Religion in a Postmodern Worldview*, by Charles Birch; *The New Cosmology and The Dream of the Earth*, by Thomas Berry; *Beyond the Modern Mind*, by Douglas Bowman; *Eco-Spirituality - Toward a Reverent Life*, by Charles Cummings; *To Care for the Earth*, by Sean McDonagh; *The Human Presence - Ecological Spirituality and the Age of the Spirit*, by Paulos Mar Gregorias; *Le Milieu Divin and Hymn of*

the Universe, by Teilhard de Chardin; *Original Blessing*, by Matthew Fox.

There are many other authors who have also taken into account the "new story" of the universe, but there is one author whom I praise above the others. What he is saying is especially relevant. I am referring to George Maloney, SJ. Most of his books are on the same theme, namely a spirituality that restores the sense of God's sacred presence in all of creation. Two of his more recent ones which I recommend are, *God's Exploding Love* and *Mysticism and the New Age - Christic Consciousness in the New Creation*.

VATICAN II

The official Catholic support of the "new story" of the universe, was expressed 30 years ago at Vatican Council II when it endorsed the concept of an evolutionary development of reality in *Gaudium et Spes*, No. 5:

"...the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one."

What has happened since, I do not know, but recent official documents issued from the Vatican, scarcely make reference to the spirit of that statement. In my opinion, the Vatican is nervous about its implications, because it may mean a major change in theological and ecclesial thinking. Yet, I believe that the Vatican and the rest of us, should be much more nervous about the way Christ and God are being heard today, especially by the young. Many young people have said to me, in their own peculiar ways, that the spiritual options they see open to them today are either - to become fundamentalist, to become indifferent or simply to "drop out."

A SPIRITUALITY NOT IN HARMONY WITH EXPERIENCE

Our rituals and rites, our language and symbols have apparently lost most of their usefulness for the modern generation. The reasons are complex. But

one question we can ask ourselves is this: Is the form of spirituality being handed on to young people today out of harmony with the light of their experience?

The writer, Henri Nouwen, told me about a personal experience he had during a sabbatical in South America. While there he sat in on a spirituality course given by Gustavo Gutierrez. It was for Nouwen a shattering experience. This is how he described it:

"As I reflect on the impact of this spirituality (as presented by Gutierrez) on my own way of living and thinking, I realize that a reductionism has taken place on my side. Talking with pastoral workers during that summer course, I became aware of how individualistic and elitist my own spirituality was. It is hard to confess, but true, that in many respects my thinking about the spiritual life had been deeply influenced by my North American milieu with its emphasis on the interior life and the methods and techniques for developing that life. Only when I confronted what Gustavo called the "irruption of the poor in history" did I become aware of how spiritualized my spirituality had become. It was, in fact, a spirituality for introspective persons who have the luxury of time and space needed to develop inner harmony and quietude."

If Nouwen understood that his spirituality was too individualistic, how might young people describe the spirituality which has been handed on to them? Perhaps they would describe it as being "heavy"; wrapped too much in a rationalistic framework, and certainly not very open to mystery or spontaneity. The emphasis, they might add, is too much on God's absolute transcendence. God is unknowable.

Perhaps that is what prompted Gabriel Moran to say that some of the most intense religious fervour can be found in the environmental or ecological movement. "In fact," he added, "I direct a graduate programme of religious

education that happens to be located in the same department as the programme of environmental science. I sometimes say, only half jokingly, to the director of environmental science: 'You now have all the true believers who used to be in my programme.'

A NEW GLOBAL AWARENESS OF UNITY

I suggest that we, as Church, need to comprehend the new consciousness-development going on in our contemporary world. We cannot live in relationship to the material world, to God, to ourselves and to other human beings according to the traditional framework we have inherited. If our understanding of the universe is changed, then obviously the way we relate to the God of the universe should also change.

Today, a small but ever-growing number of people want to embrace a new global consciousness of their oneness with all created nature, with all human beings, and with God as a personalized ever-present Centre. This was very evident among a great number of people I spoke at the Global Forum in Rio de Janeiro.

It seems to me that we desperately need a spirituality that will restore the sense of the immanence of the divine in all of creation. We need, to paraphrase George Maloney, a holistic spirituality that will act as a spiritual corrective and offset the imbalance that comes from placing ourselves at the centre of the universe. We have lost God, and instead have made ourselves the centre of all reality. This anthropocentrism has made us dominators, exploiters and even exterminators of nature. It has also brought with it a slow psychic and spiritual death marked by meaninglessness.

Albert Einstein

Physicists are the first to tell the new story of the universe, chief among them being Albert Einstein who died in 1955. His theory of relativity expressed the truth that all reality is relational.

Nothing is static. So, the human person cannot be a detached observer, but is himself a participator. Energy keeps rearranging itself in new forms by creating new relationships with the environment. What is thrilling is that this is in harmony with the biblical account that the whole world is made in the image of God (i.e. in a dynamic, energetic inter-relational communication). Scientists are finding their work and "trinitarian spirituality" to be in harmony. Scientists, in an analogous way, are assisting in "unveiling the global Presence of God" in matter.

What a change this is. For three centuries or more, science and spirituality/theology were on separate tracks and going in different directions. Today, there is the beginning of a convergence, although we seem to be the tardy ones this time. Einstein, a devout Jew, was first inspired by the "new story" of the universe when he heard a lecture in 1932 by a Belgian Catholic priest and astronomer, Fr. George Lemaitre (1894-1966). The priest explained his theory that the universe came to birth by the explosion of a "primeval atom," and it has not stopped expanding. The universe will continue expanding forever at variable speed unless gravitation eventually overcomes the propelling power of the Big Bang. At the conclusion of the lecture, Einstein jumped to his feet and said. "This is the most beautiful and satisfactory explanation of creation which I have ever heard."

This new cosmology, first glimpsed early in the century, shattered basic assumptions of the Newtonian understanding of the cosmos as a machine. The new paradigm sees the cosmos no longer as an objective entity, but as an emerging, organic system whose parts, both human and non-human, form an intricate network of interdependent components.

"UNCREATED, PERSONAL, LOVING ENERGIES"

Brian Swimme, an American physicist, describes life as interwoven layers of

bondedness. The universe consists of subjects. It is bound together in communion. Everything and everyone, including God, is interrelational. God is a dynamic, energetic force, never static, but always self-revealing through the events of each day. God does so by grace, or what spiritual writers call the "uncreated, loving, personal energies" of God - a more dynamic term than grace which suffers from the static image of the past. God shares life with us. In the God-head - totally incomprehensible, we can experience Divinity. In that experience, we know God as Love-towards us.

These uncreated energies are not actions of God. They are not things which exist outside of God. They are not gifts of God. They are God's self in action. They are God, uncreated as Archbishop Joseph Raya tells us. St. Thomas Aquinas, using Aristotle's categories, defines grace as the external principle of human actions. It is a gift, a power added to our natural power. But what is crucial in the understanding of "uncreated energies" is that through God's energies, we actually do make contact with the living God.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Everyone and everything, at its interior, is filled with the self-communicating Trinity, through the "uncreated energies." God permanently fills the universe as a loving Self. The loving personal energies that flow out from the three Persons within the Trinity are real (although not material). They are essential; they truly flow from the essence of the Godhead. Yet they are distinct.

The favourite image of the sun emitting its rays to the earth is used by St. Gregory of Nyssa to help explain this. Although the sun is distinct from the rays of the sun, yet the sun is wholly present in each ray. So God is wholly present in each ray of divinity, yet God in essence remains unapproachable. To think otherwise would be pantheistic. It is this distinction between essence and energies that

makes it possible to preserve the real meaning of the words "partakers of the divine nature" as found in 2 Peter 1:4. The doctrine of the energies signifies that the whole Trinity is energetically and personally present in loving relationships towards us and all creation.

Human and Contemplative

Human beings as contemplatives have new eyes to see and new sensitivities to experience these energies. We can be helped to do this in two ways, although ultimately, it is God who reveals:

First, by re-educating our senses in order that they bring to consciousness sharp, vital, full sense experience. This is the only way in which the material world can make contact with our interior selves in a natural way.

Secondly, and more importantly, we can prepare ourselves to experience God's personal energies by letting Jesus Christ, through his Resurrected Spirit, take us by the hand and lead us into the "implosive love" of the Three persons. This can only happen in prayer. It is the simplest, yet the most profound form of contemplative prayer. It is by faithful practice of this kind of Trinitarian prayer, that we will prepare ourselves to "see" God not only progressively in creation, but the energies of God bathing the whole universe and charging it with infinite love. It is a gift. But for those who seek, even if it means waiting, it will be given.

G.M. Hopkins

Hopkins, expresses the energies of God when he wrote:

The world is charged with the grandeur of God, it flames out like shining from shook-foil....

Through this way of living in faith, we can strip the covering away from the experiences of the moment to reveal God's loving, dynamic, energetic presence at the heart of matter. We will have no desire to have impetuous control over things. On the contrary, we will gladly surrender to God's loving presence in each event at each moment.

NOTHING IS PROFANE

A spirituality that sees God working in the material world through uncreated loving, personal energies has unlimited possibilities for daily living. Nothing is profane. If we use the word secular at all, it is only to describe someone who fails to see God inside of matter. The whole world is sacred for those who have learned to see. Yet because this spirituality of presences is so rarely taught, most of us continue to see and yet we do not see. We see beautiful flowers and fail to see the beautiful face of God shining through the flowers. We only see men and women, as the blind man confessed he saw them, as "trees walking."

Like Bartimaeus on the road to Jericho, we sit on the roadside of life, blind to much of the real world that passes us by. Jesus asks us, as he asked Bartimaeus: "What do you want me to do for you?" Our reply should be: "Master, I want to see." Living out such a spirituality, will make us sensitive to creation and everything that is destructive to it. We will not seek to exploit it or conquer it. On the contrary we will want to reverence God as present within it.

Three Integral Movements

This spirituality has three integral movements:

- Inwardly, we experience God's energies of love leading us into the family of the Trinity. Christ, who is the Way, makes this possible, through His resurrected Spirit.

- Outwardly, we are led through the Spirit into the material world to become an instrument of energizing love towards all whom we meet. Hopkins "inscaping" the pebble is an example of this.

- Finally, we work at fashioning, along with others, and with the help of God's loving energies, the Kingdom of God on Earth - a kingdom of unity and love. Here lies the deepest motivation for becoming engaged in the work of peace, justice and ecology. Everytime

we see creation being wantonly destroyed; everytime we see situations of injustice; everytime we see violence being used, be it institutional, moral or physical, we are moved. Everytime we see obstacles to relationality through human irresponsibility, uncharitableness, or attitudes of domination as, for example, by creditor countries towards the debtor countries, or rulers over people, or men over women, or humans over nature we experience pain and choose to act.

The Natural World as Primary Revelation

The natural world is important in every tradition. In its beauty and abundance, it is the primary revelation of God to humankind. Nature was revealing God before the first scriptures were written or the first prophets arrived to tell us the way.

Our task today is to live and to teach a spirituality which restores the sense of God's sacred presence in all of nature. By growing in receptivity to the energies of God, we will work with others to make this planet a more beautiful revelation of God's love.

We do not wish to diminish the transcendence of God in any way. In fact it is wrong to say that God is partly within everything and partly beyond everything. God is simultaneously totally within and totally beyond all beings. The spirituality we have been speaking about takes into account both the transcendence and the immanence of God. In tune with the needs of today, it is particularly drawn to the presence of God within each living creature, and within all material reality.

Where better to begin our re-discovery of God's immanence than in the Eucharist where God's loving energies are so totally and intensely present to us, along with the world, in its beauty and brokenness. All is there unified in the one total Body of Christ - Christ as Head and Christ in his members.

ANNUAL REPORT to the 1992 SEDOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

During the past twelve months the religious and missionary societies of men and women in SEDOS, have combined their resources to try to serve the Church more effectively in its missionary activity. Mindful of its constitutions, SEDOS has pursued its aim "of enabling its members to seek practical guidelines to action in mission by providing information and documentation on situations of mission, by organising study sessions and seminars, and by stimulating its members to share their thinking and resources towards action in the service of mission." This Annual Report attempts to inform you about our various developments and activities in pursuit of this aim, for the period 1st December 1991 to 30th November 1992.

I. STRUCTURE

1. General Assembly

The General Assembly of SEDOS has been enriched by 8 new members whose applications for membership were approved by your Executive Committee during the past year. Their names follow with the names of their Superiors General and addresses.

Ancelle del S.Cuore di Gesu; Rosario LLeo, ACI; Largo dei Monti Parioli, 3, 00197 Rome.

Bon Secours Sisters; Justine Cyr, SBS; Piazza Simone 3, 00141 Rome.

Good Shepherd Sisters; Liliane Tauvette, RGS; v. Raffaello Sardiello 20, 00165 Rome.

St. Louis Sisters; Ann Murray, SSL; 5 Grosvenor Road, Rathgar, Dublin 6, Ireland.

Filles du Coeur de Marie; Maureen Hallissey, FCM; 39, rue Notre-Dame des Champs, 75006 Paris, France.

Marianists; Quentin Hackenewerth, MS; via Latina 22, 00197 Rome.

Medical Missionaries Of Mary; Philomena Sheerin, MMM; Rosemount, Booterstown Blackrock, Dublin, Ireland.

Soeurs du Christ; Ita Conlan, SC; 44, rue des Volontaires, 75015 Paris, France.

Welcome to SEDOS which now numbers 84 member societies, 43 of women and 41 of men.

2. Executive Committee Membership

Membership of your Committee during the past year has been as follows:

President : Patricia Stowers, SMSM, Superior General of the Marist Missionary Sisters. Elected 1991.

Vice President : Yves La Fontaine, CMM, Superior General of the Marian-hill Missionaries. Elected 1991.

Treasurer : Seán Fagan, SM, Secretary General of the Society of Mary (Marists). Re-elected 1991.

elected

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| Teresa Clements, Daughters of Mary and Joseph (DMJ) | 1991 |
| L. K. Lumembu, Cong. of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (CICM) | 1989 |
| Carlos Pape, Society of the Divine Word (SVD) | 1986 |
| Cecily Paul, Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMM) | 1991 |

Executive Director : Bill Jenkinson, Congregation of the Holy Spirit (CSSp). Appointed July, 1980.

Associate Executive Director : Maureen O'Brien, Sisters of Notre Dame (SND). Appointed September, 1991.

Bill Jenkinson, CSSp completes twelve years as Executive Director in 1992 and leaves SEDOS to take up an appointment with his Congregation. Your Executive Committee is in the process of searching for a successor.

Executive Committee Elections

The 1992 General Assembly will elect two members to the Executive Committee. Outgoing members: Carlos Pape, SVD who is completing 2 periods of three years on the Committee and is not eligible for re-election;

Teresa Clements, DMJ. who was elected Provincial Superior of their English Region during the past year.

Proposed Increase in Executive Committee Membership.

The Executive Committee will propose to the General Assembly that the Committee be increased by one member. Approval of this proposal requires a two thirds majority of voting members.

Secretariate Staff

Ms. Patricia Cosgrave, happily recovered from her hospitalisation last year, continues as Secretary. Ms. Yohini Francis came as a temporary assistant in July. Ms. Philippa Wooldridge continues on a part-time basis.

Our volunteers: Sr. Christel Daun, SSpS, continued to help us throughout the year; Sr. Catherine Rupp, OSM had to discontinue as she was elected to her General Council at their recent Chapter; Sr. Margaret Byrne, RSCJ who helped us with our documentation computer programme returned to England after six years on her Generalate staff; Sr. Georgie Logan, RSCJ has begun helping us recently with the documentation programme. To all our volunteers our sincere thanks.

II ACTIVITIES

I Seminars / Conferences

1. 5th Centenary: A New Agenda

This Annual SEDOS Seminar took place at Villa Cavalletti, Grottaferrata, outside Rome, from 19 - 22, May, 1992. The Speakers were Ms. Maria Clara

Bingemer from Brazil and Fr. Gustavo Gutiérrez from Peru. As in recent years the Seminar attracted an overflow attendance, many participants having to accept boarding accommodation outside the Villa. The lay theologian, Maria Clara, mother of three children, Brazilian speaking from Rio de Janeiro, and Fr. Gustavo, "Father of Liberation Theology," Spanish speaking from Peru, analysed the effects of 500 years of Western presence in Latin America and presented their hopes for the future. The Seminar was assessed as highly successful.

This was the second in a series of four research seminars on the Prophetic Challenge of Mission in a Changing World. The 1991 seminar dealt with the challenge of the churches of North America and Europe; the 1993 seminar will address the challenge of the churches of Africa, and the 1994 seminar, the churches of Asia and Oceania. A notable feature of the seminar was the book display presented by ORBIS BOOKS; accompanying order forms enabled SEDOS members to purchase books at considerably reduced prices.

2. Mission Europe

This well presented morning session at last year's General Assembly was the third and final meeting on Mission in Europe Today. Three speakers presented different aspects of the current developing situation:

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| Mission as Prophecy | - Michael Amaladoss, SJ. |
| Mission in Eastern Europe | - Maria Brünhild Teufel, SSND. |
| Mission in Western Europe | - Teresa Clements, DMJ. |

3. Muslim - Christian Dialogue

We held a series of three conferences as part of the SEDOS Christian-Muslim programme:

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| Introduction to Islam | - Tom Michel, SJ. (February 20th) |
| Introduction to The Qu'ran | - Mgr. Michael Fitzgerald. (March 5th) |
| Fundamentalism in Islam | - Tom Michel, SJ. (March 26th) |

We are grateful to the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue for both speakers. The Conferences did much to correct misunderstandings, to present positive aspects of Islam and to indicate possibilities for dialogue.

4. Unmasking The Idols

Fr. Virgil Elizondo from San Antonio, Texas drew a large audience to this session held at the Generalate of the Brothers of the Christian Schools on March 20. When the Europeans arrived in Latin America they destroyed many sacred symbols of the indigenous peoples in the mistaken belief that these were idols. Now, on the occasion of the 5th Centenary of the Europeans' arrival, the descendants of those native peoples may be in a position to help unmask some of the idols of today's 'First World' peoples. Fr. Elizondo singled out four of these for special consideration: wealth, power, health and beauty. He illustrated his theme by a wealth of personal anecdotes from his Mexican-American experience.

5. Sufi: Prayer And Contemplation In Islam

Paul Jackson, SJ, is an Australian by birth, but an Indian citizen. He was particularly well qualified to speak to us on this theme. He has lived in India for most of his life, has studied and written on Sufi contemplation and is acknowledged by Islamic scholars to be a well qualified Sufi scholar. He has been granted Indian citizenship.

6. Theological Background To Inculturation

Michel de Verteuil, CSSp presented this full-day session at the SVD College on October 5th. He believes that the practice of '*Lectio Divina*', the sacred reading of the scripture, is the essential theological basis to inculturation of the Good News. He illustrated this from his experiences in Nigeria and in his native Trinidad. A notable feature of this presentation was his insistence that women and men, whether of sophisticated or of little formal educational backgrounds can follow this method. *Lectio Divina* is for all, not just for simple people. There are no 'simple people'!

7. Ecology And World Debt

Donal O'Mahoney, OFM.Cap. was fresh from his attendance at Global Forum, the Non-Governmental Organisations' Meeting which was held at Rio de Janeiro contemporaneously with the Rio Earth Summit. He chose two basic terms, relationality and interdependence, to illustrate the connection between ecology and world-debt. These affect profoundly all aspects of ecology and world debt. Fr. O'Mahoney found wanting the spirituality which evolved from Descartes' emphasis on reason and mind. He proposed another spirituality for men and women today, who are increasingly conscious of the essential unity of mind and body and of their oneness with 'mother' earth. The crisis today is not that deficits threaten so many commercial operations but that the earth itself is now definitively and irreparably in deficit.

III SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

1. Haiti Group

The Group met regularly throughout the year. Jan Hanssens, CICM provided constant, well informed and accurate information on developments in Haiti. Representatives of the Group visited the Vatican Secretariate of State in an effort to express their concern and to understand the rationale behind the appointment of the Apostolic Delegate to Haiti.

It is clear that the poor continue to suffer most in the wake of the army-coup and the expulsion of the legally elected President Aristide. The Haitian Bishops are divided in their attitude to him. It is apparent at many levels that there are well organised forces opposed to the President's return to Haiti.

The poorer people appear to support the international embargo even though its effects cause them great suffering. As so often happens, richer people find ways of evading the effects of the embargo. The members of the Group had access to information from their members; this included the names of Church personnel attacked and harassed in Haiti, and the dates and circumstances of these events.

2. Zaire Group

The Zaire Group met on a number of occasions in the early part of the year. Fr. Michel Decraene, Superior General of the Scheut Missionaries made a valuable contribution following his visit to the Scheut Missionaries in Zaire. His visit there coincided with some of the most violent disturbances. Fr. L. Kasanda Lumembu, co-facilitator with Sr. Emily Mullen, SND of the Zaire Group, celebrated a Mass in memory of the many people brutally killed in Kinshasa at a peaceful demonstration there. A large crowd of sympathisers attended this celebration which was held in Rome, at the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Events in Zaire continue to cause concern. Your Executive Committee sent messages of sympathy and support to the auxiliary Bishop of Kinshasa and also to the Unions of Men and Women Religious. The President of the

Union acknowledged this with his assurance that they appreciated deeply our support.

3. Womens' Concerns Group

The Group met regularly up to April of this year. Due to the small attendance it was decided to discontinue the meetings for the present.

IV NETWORKING / CO-OPERATING

1. The Secretariate co-operates with many Vatican dicasteries in Rome, notably the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, the Pontifical Councils for Promoting Christian Unity, for Inter-religious Dialogue and for Culture; also with the Unions of Superiors General of Men and of Women, with Commission VI - the Mission Commission of the two Unions, and with the International Centre for Missionary Animation. To all these we express our gratitude for their helpful co-operation.

2. We are in close contact with the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA); also with the International Association of Mission Studies (IAMS). Fr. Michael Amaladoss, SJ, a past member of your Executive committee was elected President of this Association at its August 1992, triennial Meeting in Hawaii. Sr. Margaret Loftus, SND, another past member of SEDOS Committee, was also elected to the Executive. Your Executive Director attended the meeting. SEDOS was actively involved in organising the previous IAMS meeting which was held three years ago in Rome.

3. Sudan.

Although there was no special group meeting on the Sudan the situation was a matter of concern to the Executive Committee. A message of support was sent to the Sudan Conference of Bishops. The Committee also sent letters to the Conferences of Bishops of the adjoining countries appealing to them to help the Sudan people who are now being subjected to active and organised persecution by the Kartoum Government. Many SEDOS members continue to work in the Sudan under extremely difficult conditions.

Fr. Kasanda Lumembu, CICM and Fr. Luis Hechanova, CSSR presented a three-day seminar, at the request of your Executive, to the Sudanese Bishops who were present in Rome for their *ad limina* visit in July.

4. Malawi.

Your Executive Committee sent a message of support to Bishop Roche of St. Patrick's Society who was expelled from Malawi, inviting him to address SEDOS members on the situation in Malawi. Bishop Roche wrote to thank the Committee for its support and expressed his willingness to address SEDOS members.

5. Africa Faith and Justice Network (Washington and Brussels)

Your Secretariate welcomed a visit by Sr. Maura Browne, SND., director of the Washington unit, and arranged for sharing of information and possible concerted action. Your Secretariate stays in contact also with the Brussels unit.

6. International Liaison.

Sr. Ellen Cavanaugh, RSM., Executive Director, together with two board members of International Liaison, visited SEDOS. We noted the considerable

increase in U.S. lay persons involved in mission in recent years particularly in the U.S. Lay missionaries will continue to increase in proportion to the number of religious and priests. The Secretariate maintains contact with the Organisation.

7. World Council of Churches.

Your Secretariate co-operates with the World Council of Churches in Geneva specially through its mission department and the good offices of Monica Cooney, SMSM. Sr. Monica was Superior General of the Marist Missionary Sisters before taking up her appointment as liaison between the Vatican and the World Council of Churches. She resides in Geneva.

V PUBLICATIONS

Some publications about SEDOS:

1. Trends In Mission: Towards The Third Millenium. Edited by William Jenkinson, CSSp and Helene O'Sullivan, MM. and published by Orbis Books in 1991. A second edition is under consideration.

SEDOS Bulletin Index 1979-1988. Compiled by John Tra, SVD, and published by SEDOS Secretariate, 1989. Pp. 371.

Mission in Dialogue: The SEDOS Research Seminar on the Future of Mission. Edited by Mary Motte, FMM and Joseph Lang, MM and published by Orbis Books, 1982, Pp. 688.

La Missione Negli Anni 200: Seminario di Ricerca del SEDOS sul futuro della Missione. An Italian version of *Mission in Dialogue*. Published by EMI, 1983. Pp. 492.

2. SEDOS Bulletin.

Published by the Secretariate monthly, except in August. The Bulletin is appreciated particularly by SEDOS Generalates and by SEDOS members in situations of mission. Frequent comments assure us that the choice of articles suits our readership. We have been requested not to change the format as articles are easily detached and copied for circulation to interested groups.

3. Translations of SEDOS Seminar and Conference Papers

During the year we published Italian, French and Spanish translations of the conferences given at the following SEDOS Seminars:

Rerum Novarum to Centesimus Annus: Implications for Mission;

Mission In Europe;

5th Centenary: A New Agenda.

These translations were sent to the 40 member societies who requested them. English versions appeared in SEDOS Bulletin.

4. SEDOS Brochure

The brochure giving SEDOS aims and membership is now published annually.

VI SEDOS DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

The Documentation Centre is at the service of SEDOS members. It contains a selection of books on mission, including copies of all recent ORBIS BOOKS.

The Centre also contains articles, documents and various publications on mission research, many by SEDOS members. Photo-copying is available. The Centre receives over 300 mission reviews; 60 of the more significant are keyworded and entered into the computer programme. Information can be

retrieved by author, subject-matter, or geography indexes. Currently there are approximately 4,000 entries in our data bank. If you phone us giving some details of your needs we can prepare the materials for you before you arrive; this saves you time!

An extensive collection of documents on the coming Special Meeting of the Bishops' Synod for Africa is available in the Documentation Centre. It is expected that the Pope will announce the date and venue for the meeting and present the *Instrumentum Laboris* during his projected visit to Uganda in 1993.

We express our deep appreciation to ORBIS BOOKS which donates copies of all their publications to the Documentation Centre.

VI FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Approaching the end of another year is a time not only for assessing the past but also for examining future directions in mission. The General Assembly will provide an opportunity for us to do this together.

Two important documents which appeared in 1991 had considerable repercussions on mission during the past year. The first was *Redemptoris Missio* in which Pope John Paul II reaffirmed mission *ad gentes* today. In his introduction he writes: "I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church, can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

The Pope concluded his encyclical with the same sentiment: "I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians and missionaries and young churches in particular, respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time."

Five months after the encyclical appeared the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue combined with the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples to publish a joint document - *Dialogue and Proclamation*. It defined and distinguished dialogue and proclamation and accepted the two as inter-related parts of the same evangelizing mission of the Church called for by the Pope in *Redemptoris Missio*. Much of our reflection on mission during the past year was profoundly influenced by these two documents. They will continue to influence our thinking and action during the coming year.

Your Executive Committee has already decided on some priorities for SEDOS activities in 1993. Among these are the following:

Africa - Questions And Proposals For The Church - the theme chosen for the May 1993 Mission Research Seminar at Villa Cavalletti;

Christian-Muslim Dialogue - Three conferences have been arranged for Spring 1993. The topics: The Sudan Conflict; Women in Islam; Christian-Muslim Relations in the Philippines;

Aids - A nationally known Aids educator in the United States and currently Director of a hospice for Aids patients; will address us on Aids in September 1993.

World Debt - Your Executive Committee has been working on a project of a three-year study group on world debt. The aim would be to examine how better people in mission can understand the causes and implications of the debt; its effects on people in places where many missionaries are working; what practical steps can be taken by them to influence the pattern of world debt and its consequences? We have made preliminary contacts with a number of

persons with a view to initiating this project.

I would like to add a personal note as I look back at my twelve years service in SEDOS. My first feeling as my departure approaches at the end of December this year is one of gratitude. SEDOS is its people. Being with SEDOS people has been an enriching time in my life. It has been a time of great happiness which I trace to relationships with the ever increasing number of SEDOS people. It began with my relations with the various members of the Secretariate staff. They are a happy group of people. It is a pleasure to work with and for them.

I have often wondered when I heard prophets of doom making dire forecasts about the future of the Church and its mission today whether they took time occasionally to reflect on the vast body of dedicated people working for the coming of the Kingdom. Call them missionaries - or just God's friends. They are human, imperfect, sinners, but they are "beavering away" for the coming of the Kingdom. One part of that enormous group is the SEDOS family, 'a quarter of a million of them,' we like to say. Being with their representatives here in Rome for twelve years has given me an insight into the dedication of these women and men, - brothers and sisters all, whether lay or clerical or dignitaries. I will miss the personal contact with them, the friendship, and I am not ashamed to say that I already feel a certain loneliness. But I am convinced that completing twelve years is an appropriate time to go. It is important to leave space for others with new and different methods and approaches.

I would like to record my gratitude in a special way to the officers and members of the SEDOS Executive Committees with whom I have served over the past twelve years. They have been dedicated to SEDOS. To me personally they have always been helpful, affirming and trusting. This trust is an essential part of the relationship between the Executive Committee and the Secretariate. There are so many people to thank for these 12 years! I think too of the kindness, courtesy and ever ready willingness to help, of so many in the various Vatican dicasteries and in the Unions of Superiors General of Men and Women Religious.

I believe that SEDOS will have a significant influence in the new age of mission which must emerge in this time of extraordinary change. There are many problems. But perhaps as never before since the apostolic preaching, there are also extraordinary opportunities to make known the saving message of God's loving care in today's world. We hear of a new world order dawning today, a new economic order. SEDOS which includes in its membership, people of significantly diverse cultures, is particularly well placed to witness to the coming of a new church today, the "Third Church" of Bülhman, the "World Church" of Rahner.

Pope John Paul II concluding his *Redemptoris Missio* expressed his belief that "God is opening before the Church the horizons of a humanity more fully prepared for the sowing of the Gospel". May SEDOS continue to collaborate in bringing the message of God's love to the different peoples of this human family and in learning from them.

William Jenkinson, CSSp
DIRECTOR



mission moments

DIALOGUE OF LIFE

(BANGLADESH)

Nowadays, I live in a kitchen. Jabeda, the wife of Firoz and mother of their eleven children, rented the family's cooking shed to me three months ago on the day I arrived in Jamalpur town to begin missioning in a new area. On that first day I searched for a hut to rent but received, instead, numerous refusals. No Muslim family having girls will easily agree to accept a single male into their compound. Then, inexplicably, Allah inspired Jabeda to take a chance on the foreign Christian. "You do not want a place THAT simple, do you?" she asked me, incredulously, while pointing to her kitchen hut. Indeed, I did. At that moment I was gratefully aware that God was intervening through a Muslim woman to relieve my anxiety.

No sooner had I taken possession of the cooking shed than I had to rush off to hardware stores to buy basic kitchen equipment and utensils. The first item prepared on my new kerosene stove was a gallon of boiled water. Folks here do not boil the water they drink. Children gawked as I gulped the barely cooled fluid. Even greater surprises are in store for them, and for me, as we mutually observe one another.

The cooking shed stands four yards away from the family's house. It measures almost eight feet by ten, has a bamboo roof, and incomplete walls made mostly of bamboo and partially of rusty tin. There is no ceiling for trapping heat beneath the roof. The floor is earthen and unlevel. Into it two clay stoves are sunk, remnants of the years when Jabeda and her seven daughters cooked rice and curry to feed a family of thirteen.

Food preparation requires more time than I want to give it, but the alternative is to eat inexpensive, delicious, peppery hot Bengali cuisine in local restaurants until, inevitably, a dysenteric explosion would strike me down. Each day I spend half an hour at the bazar picking out vegetables for supper, a duck's egg for breakfast, and rice with lentils for lunch. Cleaning the food takes another twenty minutes. Cooking all three meals takes less than an hour, total time, during which I read. The family has their own tubewell which is convenient and a latrine more private than ones I've gotten used to. Surrounding the family's compound is a fence constructed of jute sticks; it has a single, narrow exit through which I squeeze my bicycle.

Firoz and Jabeda expect one hundred takas per month for allowing me to share the family compound. Thus, rent is less than U.S. 9 cents per day.

Their twin teenaged daughters, Chaya and Maya (the names mean Shade and Affection) take down my drying clothes if it rains while I am away, a kindness for which there is no charge. Rain frequently penetrates the roof and dampens the hut.

Occasionally, on days when I am away, one of the twins enters to spread fresh mud mixed with rice bran on the floor. It is the Muslim Bengali's way to keep a house neat. There is no way to attach a lock to the bamboo door, and even if it were lockable any determined person could enter through 20 square feet of open space above the walls. Thus, even though my door is not always open, the house always is.

Days begin at 4 a.m. in prayer followed by Mass. Then I shave and eat breakfast. The remainder of the day is a stew of spicy activities. By bicycle I ride to many villages to meet seriously sick persons. Conversations are frequent and arguments (a form of entertainment in Bangladesh) occasional. I haggle over food prices in the bazar and visit the childrens' ward at the government hospital to bless Muslim and Hindu tots. In every corner of the district women regard warily the recently arrived foreign missionary who offers concern and assistance to their ailing loved ones. It will take time to build trust with them. Men express astonishment when they see an old man on a battered bike traveling great dis-

tances at high speed. They want to know what I get out of such strenuous labour. I explain to them my thoughts about Allah and the part that Jesus plays in my life. Every late afternoon beside the neighbourhood mosque I wash clothes and bathe in a large fish tank. While I pound sudsy laundry on a rock curious youths sit on the bank and shoot questions at me. By nightfall the hut is cooler. It is not connected to electric current so my sight and mind grow dim by 9 p.m. or earlier. Sleep comes quickly on a mat spread on a wooden cot.

Jamalpur, the town in which I have settled, is a rail junction located on the Brahmaputra River. The municipality has 101,000 people. The district of Jamalpur which surrounds it has a population of less than two millions. In the town are a score of mosques and three cinema halls. An odd feature about the main street of the town is that it changes names ten times within 1 1/2 miles. Door to door research at thirty stores informs me there is not a single wooden clothespin for sale, anywhere.

My periodic transfers from one district town to another are in imitation of Jesus' approach to mission. Jesus, the compassionate stranger, moved from area to area and in every place paid special attention to the hopelessly infirm and to sick ones who had no relatives or friends to assist them. The crowds who witnessed Jesus' acts were gripped by his compassion, and not exclusively by his cures. Bengali Muslims are no less astounded to receive compassion from a stranger.

Ref. A letter from
Bob McCahill, MM
P.O. Box 2399, Dhaka-100,
Bangladesh.

A CHANGE OF HEART

(PERU)

(The context for this account was a car bomb attack by Sendero Luminoso on 16th July in Miraflores, a residential district of Lima. Twenty people were killed, dozens injured, while many families lost everything including their homes. It describes the initial reaction of a young girl from a shanty town when she was asked to show solidarity with the rich people of Miraflores.)

"I did not want to go. Why do we have to go to the rich people when they do not come near us when our city hall and police station were blown up? I was lamenting for the tenth time that explosion a block away from our house which had destroyed the only study lamp I ever had and the only book I could call my own. My mother told me that her bible group decided to support the people in Miraflores because the terrorist destruction was extensive and that was our manner of living the scriptures.

I went, complaining that girls my age in Miraflores could pay the entrance fee for the entrance exam in the state university. I had to wait another year although I am 20 years old, hoping that I will be able to get in next year.

Our group of about fifty people went by bus to the park in the center of Miraflores. We had with us our banners of peace and hope and when we arrived, our people shouted 'Friends of Miraflores, we are with you.' The people who lived there were marching around the park in absolute depressed si-

lence as if they did not know how to protest. When they heard us and saw from our banners that we were from a shanty town that had been attacked by the terrorists, their faces changed. They began to smile; they welcomed us and we mixed in with them and we all marched around the park singing.

Nearby, a girl my age looked very sad. We began a conversation. She told me that her grandmother had suffered a heart attack when the walls fell down in her apartment. Her mother is in danger of losing her vision because of the glass that entered her eyes from the splintered windows. She said that she would have to leave her studies in the university if her mother could not work any more. We were more or less in the same boat. We began to sing together for justice and peace."

Ref. Patricia Shanahan, SND
EL CHASQUI.
Sisters of Notre Dame.
Sept. 1992. Tupacamaru de
Villa, Lima, Peru.

GOD'S CALL IN MY LIFE

(MAURITIUS)

In June 1980, two young people from the neighbourhood came to the door of our F.M.M. convent in Chemin Grenier because they wanted to leave the hell of drugs. That day, as I was alone in the convent, I was frightened by their dirty and doubtful appearance so I categorically refused their request to let them clean the convent yard. Since they insisted I gave them a brush and closed the door. Immediately

the words of the Gospel came to my mind tormenting me: "I was hungry and you did not give me to eat." It was then that I made the contrary gesture and invited them into the convent. That was the beginning of my mission with drug addicts in Mauritius. Twelve years later, I was presented with a shield by the First Minister of Mauritius, Sir Aneerood Jugnauth, for services to drug addicts.

On this occasion I was asked, "Why is a religious in the service of drug addicts?" On rereading my history the answer is simple. I did not choose to work with drug addicts, they came to me, challenging me in the name of the Lord.

The first two addicts who came to me for help were in some way messengers from a group of fifteen persons who wanted to cure themselves of cocaine but did not know how. With my community I welcomed them into our house for meals, discussions, reflection. But this was not enough to get them out of the world of drugs. In spite of all my good will, I felt my incapacity, my lack of know-how; so I went to those who were already working with drug addicts.

In 1986, the government created a public fund for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and alcoholics. I was among those chosen by the Minister for Social Security to administer the fund. This enabled me to work at the national level.

Towards the end of 1986, Cardinal Jean Margéot came with a pilot project, the creation of a centre for the rehabilitation of drug addicts. He asked me for help. I left with a group for Italy to receive formation in the Italian Centre of Solidarity which takes care of the social reinsertion of drug addicts. On my return to

Mauritius in November, 1988 I started a professional centre for rehabilitation with a priest. As he was transferred to parish work I was named President of the Centre of Solidarity in May, 1992.

This award presented to me on the Fifth International Day for the Struggle against Drugs, is not mine; it is an award for all at the Institute, especially for the many volunteers who work behind the scenes to get drug addicts back on their feet. This award shows that our efforts have not been in vain.

Ref. Maud Adam, FMM
INFORMATION DOCUMENTATION.
Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Via Giusti 12, 00185 Rome, Italy.

TO BE SOLD FOR COWS

(UGANDA)

Hardened conservatism, raiding, looting, killing for cows or money or goods. The men centered on this.

The women leading a life of exhausting labour, carrying water for miles, wood for miles, building houses, cultivating, cooking, raising children.

The treatment of women as the property of their fathers and uncles, to be sold for cows - become the property of their husbands.

This situation led to work in promotion of women at the only secondary school for girls in Karamoja.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

My awareness of the helplessness of many women in the face of the power structures of

Karimojong society increased dramatically about 4 years ago. One of my own old girls from around Kangole was working in the school as librarian. One day another girl, a student, rushed up to say that Lucy was begging me to come and rescue her in her village. An elderly man with a wife and 12 children and many cows had decided to make Lucy his second wife. He made an agreement with Lucy's mother, who is blind and fearful, and sent a group of warriors to kidnap her and bring her to his home.

Lucy managed to send an SOS to me and I went to her village. She was barricaded in her house and the village was crowded with warriors. I stood in front of her door and demanded that the mother state publicly whether or not she wanted her daughter given to the old man against her will. In the end she stated that she did not. The warriors thought my problem was that I wanted a cow and assured me that I would get one if I helped them to persuade Lucy to come out! Eventually they realized that they would get nowhere for the moment and they drifted away.

As soon as the coast was clear we brought Lucy to Moroto and hid her there until a meeting was organised with the Elders to discuss the matter. At this meeting Lucy declared that she did not want to marry the man in question and because of my presence the elders supported her. Most girls in her circumstances would not have had a hope of resisting.

Ref. Margaret Conroy, RSCJ.
CONNECTIONS.
Soc. of the Sacred Heart,
Vol. 2, No. 1, 1992.

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Mission Moments

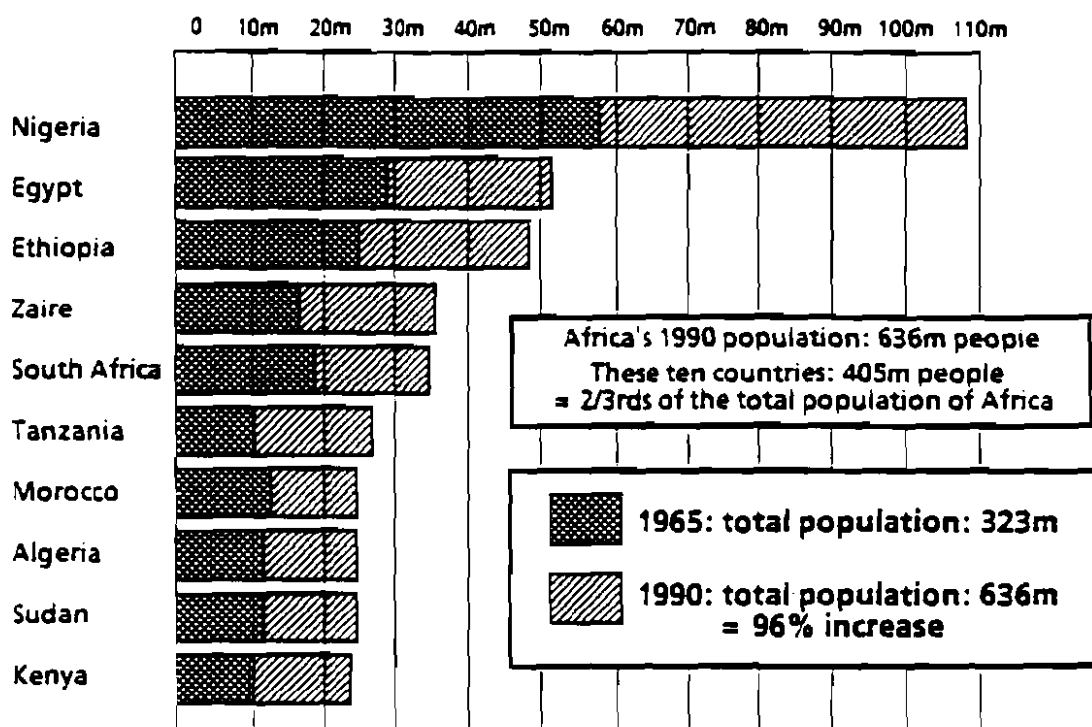
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Africa: where population doubled in 25 years

The ten countries with the highest population in 1990

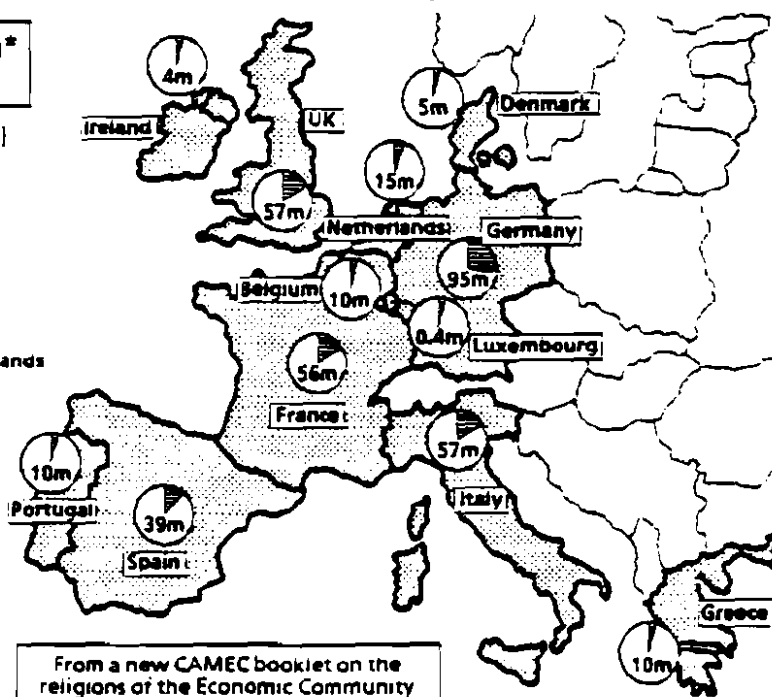
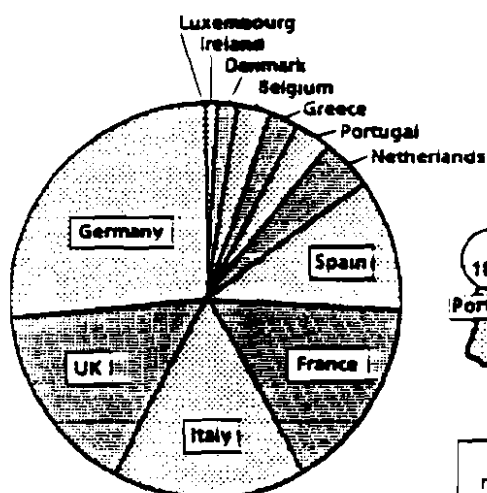


Source: Social Indicators of Development: World Bank

Economic Community: 360,000,000 people

1965: total population: 312m*
= 15% increase 1965-90

*Includes the former GDR (East Germany)
for completeness of comparison



COMING EVENTS 1993

February 8

HAITI UPDATE

SVD College; 16.00 - 18.15 p.m.

CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

A SERIES OF THREE CONFERENCES

February 25

THE SUDAN CONFLICT

March 11

WOMEN IN ISLAM

March 25

PHILIPPINES: MUSLIM CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

SVD College

May 18-22,

AFRICA: QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS TO THE CHURCH

VILLA CAVALLETTI

(English, italiano, français, español)

22 June - 3 July

UNDERSTANDING THE UMMA

THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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