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**SEDOS Seminar, December 1992**

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## IN THIS ISSUE

During the SEDOS Seminar, on December 14, 1992, KLARA SIETMANN, MSC and BRUNO SECONDIN, O.CARM shared their reflections of Santo Domingo, not as observers, but as very active participants. *A Look Back To Santo Domingo* offers a context and a possible interpretation of Santo Domingo from the vantage point of Medellín and Puebla. In their presentations, the two speakers challenge us to look at the positive and negative aspects of this ecclesial 'event' and its subsequent effect on the 'new evangelization.'

*Africa: Pastoral Care Of Refugees* is an edited report of the conference held in Lusaka on the plight of millions of refugees on the African continent.

In his article, *Reconciliation and the Church in China* ROBERT SCHREITER, C.PP.S addresses two questions that arise out of the harmful divisions experienced by Christians there: Is reconciliation possible; and if so, how will it happen?

This issue concludes with Mission Moments and coming events.

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## NEWS

### NEW SEDOS MEMBER

The application for membership of the (Irish) CHRISTIAN BROTHERS (CFC) was approved at the SEDOS Executive Committee Meeting held on January 27, 1993 (Minute 93/12). The Superior General is Br. J. Colm Keating and their address is via della Maglianella 375, 00166 Rome.

## NEW BOOKS

We'd like to draw your attention to two new titles in the series, Church and Theology in Context, published by the Faculty of Theology of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, The Netherlands. Both books merit our attention.

Frank Sawyer, *The Poor are Many*, 1992. Pp.199.

This is a well researched, well documented study on political ethics which explores the effects of the Papal social encyclicals, Christian democracy and liberation theology in Latin America. The purpose of the study is to investigate how these three elements influence social transformation in Latin America. Of particular interest to missionaries is the author's approach to the origins of and the solutions for poverty.

Alan Hunter and Don Rimmington, eds. *All Under Heaven*, 1992. Pp.139.

In 11 diverse, but related essays, by Chinese and Western writers, the editors have developed a multifaceted picture of Chinese tradition and Christian life in the People's Republic of China. Their specific focus is on the changing role of Christianity in China in the 1980's and the subsequent impact of the decade's political, social and economic transformation on spiritual values and Christian practice.

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## SANTO DOMINGO AND BEYOND

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Klara Sietmann, MSC

*(Sr. Klara Sietmann is Superior General of the Missionaries of The Sacred Heart and President of the International Union of Superiors General.)*

Three hundred and fifty-five members of the hierarchy, Vatican officials, priests, religious and lay persons converged on Santo Domingo for the October 1992 meeting of the Latin American Bishops' Conference. They came together amid rumors of violence, strict police security, conflicting statements regarding the witness of the church and the chasm between the

"official" church and the "simple laity." Expectations were high or low or even non-existent. Questions were raised about continuity with Puebla and Medellín and the role of religious in Latin America. The theme set by Pope John Paul II, "New Evangelization, Human Development and Christian Culture," moved participants back to 1492 and forward to 1992 and beyond.

### 1. THE CONFERENCE AND ITS TASK

Pope John Paul II gave a lengthy presentation during the official opening. He focused on the main topics of the theme and developed a new direction for the conference. In addition, there were three other major presentations. The assembly was to reflect on them and concentrate on specific aspects as points for discussion.

The participants discussed the theme and produced several drafts of a document. The working document, presented a good description of the situation in Latin America within the context of theological reflection. The third section of the document which set out a pastoral option and guidelines was somewhat weak, but this was later enriched during the conference.

#### Procedure and Methodology

From the very beginning, most of those present did not have a clear idea about the way in which they were supposed to work. There was a great deal of confusion regarding procedure and

methodology. The question arose as to whether the assembly would have to develop a new document as at Puebla or if it would take the form of a simple message to the people of Latin America. Would the main discussion refer to concrete problems and pastoral consequences as a response to these situations?

There was a strong insistence by the presidency and some representatives on a more doctrinal approach to the theme. Others insisted on the need for more sharing of experiences and a searching for common actions.

Subsequently, a writing committee was appointed and a first draft of a new document was approved. The basic framework was kept but the format was changed in the treatment of the stages in the new evangelization: namely, seeing, judging and acting.

In order to develop all the aspects of the theme, thirty commissions were set up. Participants chose their

commissions. Some groups experienced internal problems because neither the method nor the orientation were clear. However, others had very good discussions and were able to develop a meaningful draft. The final result was a first draft of more than 300 pages.

Because those present wanted a shorter document than Puebla, they asked the drafting committee to limit group contributions. The bishops in turn, gave approval to each section of the document, presented their comments or asked for changes.

### The Final Document

The final document as a whole lacks unity. There is no clear theological focus. In general, it consists of references or quotations from previous documents of the Pope and the Church. The part dealing with human development is the richest and most enlightening; the other parts are not very encouraging.

Although there are very few references to Puebla, in the end the assembly stated that Santo Domingo has to be considered as a continuation of Medellín and Puebla. This means that the conclusions of those conferences are still valid and must be carried on.

The main title of the document is: "Jesus Christ, Yesterday, Today and Forever." There are three major parts. Each division consists of three sections: theological illumination, challenges and pastoral guidelines.

## 2. PASTORAL GUIDELINES

The term "option" was questioned because it is used and understood in different and sometimes contradictory ways. There were certain discrepancies within the assembly regarding the development of the church and its pastoral commitments.

The majority agreed that the option

### 1. Jesus Christ, Gospel of the Father

This introductory section begins with a profession of faith and continues with a short overview of 500 years of evangelization in America.

### 2. Jesus Christ, Evangelizer Present in His Church

The second section takes up three aspects of the theme: new evangelization, human development and Christian culture. Under the heading new evangelization the following topics are treated: the Church called to be holy; ecclesiastical communities vital and dynamic - united in the Spirit and diverse in charisms; proclaiming God's kingdom to all people.

The section on human development, handles the themes: human development - privileged dimension of the new evangelization; new signs of the times within the area of human development, challenges and pastoral guidelines; the family.

The final section, Christian culture emphasizes: Christ - measure of our moral behavior; unity and plurality of the cultures of Native Americans, the Afro-Americans and the mixed-raced; new cultures; the task of education within the church; social communication.

### 3. Jesus Christ, Life and Hope of Latin America

In the third and concluding section of the document, pastoral guidelines are given priority.

for the poor had to be considered to be of major concern for the church, but others insisted that it could not be an "option" because it belongs to the essence of the mission of the Church. Certainly there were different understandings of how to deal with this option and finally it was included in the section on human development.

The main pastoral guidelines are linked to the three aspects of the theme: new evangelization, human development and Christian culture.

### A New Evangelization

This is a task for all the members of the church, but in a special way it is a task to which lay people are called and, among them, youth who need to be more involved.

Somehow one may wonder if bishops and priests, when talking about lay people, refer mainly to lay movements, and not to other groups which are the majority in the church; namely, the simple and poor. There is also the question of how far women should be involved and what the new ministries of women religious are within the church.

Among the main resources for evangelization which were considered were religious formation and the celebration of the liturgy. The call to new evangelization includes dual aspects of mission, *ad intra* and *ad extra*.

### Integral Human Development

In this area, the evangelical, renewed, preferential option for the poor is stressed as a starting point. Service to life and to the family is given significant importance.

Regarding these points there are very interesting and challenging statements. "We own (accept) the cry of the poor. We assume with renewed ardor the evangelical, preferential option for the poor as a continuation of Medellín and Puebla. This option, which is not exclusive, must illuminate our whole task of evangelization in imitation of Christ. From this perspective, we are called to promote "a new economical, social and political order in the continent, in accordance with each person's dignity, one which promotes justice and solidarity."

In another place, the document refers to the "suffering faces of people." In stating this, it presents a challenge for all Christians to discover Christ in those who suffer. This calls for a deep conversion at the personal as well as the ecclesial level.

### New Faces of the Poor

The new faces of poor people cited are:

- Faces disfigured by hunger as a consequence of inflation, or of external debt and social injustice.

- Faces disillusioned by politicians who do not fulfill their promises.

- Faces humiliated because their cultures are not respected and even despised.

- Faces terrified due to daily and indiscriminate violence.

- Worried faces of abandoned children who walk on our streets and sleep under the bridges.

- Women's faces, full of pain, humiliated and marginalized.

- Tired faces of immigrants who are not welcomed, whose dignity is not recognized.

- Old-looking faces because they are denied human dignity.

This refers not only to the diverse cultures of Afro-Americans and Native Americans, but also to those groups of people living in urban areas and the expanding suburbs. In this regard, there is an urgency to develop a true inculturation of the Gospel as well as an evangelization of diverse cultures. Attention has to be paid to the dominating influence of modern culture with its manifestations of materialism, consumerism and secularism.

### 3. RELIGIOUS LIFE IN LATIN AMERICA

Sixteen religious women and men, besides the presidency of CLAR, were invited to participate in Santo Domingo. All of them were appointed by the Pope, but the criteria and the procedure used were not explained. This made many feel somewhat uneasy. In addition, there are still some open wounds due to the experiences of the last years regarding interventions by the Vatican into various organizations of religious in Latin America.

Pope John Paul II and representatives of the bishops expressed their appreciation for the place of religious life in the history of evangelization and the importance of the role of religious in the new evangelization. However, some members of the assembly conveyed mistrust, confusion, and prejudice regarding religious life. This communicated the feeling that some of the bishops might prefer to see religious more "under control" again.

The men and women religious who were participants were allowed to speak in the assembly, and they made some good contributions. However, they could not intervene in the process leading to the approval of the drafts. If they wanted changes in the drafts, they had to ask a bishop to sign the request and present it in his own name.

In the different commissions, religious make significant contributions. This was easier in some groups than in others, depending to a great deal on the functioning of the group. The commission dealing with the theme of religious life in particular had serious problems. On the one hand these were due to a general confusion regarding methodology, and on the other, to a lack of focus. In addition, there was a clash because of different mentalities and ways of considering religious life in general and especially in Latin America. Several efforts were made to improve the presentation of the theme, especially by women and men religious

who participated in CELAM IV.

There is a beautiful description of women religious who help to make the process of wholistic liberation more human and strive to revitalize pastoral work in the Church. Many times women religious find themselves in extremely difficult places. They are especially sensitive to the cry of the poor and active in the task of evangelization, even though they are not involved at the level of decision making.

Regarding religious life, there are several quotations in the Pope's talks or in the Church documents, emphasizing the importance of striving for communion with ecclesial authority, especially in the area of pastoral commitment.

A new thrust can be found for religious life within the context of the challenges expressed in the three areas of the pastoral guidelines.

#### New Evangelization

There is a call for religious to assume their role and actively commit themselves to the task of the new evangelization. Pope John Paul II summarized this in a speech to religious on the occasion of his visit to Santo Domingo: "The experience of your witness must be in itself evangelizing, in order that those who need the light of faith may receive with joy the message of salvation; that the poor and the most forgotten may feel your presence and your solidarity; that the marginalized and abandoned may experience Christ's love; that those who do not have a voice may be heard; that those who are treated unjustly may find defense and support."

Within the section on pastoral guidelines, religious life is emphasized as a gift to the Church and an enrichment through the diversity of charisms.

Religious evangelize by who they are and not only by what they do; their being must be a prophetic challenge for society, radiating the values of God's Kingdom.

They are called to live deeply in accordance with the new evangelization, developing more initiatives and new commitments which emerge out of their charisms, and always in communion with the bishops and all the members of the Church.

### Integral Human Development

There are very interesting statements in the second part of the document where religious are called to be faithful to the option for the poor, which will lead them towards ministry in the most difficult places. This way of "insertion" means an increasingly intense commitment. Presence among the poor, which leads to a special experience of the life of the poor, has the potential to call them to intensify their service as a way of true integral human development.

Within this context, religious women are called to develop their particular giftedness and call, to defend life wherever it may be in danger, to raise awareness of each person's dignity and to work in a special way with women and families. Through efforts of sincere dialogue within ecclesial communities at all levels, religious women are urged to try to be recognized in their role as women and in their pastoral ministries in all spheres of the new evangelization.

### An Inculturated Evangelization

In referring to religious life in Latin America, it is obvious that a spirituality of inculturation has been developed, based on the theologies of incarnation and liberation. Many religious women and men have entered into a deep renewal process, which led to a new experience of God. Real closeness to people, especially the poor, the indigenous and the Afro-American has contributed to the awareness that there are genuine gospel values present in the culture of these groups.

Religious women are recognized as gifted in being able to reach the very heart of people. They help them to manifest their feelings, their longings, their thoughts as well as their relationships with one another and society in accordance with gospel values in a variety of cultural forms.

Within modern culture with its dominating influences, and in poor countries, religious life is called to be a prophetic, life-giving response. By a closeness to the poor and the marginalized, by assuming an inculturated way of living religious vows, community life and pastoral commitments take root within the new evangelization.

Religious are reminded that they are called to mission beyond the frontiers of their own countries. This call is not peripheral. It is a continuation of the commitment of religious to enter into the life of people and to recognize the face of God. It is a continuation of the task of evangelization begun in 1492 and continued through 1992 and beyond.

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## SANTO DOMINGO: AN INTERPRETATION

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Bruno Secondin, O.Carm

*(Father Bruno Secondin, O.Carm is Professor of Missiology at the Gregorian University, Rome).*

Santo Domingo will most certainly be remembered because of its final document, officially called, *Conclusiones*. The text, covering about one hundred pages in 303 paragraphs, was approved for publication by Pope John Paul II, on November 10, 1992. Thirty changes were made before publication, but generally they are not of great significance (cf. the official edition published in Bogota, Colombia, December, 1992).

We must immediately add that we are dealing not simply with a document, but with an *event*, namely, a complex ecclesial experience, involving bishops and theologians, Basic Christian Communities, Latin American and Roman experts. The center of the Santo Domingo event - October 12-28 - was the IV Conference of the Latin American

Bishops. However, as an *event*, it included years of preparation: remote preparation in 1983-84; more immediate preparation starting in 1989.

We should also include the *receptio*, the way it will be received and the implementation that will follow, inspired by the *Conclusiones*. This process has already begun: with the practical directives of national episcopal conferences, the specific options of each diocese, and the study made by religious (under the guidance of CLAR), the work done by theologians, cultural centers, and various ecclesial groups. In a special way, a more concrete interpretation is being made by those in Latin America who take the risk of being personally involved in the choices and in the actions that follow.

### 1. SANTO DOMINGO

I took part in Santo Domingo as someone from outside, but with some rather particular qualifications. I was, at one and the same time, theologian, observer and journalist. Furthermore, I went to Santo Domingo after having taken part in the VIII Encounter of the Ecclesial Basic Communities in Brazil (Santa Maria, RG, September 7-12). I also tried to understand the consequences of Santo Domingo by making a three week visit to Guatemala (November 1992), where today's bishops are lively and daring. I attempted to *contextualize* the experience, in order not to isolate Santo Domingo from the real life of the continent and its activities.

#### Journalist

I was there as a journalist. It gave me a chance to take part in meetings reserved to the press and to acquire a direct knowledge of specific opinions, evaluations, news and documents. Dialoguing with journalists from all over the world, often in direct daily contact with bishops and theologians, helped me to understand what was going on. There were many "secret" news bits floating around; we had copies of reserved texts; we commented on the opinions and the impressions of the participants. It was an interesting milieu. I also attended the press

conferences organized, as an alternative, by SEC. In general, they provided serious and useful debates which clarified the central themes discussed at the Assembly.

### Theologian

Several times I took part in the work of the theologians who were gathering under the name of an organization called, *Amerindia*. It consisted of a good number of theologians from Latin America and Europe. We discussed texts that were being prepared; evaluated tendencies, proposals and strategies. We prepared interventions for the Assembly and suggested ways for improving the texts. It was a task performed with seriousness and organization, in a spirit of service and with great love for the Church in Latin America. Well known theologians and sociologists, who enjoy the trust of their bishops or institutes, took a very lively part. The great organizer was Sergio Torres, a theologian well known for his organiza-

tional abilities and his professional experience.

### Observer

I lived with a group of Brazilian theologians: each day there was an evaluation of the situation, there were suggestions (later on, to the bishops) on priority lines, or careful attention to certain themes. Through this experience, I personally followed the work of the conference, gave some suggestions and, above all, listened to the opinions of people who were the experts.

At times it seemed to us, theologians, that the situation was desperate; the bishops were confused and it was unclear in which direction our work was leading us. It was a maze for the bishops and for us as theologians; themes and points of view changed daily. The situation caused great suffering, especially as it effected the preparation that had gone into setting up the conference.

## 2. THE EVENTS

The previous three years were intense, because of the consultation and the preparation needed in order to be able to focus on the theme of the conference. Actually, we can say that the remote preparation for the conference began in 1983, when the Pope visited Haiti, and in 1984 when he visited Santo Domingo.

### Preparation for Santo Domingo

Immediate preparation started in 1989. At that time a confidential consultation document was prepared. It was discussed at four regional meetings of Latin American Bishops and subsequently rejected. The theological foundation of that text was "the paternity of God and the episcopal hierarchy." It was followed in 1990 by the so called Preparatory Document for a Pastoral Reflection: a New Evangelization for a New Culture. Its main focus

was the evangelization of "modern culture" and the fight against "the evils of secularism." This also was rejected, because it ignored the central points of Medellín and Puebla.

On December 12, 1990, the Pope set the general theme: New Evangelization, Human Promotion, Christian Culture. "Jesus Christ Yesterday, Today and Forever." (HB 13,8)

In April 1991, during the 23rd ordinary assembly of CELAM, beside electing the new leadership (Card. Nicolas de Jesús Lopez Rodriguez, president, and Bishop Raymundo Damasceno Assis, secretary) the bishops were given the text of the Documento de Consulta. It was criticized because it did not take into account the suggestions of the bishops. The result was a Prima Relatio that took into account the various opinions. A Secunda Relatio

followed in 1992, and it was a contribution of great theological and cultural value. Besides reporting on the contribution of the episcopal conferences, it also suggested the introduction of new options: indigenous and Afro-American cultures, Basic Christian Communities, the laity. The theologians at Santo Domingo supported this text and wanted it to be taken into account. It was wishful thinking, because the text was ignored.

The last preparatory text was the Working Document, prepared in 1992 in Bogotá, approved by Rome and deemed acceptable by the Latin American bishops. No one knows who was responsible for changes in the text - the presidency of CELAM, or Rome. Msgr. Cipriano Calderón always denied having made the corrections, so it must have been CELAM in Bogotá. The usual structure of seeing, judging and acting was followed: *Mirada Pastoral; Iluminación Teológico-Pastoral; Propuestas Pastorales*.

#### The Delegates

The choice of the delegates was another important preparatory step. Each episcopal conference elected its own in due proportion to the number of bishops, and then the Pope approved them. There were about 150. To them the Pope added another 84, including about 30 from the Roman Curia. The Pope also chose about 100 "invitati" (religious, lay people, priests, experts and observers). The list, with the names of 361 participants, was published only on October 1, 1992. Some exclusions were rather odd. Dominicans and Franciscans were not included, while other choices were evidently "oriented" towards conservative and "militant" positions. In any case, only the bishops could vote: there were 234 of them, but not all were present to vote.

It is interesting to look at the mentality of these papal "invitati." Only a few (perhaps only two) of those suggested by the local episcopal conferences were actually chosen. Many of

the papal "invitati" as a matter of fact, were acting as *periti* with a conservative orientation. They attempted to, and they actually did, influence the results and above all the drafting of the texts. To know where they stood, it is enough to read their names. One of these *invitati*, who thinks of himself as a theologian, tried to include a sentence that read: "Not a few detect a certain *pelagianism*." Fortunately it was later omitted.

#### The Presence of the Pope

Three days before the opening of the conference, Pope John Paul II arrived in Santo Domingo to officially open the Assembly and also for a short pastoral visit. Some of the talks given during his five days in the Dominican Republic are quite important. They are relevant and should not to be dismissed, because they touch on many topics that were under discussion. At times the Pope proposed some daring positions on integration in Latin America, the problem of escalating poverty, indigenous and Afro-American cultures, inculturation, continental solidarity, ecclesial co-responsibility for indigenous people and Afro-Americans, and a plea for forgiveness.

The most important of all was the inaugural speech that opened the Assembly on the evening of October 12. It was a truly magisterial speech, later placed at the beginning of the *Conclusiones*, and turned out to be very open and daring on certain topics. The structure follows the general title of the conference. The theological perspective, according to some theologians, is too deductive, but on the whole it does not seem to be so. While some omissions are integrated by other talks given during those days, some critical passages were lost on their way to the *Conclusiones*: for example, the Pope's criticism of theologians (# 7-8) actually became a word of praise for their prophetic task in *Conclusiones* (#33). On the other hand, the Pope mentioned *theologies of liberation* (opening address, #16) while the *Conclusiones* do not even have a word about them.

## Faro de Colón

It is worth noting that the papal programme was not problem free. One example was the celebration at the *Faro de Colón* (lighthouse), a totally useless structure which abuses Christian symbolism (it is cross shaped and light is projected on the clouds in the form of a cross). For the people and for the local clergy it is a symbol of injustice and of arrogance. In order to build it, 50,000 slum dwellers had to be moved to make room for the building of the mausoleum itself and access roads. Outside the park, behind a wall that people call, *muro de la vergüenza*, there are still thousands of people living in shacks.

On the afternoon of October 11, accompanied by cardinals and bankers, the Pope visited the neo-catechumenal Redemptoris Mater Seminary, still under construction, and praised the project designed to gather seminarians from all over Latin America. The visit was not in the programme, but it bespoke many intentions. We may want to remember also that there was an attempt (which failed) to include in the *Conclusiones* words of praise for these *Redemptoris Mater* seminaries.

The Dominican security system created a total void around the Pope, with a military rigor that often came close to being violent. In the first few days, the same thing happened around the bishops and especially around the cardinals, who always traveled in limousines escorted by an army colonel.

## The Work of the Assembly

After the Pope left, the Assembly began its work, but it did not use the Working Document. The programme imposed by Rome demanded first of all that everybody listen to four heavy lectures. The first was christological, *Jesus Yesterday, Today and Forever*, by E.E. Karlic, Archbishop of Paraná, Argentina; followed by *The New Evangelization*, by Card. L. Moreira Neves of São Salvador, Bahia, in Brazil;

then, *Human Promotion*, by the Dominican Jesuit, J. L. Aleman; and finally *Christian Culture*, by J. de D. Vial Correa, a layman from Chile. As a whole, the texts were very heavy and theologically conservative, with static perspectives. At the same time, the Assembly brainstormed on topics that were thought to be important to the task at hand.

In practice, the Working Document was abandoned, without anyone knowing why: at first someone even complained about it demanding that the decision be left up to the Assembly. The chair did not take notice. This decision marked the beginning of a new methodology that started from high principles (*Iluminación teológica*) rather than from reality (*desafíos*.) We may say that the Assembly was extremely naive in not questioning this change in method, but by the time the bishops complained, it was too late.

For several days, the bishops divided as they were into 30 commissions that dealt with 30 themes only loosely interconnected, worked without knowing where they were headed. They ended up with a text for each of the 30 commissions. These were then examined in the grid meetings and passed through three drafts. Finally the Assembly tried to blend them into one with disastrous result.

The most beleaguered commission was the one on consecrated life (#7), which included some avowed opponents of religious life, such as Bishop Romer, auxiliary bishop of Rio de Janeiro. To get an idea of what went on, it suffices to say that, at a certain point, the religious wrote a letter to the president of the assembly, rejecting the text put together by the commission and proposing another one. According to the judgement of Fr. Benito Blanco, president of CLAR, the commission was "a disaster!" (his own words), mostly due to the rudeness of the commission's president (Bishop Romer). Furthermore, at a certain point the prepared text "disappeared" from the computers. The utmost bad luck!

## The Worst Crisis

By the end of the first week of work, the bishops were beginning to admit that they felt lost, since they did not know why they were working. Reactions and uneasiness were beginning to surface, until it all came to a climax on the evening of October 22 when there was an attempt to blend together the texts prepared by the various commissions. At the urging of the bishops from Argentina, the Assembly declared its frustration and its dissatisfaction. The chair showed its total weakness, and the editors inherited the task of writing a new text. Dom Luciano Mendez de Almeida, president of the joint editing commission, earned the full trust of the Assembly for his effort to save what could be saved.

The bishops started again to take center stage at the Assembly and it was evident that there was confusion at the top. Because the work of the commissions had been rejected, almost ten days had been lost. A decision had to be taken whether to prepare a text in five days under those conditions, or as the bishops from Venezuela were suggesting, to go home without writing the *Conclusiones*. However, had they left for home without a final text, Rome would have come up with one: that was enough to convince the bishops to do their utmost, using all the time still available!

## How the Crisis was Solved

At that moment the prestige and the ability of Dom Luciano Mendez to mediate between the various factions really shone. It was also the time for an historical presence of the Spirit, because the bishops had to think of the good of the churches they shepherded.

The operation was only half successful, because some collaborators, who were interested in watering down the prophetic tone of the text and in weakening the most debated themes, wormed their way into the editing groups. Even from outside the Assembly it was easy to spot the scurrying about of manipulating *periti!* We had news

that some topics were tightly controlled, while others were left to free interpretation. Ideas were manipulated and computer modi were strangely forgotten: there seemed to be a conspiracy of helpers who used their own diskettes. Confusion was great and an aura of pessimism pervaded the Assembly. This state of affairs lasted a few days, even though some of the great fathers continued to speak with optimism of serene and concrete work, of freedom of discussion, of democracy and respect.

The new edition of the text, shortened and produced in a hurry, was not accepted. On October 26 the bishops requested a return to the texts elaborated by the commissions, to try to save what they could. In practice, in order to reduce and summarize those texts, several topics were dropped altogether: ecology, foreign debt, and neo-liberalism. New editions of important topics were also drafted. The last two days saw a race to propose amendments *iuxta modum* (at least 5000!) and to vote on the amendments that the editing commission had already accepted. On the final day, October 28, the Assembly faced the last changes. One of them left many with a bitter taste in their mouths. It is a sentence in #85, which is illogical and out of context. It reads: "The religious of Latin America renew their allegiance to the Pope." Cardinal Sodano ordered that it not be removed. The final approval, given in a hurry and without knowing the full final text, was 201 in favour, none against, 5 abstentions.

## Rounding out the Picture

During the work of the Assembly there were several other interesting events. A long debate, for instance, took place on the question of asking for forgiveness in conjunction with the 5th Centenary: in the end, the problem was solved with a modest ceremony in which some notables did not take part (Sodano, Araujo Sales, Lopez Rodriguez). At the same time, the Pope renewed his call for forgiveness during the general audience of October 21. The *Conclusiones* several times repeat the invitation to practice the sacrament of

reconciliation, there was a contradiction between intention and action. In concomitance with the Assembly, there were also several non-official ceremonies, a Latin American Way of the Cross to ask for forgiveness for 500 years of violence and celebrations by special groups (e.g. Amerindia, Base Christian Communities).

#### The Structure of the Conclusiones

The Pope approved the text and authorized its publication. However, some rather meaningful changes were introduced and they should be taken into account. The structure of the document reflects the lectures given at the beginning of the Assembly (*ponencias*). The first titled, Jesus Christ, the Gospel of the Father consists of 21 paragraphs: a profession of faith (#4-15) and an historical sketch (#16-21). It is followed by the central section, Jesus Christ, the Evangelizer Living in His

Church, which is divided into three chapters: the new evangelization (#23-156), human promotion (#157-227) and Christian culture (#228-285). Then follows a brief conclusion: Jesus Christ, Life and Hope of Latin America: and a series of pastoral directives (#287-301).

Even though the general outline intended to do away with the classical Latin American method of, see-judge-act, in fact, it still surfaces in many paragraphs, particularly in the chapters on human promotion and Christian culture. This means that a deductive theological point of view is no longer enough. Several participants were positive about this new method, because the light of faith illumines our very judgments. But it is easy to see that the theological light proposed by this method falls prey to many blackouts. Finally in #119, the text itself accepts the validity of the see-judge-act method.

### 3. CONCLUSIONES: AN ANALYSIS

It isn't possible to go into a specific analysis of the contents. Certainly, the style of the text, especially at the beginning, is heavy and confused; the theology seems to be rather abstract and perhaps not truly in line with Vatican II, in spite of what is stated in #30.

For instance, in the theological introduction, the concept of *the people of God* is almost forgotten. When it appears later in the text, it is presented in a hierarchical way, and centered around the bishop. Judgement on the world and on history tends to be pessimistic, and accusations about secularism are often repeated. Only conversion and sacramental grace (including confession) save human persons from sin, from secularism, from the anti-culture of death.

On the contrary, the denunciation of the injustices of systems, which cause enormous sufferings to the people of entire nations, the suffering faces of

the poor (#178-179), is very strong. The chapter on human promotion was widely rewritten in the last few days, with the addition of statements about historical realism, social truth, and prophetic denunciation. So frequent are the calls for spirituality, conversion, a more contemplative outlook, that some paragraphs may give the impression of a disembodied spiritualism. These paragraphs should be seen together with those on human promotion. It must be remembered that in Latin America there is a true need for spirituality, and therefore this need deserves to be the object of discernment and of development.

#### A Global Reading

Some negative notes must be mentioned. Basic Christian Communities almost disappear from the document (#61-63), as does consecrated life (#85-93) and even apostolic movements (#102). This, in spite of the fact, that in the work of new evangelization, they are

the basic sources of strength and will hold center stage for the coming years. One has the impression that, deep down, the objective of the new evangelization is sacramentalization and personal conversion without a serious social commitment. The treatment of ecumenism (#132-135) is generic, and even more so is the statement on inter-religious dialogue. On the other hand, the treatment of fundamentalist sects and of the new religious movements (#139-152) is very detailed and not dialogic because they are seen as the cause of the fragmentation of Latin-American Christianity.

Topics are not well distributed in the various parts. Paragraphs do not have a harmonious length; the style is at times heavy and wordy, while at other times it is too sketchy. Corrections have improved some texts, but have damaged others in particular the ecclesial position of women. Some themes are repeated and, at times, the terminology is not uniform. There are 120 quotes from the magisterium of the present pontiff (about 40 from the speeches given at Santo Domingo), but only about 30 quotes from Vatican II. Medellín is not explicitly mentioned, while Puebla is mentioned a dozen times, as is *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Paul VI. The Working Document is mentioned only once (#178). Not a word from the documents of the various episcopal bodies, and even of CELAM after Puebla. The Roman magisterium reigns supreme. The new socio-cultural situation generated by the fall of the Marxist regimes is totally ignored. Attention is given instead to the new economic world order (#194-203).

The terminology, Christian culture, is not free from ambiguity (it makes one think of *new Christianity*). In fact, in the third section it is used with the phrase, inculturated evangelization. I think this is a better expression and more in line with the way the topic was discussed. The resulting impression of the document is that a general key of interpretation is not sufficiently developed - it should be the **new evangelization**.

## Positive Notes

The positive notes are many and I would like to give them some attention. Beginning the document with a profession of faith is basically valid, even though the concrete result is not satisfactory. Due to a lack of time and to the opposition of the conservatives, the inspirational thrust is rather weak. There should have been a greater effort on the part of the theologians. Whatever force the message has is due to the work of a Brazilian theologian and the inspiration taken from the Gospel account of the two disciples of Emmaus (Lk 24).

The term, *opciones*, was retained, even though some people maintained that it can be a dangerous expression. These same individuals also held that the approach of "looking at reality" should have been abandoned, because it lends itself to an analysis inspired by ideologies and prejudice. The options for the poor and for youth were retained. Others, have also been added, even though a different terminology was used: priorities, challenges, pastoral guidelines.

The evangelical preferential option for the poor is presented in continuity with Medellín and Puebla (#296). In #178 it is stated as "a firm, irrevocable, preferential and evangelical option for the poor." New biblical and theological bases are given to support the themes of poverty and the "Church of the poor" (see #180). The list of priorities has increased to include: family, vocations, ecumenism, indigenous people, oppressed cultures, and the mass media. There are some strong statements on the increased impoverishment that has taken place since Puebla because of neo-liberal politics (#179), ecological disaster (#169-170), the violation of human rights (#164-168), demographic terrorism and contraceptive imperialism (#219).

## A Key to Interpretation

The central theme and the guiding perspective is definitely the **new**

evangelization which must lead to true inculturation or inculturated evangelization. In several instances there is an attempt to explain exactly what is meant by new evangelization. Above all, there is commentary on the famous statement of the Pope: new in its zeal, in its methods, in its expressions (#28-30). It is new in its protagonists, particularly the laity, the oppressed ethnic groups: indigenous people, Afro-Americans, mixed races and women. It is new also in its recipients: ethnic groups, living and work environments, the middle class, the milieu of technology, communications (#26). Its aims, are new as it opens up to a new way of being Church, at the service of the Kingdom and not of its own self.

### A Unifying Thread

This new evangelization is the unifying thread that unites the entire picture and, as such, it often offers us statements that are both surprising and courageous. The text shows consistently that it is not possible to ignore reality and its challenges. Let us think for instance of human rights, the right to life, the right to own land, the role of women in the Church, ecology, urban culture, marginalized cultures, new ways of communications, inculturation of the liturgy, democracy, criticism of wild neo-liberalism, the new economic order, the mentality of violence and rejection, the mission *ad gentes*. These, among many, are the topics that demand a style that is courageous, often prophetic and provocative. The daring of some paragraphs is amazing and they are spread throughout the text, at times mixed in with other paragraphs that are more flat and even reactionary.

### Pastoral Directions

In each of the themes mentioned so far, we find a dialectical tension between challenges (*desafíos*) and pastoral choices (*lineas pastorales*), but it is precisely in this give and take, that we find the most courageous choices. Let us look at some examples:

**Parish structures** - must be more open flexible and missionary; must revamp

the urban parish and create ministries to be given over to the laity in order to evangelize the cities (#257ff.)

**New experiences** - ratify the validity of the small Christian communities developing within them a new missionary spirit and solidarity (#62)

**Celebration** - promotes an inculturation of the liturgy (among indigenous people) accepting with respect their symbols, rites and religious expression (#248)

**The economy** - denounces the market economy that especially penalizes the poor (#201)

**Pastoral care of the young** - promotes co-responsibility through the see-judge-act method (#119)

**Vocations** - take a particular interest in the challenge presented by the priestly formation of candidates from indigenous cultures and Afro-Americans (#84)

**Pastoral care of the family** - exercises the prophetic ministry of the church in denouncing and violation of the rights of the child, both the already born and the unborn (#227)

**The role of women** - recognizes the urgency of addressing the need to promote the presence of women in the organization and in the promotion of the new evangelization of Latin America (#109)

### Imagination and Creativity

We have only quoted some of the many examples. It is evident that they call for courage, imagination and prophetic creativity. In fact, in the name of this new evangelization, the **Conclusiones** affirm the need to "use, under the action of the creative Spirit, imagination and creativity" (#29). In some instances creative imagination is explicitly suggested in certain areas: liturgy and catechetics, organization and the use of symbols and signs, art and the integration of ethnic values, the education of the young and ecology.

Implicitly, this allows for sincere self criticism of the methods and the language used in the past and urges the search for new ways of inculturation: "Jesus Christ asks us to proclaim the Good News with a language that will bring the Gospel itself closer to the cultural realities of today" (#30). Perhaps the practical consequences of Santo Domingo are not at all clear, but a vision of the future is being opened that is full of possibilities and of creative research.

In order to correctly understand the *Conclusiones*, we must not only be familiar with the various drafts but above all remember the global mind of

the document. In fact, a global reading, rather than a limited perusal reveals more inspiration than one would expect.

Given more time, the text would have been more cohesive, but in the final analysis it is better than expected. Perhaps the best way to approach it, is to start by reading the part on human promotion, then move on to Christian culture, and finally turn to the new evangelization. This route helps us understand the implicit richness of the document and its prophetic impulse - the word, prophetic, itself is repeated in several paragraphs (see #20,33, 50,107,227).

#### 4. SANTO DOMINGO AND BEYOND

I would like to close with a consideration that goes beyond what has been said so far. A just evaluation of Santo Domingo will require time. The Pope has invited the local Churches and each diocese in particular to examine the texts and "make the necessary discernment, to see what is most useful and urgent in each particular situation" (letter of Pope John Paul II accompanying the document). The suggestion is already being implemented, not only by individual bishops, but also by episcopal conferences. It will be interesting to follow this acceptance.

Personally, I think that Santo Domingo will not be understood correctly if we only look for a kind of continuity from Medellín and Puebla. Of course, there is a type of continuity, and it is mentioned specifically in the pastoral priority lines (#290,302), but there is more. I believe that this Assembly has opened a new phase of history, made up of new experiences, un hoped for realizations, new options and a new ecclesial conscience.

##### Beyond Medellín

Much has happened since Medellín: liberation theology is an accomplished

fact; small Christian communities have sprung up; there is a new conscience about democratic freedom; initiatives have begun on behalf of oppressed cultures, the role of the laity, women, marginalized ethnic groups, and integration in Latin America and beyond. New themes have come to the surface: ecology, defense of life, the new economic order, human rights, urban culture, planetary communications. Consequently, there have also been political, military, social, economic, religious and cultural changes. The evolution that has taken place within CELAM and its work will probably dictate a revision of methods and organization. Even conflicts with Rome, under many guises: CLAR, liberation theology, seminary training, nomination of bishops, and inculturated liturgies demand new strategies of co-responsibility and of communion.

Not only has the whole world changed, we have begun to set the foundations for the 21st century. Latin America has changed. The faces of the people are less homogeneous; regional differences are more apparent. At the same time, there is a strong sense of a new continental bond that takes into account and promotes through

interdependence, "a solidarity that will eventually change into brotherhood" (#204).

### The Opening of a New Phase

In Latin America it is said that, Medellín gave flesh to *Gaudium et Spes*, while Puebla was the Latin American equivalent of *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. For some people Santo Domingo is the application of more recent papal documents: *Christifideles Laici*, *Centesimus Annus*, *Redemptoris Missio*. Perhaps it is true; I would go farther.

It is my opinion that we are now at the beginning of a new phase that concludes the journey started at Medellín. The Pope mentioned it in his speech: "In our days we perceive a crisis of unsuspected dimension," ... "today we need a deep pastoral renewal through an evangelical discernment on dominant values, on collective attitudes and ways of acting... In our day it is necessary to make the effort to have a special sensitivity in order to inculturate the message of Christ" (#21).

In order to achieve a truly authentic, new inculturation of the Gospel it is necessary to have a new ecclesial strategy, a new cultural foundation, new prophetic power. Santo Domingo has only glimpsed at new horizons, without having the chance to develop and value them. Perhaps this was also due to the make-up of the assembly and to the "watchfulness" of CAL, its president, Card. Gantin, a native of Benin, and the vice president, a former Spanish journalist, Msgr. C. Calderón. Nonetheless, these new horizons exist and *Conclusiones* identifies them, even though it does it haphazardly and with

contradictions.

### New Horizons

This new horizon must be sought, shaped into a system, interpreted as an organic project. To put it into practice there must be new strategies and new leaders, a new Exodus experience and new prophetic ingenuity. It is the *kairos*, the moment for all - laity, bishops, priests, religious and small Christian communities. I would say that we must go back to tough thinking, to prophetic imagination in order to open new ways with "*parresía*" (#50), in effective solidarity with the vast masses of "suffering faces," of humiliated ethnic groups, of lay people who are generous and daring in the following of the Lord Jesus.

If in the first part of the *Conclusiones*, particularly in the profession of faith, one may have the impression that we tend to check our pulse to find out how Christian and how faithful to "sane doctrine" we are, the development of the second part shows clearly that Christian identity calls us to stand upright and look straight ahead in order to recognize ourselves in others, particularly in the poor. We are called to judge history, culture and the emerging challenges in the light of the Gospel.

It remains to be seen where the final challenge of the document will lead to. "Let us take upon ourselves with zeal the evangelical preferential option for the poor, in continuity with Medellín and Puebla. This option, which is not exclusive or excluding, will illumine, in imitation of Christ, our entire evangelizing activity." (#296)

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## AFRICA: THE PASTORAL CARE OF REFUGEES

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A consultative meeting on the pastoral care of refugees in Africa was convened by the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, from January 5 to 9, 1993, at St. Dominic's Major Seminary, in Lusaka, Zambia. Participants came from twenty countries of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa (AMECEA, ACEAC, IMBISA), Europe, North America and Australia. Among them, were refugees, pastoral workers, members of international Catholic organizations, representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees from Zambia and Malawi.

The Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Zambia, the Hon. Newstead L. Zimba officially opened this consultative meeting. He affirmed the role of the Church as the source of hope and security for refugees. Africa, he commented, hosts over five million refugees. "It is indeed sad that instead of addressing the serious issues of national cohesion and growth, some leaders in Africa and the world are still preoccupied with egoistic tendencies and self-aggrandizement. Nations are characterized by ethnic strife, intolerance, divergent opinion and the urge to dominate."

Archbishop Giovanni Cheli, the President of the Pontifical Council gave the introductory address. He touched on three aspects in his reflections: refugees and displaced people at this point in world history; the prophetic mission of the Church, and finally, he outlined the objectives of the meeting. The objectives of the consultation were: (1) to gather accurate information before preparing any kind of pastoral response; (2) to develop a critical analysis, make an assessment, and do theological reflection on the refugee

situation on the African continent from the perspective of African traditions, and the social teaching of the Church; (3) to form practical and comprehensive pastoral guidelines to reflect the reality of refugees and displaced people of the continent.

Father Michael J. Schultheis, SJ., a member of the Jesuit Refugee Service who has been working with Mozambican refugees in Limbe, Malawi since July, 1992 developed a view of "The Refugee Situation in Africa." Using the situation of refugees in Africa as a backdrop, he identified issues, concerns, and trends. He proceeded with a challenge to the Church, to strengthen its presence and proposed a Vatican Secretariat (or an equivalent office) for refugees. Finally, he summarized his presentation by presenting a strategy in terms of collaboration by reminding the Church that refugees "invite" dioceses and local churches to respond.

### MOZAMBIQUE

One session involved a panel presentation given by three Mozambican refugees from Malawi: Mr. Miguel Jacob Mlauzi, Ms. Angelica Lourenco, and Mr. Ambrosio Ngaugahe Tsamanea. The fourth presenter was a refugee from Angola who entered the seminary in Zambia and was ordained for the diocese of Sowelzi, Fr. Lucio Vitorino Gwendelamba. All of them talked about themselves and their families, their experiences as refugees, their present situation and their hopes for the future. "We, Mozambican refugees, want to go back home in peace and live a normal life - that is our right." They appealed for peace in Mozambique. As for the Church, the Mozambican Church has done very little for refugees

outside the country. Even a single visit from a Bishop or Mozambican priest is rare." The panelists made a poignant appeal for solidarity and recognition by the Church.

### THE SUDAN

Another major theme was "The Sending Church: Pastoral Responsibility." Bishop Taban Paride of the Torit Diocese spoke on behalf of the suffering people of Southern Sudan. He began by saying that more than one third of the refugees live in the Horn of Africa of which his country, Sudan, has the largest number. The figures are enormous, but the situation more tragic than any figures suggest. Millions of refugees and displaced people in Sudan arrive as a result of systematic discrimination and religious persecution. "The fanatic Islamic Government in the North is not interested in the people of the South, but only in the land of the South. The regular bombing of civilian targets is a proof of this. This is my plea to you - our people live in great uncertainty. We even live in fear of extermination and the situation of displaced people is actually much worse than that of the refugees."

"The problem of refugees and displaced people will only be solved if we have peace in the Sudan. But there is no real peace without justice, so it must be peace with justice and respect for human and religious rights. This peace will not come about through guns and wars which cannot be won, but through dialogue and reconciliation. We ask you to assist us to stop the split among the Southern Sudanese. Southern Sudan should be united to end the suffering of the people. We would not like

our people just to be fattened with food like cattle which are fattened and slaughtered. I ask you for something greater than money and food, I ask for assistance to help us gain our human rights, our dignity and our human identity." Bishop Paride ended his presentation with a short prayer by a brother Bishop in Khartoum, Msgr. Gabriel Zubeir Wako. "God, who chose to become human, do not allow us to become stones."

### SOMALIA

Father Giorgio Bertin, the Apostolic Administrator of Mogadishu, Somalia, gave his presentation on the Somalian Catholic refugee community. He started his talk with a brief history of how Somalia came to its current situation of starvation and hunger. The number of Somalian refugees is about one million. Pastoral care traditionally was mainly addressed to the expatriate community because very few Somalis were Catholics.

"Before the civil war the Catholic community numbered nearly 2,000 people; most of them expatriate. Somali Catholics were only about 200." He witnessed the burning down of the Cathedral in Mogadishu. However he did not see this as a religious war. Rather, the Muslim fundamentalists who managed to loot and destroy "all the signs of our Christian presence, were also destroying their country." He said that most of the Somali Catholics had to leave the country. They can be found in Kenyan refugee camps, in Addis Ababa, in Djibouti, in Yemen, in Italy and elsewhere. Only about 40 are still in Mogadishu. They now live as an underground Church.

## THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The final Presentation of the Conference was given by Cardinal Alexandré José Maria dos Santos (Mozambique). His talk, "The Ethical Imperative and Religious Perspectives of

the Church in Africa," was divided into three parts: the African reality (economic, socio-cultural and political); the African reality in the presence of the Gospel; and the ethical and religious

imperatives of the Church. He commenced with a recollection of the message of Paul VI, *Africae Terrarum*.

"*Africae Terrarum* was for the African nations an authoritative appeal to all the living forces of the continent to nonviolently eliminate the wounds of racism, illiteracy, genocide and foreign dependence. It was an invitation to feel themselves to be the architects of their own destiny, to be builders of a new Africa, an Africa inspired by the ideals of holistic humanism, cooperation and dialogue."

#### LANDSCAPE OF A NIGHTMARE

The scene which Cardinal dos Santos described today on the continent, some thirty years since the conquest of independence and the message of Paul VI, is the landscape of a nightmare: half of the refugees of the world are Africans fleeing from civil or sectarian wars, or from both; chronic food shortages - famine - affects approximately a quarter of the population of sub-Saharan Africa (or, more than 100 million people); the African population continues to increase at the annual rate of 3.2% (the highest of any continent)

while food production is 20% lower than in 1967 when the population was one half of its present number. Only a third (37%) of the population has access to clean drinking water; life expectancy is 51 years; the rate of economic growth is the lowest among all the continents (1.5%). The level of corruption and the inefficiency of governmental officials are notorious. Foreign investors, taking all this very seriously and frightened as well by the fact that our foreign debt is equal to the Gross National Product, have begun to direct their funds towards the former Soviet Union, Asia and Latin America. The proliferation of thousands of sects and millennial and messianic movements has transformed our continent into a religious Babylon. Above all, there is a growing attitude of pessimism regarding Africa, a continent which is hopelessly adrift."

He went on to remark that foreign dependency, marginalization and isolation, environmental and ecological destruction, the lack in quantity and quality of social services, the exaggerated role of the state which restrains autonomous base organizations, denies the principle of subsidiarity, and reduces the fundamental rights, must be eliminated.

#### A PASTORAL RESPONSE

The Lusaka Consultation probed the elements of an appropriate pastoral strategy for the Church's ministry for refugees. The words of Pope Paul VI reminded participants that: "The pastoral care required by the people on the move is necessarily a pastoral care without frontiers.... Suitable instruments can only be found through collaboration and solidarity between the Churches concerned." (Paul VI, AAS 65, 1973, p. 590). We recommend therefore as a concrete proposal the creation of a Body of Volunteers: priests, religious sisters and church-workers dedicated to the service of refugees, who not only assist the local dioceses in organizing pastoral and humanitarian work in the refugee

areas, but also act as catalysts for this ministry.

These people could be released by their congregations or dioceses for this specific task when the needs arise. This Body of "Pastors-without-Borders" could dedicate themselves totally to the service of refugees in Africa, living in settlements and accompanying them home when the time for repatriation comes. Their commitment would be limited in time and would become a first immediate answer to a refugee crisis. This group of church workers could be drawn from all religious orders, missionary societies and diocesan priests working in Africa. It is essential that

these pastoral workers receive adequate support and specific preparation for this ministry.

### REFUGEE COMMUNITIES

Many of the established principles of a viable pastoral programme also apply to the refugee communities. Lay leaders and catechists from refugee communities need support and encouragement with special training programmes organized for them on a regular basis. The importance of small Christian communities, of families praying and supporting each other, cannot be stressed enough. While the Church in the country of asylum has the responsibility for the pastoral care of refugees, refugee communities should be assisted in their own language and encouraged to maintain both their church traditions and their own culture. This normally involves close collaboration among bishops and church leaders of countries of origin and asylum.

Greater collaboration among dioceses, national episcopal conferences, and regional associations will often be called for in shaping an appropriate pastoral response. Where a regional association of Episcopal Conferences does not have a service for refugees, the IMBISA Pastoral Office for Refugees is a useful model to follow. The Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People through a special service for refugees (or a Vatican Secretariat on Refugees) can play a more active role in coordinating and supporting this ministry.

### ISSUES AND CONCERNS

Several other issues and concerns were noted in developing a pastoral response:

**Information.** There is need for reliable information on the country of origin. The Church is often uniquely situated to develop channels of information and to disseminate this information among refugee communities. Visits by Church ministers are to be encouraged.

**Refugee Definition.** While we support existing instruments, there is the need of a broader definition of refugee beyond the 1951 Convention, the 1967 Protocol, and the 1969 OAU Convention to include internally displaced persons and other unrecognized refugees in need of protection.

**Women and Children.** The vast majority of the refugees in this continent are women, children and the elderly. Although still insufficient, we are happy to see that some specific ministries such as education, vocational training, religious formation, recreational programmes, and health care attention, have been implemented in camps and refugee settlements. We encourage international Catholic organizations to give a priority of resources to these ministries.

**Repatriation and Reintegration.** The refugees long for the day when they can return to their homelands. The return, however, entails painful adjustment similar to the wrenching experience when they were forced to leave. Consequently, it is the task of the Church to prepare refugees for that day of their return to their homelands to start a new life in new circumstances. It goes without saying that no refugees must be sent back when "there are fears of discriminatory actions or serious life-threatening situations." Voluntary repatriation must always remain the guiding principle. Mindful of the traumas that the refugees have gone through, it is imperative that there are programmes of reconciliation both in the country of asylum and in the home country. In fact, a spirituality of peace building needs to be developed together with special training programmes in principles of conflict resolution and active non-violence.

**Repatriation and Pastoral Planning.** National Episcopal Conferences, where the refugee population is found, are encouraged to articulate a specific pastoral plan to guide dioceses and parishes in the period of resettlement and reintegration. It will be helpful if this plan is truly ecumenical and

developed with other Churches as well as governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental agencies. It should be kept in mind that truly effective planning for repatriation must include the refugees themselves from the very start of its organization.

**Land issues.** In Mozambique extensive lands have been alienated to multinational companies. We deplore and condemn this practice to the extent that it is true. Refugees and displaced persons have a right to return to their home areas and to reclaim their land. When disputes over land use arise, as they surely will, it is essential that the government has in place a judicial system for a fair and just settlement of these disputes. The Church has an important role to play in ensuring that returnees are properly informed of their rights.

**Addressing Root Causes.** The Church recognizes her vital role in speaking out against the root causes that produce refugees: violence, human rights violations, and the distribution and stockpile of arms from the West to this

continent. She also has a credible role in contributing creative and effective ways in the prevention of people being forced to flee their homelands.

## CONCLUSION

The task of the Church in Africa is first of all to proclaim Jesus Christ to the peoples in this continent, and to promote with all the forces and means at our disposal a Christian model of development. Development, in this perspective, is comprised of personal conversion and permanent social reform. "The Church in Africa must form competent Catholic laity, able to assume civic and political responsibilities, inspired by the Gospel and by the social doctrine of the Church, totally committed to the service of the common good and to the construction of a just and fraternal society." It is imperative that the Church in Africa confront the tragedy of refugees, not only by intensifying relief services but by courageously fighting against the causes which perpetuate this blasphemy against God and all human beings.

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## RECONCILIATION AND THE CHURCH IN CHINA

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Many changes have taken place in and among nations during the last few years. Situations in some countries have dramatically improved, while in others they have considerably worsened. The new circumstances which such changes create often require people to come to terms with a past marred by violence, oppression and persecution. This has resulted in a call for the renewal of the ancient Christian practice of reconciliation.

In China, too, Catholics are being asked to reconcile themselves to one another and to overcome the harmful divisions that have rent the fabric of the Church there for over thirty years. While the situation among China's Catholics has evolved since 1958, there are still many hurdles to cross. Two questions arise: Is reconciliation possible; and if so, how will it happen?

On the one hand, the word "reconciliation" is often used in different ways. Sometimes it is used easily - too easily perhaps. People using it in this fashion think that reconciliation is something that can be effected quickly, if only the offending party would apologize, and the offended party would extend forgiveness. Rarely, if ever, are long and painful histories so easily resolved.

On the other hand, the word "reconciliation" is sometimes introduced into a situation with great care, since the users of that word know what will be entailed. The task can be so daunting that all parties feel paralyzed.

It is probably better to err on the side of caution in these matters. Yet we need not be paralyzed in the situation. There are things that we can do, attitudes that we can cultivate, steps that we can take. In this article, I would like to explore the biblical understanding of reconciliation as a basis for looking forward to a time of reconciliation for the Catholic Church in China.

Needless to say, the situation of the Church in China is very complex; it varies from place to place; and is always changing. Nor is it a simple matter of good versus evil, for there are people of good will on both sides, people who have borne the burden of history as best they know how. Yet many divisions remain - perhaps not as sharp as they once were, but problematic and unresolved nonetheless. And there remain long, painful histories that must be faced and somehow reconciled.

### CHRISTIAN RECONCILIATION

Reconciliation is one of those themes in the Scriptures that is clearly very central to understanding what God has done for the world in Christ, and yet surprisingly little is actually said about it. Most of what we do have, is found in the Pauline and Deuteropauline materials. Here we are reminded that the reconciliation of a sinful world unto God is the very reason for Christ's having come among us. We are told, further, that reconciliation has already taken place through the blood of his cross, although the complete

achievement of that reconciliation still lies before us. What its full realization will look like is given to us only in glimpses; however, it will take shape and it will involve all things, "whether above the earth, on the earth or under the earth."

I would like to explore this message of Christian reconciliation, since it is the source of a profound hope that sustains Christians who now suffer from

their divisions. I wish to do this by looking at three dimensions of the message: first, what reconciliation is not, lest we confuse it with other dynamics in our world and put our hopes in the wrong place; secondly, what can be distilled from the Scriptures, especially from the Pauline corpus, of the meaning of Christian reconciliation; and finally, what this may suggest for our consideration of reconciliation for the Church in China.

## 1. WHAT RECONCILIATION IS NOT

There is some advantage in beginning our reflections on Christian reconciliation by stating what it is not, since the word itself can mean so many different things. We speak, after all, of reconciling bank statements, labour disputes, divorce suits, and arguments.

There are three ways in which the term reconciliation is commonly understood that do not reflect, as such, its Christian or biblical understanding. These are: reconciliation as a hasty peace, reconciliation as an alternative to liberation, and reconciliation as a managed process.

### A HASTY PEACE

Reconciliation as a hasty peace tries to deal with a history of pain and suffering by suppressing its memory and ignoring its effects. It tries to put behind us that painful and difficult story and urges a fresh beginning on all sides. Not surprisingly, this version of reconciliation is invoked often by the very ones who have perpetrated the suffering or by those who have quietly stood by as it happened. They want the victims of that history to let bygones be bygones and exercise a "Christian forgiveness."

By trivializing the suffering of others in this way, these false attempts at reconciliation actually underscore how far the situation still is from genuine reconciliation. By calling on those who have suffered to forget or overlook

their suffering, is in fact to continue the oppressive situation by saying, in effect, that the experiences of those who have suffered are not important - indeed, that they themselves are unimportant to the reconciling process. By forgetting the suffering with such haste, the victim is forgotten and the causes of suffering are never uncovered or confronted.

Unfortunately, church people can easily find themselves implicated in this kind of false reconciliation. They naturally feel constrained to speak a word of peace and bring to bear the resources of the Christian message on a troubled situation. But if those same church people have not been part of the struggle, or have contented themselves with standing outside or above the situation while making pronouncements about it, they end up, albeit unintentionally, as part of the problem rather than part of its solution. This was the accusation leveled by the authors of the *Kairos Document* at church leaders with their "church theology" in South Africa in 1985. One cannot come into the final act of a drama and expect to play a leading role.

### AN ALTERNATIVE TO LIBERATION

Secondly, reconciliation is not an alternative to liberation. In 1985, a concerted effort was made by some conservative bishops and theologians in

Latin America to replace theologies of liberation with a theology of reconciliation, claiming that this would be more faithful to the spirit of the Gospel. The Los Andes Declaration emanating from a conference held in Chile that year made a case for this kind of thinking. To the minds of its authors, reconciliation captured more fully the finality of the Christian message, and was not as conflictual as liberation. It offered peace to all sides.

This form of reconciliation, like reconciliation as a hasty peace, does echo something of the Christian message. But it too obscures the very causes of conflict and suffering and therefore does not bring about a true reconciliation. Put simply, liberation is not an alternative to reconciliation, it is its prerequisite. It is not a choice between liberation or reconciliation. Rather, there is no reconciliation without liberation. Reconciliation as a substitute for liberation fails to recognize the dimensions of the conflict especially when the causes are hidden and the violence perpetrated is covert in nature. It also ignores the fact that division is not peripheral or an epiphenomenon arising out of a conflictual situation, but is something that

stands at the very heart of it. To ignore the division is to ignore the situation.

#### A MANAGED PROCESS

Finally, reconciliation is not a managed process, like arbitration. Reconciliation is not conflict-mediation, a process whose goal is to lessen conflict or to bring the conflicted parties to live with the conflictual situation. Conflict-mediation tries to get both parties to surrender some claims in the hope of reducing tensions, but not so many that tensions are instead heightened. Such conflict-mediation may be and often is necessary in this fallen world, but it should not be confused with reconciliation just because it brings about a temporary cessation in hostilities. As we shall see, for the Christian, reconciliation is not a skill to be mastered; but rather something to be discovered: the power of God's grace welling up in one's life. Reconciliation is more of an attitude than an acquired skill; it is a stance assumed before a broken world rather than a tool to repair that world. Or put in theological terms, reconciliation is more of a spirituality than a strategy.

## 2. THE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION

These three ways of misunderstanding reconciliation - as a hasty process, as an alternative to liberation, and as a managed process - should alert us to how complex the reality of reconciliation actually is. In a way, we, as Christians, should not be surprised. For reconciliation stands at the heart of the Good News we preach: God's plan for creation and Christ's central work within that plan. Let us turn now to a distillation of that biblical message.

Although the concept of reconciliation is central to a Christian understanding of what God has done for the world in Christ, the term "reconciliation" itself

does not occur that frequently in the Bible. It does not occur at all in the Hebrew Scriptures, although it is no doubt implied in the concept of atonement. Paul is the principal source of its usage in the New Testament, and even there it occurs in some form only fourteen times. The verb to reconcile, *kata-lassein*, was understood in Paul's time in a secular context, meaning a making of peace after a time of war.

This is not the place to engage in a prolonged exegesis of the passages related to this concept in the authentic Pauline and the Deuteropauline letters. That has been done competently and

comprehensively elsewhere. Let me rather try to distill from these texts five essential elements which give us a picture of how reconciliation is to be understood from a Christian perspective.

#### THE SOURCE OF RECONCILIATION

It is God who initiates and brings about reconciliation. We are not in a position, either as victims or oppressors, to recreate ourselves in such a way as to overcome completely the damage done by situations of conflict and violence. While we may surmount these situations, we never seem to be completely liberated. We are never quite able to get things right, perhaps because the effects of conflict and division have seeped too deeply into our bones. This is not said to encourage fatalism or quietism, for we are indeed invited by God to cooperate in God's reconciling ways. It is simply to remind us from where reconciliation comes and who continues to guide it.

#### SPIRITUALITY NOT STRATEGY

Reconciliation is more a spirituality than a strategy. Reconciliation is not brought about by a technical, problem-solving rationality as much as by embracing a view of the world that recognizes and responds to God's reconciling action. Reconciliation is discovered in the justifying and reconciling grace of God welling up in our lives and in our communities. It is from this experience that we are able to go forth in a ministry of reconciliation. Reconciliation becomes a vocation, a way of life, and not just a set of discrete tasks to be performed and completed. Reconciled communities and individuals do not return to a pre-conflictual state, they live in a new kind of way.

#### A NEW CREATION

Reconciliation makes of both victim and oppressor a new creation. What reconciliation is about is more than righting wrongs and repenting evildo-

ing. These are surely included, but the biblical understanding of reconciliation sees that we are indeed taken to a new place, and become a new creation. Reconciliation is not just restoration; it brings us to a place where we have not been before. This becomes important because we often harbour preconceived notions of what the reconciled state will be like. The Scriptures remind us that we will be more than restored, we will be a new creation.

#### OVERCOMING DIVISION

The story of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus overcomes the alternate story of division and violence. In this story, God in Christ enters into the depths of the story of human suffering, of conflict and of division. Body, blood and cross are the symbols that recur over and over in this story; symbols that can bear the paradox of the transformation of suffering and death into a new story of deliverance and life. The violence of our situations is met with the violence of Jesus' death; the dawning of the resurrection heralds that "new place" where the reconciled are gathered. The symbol of Christ's body is the vehicle for restoring the shattered bodies of those who suffer, and for gathering the scattered community of those driven apart in violence and conflict. The symbol of blood carries the memories of violence to be healed. It portends new life to those who have shed their own blood. The symbol of the cross exposes the lie of human power and domination, and the truth of how human designs often go deeply awry. The cross challenges our understandings of what constitutes power in this world, understandings that make violence and oppression possible.

#### A COSMIC FORCE

Reconciliation embraces all dimensions of reality. Reconciliation breaks down human enmity, and embraces the entire cosmos. It acknowledges that the reconciling process reaches beyond God's reconciling offer. It points to the

alienation yet to be overcome. It involves laments for what had been lost and calls forth a healing memory. It

remains for us to see what this means for us as Christians and our vocation as the bearers of God's Good News.

### 3. RECONCILIATION AND THE CHURCH IN CHINA

What meaning might all this have for the eventual reconciliation of the Church in China? A number of suggestions follow that are drawn from what has been said above and are offered as possible points for reflection to those who wish to be part of the reconciliation process. They are based on a Christian understanding of reconciliation, and not on the particular experience of someone who knows the China situation well. For this reason, they are offered rather as a resource to those who are closer to the situation than is this author.

#### RECONCILIATION BEGINS WITH THE VICTIM

It is important to realize that the reconciliation process usually begins with the victim, not with the oppressor. We may assume that reconciliation begins when the oppressor repents of evil-doing and seeks the victim's forgiveness. In the Christian view, however, it is the other way around. What happens is that the shattered victim discovers God's offer of healing grace and accepts God's favour as a restoration of an abused and shattered humanity. This is not the blaming-the-victim-syndrome. Rather, it represents God's being on the side of the little ones, the *anawim*, giving them the strength to overcome the mighty.

God rescues the humanity of the victim - a humanity of which the victim has been deprived by violence. The forgiveness that the victim is now able to offer as a result of having experienced God's care and healing, is what will provoke repentance on the part of the oppressor. This is captured beautifully in the words of Joe Seramane, now Director of the Justice and Reconcilia-

tion Department of the South Africa Council of Churches. Bearing witness to justice led to his imprisonment and torture. After his release, he was able to meet with his torturer once again and to offer him this forgiveness. He tells us that "it is through reconciliation that we regain our humanity. To work for reconciliation is to live to show others what their humanity is."

In the situation of Catholics, and indeed all Christians, in China, who is the victim and who the oppressor? Those communities that the government has officially recognized are sometimes identified with the oppressors, and those that are still outlawed and persecuted as the victims. But such quick designations may no longer be accurate. What may be more important is to ask: who felt the reconciling grace of God within their hearts? Who, in experiencing that grace, have seen how they have been diminished by the experience of the last thirty years and yet also see how God is at work healing that history? It is those who are experiencing God's work in their hearts who will be the leaders in the reconciliation process. They will be able to echo the sentiments of Joe Seramane. No one can be self appointed as a reconciling agent; only God can do that.

#### RECONCILIATION AND LIBERATION

There is no reconciliation without liberation. While there is religious tolerance in China, it is limited. Church people are not yet completely free to act as they choose. For that reason, we should not be surprised if full reconciliation will remain unlikely for as long as certain restraints remain in place. There can be no full reconciliation

without truth. It likewise reminds us of how long the reconciliation process may take and, again, that reconciliation is principally the work of God.

### A NEW CREATION

Reconciliation will make of the Church in China a new creation. It will not be a matter of reverting to a former pre-1958 style, nor of one side assuming the form and style of the other. God's reconciling work makes of us a new creation. I would suggest that one place to look for the newness of creation will be in how the word "Catholic" is understood. The root of the word is *holos*, meaning a sense of the whole. What will the "whole" be for Catholics in this new creation? In a sense the very name "Catholic" implies a search for and a responsibility to the whole. Might not such a quest - to search and care for the whole in order to be truly Catholic - be our motivation in the reconciliation process?

### THREE RECONCILING SYMBOLS

The divisions are only likely to be overcome if they are somehow brought into contact with the three great reconciling symbols of the New Testament: the body of Christ, crucified and glorified; the blood of Christ, poured out in suffering and now the drink of the everlasting kingdom; and the cross, which has become the throne of God, that exposes the lies of the world. Divisions have within themselves deep paradoxes. The paradoxical nature of the great reconciling symbols of body, blood and cross may be what is needed to overcome the suffering of the past

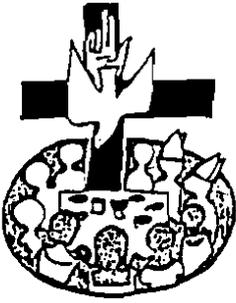
and the divisions the past has engendered.

### GOD'S ACTION AMONG US

Reconciliation is not merely a moment in the healing of a divided Church. It is as close as we can come to God's very action within and among us. God's work in Christ is described as God's reconciling the world to God's self. We are called to be ministers of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:20), but not on our own power: only as ambassadors on Christ's behalf. In experiencing reconciliation, we experience the most intimate movement of God in our lives. Thus for the Church in China to desire reconciliation is more than a wish to overcome a sad and painful past; it is the yearning to feel the touch of God.

Reconciliation is not an easy process. But if we yearn and pray for it, we can have confidence that God will hear our prayer. We need also to look for signs of hope. John Baptist Jiang reported in *The Clergy Review* (no. 299) that in one place in China two bishops are sharing the same house: one a bishop of the "official" Church recognized by the government, the other from the "unofficial" Church. They are also said to share some measure of "communion" with one another. Whatever that might mean precisely, it does show that there is indeed hope. We must seek God's reconciling grace in our lives, face the truth that sets us free from suffering and painful memories, and prepare ourselves to become a new creation.

Ref. *Tripod* Vol. XII - No. 69  
May - June, 1991, 6 Welfare Road,  
Aberdeen, Hong Kong



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## mission moments

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### URBAN MISSION

(SENEGAL)

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#### URBAN MISSION IN DAKAR

As part of my professional formation I was asked by our school (Teachers' Training School for Technical and Social Education) to do a session in maternity. It was this assignment that brought me to the Abass Ndao Municipal Medical Centre of Dakar.

I spent most of my time in the delivery room. Teams replaced each other in turn but theoretical organization was hardly ever respected. Women about to give birth were asked to pay 300 CFA francs for the consultation, then another 2,000 francs for admission to the delivery room. Sometimes they were so poor that they were not able to pay the sums of money asked of them. We did an average of 40 to 50 deliveries every 24 hours in terribly under equipped conditions. It was not rare to see women lying on the ground because there was no bed or delivery table. Everything was lacking: alcohol, cotton, bandages, medications for the women and babies, with the result that a hemorrhage was often fatal for the mother.

When a woman gave birth without too much difficulty, she was asked to get up, dress

herself quickly and clean the table or the floor, then she was directed to the post-delivery room. There they were two or four in the same bed with the babies in their arms. In serious cases, the women were kept until some improvement could be seen in their health and for this they had to pay an extra 5,000 francs together with the price of the medicines used in their treatment.

I came very close to touching the distress of these women. They were facing a maternity which was both desired and feared at the same time. Suffering, in anguish and all alone (in the midst of the crowd), it was often at this moment that they confided all their problems to me. Economic and family difficulties or poignant tragedies were the cause of abortions performed in the district by inhuman means and under inhuman conditions, and for a fee! I saw some of these young girls dying, while medical personnel chatted in the reception room, totally unconcerned. Often I had to run home to the convent to get medicine or soap. The superior gave me gloves, surgery thread etc. Whatever I brought was but a drop of water in comparison to the enormous need.

I could never recount all the misery I say in this municipal medical centre, because each day had its own burdens. With a strike by the medical trade unions, misery increased, the

deaths of mothers multiplied and stillborn babies were no longer counted. In spite of all that, I admired the good will and devotedness of the under-supported and overworked interns.

Ref. Marie Ange Diagne, FMM  
FMM INFORMATION DOCUMENTATION, Jan. 1993,  
via Giusti 12, 00185 Roma

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### TWO MOTHERS

(TANZANIA)

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Elizabeth and Martina asked me to take their sick children to Bugando Hospital in Mwanza, Tanzania. Both were baby boys about one year old who were suffering from severe anemia and urgently needed a blood transfusion.

We set off in my four-wheel drive Toyota. The two babies were breathing rapidly, a sure sign that their bodies needed more oxygen. From time to time I would take a quick look at Elizabeth's baby Golgadi. His tongue and palms seemed white rather than red. He was breathing heavily, even panting at times.

Suddenly Elizabeth said to me: "Stop the car. I want to get out." Little Golgadi had stopped panting; his frail body was

limp. Elizabeth said quietly: "He is dead. I'm going to take him back home to be buried." Then she began weeping.

I stopped the truck and immediately baptized Golgadi, giving him the name of Peter. Following local African custom, the dead child would be buried in the family homestead that very afternoon. We parted sadly. I will never forget the sight of the weeping Elizabeth carrying her dead baby back to Kahangala - a symbol of so many African mothers immersed in the tragedy of so many unnecessary deaths.

Then Martina, her sick baby Masunga, and I set off for Bugando Hospital where he received a blood transfusion. With the baby in good hands I said good-buy. Later, I heard that the boy had recovered and had been baptized Richard.

How heartbreaking for Elizabeth to watch her child die in her arms. Yet millions of children in Africa die unnecessarily each year from malnutrition, dehydration, malaria and AIDS. In virtually every country in the world mothers still carry the cross of poor health care and the lack of medicine.

Ref. Joseph Healey, MM  
WORLD PARISH  
Maryknoll, N.Y. U.S.A.

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#### A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

(BRAZIL / HAITI /  
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC)

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Five hundred years after Columbus reached America, and as a consequence opened the route of the slave trade, I had

the chance to go the same way, visiting some of the countries with the highest concentration of descendants of the African slaves: Brazil, Haiti, Dominican Republic.

Visiting a rural area in the Dominican Republic, I took part in a Mass celebrated in a small Christian community. The landscape, the vegetation, the way the chapel was built, reminded me of any coastal area in Africa. The priest introduced me to the faithful. The first reaction was cold, since in the Dominican Republic the official policy is to deny the presence of an abundant dose of black blood in the population. They suggest that the dark skin comes from the Indios that inhabited the island - not true since the Indios were exterminated in less than fifty years, and their skin was not black! So the priest jokes, and referring to his and my crispy hair said to the people: Don't you think we have something in common?"

One of the most moving moments was in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), in the sacristy of a Church filled with old discarded statues of slaves and black people who rebelled against oppression. Popular piety has transformed it into a temple of black remembrance. People come in reverently, murmur a prayer in front of a statue, and in West African style put an offering of money or cigarettes in front of one or two statues. There is a huge head representing the "unknown slave:" people whisper prayers and requests into his ears. How many stories of poverty and oppression has he heard and never passed on?

The drumming and the rhythmical songs of a Sunday Mass in Haiti made me feel as if I were back in Africa. But this was followed by disillusionment

when in the colourful street market just outside the Church a Haitian youngster asked me if I come from Africa-Guinea. In the conversation that followed I realized that apart from the worst stereotype he did not know anything about Africa, in spite of being Black and studying in an upper-secondary school. Moreover when he introduced me to some of his friends he told them I was from the U.K. And when I tried to clarify, he told me I better pretend to be from the U.K. rather than from that uncivilized part of the world called Africa. It was the end of our short friendship!

I found in the Black community of Latin America a great ignorance of African issues, sometimes coupled with outright rejection of their own African roots. But this is understandable, since it is the fruit of the long colonialist and neo-colonialist brainwashing. Since Africa is only known for the bloody armed tribal conflicts, drought, famine, floods and other kinds of calamities, how could anyone want to be identified with such a continent? This was in fact the masterpiece of the colonialist, making the people they exploited ashamed of their own identity and history.

Ref. Albert Mori, NEW PEOPLE  
No.22 Jan./Feb. 1993

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#### A PRISON APOSTOLATE

(POLAND)

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I take special care of prisoners with AIDS. There is no danger of contagion through simple contact but, up to now, the police absolutely refused

to transfer them to the Tribunal, and so their files waited indefinitely. The prison Director had already written a number of petitions regarding their situation, but the police remained firm in their refusal. So I asked the Director if there was some way in which I could help. "We would be grateful if you could," he replied.

So I went to see the President of the Tribunal to ask him to fix a date for the hearing. "I would be only pleased to see to it," he told me, "but the police will not allow the transfer." I insisted: "Is there really nothing I can do? Perhaps I should go and see the police." - "Officially, I cannot tell you to do that, but privately I tell you: 'Go, perhaps you will be successful!'" So off I went, not even knowing whom I should contact. I thought that there must be "someone in command of the escorting party of the prisoners' convoys" and I asked to see him, without knowing if such a person existed. I was led to a police official and ... everything went well! Since then, the transfers have been carried out like clockwork.

It is true that at the beginning the police put on special security coats and gloves and wore plastic masks, but now they just make do with the gloves. I make a point of sitting next to the AIDS victims or those carrying the HIV virus and talking to them normally, as I think this is the only way of showing others that there is no danger to fear.

I take reasonable precautions, of course. I usually shake hands with them when I meet them, but if there is a wound on one of my hands or theirs, I say quite simply: "Because of this wound, we will not shake hands today." And they accept this as being quite natural.

One day, in the Tribunal court, speaking about his sad family life and the way in which he had been shunned since contacting the AIDS illness, a prisoner said: "... I would have ended my life, if it had not been for Sr. Klemensa..." His voice broke here, and such a long silence prevailed in the court I felt embarrassed.

I have noticed that I am welcomed at the sessions of the Tribunal and that my presence sometimes helps to reduce the sentence. Once, for example, the judges ignored a law which lays down that a recidivist must receive a heavier sentence. Another time, they suspended the sentence so that the prisoner in question could be sent to MONAR to receive necessary therapy. (MONAR: a private organization for drug addicts and AIDS victims.)

In this way I have made contacts with MONAR, the police, the procurator, the Tribunal, Social Security, therapeutic centres, and work centres.

Ref. Sr. Klemensa Pawluk, OSU  
INTER-URSULINE  
No. 1, Jan.-Feb. 1993  
via Nomentana 236,  
00162 Roma

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#### A DEADLY STRUGGLE

(BRAZIL)

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On December 1, 1992, Domingos Paulino, chief of the Gaviao Pukobye people, was killed by two shots to his head and body. The killer, a timber merchant called Coaraci, has not been put under arrest, though he is well-known in the municipality of Amarante, Maranhao, where he committed the crime. Now police

are investigating those responsible for the murder.

Domingos was the chief of a community of Gaviao-Indios in Riachinho. Though receiving frequent death-threats, he was not willing to negotiate with the loggers, as they demanded free access to the Indios' territory in order to fell trees.

However, the loggers went ahead anyway, taking as their base the territory of the neighbouring Guajajara-Indios. Because they received no protection, the Guajararas felt obliged to yield to the loggers, "trading their wood for their survival!" Finally, they were cheated anyway, because the woodcutters carried off the logs they felled at night, when the Indios could not control the booty.

According to CIMI, the Brazilian Bishops' Missionary Council for Indigenous People, there is imminent danger of another open conflict breaking out between the Deni Indios in the South of the Amazon and the Mayor-elect of Itamaraty, Raimundo Lobo. Lobo is a landowner in the area with links to the lumber companies. He claims publicly to be the "owner" of almost one million hectares where the Deni live, though their land is under the protection of FUNAI, the National Foundation of the Indian.

Bad news is also coming from the Yanomami in Roraima. Hardly one year after the demarcation of their territory, it is again being invaded by 5000 gold diggers who usurp the territory and threaten the survival of the tribe.

Ref. INFORMATION  
Missionszentrale der  
Franziskaner. 5300 Bonn 2,  
Albeatur-Magnus - Str. 39,  
Germania.

# COMING EVENTS

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## CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

A SERIES OF THREE CONFERENCES

**February 25**

THE SUDAN CONFLICT

Speaker: Bartolomeo Burgos, M. Afr

**March 11**

WOMEN IN ISLAM

Speaker: Lucie Provost, MSOLA

**March 25**

PHILIPPINES: MUSLIM CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

Speaker: Sebastiano D'Ambra, P.I.M.E.

All of the conferences are scheduled for 16.00 - 18.30 p.m.  
at The SVD College, via dei Verbiti, 1

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**May 18-22**

## AFRICA: QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS TO THE CHURCH

VILLA CAVALLETTI

Speakers: Bishop Anselme Sanon - Sister Teresa Okure, SHCJ

(Early registration is recommended)

(English, italiano, français, español)

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**June 22 - July 3**

## UNDERSTANDING THE UMMA

## THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY YESTERDAY AND TODAY

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