Vol. 25 No. 1
15th January

SEDOS bulletin 1993

CONTENTS

SEDOS - Via dei Verbiti, 1 - 00154 ROMA - TEL.: 5741350
servizio di documentazione e studi - documentation and research centre
centre de documentation et de recherche - servicio de documentación e investigación

IN THIS ISSUE

Our first issue of 1993 contains a number of articles which deal with topics of continuing interest and concern.

In the first article by PETER SCHINELLER, SJ the varied meanings of syncretism are explored with attention to its historical context, positive and negative meanings and uneasy relationship to inculturation.

GEORGE TINKER, a Native American theologian, expands our understanding of liberation in his article, *The Full Circle of Liberation.* By developing the argument that "God reveals God's self in creation, in space or place and not in time," we have our attention riveted on the centrality of the earth in the theology of our Native American brothers and sisters.

The link between development and evangelization is explored by ANASTASIA LOTT, MM in her article, *The Relationship Between Evangelization and Development.* Of particular note are her comments on imposed models of development by first world countries and suggestions for just alternatives.

The final article, *The Work of Justice and the Option for the Poor,* by SEAMUS MURPHY, SJ raises a number of specific challenges for ministry. Who are the poor? Is injustice always linked to poverty? Are works of justice and option for the poor synonymous?

This issue of the Bulletin concludes with proposals for action *From The Pakistan Catechetical Conference,* Mission Moments and coming events.

NEWS

WELL DONE TO THE OUTGOING DIRECTOR

On December 31, 1992, Bill Jenkinson, CSSp completed 12 years as Director of SEDOS. The occasion was preceded by two events - on December 11, the Annual General Meeting, and December 14, the SEDOS Christmas Party. On both occasions Bill received standing ovations, signs of appreciation for the dedication and vision which he brought to SEDOS as well as indications of the affection with which he is held by the members. The twelve year period of Bill's tenure was marked by an increase in membership from 44 to 84 member congregations and societies, by physical and personnel changes at the SEDOS Secretariat, but especially by Bill's enthusiastic response to the interests and questions raised by members.

We wish Bill "God speed" as he begins a well deserved three month sabbatical and look forward to welcoming him back to Rome as Superior of the Spiritan Generalate on April 1!

WELCOME TO THE NEW DIRECTOR

In mid February, Father Walter von Holzen, SVD will begin his work as the new Executive Director. He comes directly from Benin and also brings to SEDOS 15 years of missionary work in Paraguay, experience as the Latin American mission animator for the Society of the Divine Word and founder and editor of Paraguay Misionerio.

INCULTURATION AND SYNCRETISM: WHAT IS THE REAL ISSUE?

Peter Schineller, SJ

(Peter Schineller, SJ., is Superior of the Nigeria-Ghana Jesuit Mission. He received his doctorate from the University of Chicago, has taught at Weston school of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and the Jesuit School of Theology in Chicago, and was lecturer and dean at the Catholic Institute of West Africa, in Nigeria. In 1990 Paulist Press published his book, Handbook on Inculturation.)

In the process of Christian mission and inculturation of the Gospel, is syncretism always wrong? Are syncretism and inculturation incompatible? Is syncretism inevitable - a necessary step in the process of inculturation? Is there any clear, agreed upon definition of syncretism? These are some of the questions raised when syncretism and inculturation come face to face.

The word "syncretism" has contrasting meanings and connotations, many of them pejorative. A number of theologians, however, view syncretism more positively, often approaching it from an anthropological rather than a theological perspective. For them it is a necessary stage in the process of inculturation.

In light of this ambiguity, my view is that the word "syncretism" cannot be redeemed. After briefly reviewing current thinking about syncretism and citing a number of historical examples, I will focus in this essay on what I believe is the crucial issue - namely, the criteria by which to distinguish adequate and valid inculturation from inadequate and invalid attempts at inculturation.

1. THE MANY MEANINGS OF SYNCRETISM

Both in the history of its usage and in contemporary usage, "syncretism" has had varied meanings. Originally it was applied to political alliances in ancient Greece. Some Old Testament scholars use it to describe the process by which ancient Israel assimilated elements from surrounding cultures. In the age of the Reformation it pointed to the links between Christianity and humanism, and also to the need for Protestant and Catholic churches to come together. Today it retains many of these meanings, with both positive and negative connotations. As used by anthropologists and historians of religion, it is generally used positively. As used by theologians and church leaders, it may be used either positively or negatively. Whether one takes a positive or negative view will depend on how one defines syncretism and usually will reflect a conservative or liberal stance.

In his book, *Eternal Word and Changing Worlds,* Harvie M. Conn quotes the African theologian Byang Kato as saying that syncretism occurs "when critical and *basic elements* of the Gospel are lost in the process of contextualization and are replaced by religious elements from the receiving culture."

Similarly, Conn refers to an Asian evangelical declaration that describes syncretism as an "uncritical affirmative approach" to the evaluation of Eastern religions and cultures, and "the unjustifiable fusion of irreconcilable tenets and practices."

Joseph Prased Pinto from India speaks of the "fusion of incompatible elements" and the "mingling of authentic notions and realities of the revealed faith with realities of other spiritual worlds." The concern is that one may borrow elements of another religion without critically passing them through the screen of Christianity, with Christianity being watered down or destroyed in the process. As David Hesselgrave puts it: "Ultimately, syncretism is but another form of Christ-rejection."

We might note that Vatican II, in its Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Churches, in section 22 on the need for a more profound adaptation of the faith, warns against syncretism: "Every appearance of syncretism and false particularism will be avoided." The concern of the Council Fathers is that true Christianity will not be nourished by such syncretism but rather diluted or destroyed.

Some authors seem to wish to save the word "syncretism" by rescuing it from inadequacies. Thus Aylward Shorter warns that many religious movements in Africa are "crudely syncretistic," which again implies that there can be a critical syncretism. Pinto writes that "not all types of syncretism are negative and to be shunned." Louis J. Luzbetak asks, "Must syncretistic assimilations always be judged pejoratively?"

I similarly hold that particular cases of syncretism, or the inculturation of the Gospel, must be examined to judge whether the inculturation is adequate and authentic. In this sense, syncretism refers to the necessary, ongoing process of the development of Christian life, practice, and doctrine.

Michael Kirwen writes: "The term syncretism is used in the sense of a developmental process of historical growth in religion by accretion and coalescence of originally conflicting forms of beliefs and practices through processes of interaction, suppression, and development." We only understand and assimilate the new in terms of the old. For Kirwen, syncretism does not involve religious compromise or inconsistent eclecticism.

Eugene Hillman believes that syncretism is more often than not both desirable and necessary "for the progressive universalization and tangible catholicization of Christianity." Sanneh writes that "the charge of syncretism, so often invoked against the increasing importance of African leadership in the church, loses its force." He sees Christianity as one of the most syncretistic of religions, basing this upon his understanding of the doctrine of incarnation. Pinto writes that "at times syncretism may be even indispensable in the process of casting off the old and putting on the new."

Most positive of all is Leonardo Boff, in the *Church: Charism, and Power.* In chapter 7, entitled "In Favour of Syncretism: The Catholicity of Catholicism," syncretism is seen as a normal process. Syncretism reflects the church at its best, searching openly and courageously for true catholicity. Boff admits that there is true and false syncretism and thus tries to establish criteria for authentic syncretism that will lead to the growth and emergence of the true catholicity of the church.

EXAMPLES OF SYNCRETISM

A number of historical cases of syncretism can be recalled, illustrating its negative and positive roles. Whether one calls the specific example syncretistic or not will depend upon the definition or connotation one gives to the word.

The Jerusalem Council. As recorded in Acts 15, the early church decided to allow Gentile converts to enter the Christian community without being circumcised and following all the Jewish dietary laws. It is clear that to some believing Jews, this was seen negatively as a loss of the Jewish roots of Christianity. Gentiles, however, saw it as a valid development of doctrine. Karl Rahner cites the Jerusalem Council as one of three key moments in the history of Christianity. He believes that the breakthrough achieved at that council is parallel to the breakthrough at Vatican II.

The Feast of Christmas. Christians decided to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the light of the world, at the time of the pagan winter feast of light, a feast of the sun. Their goal was to suppress or overwhelm that pagan feast by the good news of Jesus Christ. Many felt this was syncretism, an ill-advised accommodation to pagan ideas. (Some Nigerian Christians still feel this way.) But this adaptation of a pagan festival has prevailed. We now celebrate December 25 as the birth of Christ and not as a pagan feast of winter light.

St. Thomas Aquinas and Aristotelian Philosophy. Thomas studied, learned from, assimilated, and built upon the philosophy of the pagan Aristotle. This was opposed by many fellow theologians and bishops. Some teachings of Thomas were condemned by the Archbishop of Paris soon after his death. Opponents felt that Thomas was giving too much weight to the pagan philosopher. But Thomas won out; his work exemplifies the catholic principle that "grace builds on nature."

Christianity and Modern Culture. In the struggle against modernism, Pius IX and Pius X strongly opposed modernistic ideas. They feared that the mingling of modern historical, scientific, and philosophical perspectives would overpower the Gospel. In contrast, at Vatican II the bishops speak more positively, suggesting that the church can learn from modern cultures and science. This is a major shift, allowing for a critical relationship to the modern world rather than an outright rejection.

More recently, Leslie Newbigin speaks of the neopaganism of the West. He feels, with many others, that Western Christianity has been overpowered by the values of the modern world. Modern culture is resistant to the gospel message. Christians too easily identify with contemporary Western culture and lose the ability to be critical in light of the Gospel. We are guided less and less by Christian principles, more and more by secular, even pagan, values. He remarks that a new, negative syncretism between Christianity and modern culture has been forged and that the future of Christianity is at stake.

Latin American Religion and Cults. Many of the traditional figures of popular religious cults in Latin America as for instance in Brazil, where religious movements often have African roots, are viewed as coequal with the Christian communion of saints. The result is often the modification and lessening of the challenge from gospel values. In Cuba, the Yoruba (West Africa) divinities of Elegbara and Ogun have been identified with St. Peter and St. John the Baptist. Such attempts to Christianize traditional figures may result in pagan elements predominating over Christian values.

Old Testament Use of Neighboring Mythologies. Ancient Israel took over from Persian, Babylonian, Phoenician, and Egyptian sources some of their stories and myths, adopting and incorporating them into the Hebrew tradition and Scriptures. Examples might be the stories of creation, the flood, the covenant, and the celebration of various harvest feasts.

Independent Churches in Africa. Often in their ritual, song, and dance, African independent churches incorporate many elements of traditional religion and culture, placing these side by side or even above elements from the Christian tradition. Many of these churches feature healing at the center of their worship. A glance at the

Gospels reminds us that healing was often at the center of the ministry of Jesus. This healing ministry has been lost in many Western, modern expressions of Christianity.

The Zairian Rite. In Zaire, a modified form for celebrating the Eucharistic liturgy has been approved by Rome for limited use. It incorporates elements of Zairian culture - processions, dances, musical instruments, forms of prayer, invocation of ancestors, vestments.

Changes in Official Church Teaching. In significant cases, official church teaching has been changed or reversed. There was a time when the burning of heretics and the use of torture were allowed.

Slavery was seen as legitimate for 1,400 years. Only with Vatican II was the church's view on religious liberty positively formulated. What once was considered right is now seen as wrong, or vice versa.

2. SYNCRETISM OR INCULTURATION

These examples of inculturation can be judged successful or not from the viewpoint of Christian tradition. Although each of these cases must be studied in more detail, a few general observations can be made.

First, there will always be disagreements among church leaders and theologians as to whether or not a particular action represents a development of legitimate inculturation or is syncretism in the pejorative sense.

Second, it takes time to evaluate inculturation. For example, some teachings of Thomas Aquinas, once judged as heretical, were later vindicated. Slavery, once allowed, is now seen as contrary to the Gospel. What first appears to be syncretistic may later be judged to be orthodox.

Third, those in positions of power and authority will naturally be critical of any movement that threatens to weaken their power. They may resist important changes by labeling them heretical or syncretistic.

Fourth, some degree of openness or tolerance is needed in responding to new views. The principle of Gamaliel, as reported in the Acts of the Apostles, is apropos: "If it is from God, no one can stop it; if not, it will die on its own."

One further observation is that the application of the term "syncretism" to some or all of these examples is not very helpful. In my view, the word is too ambiguous, open, and subjective and has too many different connotations to be used fruitfully in discussing inculturation. Even though I incline toward those scholars who see syncretism as a positive, necessary, and helpful word to describe development of a tradition in new cultures, I do not feel the term can be saved. One's energies are too easily consumed in quarrels about the meaning of words. The all-important issue that the question of syncretism raises can thus become sidetracked, namely, the issue of the criteria for distinguishing adequate versus inadequate inculturation.

CRITERIA FOR VALID INCULTURATION

Before discussing the criteria of valid inculturation, we must note that inculturation is a given, not an option; it is an imperative for all churches and church leaders. "You may, you must have an African Christianity." The strong statements of Paul VI and John Paul II in Africa make clear that each church is under obligation to inculturate gospel values in its particular situation. The 1991 encyclical of John Paul II entitled *Mission of the Redeemer,* sections 52-55, explores the necessity and meaning of inculturation in the ongoing mission of the church.

How, then, can one judge whether a particular development is truly Christian? Also, who - which individual

or body - will make this judgment? These are not easy questions. There will be disagreement and, in many cases, winners and losers; it will take time and effort to move to viable solutions.

The basic schema for evaluation, in my view, is to be formed in the employment of the pastoral or hermeneutical circle, which consists of three poles - namely, the Christian message, the cultural situation, and the pastoral agent or agents. An inculturation will be successful and Christian if it is faithful to the Christian message and tradition, if it is faithful to the positive, valid insights of a particular culture or tradition, and if it can be lived out by the pastoral agent or agents and their communities of faith.

Faithfulness to the Christian Message

Above all, each new inculturation of the Gospel must be in accord, not contrary to the scriptures. It need not be found in so many words in Scripture, but it must be faithful to the spirit of Scripture. The Scriptures must not only be maintained as the basic source but must also be carried forth, creatively proclaimed in new circumstances and situations. We must remember too that the Scriptures themselves are pluralistic, written over a long period of time in different places, and include within themselves religious developments.

The Christian message involves not only scripture but the history and tradition of the church, in which the councils and creeds hold a special place. Attention should also be given to the writings of theologians and to the lives and examples of the saints. This history is complex and diverse, comprised of many different schools of theology, many different spiritual traditions, and even different canon laws for East and West.

In regard to both Scripture and tradition there is the difficult question of distinguishing what is essential from what is accidental. On one hand, Jesus Christ as risen Lord is essential for the universal church. On the other hand, women covering their heads in church may be seen in the United States as accidental, while in Africa it still may be viewed as essential. In making these distinctions, not only bishops but also scholars and theological experts must be involved.

Insertion into the Cultural Situation

Grace does not destroy but builds on nature and culture. The Christian Gospel should not destroy what is good in particular cultures but rather should save and preserve it. Care must be taken in examining and evaluating aspects of culture, with the help of anthropologists and social scientists, so that only what is good is kept. For example, the destruction of twins by exposure can never be a Christian option. Yet traditional dance is a way to praise and worship God.

According to Vatican II the theological base for taking seriously the culture is that the "seeds of the Word" are found in all cultures. If we do not discover these seeds, we are overlooking the creative presence, challenge, and richness of the mystery of God incarnate throughout human history and culture.

Engagement by Pastoral Agents

Inculturation is basically to be done by the people, but they need guidance and leadership. Ultimately this comes from the authorities of the church, and it comes more immediately from local leaders and from theological scholars. With trust in the guidance of the Spirit they have the task of moving the church and the Gospel into new, uncharted areas. They will be making decisions as how best to live the Gospel in a particular situation. This is shared with the larger church through its official leaders, who should be respectful of the process but also critical when necessary. There will be tensions and disagreements, and there may be no simple solution to many issues. but if there is dialogue, communication, and sharing of faith, there is hope that the Spirit will be the guiding force in the process and not the whims of one particular group or leader.

3. ATTITUDES NEEDED FOR SUCCESSFUL INCULTURATION

Acceptance of Risk. This is clear in the Jerusalem Council and in the theology of Thomas Aquinas. No risk, no gain. Courage is needed, based upon the conviction of the active presence and guidance of the Spirit of God in human history and in the Christian community as well as in its leaders and theologians.

An Attitude of Freedom. There is no creativity without freedom. Surely freedom has its limits, but there must be not only toleration of diversity and growth but also positive encouragement on the part of church leaders. The words of the ancient hymn to the Holy Spirit come to mind, *"flecte quod est rigidum."* What is rigid is often dead; what is flexible is ready to move and to grow. The lives of people in the present, in new circumstances, rather than nostalgia for the past are most important.

A Sense of the Reign of God. A theology of development will be an ecclesial theology, but it must see beyond the church to the larger realm of God's kingdom and reign; the church is to be a witness and in service to that kingdom. Otherwise it becomes too narrowly focused and unable to expand with the freedom of the children of God, led by the Spirit that blows where it wills.

Patience. Change comes slowly and can be painful. When one is close to it, it is difficult to see where it is heading and whether it is faithful to the Gospel. It may take years for the genius and creativity of a Thomas Aquinas to be recognized. John Paul II speaks of inculturation in *Redemptoris Missio* as "a slow journey," and "a difficult process," "for it must in no way compromise the distinctiveness and integrity of the Christian faith."

A Sense of God at Work in the World. While the Bible is all-important, it functions not as an end in itself but to help us see God at work in human lives today. The Bible functions as eyeglasses not to be looked *at* but to be looked *through,* to see the reality and love of God in the world today. Tradition too is a resource and not an end in itself.

A Sense of the People of God. The *sensus fidelium* is a key criterion for Christian doctrine. Can it be lived? Does this particular teaching increase the quality of the faith life of the Christian community? As Felix Wilfred writes in "Inculturation as a Hermeneutical Question," "The authenticity of inculturation has to be sought in the concrete living out of the Gospel by a community of people in a determined cultural context."

Listening. I see this as the final word. We must bring to the process of inculturation a critical openness, an attitude of learning and listening to the Christian message in all its richness and to the various human cultures in all their diversity. This listening attitude opens us to the Spirit of God, and to the spirit of truth present in all cultures, in new and exciting ways. True catholicity remains ahead of us, a pilgrim goal still to be achieved.

Ref. *International Bulletin of Missionary Research.* Vol. 16, No.2, April 1992, 490 Prospect Street, New Haven, Connecticut, U.S.A.

THE FULL CIRCLE OF LIBERATION

AN AMERICAN INDIAN THEOLOGY OF PLACE

George Tinker

(Theologian George Tinker claims indigenous traditions and spirituality as the true roots of his American Indian theology of liberation. He is assistant professor of cross-cultural ministries at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colorado, U.S.A. and associate pastor of Living Waters, a joint Episcopal Lutheran Indian parish. This article is adapted from a speech he delivered to the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 1992.)

Gustavo Gutierrez, provides four important points for our consideration of the circle of liberation:

1. Liberation theology should focus on the "non-person" rather than on the non-believer;

2. Liberation theology is a historical project that sees God as revealed in history;

3. Liberation theology makes a revolutionary socialist choice on behalf of the poor;

4. Liberation theology emerges out of the praxis of the people.

The latter emphasis on praxis is perhaps the most enduring and pervasive gift of liberation theology.

However, a Native American theology finds the emphasis on the historical unsuitable and begins with a much different understanding of Gutierrez' category of the non-person. Moreover, Native American culture and spirituality imply different political solutions from those currently imposed by any socialist paradigm. In the context of these differences, my hope is for constructive dialogue leading to mutual understanding and solidarity between Third and Fourth World peoples and an advance of genuine and wholistic liberation.

RESISTANCE TO CLASS CATEGORIES

In an early essay in the theological journal *Concilium*, Gutierrez described the meaning of the "non-person" in language that strongly distinguished the concern of liberation theology from the rest of modern theology.

> "Much contemporary theology seems to start from the challenge of the non-believer. He or she questions our religious world and faces it with a demand for profound purification and renewal. This challenge in a continent like Latin America does not come primarily from the man or woman who does not believe, but from the person who is not recognized as such by the existing social order. Placed in the ranks of the poor, the exploited, systematically and legally despoiled as human beings they scarcely know that they are persons. The challenge then is not aimed first at our religious world, but at our economic, social, political and cultural world; therefore it is an appeal for the revolutionary transformation of the very basis of a dehumanizing society. What is implied in telling this man or woman that they are a son or daughter of God?"

The Suffering of Non-Personhood

This powerful question names the alienation of marginalized poor and oppressed peoples and provides the

impetus for a liberation theology response to people who suffer under unjust systems. However, it falls short in naming the particular suffering of non-personhood experienced by indigenous people. The very affirmation of Third World "non-persons" in the Americas tends to continue what has been, in praxis, a 500 year disaffirmation.

While Gutierrez avoids the language of explicit political programmes, he explicitly and implicitly identifies the preferential option for the poor with solutions that analyze the poor in terms of social class structure. This overlooks the crucial point that indigenous peoples experience their very personhood in terms of their relationship to the land.

A People of the Land

Native American peoples resist categorization in terms of class structure. Instead, we insist on being recognized as "peoples," even nations, with a claim to national sovereignty based on ancient title to our land. Classification, whether as "working class" or "the poor," continues the erosion of our cultural integrity and national agenda. Capitalist economic structures - including the church (missionaries) and the academy (anthropologists) - have reduced Native American peoples to non-personhood. So too the Marxist agenda has failed to recognize our distinct personhood.

Reducing our 'nationness' to class imposes upon us a particular culture of poverty and especially a culture of labour. It begs the question as to whether indigenous peoples desire production in the modern economic sense in the first place. To put the means of production into the hands of the poor eventually makes the poor exploiters of indigenous peoples and their natural resources. Finally, it seriously risks violating the very spiritual values that hold an indigenous cultural group together as a people.

This is not to suggest simply discarding Marxist or other tools of analysis. Rather, this is a constructive critique of these tools and the implicit hegemony they exercise in much of our midst in the Third World.

A History of Cultural Genocide

The failure to recognize the distinct personhood of Native American peoples has a history as long as the history of European colonialism and missionary outreach in the Americas. In particular, it should be noted that the church's failure to recognize the personhood of Native Americans was the most devastating. Less direct than the military (yet always accompanied by it), missionaries consistently confused the gospel of Jesus Christ with the gospel of European cultural values and social structures. They said our cultures and our social structures were inadequate and needed to be replaced with what they called a "Christian civilization."

Liberation theology and socialist movements in general promise no better than the continued cultural genocide of indigenous peoples. From an American Indian perspective, the problem with modern liberation theology, as with Marxist political movements, is that class analysis gets in the way of recognizing cultural discreetness and even personhood. Small but culturally unique communities stand to be swallowed up by the vision of a classless society, an international workers' movement, or a burgeoning majority of Third World urban poor. This, too, is cultural genocide and signifies that indigenous peoples are yet non-persons, even in the light of the gospel of liberation.

GOD IN PLACE AND TIME

In The Power of the Poor in History, Gutierrez argues that God reveals God's self in history. I assert that this is not only *not* a self-evident truth, but that Native American theology, if true to our culture, must begin with a confession that is both dramatically different from and exclusive of Gutierrez' starting point. Essentially, a Native American theology must argue out of spiritual experience and praxis that God reveals

God's self in creation, in space or place and not in time.

The Western sense of history as a linear temporal process means that those who heard the gospel first have and always maintain a critical advantage over those of us who hear it later. We rely on them to give us a full interpretation. This has been our consistent experience with the gospel as it has been preached to us by missionaries of all denominations, just as it has been our experience with the political visions proclaimed to us by revolutionaries.

The problem, from the 16th century historian Las Casas to Marx, is the assumption of a hegemonic trajectory through history that fails to recognize cultural distinctions. With the best of intentions, solutions to oppressed peoples' suffering are proposed as exclusive programmes that do not allow for diverse possibilities.

Whatever the conqueror's commitment to evangelization and conversion or to military subjugation and destruction, it was necessary to make the conquest decisive - on military, political, economic, social, legal, and religious levels. And just as the conquest had to be decisive, so too must modern revolutions be decisive. No room is allowed for those who consider themselves distinct - economically, politically, socially, and culturally - to find their own revolution or liberation.

A prime example was the situation of the Miskito Indians in Nicaragua during the Sandinista Revolution. Relocated from their coastal territories, where they had self-sustaining local economies, to high-altitude communal coffee plantations, the Miskito peoples were forced to labour as culturally amorphous workers with no regard to the abject cultural dislocation they had suffered. The Miskito Indians had been a people; removal from their land reduced them to a class without a cultural identity.

History and Temporality

Whether in capitalist or socialist guise, history and temporality reign supreme in the West. On the other hand, Native American spirituality and values, social and political structures, and even ethics are rooted not in some temporal notion of history but in spatiality. This is perhaps the most dramatic cultural difference between Native American thought and Western intellectual tradition.

The question is not whether time or space is missing in one culture or the other, but which is dominant. Of course Native Americans have a temporal awareness, but it is subordinate to our sense of place. Likewise, the Western tradition has a spatial awareness, but it lacks the priority of the temporal. Hence, progress, history, development, evolution and process, become key notions that invade all academic discourse in the West, from science and economics to philosophy and theology. History becomes the quintessential Western intellectual device.

If Marxist thinking and the notion of a historical dialectic were finally proven correct, then American Indian people and all indigenous peoples would be doomed. Our cultures and value systems, our spirituality, and even our social structures, would give way to an emergent socialist structure that would impose a notion of the good irregardless of ethnicity or culture.

DRAWN TOGETHER IN CREATION

One could argue that we must learn to compromise with the "real world," that to pursue our own cultural affectations is to swim upstream against the current of the modern socio-economic world system. When rightists or capitalists of any shade assert this, I know they are arguing the self-interest or prerogatives of those who own the system. When Third or Fourth World peoples make the argument, I am curious how readily some of us concede

to Western categories of discourse. How easily we internalize the assumption that Western, Euro-American philosophical, theological, economic, social, spiritual, and political systems are necessarily definitive of any and all conceivable "real" worlds.

Native American Spirituality

As native Americans we think that our perception of the world is as adequate, perhaps more satisfying, and certainly more egalitarian than the West's. In order to sense the power of our culturally integrated structures of cognition, a beginning understanding of Native American spirituality is necessary, for all of existence is spiritual for us. That is our universal starting point, even though we represent a multitude of related cultures, with a great variety of tribal ceremonial structures expressing that spirituality.

That the primary metaphor of existence for Native Americans is spatial does much to explain the fact that American Indian spirituality and American Indian existence are deeply rooted in the land. It explains why our conquest and removal from the land was so culturally and genocidally destructive. There is, however, a more subtle level to this sense of spatiality and land rootedness. It shows up in nearly all aspects of our existence, in our ceremonial structures, our symbols, our architecture, and in the symbolic parameters of a tribe's universe.

The Circle

The fundamental symbol of existence for Plains Indians is the circle, a symbol signifying the family, the clan, the tribe, and eventually all of creation. Because it has no beginning and no end, all in the circle are of equal value.

In its form as a medicine wheel, with two lines forming a cross inscribed vertically and horizontally across its whole, the circle can symbolize the four directions of the Earth of more important are the four manifestations of Wakonta (the Sacred Mystery, Creator, God) that come to us from these directions. Native American egalitarian tendencies are worked out in this spatial symbol in ways that go far beyond the classless egalitarianism of socialism.

In one layer of meaning, these four directions hold together in the same equal balance the four nations of Two-leggeds, Four-leggeds, Wingeds, and Living-moving Things - encompassing all that is created, the trees and rocks, mountains and rivers, as well as animals. Human beings lose their status of primacy and dominion. In other words, American Indians are driven implicitly and explicitly by their culture and spirituality to recognize the personhood of all "things" in creation. When the Lakota peoples of North America pray *Mitakuye ouyasin,* "For all my relatives," they understand relatives to include not just tribal members, but all of creation.

This matrix, this cultural response to the world that we might call spirituality continues to have life today in North America among our various Indian tribes, even those who remain in the church and continue to call themselves Christian. More and more frequently today, Indian Christians are holding on to the old traditions as their way of life. They are claiming the freedom of the gospel to honour and practice them as integral to their inculturated expression of Christianity.

Today there can be no genuine American Indian theology that does not take our indigenous traditions seriously. This means that our reading of the gospel and our understanding of faithfulness will represent a radical disjuncture from the theologies and histories of the Western churches of Europe and America - as we pay attention to our stories and memories instead of to theirs.

AN INDIGENOUS THEOLOGY

This inculturation of an indigenous theology is symbolic of American Indian resistance and struggle. More than symbolic, it gives life to the people. However, we also see the possibility

that our interpretations can prove renewing, redeeming, and salvific for Western theology and ecclesiology.

An American Indian theology coupled with an American Indian reading of the gospel might provide the theological imagination to generate a more immediate and attainable vision of a just and peaceful world. Respect for creation must necessarily result in justice, just as genuine justice necessarily is the achievement of peace.

We understand repentance as a call to be liberated from our perceived need to be God and instead to assume our rightful place in the world as humble human beings in the circle of creation. While Euro-cultural scholars have offered consistently temporal interpretations of the gospel concept, *basileia* (kingdom), an American Indian interpretation builds on a spatial understanding rooted in creation. If *basileia* has to do with God's kingdom, where else is God actually to reign if not in the entirety of the place that God has created?

While God revealing God's self in history holds out some promise for achieving justice and peace in some eventual future moment, the historical/temporal impetus must necessarily delay any full realization of the *basileia* of God. Instead, American Indian spirituality calls us to image ourselves here and now as mere participants in the whole of creation, with respect for and reciprocity with all of creation, and not somehow apart from it and free to use it up at will. The latter is a mistake that was and is epidemic in both the First and Second Worlds and has been recklessly imposed on the rest of us in the name of development.

This understanding of *basileia* and repentance mandates new social and political structures, genuinely different from those created by either of the dominant Euro-cultural structures of capitalism or socialism. The competition generated by Western individualism, temporality, and paradigms of history, progress, and development must give way to the communal notion of interrelatedness and reciprocity.

CONCLUSION: A THEOLOGY OF COMMUNITY

I am not espousing a value-neutral creation theology in the style of Matthew Fox or a New Age spirituality of feel-good individualism. Rather, ultimately this is an expression of a "theology of community" that must generate a consistent interest in justice and peace.

If I image myself as a vital part of a community, indeed as a part of many communities, it becomes more difficult for me to act in ways that are destructive of these communities. The desire or perceived necessity for exerting social, political, economic, or spiritual control over each other gives way to mutual respect, not just for individuals, but for our culturally distinct communities.

If we believe that we are all relatives in this world, then we must live together differently. Justice and peace, in this context, emerge almost naturally out of a self-imaging as part of the whole, as part of an ever-expanding community that begins with family and tribe, but is finally inclusive of all human beings and all of creation. Such is the spirit of hope that marks the American Indian struggle of resistance in the midst of a world of pain.

Ref. *Sojourners*. October 1992. Vol. 21, No. 8. 1321, Otis Street NE, Box 29272, Washington, DC 20017.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EVANGELIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Anastasia Lott, MM

(Anastasia Lott, MM is a Maryknoll Sister who has worked in Garissa Diocese, Kenya, since 1988. Prior to this, she worked in adult religious formation as a lay missioner in Barinas Diocese, Venezuela).

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this article is to analyze some aspects of the relationship between evangelization and development, in so far as ideological differences are barriers to effective collaboration. Fidelity to Gospel values, discipleship and service challenge Christians in Africa to be involved in fostering the dignity of the whole human person through authentic integral development. This causes great concern to many committed Christians and pastoral workers who see themselves as dynamic Gospel agents. They wonder at the relevance and effectiveness of many projects designed to promote development in Africa. They look forward to more just and life-giving patterns of international, economic, political and social relationships.

Nehemiah's Dilemma

In the Book of Nehemiah, an oppressed people ask Nehemiah to help them get relief through justice and mercy. Men and women complain about their need for grain to keep their families alive. They have mortgaged their fields, vineyards and houses in order to buy sufficient grain to keep them from starving. They have borrowed money to pay the royal tax on fields and vineyards.

These burdens were inflicted by fellow Jews. When Nehemiah hears of the complaints, he angrily denounces the leaders for oppressing their brothers and sisters. He calls a public assembly to look into the problem and condemns the Jewish leaders for violating the communal trust of justice by forcing their brothers and sisters to sell themselves and their children in order to pay their debts. Nehemiah condemns oppression as evil and calls upon the leaders to cancel all debts and return the fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses to their original owners. The leaders agree with Nehemiah's proposal and all affirm this action as right and just. (Nehemiah 5:1-13)

THE CHURCH AND INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT

The dilemma facing the Christian Church today on issues related to development in Africa is similar to those brought to Nehemiah's attention. Although development is a common word in international political relationships and in Christian mission, it is not a concept that can be easily defined in the contemporary context. It is varyingly defined as progress, industrialization, modernization, or transformation. The political and evangelical challenge of our times is to enable countries which have been neglected or injured in the world market to achieve higher standards of living, improved social services, greater access to international resources and greater equity in the international, social and political realm.

History, geography, culture and economy have played significant roles in shaping the current situation of development and underdevelopment. Variations in the models and understanding of development, adds further confusion to the discussion of this topic. The basic question is, "How can authentic and integrated development be implemented as an international collaborative project which acknowledges existing injustices, attempts to redress them in some way, and enhances the possibility for genuine cultural, economical, political and educational social interchange?"

Evangelization and Development

Development is of great concern to the Church because all people belong to the Body of Christ. Therefore, evangelization and the call to minister to the growth and dignity of each human person is fundamental to the universal mission of the Church. Development should not only consist of quantitative material factors like gross national product or per capita income, but questions about the qualitative development of the whole human person.

Is life genuinely improving? Do people have a deeper sense of belonging to their world; a greater sense of participation both in decision-making and in the distribution of the fruits and goods of creation? Have our relationships with each other become closer and more supportive? Are we more empowered to be co-creators? Is the quality of life declining in spite of apparent per capita income and industrial development or is it enabling people to have more material goods and a longer potential life-span.

Education in many areas has made such rapid strides that numbers of secondary school leavers and university graduates exceed the immediate demands for their skills and services. There has been advancement in road construction, accessibility to electricity and transport and wider availability of medical services. Nonetheless, there are still innumerable malnourished children, discouraged youth, broken women, frustrated labourers. Many are worn down by the failure of technological development.

Authentic Christian Development

Anyone who has worked to promote development knows that programmes have often "functioned primarily to help make the subordination of the Third World to metropolitan capitalism more palatable and permanent." A development programme which is of authentic Christian inspiration must be, first of all, concerned with preserving and promoting the dignity of the human person. Part of this fundamental dignity is reflected in full mutual participation and concern. For Christians, development is concerned, not only with wealth and the standard of living, but also with a just distribution of resources. This calls for a serious reflection on several questions. Do we dare to question and challenge the prevailing ideologies that perpetuate injustice and oppression? Do our liturgies clearly proclaim a God radically and lovingly present in the suffering and struggle of the people called to be God's own?

In one sense, the challenge of authentic Christian development has a two-fold dimension. First, it is to seek out creative pastoral responses to the contemporary social situation through social analysis, group planning, use of appropriate technology and resources. Secondly, it develops effective spiritual and religious inspiration through appropriate use of myth, symbol, story and ritual to proclaim a new vision, a new creation and authentic Good News for those who are struggling.

Genuine Christian development which overcomes the fantasy of contemporary development must be grounded in a deep awareness of the dignity of the human person through careful and persistent social analysis and a Gospel-rooted eschatological vision of equality.

DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Massive resources have been combined to enhance development in Africa. Yet in spite of all these efforts, there

has been little apparent progress. One basic question underlying this problem is: "Who controls development money and what are their goals and objectives?" As this question is further analyzed, it leads to another very crucial one. "Who is developing whom?"

Underdevelopment And Debt

It has been well argued that underdevelopment is not merely an accident of circumstances, but an active process. It is a real phenomenon consisting of the drop in food production, decline in per capita income and population productivity, the dramatic decline of gross domestic product and declines in food consumption, health and overall standards of living. The gravity of the debt problem and its implications for development in Africa cannot be underrated as indicated in Kabiru Kinyanjui's observation:

> The implications of debt on African development needs to be appreciated. First, the increasing foreign debt burden and the depreciation of commodity prices in the world market has made Africa a net exporter of capital. Contrary to some misconceptions, Africa is not receiving increasing amounts of foreign capital for development, but rather it is exporting most of its foreign exchange in the form of debt payment, managing fees and profits and through private export of capital.

It is difficult to determine where this debt situation will end in view of the changes that are being considered internationally. Some developed countries are relaxing demands on debt payment or have already converted certain development loans into grants. But even with this potential relief, the debt problem is still aggravated by drastic declines in commodity prices. As solutions to the economic problems of developing countries, such organizations as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank almost invariably recommend increased production of export crops. Unfortunately, this policy has produced competing producer markets. Many struggling countries are increasing their production of the same or similar crops, resulting in lower prices and increased benefit to consumer nations which further undermine the already tenuous efforts at economic development.

The Kenyan Situation

The *informal sector* plays an increasingly important role in the Kenyan urban economy. There are various opinions as to its place and significance. On the one hand, it is perceived as an employee pool that is highly exploitive and oppressive as a means of masking the problem of unemployment, and as a problem associated with rising squatter areas. On the other hand, it is seen as an area that should be encouraged and supported as potentially generative of development.

FLAWED MODELS OF DEVELOPMENT

As indicated, one main obstacle to appropriate and effective development is the model imposed from the developed world. Wealthy countries design and control the international economic order and with it the definitions of, methods for and means of development. Though the economic damage done to African countries in the name of international development schemes and assistance are grevious, the violence of cultural domination is far more destructive to the collective African identity. The ideal for development is North American and European and the message is clear - real development is to look like us, act like us, think like us.

Unfortunately, the Church is seen by many as an agent and a propagator of foreign development. Kabiru Kinyanjui identifies four main problems with the Church as: the legitimization of oppression by the dominant ruling class, financial and ideological domination by overseas Churches, the failure of leadership development, and religious fundamentalism.

As long as participation in decision-making, and models and policies continue to be so lopsidedly in favour of rich, developed countries, authentic international development will not occur. Those who hold the resources - both money and international power - have invariably favoured policies that perpetuate patterns of increased wealth in some areas and further underdevelopment in others.

Up until recently, international commodities boards comprised of key producer and consumer nations, tried to bridge this gap by negotiating prices and quotas to facilitate a stable market and reasonable income. The Lome Negotiations between members of the European Economic Community and sixty-four African, Caribbean and Pacific States, gave hope of being an effort toward better mutuality. But generally, this is still marred by excessive control from the EEC membership over the programmes that will be carried out to assist the ACP countries. Part of the problem is the implication of most international aid programmes that the rich countries are providing gratuitous charity to the poor countries with no real mutual economic return.

Furthermore, within the underdeveloped countries, it is rarely producers, that is, workers and peasant farmers who have a direct say in economic policies either nationally or internationally. They are represented by middle-class go-betweens who have other interests at heart and who are easily bought by consumer representatives through commissions, political favours and other enticements.

AN ALTERNATIVE MODEL

In order to achieve fuller participation in decision-making processes, we need to develop models and promote skills that will enable us to relate in more collaborative ways. Small groups meeting together with appropriate facilitation can perceive more clearly the economic dynamics, seek alternatives and explore new models. Youth facing the grave consequences of existing social situations, may be open to the experience and readily grasp the analysis. Furthermore, there is the possibility that a new generation of young leaders may offer alternatives to the existing order of relationships.

Henry Okullo provides a straightforward and clear description of a participative development planning process as follows:

> Local people often become the object of research just as they become objects of planning. In the alternative approach advocated here, that of facilitating local people in the making of their own analysis and their own decisions, there is far less need for systematic, formalized social research. By and large, people know their own situations, and if they are to make decisions, there is little need for formal research.
>
> Concretely, this means working to reduce the distinctions between the expert and the non-expert, the planner and the plannee. This can be accomplished through the sharing of planning tools. Similarly, the role of the professional planner should perhaps be understood as being not so much that of doing the planning for people, as that of bringing in tools and methods of facilitating the work of people planning for themselves. The task of interpretation should, as much as possible, be left to the people themselves. They can apply the lessons which they have derived from it. They then become enriched by that interpretative activity.

In spite of the fact that alternative visions and models do exist, fuller participation may be difficult to achieve at wider levels. Invariably, economic power implies political power. In Kenya there is little room for an opposition and so it seems that short of a revolution, with its huge social costs and tenuous promise of hope, structural change and social transformation will be hard to achieve.

DEVELOPMENT AS A CHALLENGE TO CHRISTIANS

As committed Christians, we are called to be optimistic agents of social transformation, co-creators with God in bringing about a new creation of justice, mercy, harmony and love. We are invited as a discipleship of equals to reach out in faithful, committed service and to participate in integral development, in a process which celebrates the goodness and healing possibility in every community, every moment and in every land. To overcome the odds against false development and the dominant models, we need to be alert and astute in promoting Gospel values, humble in the evaluation thereof, and courageous in implementation.

Proclaiming The Good News

It is not unusual to confuse authentic evangelization with the imposition of words and the imposition of a foreign culture, when announcing the Gospel Message. If we have truly heard the Good News, our lives will proclaim it through just actions. If we are one with God, we will be moved to identify with others as we promote processes which recognize the contribution of each person to the development of genuine community life. With mercy and gentleness we will encourage each other; with authority and courage we will challenge injust structures.

The Church's pastoral activity must be deeply involved with the real social context of the people to whom it is proclaiming the Good News. How its members live and express this flows out of real life and proclaims an authentic message of liberation for the whole community. As Ela Jean-Marc observes in *African Cry*:

> The modes of expression of faith have sense and meaning only if the Church is deeply involved in the battles being waged by human beings against conditions that stifle human liberty. The participation of the Church in these battles then becomes the necessary condition for liturgy, catechesis, and theology in Africa.
> How are we able to participate truly and fully in the genuine life struggles of the people, not as distant observers or as directing generals but as authentic co-actors? How do we generate social change with and for others and ourselves in such a way that we contribute creatively, communally and justly to the full, authentic and integral development of the whole person in order that we all share life to the full?

We must attend to the quality of our presence among and with people. If as pastoral agents we are not truly and enthusiastically in love with the people with whom we are called to follow Jesus in service, the task of evangelization has already failed. We will have no credible word to speak on development and liberation.

Ref. *African Ecclesial Review*
April 1992, Volume 34; No. 2;
Amecea Gaba Publications;
P.O. Box 4002; Eldoret, Kenya.

THE WORK OF JUSTICE AND THE OPTION FOR THE POOR

Seamus Murphy, SJ

Since the early '70s, the phrases 'the work of justice' and 'the option for the poor' have been increasingly heard throughout the Church. The modern roots of this development go back to Vatican II and the Latin American bishops' conference at Medellin in 1968. In 1971, the Synod of Bishops stated that action for justice is a constitutive part of proclaiming the gospel. Nor has this been just words; around the world, and particularly in Latin America, a growing number of Catholics have committed themselves to radical social analysis and action on behalf of the poor.

CLARIFICATION REQUIRED

Liberation theologians hold that the Church's reflection should be influenced by the experience of action for justice on behalf of the poor. The experience will vary from one country to another. Around 1975, the Jesuits committed themselves to an integral apostolate of 'the service of faith and the promotion of justice.' In 1990, a review of the Jesuit experience of living out that commitment showed that the operative notion of justice had broadened out from focusing primarily on poverty and inequality to embracing a variety of other issues. This development has raised the question of the relationship between the work for justice and the option for the poor, and this article is a first attempt to clarify the relationship.

Church documents have not always distinguished them clearly. It has been noticeable that religious in the apostolates of education and health-care have had difficulty in working out the implications of the Church's call for their apostolate: for example, some of them wonder how it can be right to spend time educating middle-class children if the work of justice is essentially about an option for the poor.

Since injustice and poverty are not the same thing, it follows that the work of justice and the option for the poor do not always involve the same kind of apostolic activity. Often they will, but sometimes they won't and this can have practical and not just academic significance. In the Third World, where the great majority are poor, an option for the poor will generally ensure that one is thereby promoting justice. In the industrialized world there are reasons for thinking that what is involved in action for justice and what is involved in option for the poor overlap substantially but are not identical.

Some of the greatest injustices that take place in the rich world have little direct connection to poverty. For example: (1) the activities of paramilitary and terrorist groups in Ireland and elsewhere; (2) the numerous abortions in countries which are easily able to afford more babies; (3) the high incidence of rape and other violence against women and children; (4) the havoc wrought by organized drug-pushers. The occurrence of such injustices demonstrates that the elimination of poverty (among the middle and upper classes of the western world) does not mean the end of social injustice.

FIRST BAD OPTION: "THE FUNDAMENTAL INJUSTICE IS POVERTY."

Some people, disturbed by the suggestion of drawing a distinction, have wanted to define work for justice and option for the poor so that they will come to the same thing. They want to ensure that 'the poor' and 'the victims of injustice' will refer to exactly the same set of people.

Taking these two realities as identical means defining one in terms of the other. This gives two choices, each of which has serious drawbacks. The first collapses the notion of injustice into the notion of poverty. It means narrowing what counts as injustice, and assuming that the only injustice is humanly-caused poverty. On this view, war, rape, or ecological irresponsibility all reduce to a kind of poverty. Anything that will not reduce to some kind of poverty then gets treated as not really an injustice, or at least not an injustice that needs be taken seriously.

Concrete Examples

There is a concrete example to hand. A few Irish Catholics have applied a bowdlerized version of Latin American liberation theology to Northern Ireland and have come to bizarre conclusions. They have started from the position that poverty and inequality arising from structural factors is the fundamental and most serious injustice, and so violence emanating from people suffering such injustice (or their representatives) is less unjust. They have concluded that the IRA's campaign is less unjust than the structural injustice (poverty, inequality, sectarian discrimination) affecting the Catholic working-class. And therefore the IRA's violence is essentially a response to the institutionalized violence of society. On this view, the IRA's campaign is interpreted as a kind of popular struggle of the working-class against colonialism, imperialism and capitalism.

But common-sense morality tells us, and the bishops of Ireland have repeatedly emphasized it, that the injustice of murder is worse than the injustice of discrimination and inequality. To argue that the fundamental injustice is poverty can make it difficult to grasp the moral issues involved in, for instance, the rape of a rich woman by a poor man, political assassination, homophobia involving violence or discrimination against homosexuals, and racism. On the one hand, attempting to define these as forms of poverty leads to intellectual contortions and confusion; and on the other hand they can not be dismissed as not being real injustices.

Two other points can be made. First, treating poverty as the very essence of injustice can lead to considering personal and moral responsibility to be attributable only to those who are not poor. This will not do. The goal of empowering the poor and the powerless necessarily involves enabling them to take responsibility along with power. Second, it ignores the fact that in a minority of cases poverty is not the result of injustice.

SECOND BAD OPTION: "WE ARE ALL POOR IN SOME WAY."

The other choice involves expanding the notion of poverty into the notion of injustice or, more precisely, into the notion of need. This means expanding the category of 'the poor' to cover all sorts of groups, many of whom are not materially deprived and are not poor in the sense in which ordinary language uses the term. Like the first option, this too seems very forced and artificial: to say rape-victims or the victims of environmental pollution are the poor sounds odd. Any group which experiences systemic injustice, (e.g. women, homosexuals, ethnic minorities) will count as 'the poor' under this approach. So too will the wealthy, as candidates for the class of the 'spiritually poor'; and since, unlike material poverty, one can not tell easily whether somebody is spiritually poor, we shall just have to give the wealthy a benefit of the doubt. The final result: everybody can count as poor, in one way or another.

This approach undermines the claims of the materially poor, as those who work with the poor would argue. If more or less everybody can count as poor then the materially poor have no special claim to our attention. This approach guts the option for the poor notion of any serious meaning, and deprives it of its cutting edge. It fails to grasp the horror of some kinds of poverty. It is simply unacceptable to speak as though the wealthy man whose inner life is empty and meaningless has as much a claim upon us as has the homeless child forced into prostitution.

Institutions

Education and health-care are two areas in which religious congregations have become deeply involved in an institutional level. It is no secret that the challenge of making an option for the poor has presented such institutions with a tough challenge to new growth. A promiscuous broadening of the category 'poor' is liable to let them off the hook of making the radical changes that are necessary. So a school or hospital could continue to cater primarily for upper-class and middle-class people on the grounds that they too are probably poor on a spiritual or cultural level. This can only turn option for the poor into a joke.

Language

It is important when the Church speaks to the men and women of today that it uses the language of today. It is even more important that when it uses ordinary words it uses them in their contemporary sense. The poor in ordinary language refers to those who are in material need or economically deprived. It causes confusion to use the word in a different sense. Non-Christians who work with us for a better world will be unsure of the seriousness of our commitment if our use of the term 'poor' could as easily refer to a wealthy élite whose souls are empty as to the homeless whose bellies are empty.

The sense of commonly-used words such as poverty or work cannot be changed at will. Running the concepts of injustice and poverty together leads to linguistic confusion and this in turn leads to moral confusion. This is not a trivial point; confused concepts are a major hindrance to effective action for justice.

RE-FOCUSING: JUSTICE

Poverty and injustice overlap, of course, since those who suffer from poverty are mostly also victims of injustice. One need not worry that one will have to choose one at the expense of the other. It is more sensible to hold that: (1) there are many injustices that have little connection with poverty; (2) of these, a few (e.g. murder and rape) are more unjust, and many others less unjust, than the injustices involved in poverty; (3) the injustices connected to material poverty are serious, and the poor have a special claim to our attention; (4) poor people can commit injustices, and rich people can suffer injustices.

Anybody, rich or poor, white or black, male or female, can be the object of work for justice but only those who are materially poor can be the object of the option for the poor. Justice is something that all are entitled to. For example, to deny a child adequate education is to do an injustice; socio-economic background is irrelevant to that claim. There are a range of rights and claims the denial of which constitutes injustice, and these rights are held by the middle-class as much as the working-class. Any work which enables any group of people to receive their rights is a work of justice.

That same work might count as part of an option for the poor if that group were materially poor, but not otherwise. The call reflects the insight that the needs of the poor are greater and less likely to be met by other means, which implies that they have the strongest claim to our work for justice commitments, except where there exists a greater injustice elsewhere. The point to note is that merely because a particular apostolate does not have direct impact on the poor does not mean it is not a work of justice.

THE WORK OF JUSTICE

Middle-class children are entitled to education. Catholics who provide them with education are thereby doing a work of justice, although it is not an option for the poor. The argument that by educating middle-class children one is living out option for the poor since those children will work for the poor or be more generous towards them is a bad argument. First, it amounts to using children as a means to our ends instead of seeing them as ends in themselves and their education as an end of justice in itself; second, it makes one's option for the poor dependent on the choices of others who have made no such choice. Educating any children counts as a work for justice; educating poor children counts as option for the poor as well. This should tilt us towards concentrating our increasingly limited resources on educating the poor. The same goes for health-care and other apostolates.

What I have said may make it look as though work for justice is a soft option, since it could include working with anybody. It need not be. The biggest social challenge facing Irish Catholics today has no necessary connection to poverty. It involves confronting the greatest single injustice perpetrated in Ireland today, viz. the IRA's armed campaign, greatest since it is they who are responsible for the majority of the political murders (including the majority of murders of Catholics) in Northern Ireland.

In 1988, John Hume stated that were he to lead a civil rights movement today, its primary target would be the IRA. As Archbishop Romero, the Jesuits and others in El Salvador opposed the local death-squads, so Irish religious need to be a great deal more active in opposing these death-squads, the more so when they come from the Catholic side. Just as the German churches in the 1930s and 1940s fumbled the challenge of facing Nazism, because it was so identified with the national spirit and had support from lower income groups, the Irish Catholic church today is in similar danger with respect to the IRA/SF and for similar reasons.

RE-FOCUSING: POVERTY

When it comes to the option for the poor, the first point to note is that it is a preferential option for the poor; it is not exclusive. This does not mean, however, that it loses its radical edge, once one avoids extending the term poor to cover any kind of need.

The preferential option for the poor can be understood as filling in part of the content of the notion of justice. Precisely because modern societies display such poverty and inequality, part of the work of justice is the making of an option for the poor. The common good requires a preferential move in favour of one particular group. The option for the poor can be understood in terms of what Aristotle calls the rectificatory dimension of justice. Given an unequal society, both justice and the common good require a restoring of the balance in favour of the poor; hence work for justice, taken as a whole, requires an option for the poor as one of its elements. The development of this notion reflects the Church's overdue acknowledgement of and response to the division of society between rich and poor, powerful and voiceless.

To act justly, the Church must make a concerted effort to shift its resources towards the poor, which means away from the better-off to some extent. But this can be done rightly only on the basis of a vision or concept of the good of society as a whole. The good for the poor has to be understood and attained within the context of the common good. In short, option for the poor must be grounded in work for justice and where it is not, option for the poor will be subverted to nothing more than a partisan stance in favour of a particular group.

Ref. *Religious Life Review,*
Vol.31; Sept./Oct. 1992
42 Parnel Sq., Dublin 1.

FROM THE PAKISTAN CATECHETICAL CONFERENCE

October 26 - 30, 1992

(After a year of intensive preparation, the first ALL PAKISTAN CATECHETICAL CONFERENCE was held at the Pastoral Institute, Multan, Pakistan, under the auspices of the National Catechetical Commission).

1. CHALLENGES OF THE FUTURE

1. During our discussions we have come to realize that our church faces many challenges. Since 1947, we live our faith in an Islamic context. During the past 15 years the process of Islamisation has greatly influenced our political, social and family life. These difficulties and tensions are likely to increase in the next decade.

2. The nationalization of many schools in 1972 has deprived many of our children of the possibility of systematic instruction in their faith. Hundreds attend non-Christian schools and grow up without religious education in school.

3. The trend of rapid industrialization has left a profound impact on our people and on the environment. Many rural families have shifted to the big industrial centres where they live in degrading poverty and lose the practice of their faith. Many are doing two jobs and have no time to teach their children. Certain religious sects are luring some of our faithful away from the church, even educated people are falling away.

4. The growing influence of media culture poses a tremendous challenge. The T.V., V.C.R. and satellite broadcasting are having their good and bad effects on the attitudes, morals and beliefs of our people.

5. There is a continual challenge of the church for Evangelization and catechizing the tribal people and to devise new methods adapted to their needs and culture.

6. Another challenge lies in the fact that the number of faith educators and animators is not enough to keep up with the growing population. Hence the challenge to involve the lay faithful especially the parents, to be more active in their responsibilities to educate their children.

2. PROPOSALS FOR ACTION

In order to meet the contemporary challenges of the 21st century, we took as our main vision: THE BUILDING OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD through small vibrant Christian communities. We envisaged building a new heaven and a new earth by forming a "new person" capable of realizing the kingdom values of peace, love, truth, justice and freedom. We should therefore strive to create a living, witnessing and prophetic church in our dioceses:

1. We propose that a historic shift should take place from school based to home based catechesis. The first place where faith must develop is in the family community. The time has come for

parents to see themselves as the first catechizers and the essential task of their vocation is to hand on the faith to their children, while at the same time evangelizing each other. They should provide a proper Christian atmosphere in the home and celebrate certain important events in the family.

2. Catechesis must also be a priority of the parish community. The pastors and other faith educators should provide solid food for the faith through well prepared liturgies and catechetical homilies. The parish priest should form a team of parents who will help to instruct other parents in their responsibilities. We emphasize that the local community ought to be the agent of catechesis and a special effort should be made to involve the women of the parish. These voluntary catechists should be given some initial training by the diocesan catechetical centre.

3. Our catechists, both full time and part time, must take the teaching of the faith as their primary responsibility. They should be entrusted with as many families as they can provide sufficient religious formation. The members of the parish should be taught to pay their church support on their own.

4. Catechism in schools needs to be intensified and the heads of schools must take great care to provide for well motivated catechism teachers who would enjoy a proper status and adequate remuneration. Other teachers should be trained to impart value education and positive attitudes through their class subjects.

5. On-going training of catechetical personnel is a must if we want to attain our goals in faith formation. The various catechetical centres have a key role to play: adequate staff and financial support need to be provided to them. We need to send some persons for higher training in the planning of curricula. We strongly recommend that initial training should be imparted at the local level and therefore a national institute for lay theological formation should be set up in Pakistan.

6. The seminaries and houses of religious formation should gear themselves to face the future challenges by bringing about an attitudinal change in the minds and hearts of their students so that they are convinced that the catechetical ministry in all its forms is an essential task of the priest. More time should be given in the seminary curriculum to teach both the theory and practice of modern catechetical methods.

7. In this age of electronic media, it is imperative that media education should become a part of faith formation. Audio visual materials, both traditional and modern, should be made available for effective teaching by faith educators.

8. We propose that the diocesan plan of catechetical renewal drawn up at this conference should be discussed, finalized and endorsed by each diocese. The common vision, namely, the building up of the Kingdom through small vibrant Christian communities - and the goal and objectives should be explained and implemented with zeal and vigor.

9. We earnestly recommend that in the course of the coming year a national plan of catechetics should be worked out in coordination with the Bishops Conference of Pakistan by the National Catechetical Commission so as to ensure a coordinated and systematic thrust in faith formation in the 21 century.

mission moments

THE BELLS AT SAINT MICHAEL'S

(INDIA)

The incident took place some forty years ago, but it is still vivid in my mind. In the small village of Gokhla, some 300 miles North West of Calcutta, one morning, a cobra came out of its hiding place and decided to cross over to the playground of St. Michael's Girls' School. As soon as he was spotted, a cry went up: 'Bin Bin!' (Snake, Snake).

In a moment, Sisters and students armed with sticks and clubs, surrounded the reptile, smacked the ground with their weapons, but kept a good distance from their deadly enemy. Several older girls rushed off to the Boys' School, to call for help from Fr. Patrick Boland, TOR. Fr. Pat grabbed his gun and rushed to the scene. To his surprise, upon reaching the place he found a Sister and two girls tinkling small Mass bells and Mr. Cobra waving his raised head in their direction. The cobra seemed distracted and uncertain about what to do next. Meanwhile, every one there prayed that the cobra would not make a deadly spring forward.

Those intervening minutes from the time the girls had gone to Fr. Patrick and the time he got to the school must have seemed like an eternity. The area behind the snake was cleared of people. Father took a careful shot and the cobra lay dead. Though it is commonly held that snakes have no hearing and have only poor vision, the bells held the cobra in a trance, tinkling and tolling his death knell. On the mud-walled building of that school I recall seeing a picture, near the entrance to the sacristy, of St. Michael battling Satan with a spear. I'm sure, he was listening to the prayers of the children and the Sisters that day.

Ref. Fr. Martin Brodhead, TOR
MISSIONES TOR (Third Order Regular of Sr. Francis)
Spring 1992

"IN THE BUSH"

(NAMIBIA)

Sister Magdalena was thrilled when I arrived at Oshikuku to teach English to sisters and clinic personnel. It was decided that I would be most helpful "in the bush." Ovambo is the most densely populated region in Namibia, half of the country's two million inhabitants live here. The sisters maintain a handful of mission stations here, and the largest and most remote is Iilyateko.

Five sisters manage the many responsibilities of this station. They run a small clinic, the closest healthcare for the surrounding homesteads.

Sr. Angela teaches at the primary school based at the mission. A collection of log sheds roofed with zinc, or in one case, thatch, serves as classrooms for three hundred students. Like most bush schools, they all lack but the most rudimentary supplies.

My job at Iilyateko has me teaching four English classes a day. In addition to helping the sisters, I also instruct four candidate sisters and provide a language and skills upgrading class for the majority of teachers at the school. English is now the official language, and everyone recognizes the importance of learning it, but most lack the means or resources to do so.

The sisters in Ovambo are formidable people, with a sense of humour that is infectious. Their duties take them out to the surrounding areas in a pair of 4 x 4 pick-up trucks, along undulating tracks in the thick sand of the bushveld.

They are establishing an even more remote post themselves, 12 miles to the West, called Oshipeto. So far it is one traditional cluster of round

huts, a dug well, a field of mahangu and a pile of bricks. I have no doubt that they will finish it.

Being a part of a community means my lessons are not all that I do. I have a variety of vegetables started with some of the girls who live in the hostel of the school. I often am the driver on one of the forays into the bush. I am learning two of the eight distinct dialects of the region. Two days ago one of the cows had a calf, so my long-dormant milking skills may yet come into play. I am awed by my reception here. Everyone is elated to have a teacher.

Ref. Timothy Abbot
ALLIANCE FOR INTERNATIONAL MONASTICISM (AIM) Vol. 1, No. 3, 1992.

A CHOICE

(KOREA)

(Sr. Son In Sook was working in a Seoul parish located in a slum area. The slum had 1,600 one-room houses. About half of them were rented because the owners preferred to live in better places and wait till the price of the houses went up, before selling them.)

I had a vision of turning this community into an ideal Basic Christian Community. I took great trouble to hold Bible study groups, retreats and B.C.C. meetings.

When the government was busy preparing for the upcoming '86 Asian Games and the '88 Olympics, the slum area was earmarked for development. Government and construction companies organized a Houseowners' Cooperative to tell slum dwellers that when new houses were built, they could get an apartment free of cost or sell their "right to get an apartment" ticket. They were told that the money they would get would be equal to ten years of hard work.

Homeowners were used by the govenment, construction companies and promoters as a tool to get rid of other slum tenants. Pressure was put on the homeowners by setting a time limit for removing the tenants - or losing their benefits. The homeowners and tenants began to fight. This fighting was the result of an inhuman pursuit of profit. In the end, it was through violence that "development" took place and through violence that the construction companies and promoters earned money for the government.

I was really shocked, disappointed and frustrated at seeing what happened. It was no use telling people how to live according to Christian values. It took me three to four years to build a Christian community, but the government took only a few weeks to break that community and change its values.

I began to participate in political events, organizing the tenants to cry out to the government to stop such false development which is not really development, but regression. In this situation, persons cannot be masters of their own future rather the experts, speculator, construction companies make decisions for them and cause division in community relationships. Will the country be secure if, for the purpose of gain, the poor have their living place taken away and are forced to live on the streets?

I realized that all along I was healing minor wounds while the powerful were holding the poor down. I realized that by doing good within the government system I was supporting the power that oppressed the poor. By taking part in politics, when necessary, I can release those powerful hands. This is a long and hard process and I feel like an Israelite waiting to enter the Promised Land.

Ref. Son In Sook, RSCJ
CONNECTIONS: POLITICS BEHIND THE UTOPIA.
Publication of the Society of the Sacred Heart, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1992.

BENEDICT

(SUDAN)

It was Christmas Eve and we were driving slowly through the tall grass, close to the Lopit mountains, when we came across Benedict. My missionary friend got off the car and hugged him. Benedict was on his way to a nearby village, to remind the people about the Christmas Mass that had been planned. As we drove along, my friend told me the story of Benedict's life.

About 15 years ago, when all the priests were expelled from the area, Benedict was called to help the Christians preserve their faith. Since then Benedict has been walking from village to village, to pray with the people, teach the children and keep alive the light of faith. He has never asked for compensation, has

never known about motions to implement the role of the laity in the church, or about the latest trends in mission theology. He has been teaching all that he knows: the catechism he learned from A to Z, some prayers. He has been faithful and generous in answering the call of the Spirit.

What impressed me most in Benedict's story is the fact that he was born blind. But the handicap does not stop him from walking across a 40 miles hilly area, all by himself, with the help of a stick.

I met him again after Christmas Mass and asked him where he found the courage to do what he was doing. His simple answer was, "With God's help!"

Ref. COMBONI PRESS
December 18, 1992.
via Luigi Lilio, 80
00142 Roma, C.P. 10733

AN UNUSUAL UNDERTAKING

(EGYPT)

For several years now, my apostolate has been among children and young people from more or less well-off backgrounds. At present I am working at De La Salle College in Cairo.

In a school of more than 2,500 pupils who are either Orthodox Coptic, Christian or Muslims, I have to admit that sometimes I fail to see where to go next. In a developing country, the determination on the part of young people and families to manage on their own is very strong.

In October 1990, several of us on the staff decided to organise a day for giving blood. In Egypt, few people go to give blood, and yet there is a great need for this. Centres for collecting blood are unfortunately often deserted. The reason for this stems from a variety of taboos and from the opposition of Islamic groups.

Our aim, therefore, was to bring this subject to the attention of parents and pupils, and to encourage older students, those over 17 years of age, as well as teachers and parents to give blood.

A fortnight before December 15, 1990, the day we had chosen, the staff involved in this scheme went into all the classes, starting with the last year in the primary school, where the children are about 10 years old, and going all the way up to the top classes.

With the help of a former student, Dr. Adel, a leaflet had been prepared which pupils were asked to take home. The leaflet invited parents to come and give blood on the day fixed, either at the College itself, or in a centre near to where they lived. Teachers were informed too.

As in England, every day before school begins there is an assembly: this is attended by all the senior school pupils. In the first fortnight of December, three speakers spoke at the assembly about giving blood, treating the topic from either a medical or a human point of view. Care was taken that one of the teachers of Arabic, a Muslim, was one of those who spoke. Also in the secondary classes work was set in both French and Arabic on the question of blood. Art teachers were asked to produce pencil, charcoal or gouache illustrations on the theme "Blood, the source of life."

On December 15th, Dr. Adel and 6 or 7 nurses from a state hospital located in a poor Muslim district came to the school to run the operation. The results were very encouraging: 108 persons of whom 73 were pupils gave blood. Pupils were very keen to give blood, but all those under 17 had to be turned away. Some of these had even asked their parents for permission. Unfortunately, this day for giving blood did not make much impact on teachers and parents. Older students noticed this and were surprised.

As a follow-up to this day, the "Union of Senior Students" wanted to organise another day for giving blood at the beginning of Spring, but Ramadan presented them from doing so. However, this has been only postponed, probably till Autumn 1991.

Dr. Adel, a Christian, told me how the Muslim nurses had been full of wonder and surprised at the success of this first operation, and how they had been caught up in the spirit of the day. For them it was their first contact with a Christian establishment.

Quite clearly, the preparation for December 15, 1990 and the day itself can be considered as an attempt to achieve "universal love," and that, in the face of all the barriers between people created by beliefs in this country. Also, it was a work of evangelisation in the very heart of a Muslim country. One could say that this event was not only beneficial, but also provocative in a way for our Christians who remain too isolated in their rites and Churches.

Ref. Brother Claude Robbe, FSC
(SECOLI) December, 1992

93/28

COMING EVENTS 1993

February 8

HAITI UPDATE

SVD College, via dei Verbiti, 1

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, via dei Verbiti, 1

16:00 - 18.30 p.m.

May 18-22,

AFRICA: QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS TO THE CHURCH

VILLA CAVALLETTI

(English, italiano, français, español)
