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## IN THIS ISSUE

Dom DEMETRIO VALENTINI participated in the Santo Domingo Conference as a delegate of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops. Through his eyes we see the proceedings and the results of the conference in *Santo Domingo - The Fruits Beyond the Struggle: Human Promotion and Inculturation*.

The basic content of liberation theology is one. But it is shaped by a particular world view, mentality and set of aspirations. By taking into account African traditional religions and cultures, Dr. P.N. WACHEGE proposes an integral African liberation theology in *African Inculturation - Liberation Theology*.

Sr. LUCIE PRUVOST explores two currents in Islamic feminist thought in *Women in Islam*. She moves beyond the veil and clausura to examine the fundamentalist and modernistic currents which influence the present and the future choices of women in Islam.

Can Muslims and Christians find a common ground for peace in the Philippines? Is dialogue possible? Fr. SEBASTIANO D'AMBRA, founder of the Islam-Christian Sisilah Dialogue Movement, believes that it is. *The Philippines: Muslim-Christian Relations* discusses the possibilities and the difficulties in the quest for peace.

The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Guatemalan Indian activist, RIGOBERTA MENCHU was for her a gesture which embraced all of the indigenous people of the Americas. *A Voice of Resistance* celebrates a heritage of resistance grounded in Mother Earth, Mother Nature and human life.

This month's MISSION MOMENTS contain personal accounts of drought in Mali, a farm school in Brazil, the

testimony of a former hostage in Lebanon, and an ecumenical venture in East Berlin. The issue concludes with COMING EVENTS.



We should promote an evangelisation which penetrates to the deepest roots of our peoples' common culture, being especially attentive to the growing urban culture.

- For the whole inculturation of the Gospel it is very important to develop an effective educational programme and to use the modern means of communication.

...

We reaffirm the need to find new methods so that the ethical demands of the Gospel concerning the whole social order reach those who are building our pluralistic society. The social doctrine of the Church is an essential part of the Christian message. Teaching, spreading, deepening and applying this doctrine are indispensable for the New Evangelisation of our peoples.

...

The New Evangelisation will intensify the missionary apostolate in all our Churches and make us feel responsible for going beyond our borders to bring the faith which arrived among us 500 years ago to other peoples.

*Latin American Bishops: Santo Domingo*

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## SANTO DOMINGO – THE FRUITS BEYOND THE STRUGGLE

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Dom Demetrio Valentini, Bishop of Jales, Brazil

I participated in the IV Conference of the Latin American bishops as a delegate of the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops (CNBB). In this article, I am making some personal observations.

My intention is to contribute to a full understanding of the events of the

Conference and to an accurate interpretation of its results. In doing this, I am not making any judgement which diminishes the value and importance of the IV Conference. I actually believe that their real meaning will be clearer if the circumstances in which it was conducted are more widely known.

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROCEEDINGS

The Conference was opened by Pope John Paul II. In his speech he dealt with its central themes and summarised the teachings already enumerated during his papacy. The Pope also attended an early session and listened to the first of the scheduled magisterial expositions (*ponencias*). Then he heard comments from the floor, some of which were made by cardinals which gave the distinct impression of having been, for the most part, chosen by the presidency for the occasion.

The first days were indecisive because there was no defined direction. We felt that we were wasting time. It was only on the Friday of the first week that the *thematic commissions* began their work. They had to finish their tasks by the following Wednesday when their conclusions were delivered to the *editorial committee*. While we were waiting for the text by the editorial committee (delivered only two days before the end of the Conference), we debated the pastoral guidelines. In the end, the final document was hurriedly voted on (October 26th, to October 28th).

In plenary session, at the beginning of the Conference, various petitions

were presented concerning the progress of the assembly which asked for a more precise definition of its aims. The main emphasis was on defining the final document, considering the suggestions of the assembly for the composition of the different *commissions* and attempting to stop *magisterial presentations*. The prevailing impression was that the presidency was unwilling to accede to these requests.

The *thematic commissions* drew up drafts of a summarised text, modified by the suggestions gathered from intergroup meetings between commission members with similar working themes. This was how the *thematic commissions* eventually ended up with a fourth draft. This text was delivered to the editorial committee. The editorial committee then took responsibility for the text and the *thematic commissions* were disbanded.

The text of the editorial committee was delayed in coming before the plenary assembly. Despite questions by the assembly regarding the text, it was only at the end of the Conference that the assembly received a copy of the text on which it had to vote.

The section of the final document which was presented first to the assembly related to the main pastoral guidelines. This part was the most widely debated and the best assimilated by the Conference. What most hindered the assembly's wish to debate the content of the final document was the necessity of listening to four magisterial expositions followed by group debates on each of them. The final voting on the text was so rushed that the assembly did not even know the exact result of every vote.

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The early announcement of the Conference would lead one to suppose progressive preparation which integrated the contributions of the bishops and resulted in a basic text for discussion and approval. But this was not the case. The Conference was disorganised from start to finish. Each step of the preparations ignored and cancelled out the preceding step. This is particularly obvious from the following:

The consultative document was published in 1991, after the theme of the Conference had been set by the Pope. It was abandoned in February 1991, following the reaction of the general secretaries of all the episcopal Conferences at their meeting.

The "Secunda Relatio," contained the suggestions of episcopal Conferences. It was a definite reaction against the *consultative document*. Based on the "Secunda Relatio" a *working document* was drawn up by a group of experts nominated by CELAM. This became the official preparatory instrument of the Conference. Approval for its publication was delayed for two and a half months in Rome. In some countries, such as Cuba, it was not even brought to the attention of the church. In others, it only arrived a few weeks before the Conference.

The *working document* was abandoned at the start of the Conference. This was because *magisterial conferences* pushed forward as a basis for group work. The working document fell into disrepute. Of

the eight experts who drew it up, only two were invited to the Conference. Absolute silence was maintained on the working document during the Conference by both the presidency and the coordinating and editorial committees. The *thematic commissions* drew up another text. This was based on discussion of assigned themes and submitted to the editorial committee.

The work of the thematic commissions was largely abandoned by the editorial committee which insisted on its own plan. An exception was the chapter on human promotion; here it was possible to rescue a part of the texts drawn up by the working groups.

### THE DYNAMICS OF THE PROCEEDINGS

In the initial debates the petition on the Conference's schedule was raised repeatedly. In fact, there were questions and doubts which threatened the very purpose of the Conference. Only gradually did it emerge to what kind of procedure the Conference was tending. *synod type* proceedings were being proposed, rather than a *General Conference*.

#### Synod Versus General Conference

The conduct of proceedings, from the scheduled magisterial presentations to the numerous initial interventions at the plenary session all pointed to a synod procedure. This always begins with a *relatio*, suggestions are then gathered from the synod fathers and combined into a final summary and put at the Pope's disposition. This seemed to be the programme which the working proposals of the Conference implied. The interventions in the plenary sessions which asked for a definition of the type of document required and which debated the value of the major presentations underlined the fact that this was not a synod geared to making suggestions to the Pope. It was a General Conference of South American Bishops which was to direct a message to a waiting people. The tension between the format of a synod and a general conference marked the entire proceedings.

## Change In The Methodology

Another significant element was an emphasis on changing the South American way of confronting issues. This method can be summarised as: see - judge - act. The change in methodology was reflected in the Conference's final results. A new scheme was imposed: theological principles - challenges - pastoral guidelines. Given this imposition, the assembly tried to save its own method by confronting reality from the point of view of challenges. However, opposition to the proposed change had no success. Some thematic commissions, such as the ecological commission, of which I was the coordinator, insisted on starting with the facts. However, once these had been handed over to the editorial committee, the texts were altered to present theological principals first. This explains why the thematic commissions were disbanded during the second week.

## ABSENCE OF ORDER AND DEBATING PROCEDURE

There were problems both with the general regulation of the Conference and with debating procedures. By the second last day, even the presidency recognised this. Neither the general regulations nor the debating procedures were voted on by the assembly.

This lack of order was the origin of a juridical uncertainty which lasted throughout the Conference. This also contributed to the further concentrating of power in the hands of the presidency. For example, in relation to the outstanding points, because of confused debating procedures, the presidency decided that each point should initially be approved by the editorial committee. The presidency itself was unsure of

how to interpret the debating procedures.

In the plenary session, the president was questioned by numerous bishops about the meaning of the rules. He was unable to answer questions on the value of the important indicative vote, which was used to approve the general outline proposed for the final document. Subsequently, it was frequently interpreted that by the indicative vote, the assembly had approved the document in approving the general plan.

## DUAL COORDINATION

Another consideration is that the Conference was organised by two bodies: The Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM) and the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (CAL). It was clear that an event like the Conference could not be managed by two institutional organisations without a clear division of their respective responsibilities. This confusion led to a poor programme which had to be frequently modified.

## Two Secretaries General

The nomination of Mons. Medina as a second secretary was not officially explained. In Medellin and in Puebla the secretary of the Conference was the Secretary General of CELAM. The same procedure was expected at Santo Domingo. The presence of two Secretaries General reduced the assembly's confidence in both. As the Conference proceeded, it became clear that Mons. Medina was preeminent to the detriment of Mons. Damasceno. This was obvious on the second last day. While Mons. Damasceno thoughtfully explained to the bishops where they could collect lost property, Mons. Medina authoritatively pronounced his own interpretation of the votes on the final document.

## SIGNIFICANT MOMENTS OF THE ASSEMBLY

Because of their consequences, I think that it is important to highlight significant moments of the assembly.

**Nomination of the *Operating Committees*.** The presidency nominated the following committees: coordinating, editorial, juridical, messages and scrutinising. From the second day, the assembly asked that its suggestions on the composition of the committees be considered. This delayed the publication of the lists of members and, above all, ensured that Mons. Luciano Mendes joined the editorial committee and became its head. This was the main result of the request submitted in plenary session. The climate of the assembly would have been different if there had been a greater openness and if all the operating committees had been formed in accordance with the assembly's proposals.

**Indicative approval of the outline of the final document.** After the first days, the editorial committee, with the help of the coordinating committee, presented a projected general outline based on the assembly's proposals, thereby establishing the form of the document to be produced. The project was presented by Mons. Luciano Mendes. It appealed to the assembly to the extent that it received a unanimous vote, but it was only an indicative vote that he had requested. The editorial committee was asked to refine the document if necessary. That approval was often subsequently invoked to block substantial changes in the text by the assembly.

**Dissolution of the thematic commissions.** On Wednesday, October 21st, these commissions were disbanded having delivered their texts to the editorial committee. From then on, the editorial committee took complete responsibility for the text. The assembly thus lost control of its main method to influence the next stage in the work of the conference.

**Renouncing the right to vote on the text.** On Friday the 23rd, the editorial committee presented the drafts of the

first two texts for the assembly's approval. They were the christological and historical introductions. The latter did not receive the necessary two-thirds approval and was therefore rejected. The assembly then renounced its right to vote on the following texts on the pretext that it was sufficient to present amendments to them. In this way, the assembly lost the chance to say clearly which texts it approved and which it rejected, as it had already rejected the historical introduction.

The important thing was the confidence posed in Mons. Luciano Mendes. He promised, on behalf of the committee, that his members would accept the assembly's proposals. It subsequently emerged that some members of the editorial committee were not of the same opinion and therefore were unworthy of the confidence placed in Mons. Luciano Mendes. From the assembly's renunciation of the right to vote on the texts, it can be seen how vague the methods of the assembly were. It also shows how the assembly's deliberate choice was subsequently twisted against their wishes.

As regards the chapter on Human Promotion, the *iuxta modum* votes were used effectively to modify the text of the editorial committee substantially; this was not possible for the other chapters. The final draft of the chapter on Human Promotion was entrusted to Mons. Luciano Mendes, with the help of Mons. Clovier Frainer and Mons. Ovidio Perez. The last two were nominated on the evening of October 27th, together with ten other bishops, to help the editorial committee. The three main editors accepted "global amendments" presented in an orderly fashion, for each part of this chapter. Thus the chapter on Human Promotion, as opposed to other chapters, was rewritten on the basis of the work of the thematic commissions and voted on by the assembly.

**The hurried final vote.** All the final votes were rushed. The assembly got the text of the document on the morn-

ing of October 26th. By the end of the afternoon they had to submit their votes and new amendments. On Tuesday the assembly received the modified text to submit *placet* or *non placet* votes and to record any outstanding point by the end of the next day. The editorial committee was to determine whether or not a point should be incorporated. On October 28th, the editorial committee presented its own definitive list of outstanding points to the assembly. The list was voted on quickly as time was limited and the end of the Conference was approaching. By then, the assembly did not have the entire text available to it. It was therefore impossible for the assembly to perfect the final document as it might have done.

### SYMBOLIC EPISODES

The climate of the assembly can be gauged by some incidents which reflected a reality which was more important than their apparent meaning.

The request for forgiveness. A group of thirty-three Brazilian bishops signed a petition asking the assembly to make a penitential gesture. This was for the injustices perpetrated against the black and indigenous populations, in the context of five hundred years of evangelisation. The Brazilian bishops, imagining that such a motion could be easily accepted by the presidency, presented it on their own. In the end, it became a symbol of the state of mind of the Conference. It showed the arbitrary character of the presidency, which, instead of allowing one of the authors of the petition to explain it, allowed Mons. Di Stefano, Argentina to contest it with an astonishing historical argument. On the same day on which this petition was rejected, the Pope, in Rome, repeated his call for forgiveness. When the assembly learnt of it, the fact only increased their embarrassment. The assembly was so anxious to follow the Pope that it feared taking any clear and autonomous position.

Rigoberta Menchú. During the Conference, by a happy coincidence, the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to a

Guatemalan, Rigoberta Menchú, a catechist in the diocese of El Quiché. The fact presented a good chance for the assembly to show its position. Cardinal Arns suggested that the assembly send an official message of congratulations. This motion was rejected, on the pretext that it could become an objective of ideological exploitation. There was no obvious ideology however in rejecting the motion.

### MOMENTS OF STRENGTH

In private conversation during the Conference some bishops pointed out that the assembly was timid and afraid. The most severe recrimination, was that it was not a "bishop's assembly" but an "assembly for bishops" because of the insistence on the magisterial presentations. There were however moments when the assembly asserted itself. Here are some examples:

Rejection of the historical chapter. The text was unsatisfactory and did not get the two-thirds required for its approval. It is a pity that the assembly did not realise that it was depriving itself of its authority by renouncing the right to vote on subsequent texts. From then on it had to be content with presenting amendments and trusting the editorial committee to incorporate them in the text, which in fact, rarely happened.

Rejection of the messages. On the afternoon of Saturday, the 24th, the message committee presented four messages for approval. The most important, to be addressed to the population of Latin America was missing. The assembly reacted by asking who had requested so many messages. The assembly was shortly asked to vote in plenary session, which it did. It asked that all the messages be combined into one. It was evident that there were different evaluations of the role of the committee. The committee believed itself to be competent to decide which messages to prepare, without placing itself at the disposition of the assembly. This episode is revealing in the context of the persistent conflict in the identity of

Santo Domingo. Was it an autonomous forum of decision or a subordinate forum of approval?

The assembly's request for a prior scrutiny. Another of the assembly's affirmative gestures was made on October 26th. The presidency proposed that the entire day be devoted to an individual study of the document with the vote taking place at the end of the

afternoon. Numerous bishops then asked for a preliminary plenary session so that opinions could be put to the assembly. Put to the vote, the proposal won.

Approval of the pastoral guidelines. I believe it is important to reiterate the point that this approval reflected accurately the views of the Santo Domingo Assembly.

## THE FINAL DOCUMENT

The specific weight of different chapters. The chapters are not subjectively, but objectively very different from each other. Some more than others reflect the work of the thematic commissions. This fact reveals an important criteria; some members of the editorial committee rejected substituted texts in the form of amendments, while others accepted them.

**Human Promotion.** It is worth repeating that this chapter best reflects the work done by the Santo Domingo Conference. Reality and also theology are integrated in different parts of the chapter. It is here that the tradition of the Latin American Church can be seen most clearly.

**The Pastoral Guidelines.** This is the practical part of the document which could have stood alone. It was the most reflected upon, the most clearly voted on, and the most definitively supported. Some points to highlight in relation to this chapter are:

**Continuity with Medellin and Puebla.** The wishes of the Conference showed this continuity. Santo Domingo subscribed to the pastoral vision of the Latin American Church. It was not a break, even if this break was desired by some and insinuated itself in more than one part of the final document.

**The option for the poor.** This was confirmed with renewed vigour. It stands out in the general presentation of the text on pastoral guidelines. Here

it states that "this option (...) will illuminate all our work of evangelisation." The inclusion of this dimension is strong, even if in this chapter it was put in the context of the pastoral priority of human promotion.

**The fundamental role of the laity.** The priority of the new evangelisation emphasizes the role of the laity. This was maintained despite opposition by some.

**In service to life.** Within the priority of integral human development, the Church is presented as in service to life. This proposition could be a great source of pastoral vitality.

**Inculturation.** It seems to me that this is the priority which offers the widest possibilities. It recognises the value of Indigenous and African-American cultures. By doing so, the Santo Domingo Conference acknowledged its historical duty. The importance of the teachings of the Gospel in urban areas is also recognised. The emphasis on inculturated evangelisation is a particularly fertile ground and may open the way to significant progress at pastoral and structural levels in the Church.

## OTHER OBSERVATIONS

**An absence of parliamentary practice.** As bishops we must learn how to conduct large assemblies in accordance

with rules which guarantee transparency, respect for the assembly and allow decisions which represent the wishes of the majority. The Brazilian bishops have the most experience in this area with its annual assembly of about three hundred members. That is close to the number which attended the Conference at Santo Domingo. Other episcopal conferences have not had this experience. This was obvious from the proceedings of Santo Domingo.

**Fear of decisions in plenary sessions.** Throughout the Conference, the presidency clearly worried about leaving decisions in the hands of the assembly. When for example, Mons. McGrath proposed to act as in the Vatican Council; voting first on the complete text to check whether the assembly would accept it as a basis for discussion, his suggestion was simply ignored. This fear of plenary sessions was accompanied by a manifest desire to direct results. This was evident, for example, in the nominations of the members of the committees.

**Communication between episcopal conferences.** At the beginning, the assembly was inarticulate. This showed how CELAM has distanced itself from its base in the last few years. It should be the permanent connecting organisation between the episcopal conferences. The communication which took place at the Conference and its results are worthy of note.

**The lack of theologians.** Another thing which requires explanation is the absence of theologians. They did not have access to the work of the Conference. They were obliged to keep themselves at a distance, discreetly avoiding being drawn into discussion, but remaining available for any collaboration. The extent of collaboration allowable was unclear.

**The weakness of the invited experts.** I would like to cite an illustrious cardinal who observed that the majority of the experts officially invited to the Conference made no contribution for the simple reason that they probably had

nothing to say. This contrasts singularly with the care which was taken to put aside well known theological names. In the case of Brazil it is enough to say that no one proposed by the CNBB was officially invited to the Conference.

## OUTLOOK

I wish to briefly present some prospects in forms of hopes.

Closer ties between episcopal conferences. Independent of the document and of pastoral priorities, the Conference was valuable for the friendship and increased contact between the Latin American and Caribbean bishops. This will certainly contribute to reinforcing the identity of the Latin American Church.

**Reevaluation of the role of CELAM.** After the Conference it is easier to understand the motivation of those who formed the South American Episcopal Conference CELAM. Perhaps the objectives of this organisation can now be restored.

**Confirming the Positive.** The final document was not what it could have been. However it has many positive points. The continuity and the deepening of the evangelical path of the Church in Latin America, in the steps of Vatican II, of Medellin, Puebla and now Santo Domingo was confirmed.

**The American Synod.** In his inaugural speech the Pope suggested holding a synod for all of the Americas. The assembly gave the idea a lukewarm reception, perhaps because some feared it would mean the end of our "general conferences." However the idea should be considered and evaluated.

The lessons to be drawn from it. They are certainly numerous and various. They can be gathered at different levels. In this way the failures of the Conference may seem providential because they illustrate lessons to be learnt.

# AFRICAN INCULTURATION - LIBERATION THEOLOGY

P. N. Wachege

Liberation theology is one of the main theological trends in our contemporary society. It is arguably maintained that Latin American theologians have conscientised and explicitly oriented people into this manner of theologising. However, this mode of doing theology is not confined to Latin America. We find it also in Europe as political theology; in North America as Black Power theology; in South Africa as Black theology; in independent Africa south of the Sahara. But the question is, is African liberation theology really African? Or, is it just a replica of other liberation theologies? What characteristics and elements affirm its distinctiveness, in view of a global contribution?

Dr. L. Magesa, one of our African theologians, committed to liberation theology by words and deeds, is of the strong conviction that African liberation theology is as real as any other in the world. In this connection he says:

Thus the widespread notion, that sees in African liberation theology a replica of Latin American liberation theology is factually a misconception.

The sooner it is abandoned the better. D.W. Ferm argues correctly: "The diverse and rich culture of Africa, in addition to its unique experience of Christianity, represents a fresh challenge to those seeking to understand African notions of liberation." Not only that: the historical experience of Africa whose effects are still with us, and the present day reality as people perceive and live it, are likewise challenges that give to African liberation theology its particular character and outlook.

Taking Magesa's remarks into account, my article concerns itself with proposing an African liberation theology within an African context. It begins with an elaboration of the nature of inculturation and that of liberation theology. Then, explains the levels of oppression and discusses the notion of liberation theology and liberation theologies. The most important step is that of briefly presenting a model of African liberation theology. The article ends with some critical reflections on the future of this proposed type of liberation theology.

## THE NATURE OF INCULTURATION AND LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

The concept of inculturation is quite problematic. There are scholars who prefer to substitute other terms for this concept.

**Indigenisation**, implying the localisation and promotion of local Church personnel.

**Contextualisation**, i.e. theologising within a particular context or situation in life.

**Incarnation**, indicating the concretisation of Christianity. In other words, this takes the phenomenon of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the

historical existence of Jesus of Nazareth, as the perfect model in realising Christianity in every milieu and culture, in all times and generations. It is figuratively speaking, putting flesh on the Christian message, making it thoroughly concrete so that we may understand it, but also smell it, touch it, taste it - indeed, digest it.

Reformulation, meaning understanding and interpreting Christian doctrines in thought-forms, mentality and language that is comprehensively understandable.

Adaptation, connoting a kind of intelligent copying. The main concern here is not only the Christianisation of indigenous cultural values; it deals with the Africanisation of Christianity.

Interculturation, implying intercultural dialogue in doing and living theology. As such, inter-relatedness, interdependence and mutuality of cultures is demanded.

Without ignoring these concepts, since each of them has its own contribution as well as limitations, preference is given to the term, inculturation. It conveys the effort of presenting, interpreting and putting the Christian message in such a way that it germinates, matures and flourishes in a culture. In other words, the term inculturation contains and expresses best and most coherently the contemporary trend of understanding, presenting and concretely interpreting Christianity in accordance with the African people's aspirations, needs, thought-forms and mentality.

Dr. Waliggo is more elaborate in providing an insight into this concept.

Inculturation means the honest and serious attempt to make Christ and the message of salvation evermore understood by peoples of every culture, locality and time. It means the reformulation of Christian life and doctrine into the very thought-patterns of each people. It is the conviction that Christ and his Good

News are dynamic and challenging to all times and cultures as they become better understood and lived by each people. It is the continuous endeavour to make Christianity truly 'feel at home' in the cultures of each people.

### Various Definitions

Various definitions are given by scholars as to what liberation theology is. For our subject matter, it will suffice to present the insights of Gustavo Gutierrez, Clodovis Boff and Leonardo Boff.

Gustavo Gutierrez, who is referred to as the father of liberation theology, defines liberation theology as "a theological reflection born of the experience of shared efforts to abolish the current unjust situation and to build a different society, free and more humane." He further qualifies it in a *Theology of Liberation* as "a theology of the liberating transformation of the history of humankind." Gutierrez extends his presentation by describing it as:

A theology which does not stop with reflecting on the world, but rather tries to be part of the process through which the world is open - in the protest against trampled human dignity, in the struggle against the plunder of the vast majority of people, in liberating love and in the building of a new, just, and fraternal society - to the gift of the kingdom of God.

A closer scrutiny of his epoch making book, *A Theology of Liberation* reveals that the term liberation has a threefold connotation: 1. emancipation from sin and restoration or re-establishment of life in Christ; 2. freedom from oppressive conditions e.g. socio-economic, political and cultural; 3. re-establishment of human authenticity.

Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff define liberation theology as:

Reflection on the basis of practice, within the ambit of the vast efforts made by the poor and their allies, seeking inspiration in faith and the gospel for the commitment to fight against poverty and for the integral liberation of all persons and the whole person.

Leonardo Boff adds a more significant definition when he writes:

The theology of liberation is nothing other than the theological moment of the experience of Christian faith, when it undertakes to consciously transform a world situation of dependence on the basis of the gospel.

The above definition of Leonardo Boff is comprehensive. It contains two fundamental elements in liberation theology: faith and transformation. He sees liberation theology, in terms of Christianity, as faith seeking to remake the world. The term moment in his definition is

highly technical and it means aspect or mediation.

Boff explains that there are three moments with regard to the methodology of liberation theology. He elaborates them as: the moment of insertion, the moment of theological reflection i.e. hermeneutics, and the moment of pastoral planning.

Furthermore, these moments are complemented by three levels: 1. the popular level. Here ordinary people from an experiential awareness cry for liberation thereby attaining emancipation. 2. a pastoral level. Here pastors hear the cry of the poor and in their sermons, homilies, catechesis, counselling, they react accordingly. 3. the professional level. Here scholars explicate the above in monographs, periodicals, symposia, workshops. All those levels, as Boff explains, are intertwined in that they have for their common denominator a faith that transforms history thereby effecting freedom and authenticity.

## LEVELS OF OPPRESSION

The insights gained from this definition bring to awareness the critical point that while the goal of liberation theology is liberation, the point of departure is the situation of oppression, marginalisation, rejection, dependence, dehumanisation.

It is remarkable to realise that there are numerous levels of oppression or dehumanisation and depersonalisation which violate and indeed distort people's dignity, worth, and above all freedom to live and believe. Oppression hinders human integral growth, caricatures genuine interpersonal relationships, abuses and misuses human life, adulterates one's religiosity, causes restlessness and meaninglessness in our society and alienates people from their naturally endowed human authenticity.

P. Frostin deserves credit for enumerating and classifying the levels

of oppression as: 1. economic (rich-poor); 2. classist (capitalist-proletariat); 3. geographic (North-South); 4. sexist (male-female); 5. ethnic (e.g., white-black); and 6. cultural (dominant-dominated).

These levels of oppression and other alienating factors give an invaluable insight into the pluriformity of liberation theology. For instance, the dominant oppressive factor in South Africa is the apartheid system and structures of injustice inculcating an inferiority complex among Africans. Hence, South African liberation theologians would focus mainly on the ethnic level of oppression for relevance sake in their Black theology, asserting Black consciousness and liberty.

Those of sub-Saharan Africa who are confronted with male chauvinism, which subjugates and marginalises women, cultural repugnance, superstitions and

other cultural/religious erroneous elements would dwell on the sexist and the cultural levels.

In Latin America, the manipulation of powerful multinationals would accentuate the economic and second class levels of oppression. Hence a preoccupation with the socio-economic and political realms in this brand of liberation theology. Those of North America whose life situation is explicitly marked by the phenomenon of race-hate and malicious paternalistic establishments would dwell on the ethnic and cultural levels of oppression as they affirm Black Power, Black beauty and emancipation from mental slavery in a North American Black theology of liberation.

Individuals in Europe faced with con-

sumerism, apathy, personal indifference and other after effects of development-cum-civilisation would focus basically on the geographic and classist levels of oppression. Those of Eastern Europe confronted with religio-cultural alienations would stress the cultural and sexist levels of oppression.

These then are the deep rooted, alienating and oppressive factors effecting people all over the world. They feed hopelessness and irreligiosity in our contemporary society. Obviously, these levels of oppression are so intertwined that to dichotomise them as if they were separate entities would amount to missing the whole point. All of them have to be taken seriously in our proposed African theology of liberation.

## LIBERATION THEOLOGY LIBERATION THEOLOGIES

It is valid to infer that liberation theology is the same everywhere. The verification of this assertion emerges from the fact that liberation theology has the same point of departure and the same goal. In other words, liberation theology is triggered from a situation of oppression/deprivation and has for its finality a situation of freedom.

Moreover, there is a basic harmony in the themes treated by liberation theology. A critical analysis of Christian liberation theology shows that the following themes are of great concern:

- God's preferential option for the poor;
- a critical questioning of the prevailing interpretation of the bible;
- the conviction and appreciation that it is people who liberate themselves since they are capable of emancipating themselves for themselves and for others;
- working for the liberation of (liberation) theology from the shackles and impact of the ideologies of the powerful;

- a justifiable impatience and bitterness with the oppressive and unauthentic reality confronting one's society.

Nevertheless, this should not blind us to the specificity of liberation in diverse regions with peculiar world views, distinctive cultures and particular experiences. The ways a given people understand, present, formulate and concretely interpret religion in accordance with their aspirations, needs, thought-forms, mentality and expectations within their own concrete historical existence necessarily contributes to their originality and their subsequent contribution.

These observations bring to awareness that the kernel of liberation theology is one. As has been indicated, this is so because the content i.e. the point of departure and the goal, are one. Yet, due to the diverse manner in which it is tackled within corresponding contexts or frameworks, the ways of this theological approach make us qualify this particular orientation as liberation theology.

## INCULTURATION-LIBERATION THEOLOGY: AN AFRICAN PROPOSAL

Globally and in terms of content, liberation theology is one and the same. Nevertheless, with regards to the manner of theologising - taking into account milieu, world-view, mentality, aspiration - in a concrete historical existence, liberation theology is multiple. Latin American in Latin America, Germanic in German, North American in North America, Asiatic in Asia, European in Europe. And why not African in Africa!

With the above in mind, I propose an African liberation theology. The name for this proposed approach to theology which takes into account African traditional religions and cultures is African inculturation-liberation theology.

This new way of doing liberation theology takes and accentuates inculturation imbued with African religiosity and cultural wealth as a point of departure for the theology of liberation. Here it should be thoroughly understood that to achieve the desired goal, it is not enough to have a theology of inculturation. One must have the explicit intention of taking such an inculturational approach as a starting point for a theology of liberation from socio-economic oppression.

The theologian who intends to construct a liberation theology from socio-economic and political oppression, must start from the global, cultural and social situation of the country or society in which such oppression is found.

He or she must then elaborate a theology which strives to liberate the oppression, starting from the global cultural and social situation with which the socio-economic and political elements are closely linked.

This way of doing liberation theology has various advantages:

- It necessarily links inculturation

and liberation types of theology;

- It attacks the evil of oppression from within, and thus avoids the error of isolating the problem of socio-economic and political oppression from its social and cultural background;

- It immediately leads to a theology of integral liberation, and easily avoids the danger of political reduction in theology. Thus, if we opt to take Christology as our theological theme, a Christology of liberation constructed in this manner is much less prone to see Christ as only a political revolutionary.

The approach has a number of advantages over the one taken by many liberation theologians, especially in Latin America. It is a more comprehensive and realistic approach to liberation, situating the problem in the total cultural and social setting in which it is found. The immediate insistence on conversion (oppressor and oppressed) to follow Christ the Liberator (fullness of life) - is the basic condition for true and lasting liberation. Hence, the insistence on the focus on sin as the primary task of the liberation movement. Everyone, including the poor or oppressed, is an oppressor - first of himself/herself and then of others. Other liberation theologians often see others only as sinners and oppressors. Conversion is a good and necessary preparation for true and lasting liberation. Some theologians do not prepare the poor or oppressed for future liberation. Love of the oppressor, and an effort to liberate him/her is integral.

From these observations and elaborations, it is my contention that this proposed manner of theologising will immediately lead to a theology of integral liberation. It thus easily avoids the danger of political reduction in theology. Above all, I hope that this orientation will produce within an African framework, a genuine African inculturation-liberation theology.

## THE FUTURE OF AN AFRICAN LIBERATION THEOLOGY

The concern is now with the future of this proposed liberation theology. Does it have a future?

Any theology is situational. Theologians theologise in a situation inherent in their milieu since any theological approach is contextual. It has also been established that liberation theology operates within oppressive situations of unfreedom and inauthenticity. If these situations are absolutely arrested, it would mean the death of liberation theology. On the other hand, so long as there are oppressed people, oppressive structures and systems of unfreedom existing in any given community or country, then liberation theology has to be there.

Liberation theology has as its aim to emancipate people from sin, free them from any oppressive situation and restore human freedom and authenticity. Certain oppressive elements cannot be wholly eliminated once and for all from society. History bears out the fact that today's oppressed have the potential of becoming tomorrow's oppressors. Even the elite and youth are in continuous need of liberation so they may keep understanding and appreciating their own culture, customs and life now that the world has become a kind of global village.

So long as oppression, poverty and unfreedom exist - liberation theology may be said to have a future. As long as people continue to suffer from socio-economic, political and cultural injustices whether external or within; as long as there is sexism and male chauvinism; as long as there is racism; as long as people continue to be in

bondage to sin and enslaved in the shackles of useless anxieties and the illusions of hedonism and idolatry; liberation theology has a future.

A number of prominent proponents of liberation theology are young energetic people. Through them, its continuity is assured. They are forceful hard-workers who realise that the work of a theologian does not stop so long as there is unfreedom in society and oppressive factors and conditions are endless and perennial.

By its very essence, Christianity is liberating. It ultimately aims at restoring authenticity to human beings, saving/redeeming them as well as divinising them. In this way, wherever Christianity is, liberation theology is there too. Consequently, as Christianity endures so will liberation theology. The mushrooming of independent Churches in Africa, will continue to need liberation theology.

Observing the perennial tension and antagonism between Church and State, we are able to comprehend better that liberation is needed. The Church will keep accusing dictatorial regimes of being a stumbling block to freedom. The State will keep hitting back by pointing out the Church's paternalistic leadership and meddling in Caesar's realm. As long as these kinds of unfreedom exist, liberation theology has a future.

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## WOMEN IN ISLAM

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Sr. Lucie Pruvost, MSOLA

(Sr. Lucie Pruvost, MSOLA, from Algiers gave the following conference, in French, at a SEDOS study session on March 11, 1993. The Conference was part of a series on Muslim-Christian dialogue.)

Some of the widely held views of Moslem women involve: the wearing of the veil and clausura; polygamy and the ease with which a husband can arbitrarily repudiate a wife; the general subjection of the woman to the man; the absence of feminine autonomy; a non-recognition of the feminine personality. A woman is, many non-Moslems believe, a person whose familial and social rights are strictly limited and subordinated to those of men.

In fact, the Koran, the tradition of the Prophet, treatises on Moslem law support these ideas to a certain degree. So does the actual practice today in still largely patriarchal societies.

The status of woman in Islam derives from the relationship established between this status and the word of God, to which is added the justification by religion of male chauvinist behaviours which are patriarchal in origin.

Another dimension, equally important though generally unknown, is the full recognition the Koran accords woman as a believer who is as much a creature of God as man. She has the same religious obligations that he has and is promised the same destiny after death. "There is no distinction among the faithful except according to their personal merits."

### TWO CURRENTS OF FEMINIST THOUGHT

There exist today in Islam currents of feminist thought evolving along two main lines which could be described as

fundamentalist and modernist. Both these currents are determined to engage in the transformation of the societies around them. Both have links with larger movements which are often active in the political arena, either with the goal of restoring Islamic society to its integrity, or with the opposite goal of bringing society into the modern world.

The representatives of these currents of thought base their efforts on the same observation - the degraded situation of the Moslem woman has disastrous consequences for the whole of society. The situation must be transformed if these countries are to have a new birth and take their rightful place in today's world. But the methods are different, as are the expected results of a project for a new society.

The modernist argument is characterised by a real rupture in methodology. According to this argument, women are - although different - fully human beings. Their status and roles are not necessarily dependent on the status and roles of men. "We have to detach ourselves from Adam's side, to which women have been fused by ages of patriarchal culture" and "by means of this separation, forge an autonomous self-image." This argument calls for a radical departure from history and life-experience. It is a way of imagining that is feminine and not masculine.

This anthropological method is rejected by the fundamentalist feminists, for whom to become 'detached from Adam's side' means opposing an

entire religious tradition founded on an absolutely unquestionable revelation.

The conflict between these two modes of thought is related to an even larger conflict between faith and reason. The image presented in the textual sources of the fundamentalist feminist creates problems in the modern context. In this context, any argument from the authority of a juridical and dogmatic tradition is opposed or replaced by the full autonomy of reason, with the consequent separation, sought after or rejected, of the religious from the temporal.

### FUNDAMENTALIST VIEWS

Sociological studies carried out in different countries show that fundamentalist feminists often come from a milieu whose members for various reasons have never had access to a modern scholarly and cultural formation. Unlike their parents and other women of their generation, thanks to the general spread of education and to their own resoluteness of character, these feminists have acquired a relatively advanced education in modern sciences or in religion. They are engineers, doctors, and so on. Technicians or "scholars" in Islamic science, they have learned Islam through studies in Islamic universities or through their own research. They practice a "return to the sources" of their faith and are in an excellent position to conduct studies on the situation of woman in Islam.

#### The Veil

One of the primary manifestations of their desire to restore an ideal Moslem society is that they have returned to wearing the veil. Often their mothers abandoned it, or never wore it. At the least, this garment consists of a veil worn over an ample cloak; it often involves a total envelopment that includes the face, black-gloved hands, and jilbab dragging along the ground so that the feminine body is entirely covered.

In itself, the veil stands for a whole range of symbolism. It signifies the total separation between public and private, between the masculine and feminine in Islam. This traditional dichotomy founded on the "veil verses" in the Koran. Today, women wearing the veil are allowed to enter the public arena through studies and professional work outside the home. It is also a means of bringing to mind the Moslem image of modesty as the Koran expresses it: "to cover beauty lest it sow disorder." The wearing of the veil also represents a return to the source of the faith, the Koran. Hence the promotion of this garment is one of the themes very dear to the fundamentalists.

#### Return To The Sources

However, the fundamentalist current is not monolithic. There are two developing tendencies. The first tendency has adopted the problematic "return to the sources" of the "salafiyya" reformists (cf. R. RIDA, *Frères Musulmans d'Egypte*, *Réformisme algérien issu des 'ulamâ' badisiens*, etc.). In this view, the status of women was fixed from the very beginning of Islam fourteen centuries ago. On this point, just as much as on any other, divine law as transmitted in the Koran and the Sunna cannot be questioned. According to this view, Islam saved women from a disastrous situation. It recognised her as a person, preserving her with care from dishonour. Whatever there is of decadence stems not from a religion sacred in all times and places, but from the perversion of comportment. There is only one cure - a return to authentic Islam by means of an absolutely necessary restoration of the values of Islam.

Among these values is the status of women whose subordination to men offends modernists so grievously. Any claim of equality between the sexes is dismissed by reformist women on the basis of well-known interpretations of the Koran. The most weighty argument is a difference of nature and the consequences flowing from it. The man is physically stronger than the woman and less moved by sentiment. The woman is characterised by gentleness, tenderness

and similar qualities. Hence her lack of aptitude for certain professions, such as that of magistrate, for example, or for functions of a political nature. The door is wide open however, to a whole field of charitable activities or the religious formation of other women. Likewise, giving women liberty to go and come without male supervision can lead only to disorder. From this comes the rejection of co-education. A number of pseudo-rational arguments follow to explain or reinforce, where necessary, the argument from the authority of divine law.

### Radical Islam

A second tendency, more markedly militant, is linked rather to political Islam, called "Islamism" or "Radical Islam." Representatives of this tendency seek superior education and diplomas which will give them access to professional categories reserved in other times for people from a social milieu quite different from their own humble origins. They choose professions in which they can be useful to women: medicine, pharmacy, education. Islam, they say, gives them full freedom of choice between a profession or motherhood. They choose therefore, to seek personal realisation in the social sphere, and even in the political sphere, as is shown by their militancy within Islamic parties and movements.

They are feminists in the sense that they dare to revolt against the oppression of women which they recognise even among Moslems, unlike the reformists who shut their eyes to this social reality. They assign responsibility for the oppression of women neither to Western values nor to the contamination of Islam by tradition, but to Moslem men (N. GÖLE, "Moslem engineers ..." in *Kepel, Intellectuals and militants*, p.188).

Their behaviour carries a high risk of overturning within the community the relationship between the sexes. In this it corresponds to the behaviour of modernist feminists, although it always has a different goal in view - the establishment of an authentic Islamic society.

### THE MODERNIST VIEW

Representatives of modernist feminism belong to another generation and perhaps also another world than representatives of fundamentalism. Frequently they have had a modern formation in a European language, either in their own country or outside, in Europe or the United States. Thus they are familiar with feminist thought in the West, and use the arguments of Western feminism, all the while remaining believers in Islam. Their goal is a modern pluralist society founded on the values of authentic democracy.

Among the modernists there are diverse tendencies, even though they agree on the objective of liberating women from the traditions and oppressions which have developed from Islam.

As with the fundamentalists, there is a group which desires a "return to the sources" of the religion. But their methods and conclusions differ from those of the fundamentalists. Representatives of this tendency re-read the sources in the light of modern literary criticism. For example, Riffat HASSAN, A Pakistani, professor in an American university, perhaps inspired by women theologians, is working at a new reading of the Koran based on linguistic criticism. For instance, regarding the terms Adam and his Jawz ("the other," in any pair), she shows that the traditional reading does not correspond to the true sense of the terms, but is owed entirely to the Judeo-Christian reading of Genesis. In her criticism, she tries to dislodge the common "macho" reading found in most of the commentaries on the Koran.

The critique of a Moroccan, Fatima Mernissi, is similar to that of Riffat Hassan. But she uses the methods of historical criticism. This university professor has studied the fundamental works of Moslem exegetical science. With their techniques as support she does a new reading of the Koran that situates its contents in their historical truth, beginning with the life of the Prophet Mohammad. She demonstrates the

influence of his personality and historical experiences on the revelation he received. She dares to discredit certain propagators of misogynist prophetic traditions, as well as the contents of these traditions, at present strongly rooted in the Moslem mentality. An example is the tradition that holds that the entry of women into politics is a danger for any people.

Another group, frequently sociologists, take an anthropological approach, seeking to bring about a rediscovery of women as fully human beings. Social practices are the object of their criticism. One of them writes: "Islam is no more anti-woman than other religions." "If Islamic culture has an effect on the condition of women, the cause is its appropriation by political groups which consider the traditional customs sacred and are working at the refashioning of society from the starting point of an active misogyny which no one has tried to counteract (R. ABDELKRIM-CHIKH in *Peuples méditerranéens*, n° 48-49, p.296).

Modernists have come to reject any appeal to the role women played in the wars for independence as meriting the improvement of their status. Militancy, they say, is not appropriate for women.

Why should women have to "merit" rights which men have simply by birth? Is there more than one human nature?

Over and above the theories, all the feminists of the modernist trend are battling to transform mentalities as much as to change the juridical structures still profoundly influenced by classical Moslem law and its reference to the divine law. They want to move from a monist, unitary world to modern pluralism, from tradition to modernity by deliberately entering into modern ways and means, even those non-Moslem in origin.

Access to the world of work is one of those means, with everything which that kind of "going out" implies of rupture, subversion and, ultimately, risk for masculine preeminence.

The veil and clausura are symbols which visually remind non-Moslems that the world of women in Islam is marked by obvious difference and traditional parameters. The reality is quite different. Moslem women are questioning, and exploring their complex identities in terms of modernity and tradition, the Koran and modern scholarship, in an effort to effect their present and future choices.

# THE PHILIPPINES: MUSLIM-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

## PEACE AND JIHAD IN ISLAM

Sebastiano D'Ambra, PIME

*(Fr. Sebastiano D'Ambra, PIME, is the President of the Islam-Christian Silsilah Dialogue Movement which he himself founded in 1984 at Zamboanga City, The Philippines. The following is a shortened version of his conference, given at SEDOS on March 25, 1993.)*

*The Great Jihad, as a struggle against the forces of evil and those of society, is a way through which a person can establish an integrative dialogue with God, self and others.*

Moro was the name given to the Muslims in the Philippines by the Spanish colonisers in the 16th century. This name bears the disappointment and the scorn of the Spaniards against a people and religion that for centuries had dominated their Christian country. The same term, **Moro**, once used as a derogatory label against the Muslims is now becoming a sign of identity expressing their aspirations vis-a-vis present realities.

For almost three centuries the Mus-

lims in the Philippines were the majority religious group, if we consider that Islamisation in the archipelago started in 1380 when the gurus and Sufi missionary, Karim Al-Makhdum arrived in Simunul, Tawi-Tawi. It is indeed a rather exceptional case in the history of Islamisation when a Muslim group becomes a minority in a given country and situation. We know that the majority of the Filipinos today are Christians (85% Catholic) in an estimated population of more than 60 million. An estimated 4 million are Muslims concentrated mainly in the Southern part of the country. The wide gap in population distribution is only reflective of the deeper and far more serious rift between them in almost every level of human relations.

## MUSLIM — CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

The focus on Islam in the Philippines offers us a colourful and interesting history of different groups of people who have embraced Islam in their own distinct ways. When we speak of Muslims or Moros in the Philippines we are referring to their particular groupings as: *Maranaos, Maguindanaos, Tausugs, Samals, Yakans, Sangil, Badjaos, Jama Mapuns, Kalibugans, Melebuganos, Palawanis, Iranuns, and Katagans*. The first four groups represent 94% of the

total Muslim population in the country. They are also the groups better known for their history, literature and the arts. In their resistance to foreign aggression they launched formal attacks against the Spaniards and the Americans, and put up effective defenses.

Although there is a growing effort on the part of the present government to unite people of different cultures and

religions in the country, there is a strong tendency towards a polarisation of orientation, religious or otherwise. This greatly affects the development of Muslim-Christian relations in the Philippines. It is noticeable that the Muslims are inclined towards forging closer ties with Muslim countries, and are keen about events and major developments in the Islamic world. The government and Christian Filipinos are however more comfortable with events in the Western hemisphere and keep closer ties with the United States and its allies. This is understandable in the light of a "heritage of past colonisations."

### RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In 1972, the beginning of Martial Law saw Muslim aspirations on the rise with the organisation of revolutionary movements. Foremost among these is the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) which later gained international recognition. Increasing violence and injustices against the people and minorities sent off an alarm and concern throughout Muslim communities and the Islamic world. What contributed to the horror of Martial Law was the spontaneous mushrooming of fanatic groups on both sides. The issue of Muslim-Christian conflict was the cry of the decade of the seventies. There is no telling whether wounds have healed amidst the present lull in the fighting. Nonetheless, the problem generated national and international attention and some measures were taken to address the situation.

The Tripoli Agreement of December 23, 1976, signed by the Philippine government and the MNLF under the auspices of the Organisation of Islamic Conference through a special Quadripartite Committee (composed of Saudi Arabia, Libya, Somalia, and Senegal) brought hope to both Muslims and Christians in the war-torn land of Mindanao. Autonomous government did not go beyond the good intentions written down in the document. Ingrained suspicions and prejudices are still very much a decisive factor in countless negotiations, truces, and frustrations

between the Muslim communities and the Christian government. It appears that there is a hard lesson to learn from a conflict that has taken a toll of such magnitude on Filipino Muslims: more than 500,000 people forced to abandon their homes and land, 200,000 houses burned, 130,000 Sabah refugees, and an undisclosed number of massacres, "salvagings," disappearances, tortures, and other atrocities. All these events are a convincing proof that there is indeed Muslim-Christian conflict. On the other hand, the political ambition and economic greed of some political leaders, Muslims and Christians alike, have been quick in capitalizing on the picture of Muslims and Christians in total war.

Today the situation is still very unstable, and the issue of Muslim-Christian conflict is far from being resolved. But there is hope and confidence that past mistakes can urge the MNLF and the government to find a peaceful solution. Any attempt by either side to put one over on the other could aggravate the delicate political balance. On the other hand, the current status of the Muslim issue can provide a useful opportunity for showing sincerity and goodwill.

The recent turn of events, especially the approval in only four provinces of Muslim Mindanao Autonomy, and the disappointment of the MNLF leadership over the loss of its bid at membership in the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC), could be a good opportunity for dialogue. It is very clear that neither the government nor the MNLF alone can resolve the multifarious issues that rend society. Both have a responsibility to bring to a close centuries of animosity. The people themselves are equally obliged to provide support, if not pressure, upon those in a position to bring about a meaningful and just resolution of conflict.

### DIALOGUE

In dialogue, both sides should be ready to compromise their respective positions as far as their basic

aspirations are respected. I have come to know friends, both Muslims and Christians, who have been fighting each other on both sides of the river. They have been fighting for almost twenty years, yet none of them dare to find a way to cross the river. I respect their aspirations and their dreams, although I often remind them that the arm of dialogue brings peace, rather than the arm of violence which only begets an escalation of senseless suffering.

"In the name of God" rivers of blood have been shed. We are now called to envision a Copernican Revolution. How can religions contribute to the attainment of peace? It seems that the present appears to be the most favourable time to search for peace through the contribution of religious and cultural traditions. Science and technology have proven to be unreliable as instruments for peace, and indeed too often are made to serve the cause of war. There is a great need to rediscover the values of religious tradition, and to emphasize the positive and relevant role of inter-religious dialogue.

In announcing the Camp David accord, each of the three national leaders - Begin, Carter and Sadat - all appealed to the central aspect of their own (and the others') religious tradition

concerning peace, to justify the national commitment each was making for peace. A spiritual tradition must be acknowledged as living and its teachings realised in the context of the complex and demanding world of inter-personal relationships. Such a spiritual legacy must guide us - in Buber's words - not in "renouncing the world but in placing it upon its proper ground," the ground of the divine.

The words of Pope John II, addressed February 20, 1981 at Davao in the Philippines to the Muslim leaders who met on the occasion of his visit are an encouragement for those who are seeking a genuine meeting between Muslims and Christians in the country:

"...I know that you and your Christian brothers and sisters are becoming even more aware of the responsibility that rests upon your generation. For a number of years now, you have felt the urgent need to sit down together and to face your problems, and to restore mutual esteem and trust. A fruitful dialogue has already begun... Dear brothers, you must look at the past with long-suffering forbearance in order to construct a better future. You have an obligation of building this future, a future for your children, as well as a future for the entire nation."

## PEACE AND JIHAD IN ISLAM

Muslims are called by the Qur'an and the example of the Prophet of Islam to strive for peace through all available means. The very term Islam derives from the root word whose basic meaning is peace. This concept of peace defines the world view of Islam, but more importantly it permeates the daily lives of Muslims. Thus, each time two Muslims meet, they greet each other with the words: *Salamu Alaikum* - Peace be on you, and *Alaikum Assalam* - Peace be on you also. The regularity and feeling which this greeting is exchanged shows that it is not merely a mechanical pronunciation or words, but a religious ritual of great importance.

### PEACE

In Quranic terms, peace does not only mean absence of war, rather it is a state of security in which one is free from anxiety of fear. It is a state that entails both submission or "self surrender to God" (Islam) and "true faith in God" (Iman). References are made to this concept, directly or indirectly, on every page of the Qur'an through the many derivatives of the roots "S-L-M" and "A-M-N" from which Islam and Iman are derived. Peace is also an integral part of two of Allah's names, *As-Salam* and *Al-Mumin* mentioned in the Qur'an:

He is Allah, beside whom there is no God; the King, the Holy, the Author of Peace As-Salam, the Growth of Security Al-Mumin, guardian over all, the Mighty, the Supreme, the Possessor of greatness (Surah 59:23).

God invites humanity to Dar As-Salam (i.e., the abode of peace) as stated by the Qur'an (Surah 10:25) and promises the reward of peace to those who live according to the will of God.

God guides such as follows His pleasure into the ways of Peace and brings them out of darkness into the light by His will, and guides them to the right path (Surah 5:16).

And this is the path of thy Lord, straight. Indeed we have made the message clear for a people who mind. Theirs is the abode of peace with their Lord, and He is their Friend because of what they do (Surah 6:127 - 128).

According to these and related verses in the Holy Qur'an, peace on earth, a precondition of peace in heaven, is the result of living according to the will of God. It is also important to note here that Islam conceives of God as Rabb Al-'Alamin: the Creator and Sustainer of all humanity and the universe, whose purpose in creating them (as stated in Surah 51:56) is that all creatures should engage in God's Ibadat. This term, commonly understood as "worship," in fact has a much broader meaning and refers to "doing what God approves."

From the Quranic perspective, achieving peace either here and now or in the hereafter is not meant to be easy:

"Did you think that ye would enter Al-Jannah 'The Garden:' the abode of peace without God testing those of you who fought hard (in His cause) and remain steadfast?" (Surah 3:141)

## JIHAD

Peace is dependent upon Jihad Fi Sabil Allah: or striving in the cause of God. It is most unfortunate that Jihad, which is the means whereby God's vision of a peaceful world can come to be, is often identified in the mind of many Muslims and non-Muslims with mere destruction. Jihad is often translated as holy war a characterization which does not however fully or deeply reflect the essence of the term. In my understanding, the concept of Jihad is more meaningfully translated as holy peace. The word Jihad comes from the verbal noun of the Arabic verb Jahada, meaning to endeavor, to strive or to struggle.

In a religious context, it can mean: to struggle against one's evil inclination, to work for the moral uplift of society or to spread Islam. This last understanding of Jihad can be peaceful with the "Jihad of the pen," according to Surah 16:125 of the Qur'an:

"Call thou to the way of the Lord with wisdom and admonition, and dispute with them in the better way."

But the use of force is also possible with the "Jihad of the sword" according to Surah 2:193 of the Qur'an:

And fight them on until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God, but if they cease, let them be no hostility except to those who practice oppression.

Unfortunately, this possibility of Jihad through the use of the sword has been overemphasized by Muslims for political and material reasons, and by non-Muslims in order to generate a feeling of revulsion against Muslims.

The challenge to present Jihad as "holy peace" is based on the understanding that both Muslims and non-Muslims easily forget the meaning of Jihad. Among pious Muslims and mystics, it is spiritual and moral Jihad which is emphasized. This is called

greater Jihad in comparative terms, in relation to the lesser Jihad, the more popular concept of Jihad, which is the Holy War, as stated in the following tradition (*Hadith*) of the Prophet Muhammad:

Once, having returned from one of his campaigns, the Prophet said: "We have now returned from the lesser Jihad."

The tradition adds that his companions asked: "What is the greater Jihad?" and the Prophet answered: "the struggle against one's evil inclination." This is the deeper and more personal aspect of Jihad, which by its very principle is an inner struggle for "holy peace," as opposed to the outer physical struggle for "holy war."

On this level, dialogue can be a channel of peace if it encourages an internal struggle that purifies the hearts of men and women in preparation for the great dialogue with God, oneself and people. This greater dialogue cannot be possible without a great struggle. Through this process, we may achieve great conversion of heart. This is not related to the conversion from one's religion to another, but to the conversion of ourselves to God. As Rumi, one of the great sufi poets of Islam states:

Jihad can only be waged by constant waging of the greater Jihad; without spiritual, ethical content, the Jihad becomes an instrument for ego and rebellious masquerading in the hypocritical soul as fighters for the sake of God.

This emphasis on the spiritual aspect of Jihad is part of a continuous effort to read in Islam and Christianity elements of relevance to a deeper dialogue between Muslims and Christians. According to the Qur'an, Muslims have the right to defend themselves against injustice and the duty to protect the

weak from injustice (Surah 2:190-193; 217; 4:75-78; 22:39-40; 60; 57:25). But they are reminded, over and over again that the "limits set by God" (Hudu Allah) are not to be transgressed at any time; justice must be accorded to the enemy (Surah 5:8). Furthermore, any initiative toward peace taken by an enemy must be accepted and responded to in good faith and with goodwill (Surah 8:6).

The religions of Islam and Christianity teach moral fortitude and enjoin upon their members to exercise justice. It is within this commandment that Jihad or holy war has to be understood.

Essentially, Jihad means struggle, or the application of a maximum effort to achieve what is good or right for man to do as commanded by God. It is meant to keep order, harmony, and balance within one's self and in relation to others including all forms of creation.

## CONCLUSION

Considering the ill-will that Muslims and Christians have harboured against each other, the decision exacts nothing less than the will to be what we are - creatures made in the image of God. By this we are obliged to get rid of the negative forces that have possibly taken the best of our divinity inspired natures and to struggle against other evil forces which intrude upon heart and mind.

The significance of the greater Jihad satisfies both the individual struggle against the forces of evil and those of society. It prepares and equips a person for a confrontation with themselves, thereby making relations with others less selfish. The greater Jihad is a way to establishing an integrative dialogue, one which perfects relationships with God, oneself and other human beings.

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## A VOICE OF RESISTANCE

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Rigoberta Menchú

*(Shortly after she was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, Rigoberta Menchú visited Argentina and met with Christian communities in Quilmes, a populous area south of Buenos Aires.)*

Rigoberta Menchú may have just received the Nobel Peace Prize, but for Latin America's exploited indigenous people her name has long been a symbol of struggle and resistance. Guatemalan, the daughter of Indians, descendant of the Mayas, Menchú began working as a child in the country's fields and later as a domestic servant in the capital.

In 1977, she joined the Campesino Unity Committee, of which she is currently the president. Since then she has been working continually in defense of peace and human rights. An unshakable spokesperson for her Latin American brothers and sisters, Menchú retains all of the energy and freshness of her 33 years. Her father, Vicente Menchú, was burned alive in the Spanish Embassy in Tegucigalpa along with 38 other Indians; her mother, Juana Tum, and her brothers and sisters were also victims because of their defense of indigenous rights.

The following are excerpts from testimonies given in Buenos Aires during her recent visit. She spoke to the Christian base communities south of Greater Buenos Aires, especially in Quilmes.

### MOTHERLAND, MOTHER EARTH

Here are buried the bones and memories of my ancestors. Behind your back they buried your grandparents, children and grandchildren. Here they piled bone on top of bone. The bones of the beautiful women who tended the corn, *yucca*, *malangas*, *chilacayotes*,

*ayotes*, *luicoyes*, and *huisquiles*. My bones were formed here. Here is where they buried my umbilical cord. That is why I will stay here, year after year, generation after generation.

My land, land of my grandparents: I want to caress your beauty, reflect on your serenity, cry your tears, accompany you in silence. I want to cry your tears when I see your children spread throughout the world, tending far-off lands unhappily, without their Mother Earth, without peace, with nothing.

### WE INDIANS ARE NOT MYTHS OF THE PAST

Five-hundred years later, the indigenous peoples are still alive, we are reaffirming the validity of our culture. We are demonstrating that many of our thoughts, our visions of the cosmos, are at the forefront of the fight to save our Mother Earth, Mother Nature - above all, to defend life.

I think it is necessary to show the people of America that they should be proud to be part of America. We have roots that stretch back to ancient cultures and these cultures should become part of America's patrimony. A patrimony that is different from the common idea of keeping indigenous people in a zoo, in a museum, that continues to see us as things of the past. Many people talk with pride about our past, but they are thinking about the ruins left behind by our ancestors, thinking about what they see in muse-

ums. They do not talk about the Indians they see every day in the streets, in the markets. They do not see our reflection in the food they eat or the language they speak.

I think the challenge today is to show that we are not relics of the past, we are not part of the ruins. We are a people who demand our rights. We give witness to the fact that systems that have existed have not only been unjust, but have also been unable to understand the indigenous communities.

Maybe it is because some have always seen indigenous people in a critical light, saying that we reject science and technology, as if we were anti-science and anti-technology. Some say that we reject education. We have heard people say, 'If we give them shoes, if we give them a nice house to live in, they will surely stop being Indians. We can not do it because we will be taking away their culture.' The interpretation of culture is always different from what it should be.

It is unfortunate that in many parts of the Americas: Indians, Afro-Americans, mestizos, and the poor continue to be marginalized and go unheard. Their voices are not heard in America. In other parts of the world they offer us opportunities to speak to large audiences, they give us giant microphones so we can be heard. But what purpose does this serve if in our own homes they will not let us speak?

There are many parts of our constitutions that continue to be offensive to indigenous peoples, such as the Day of the Race. In almost every country in America, October 12 has been proclaimed the Day of the Race. If we think about this for a moment, we do not know if we should talk about the Incas, Mayas, Aztecs, or talk about the Afro-American race, the Anglo-Saxon or the Spanish race. This idea is very racist. At the end of the twentieth century we should attempt to make a few changes. It is fundamental for our struggle as oppressed peoples and as part of the great Latin American community that brings together many races.

## THE FACES OF DIVERSITY

It is beautiful to see the diversity of America, the plurality of America, the great America of indigenous people, mestizos, Blacks, or all the races that may have come from far-off lands and today form part of our America. There are many things that challenge our identity, the search for our roots.

When we talk about diversity we are also talking about our organisations, our social structures. In America there have been different ways of working, organising, struggling, raising awareness, different ways of surviving. This is one of the riches of our continent.

I believe that continental unity is needed. The unity of our causes and struggle is necessary. We have the same face - the face of the marginalized, the silenced and above all, the face of diversity.

## WOUNDS ON THE LAND

The struggle to defend dignity and human rights has always been frustrating. It is a struggle that has never been coherently followed in relation to the abuses and violations in each of our countries. We have also been responsible in part for these violations through our silence, tolerance and lack of commitment and sensitivity to the struggles of our neighbours.

Lately, we have been talking about human rights in relation to numbers and statistical information. The numbers do not mean anything compared to what our lives mean.

We have been victims of discrimination. When one is born into this discrimination, one knows what is meant by the word and also what is meant when it is put into practice.

Many people are still unaware of street children. I do not know if anyone knows how many children in America are living on the streets or who these street children are. When we

see movies, we are moved to see young children left to their own defenses. What will become of these children in 20 years?

### WE HAVE PAID DEARLY FOR OUR DREAMS

As the people of Guatemala know, the causes that lead to conflicts are profound. The internal armed conflict in Guatemala has its roots in conditions of social, economic and political injustice, and the absolute exclusion of indigenous peoples in decisions concerning our destiny.

We have paid a heavy price for our dream of a pluralistic and multi-cultural nation, where indigenous and non-indigenous people alike feel that they are represented and have a role in their own destiny. Between 65 and 70 percent of Guatemalans are children or grandchildren of the Mayas and we continue to hold onto the happiness of our ancestors. But we have also paid a high price for dreams about our country.

During the past year, the peace negotiations have been repeatedly interrupted because of the issue of human rights. The issue of human rights is not afforded the same attention as other issues.

The Mayan people are hopeful that for the first time in America, indigenous and non-indigenous people can share in the decisions that will influence the destiny of our nation. We are a majority and there will never be justice or democracy in Guatemala if we are not allowed to participate in decisions concerning the economy, politics, culture, education, health care and even military issues. Indigenous peoples have borne the brunt of the country's military policies.

### TODAY, HUMAN BEINGS ARE SACRIFICED

I come here after a very surprising trip, a trip I never thought I would make and maybe one which my compañeros never thought would be offered

to me. I have just returned from Santa Victoria del Este, in the province of Salta, where the people would say that it should be declared a national emergency. The gravest emergency is the slow agony of human beings. Recently, I have been to Bolivia, Chile and Ecuador, and I had an opportunity to see many parts of these nations. But nothing surprised me as much as the situation of our brothers and sisters in Santa Victoria. The people have no water, they are struggling to find water and food. Many of them are probably dying as I speak.

### SELF-DISCOVERY

On December 10, 1992 the United Nations began celebrating the International Year of Indigenous Peoples. It is the first international year dedicated to indigenous people in 500 years. It is not a gift from anyone. It is the result of the work of many people, who walked through the halls of the United Nations many times.

We will demand that it truly be a year for indigenous people, that it serves to unite our peoples and offers us the opportunity for needed self-discovery. The day we are respected in each of our countries, things will begin to change.

We are very patient. In America there are about 80 million indigenous people and we are going to demand a real and concrete participation in each of our countries.

### PEACE IS WHAT IS CULTIVATED IN THE HEART OF SOCIETY

One of the important things we understand is that Mother Earth is not only Mother Nature, but it is human life. These three realities cannot be separated. Whoever defends life is defending the environment, and whoever defends the environment must surely be defending life. In the end, each of us only spends a short time in this world, but our children come after us and they will want to live in a world

with dignity, like our ancestors. We believe strongly in this.

Maybe it isn't a coincidence that in 1992, at the end of the twentieth century, there is a resurgence in the original religions of our peoples. In Guatemala, the religion of the Maya is growing rapidly. Our Mayan priests have not read the *Pop Vuj*, the sacred book of the Mayas, or the studies that have been done around it in the past 500 years. They have not read these things simply because these books have not reached the Mayas or their priests. But why do they talk as if they have studied about the environment in an academy, and why do they talk about the light, the clearness, the dawn, and what is coming from the peoples and what will exist on the planet?

Peace is what is cultivated in the heart of society. Peace is the eradication of the causes of injustice and not only that the end of internal conflicts. Finally, we are alive. Perhaps the future promises us life. This depends on awareness and the cultivation of Peace in society.

## A NOBEL PEACE PRIZE FOR THE OPPRESSED

I hope to return here one day. But if I do not come back. I know that you will do everything possible to defend the dignity of America, the dignity of her children, her history and her memory. Men and women are committed more than ever to history. It depends on sensibility, work and our political willingness to try to construct a third millennium that is more just, dignified and human. We want a world that is just for all people and, in particular, a just world for the indigenous people of America.

I have nothing more to say. I experience your solidarity and believe that the Nobel Peace Prize is for all my brothers and sisters and not only for Rigoberta. Your solidarity is not for me but for the cause, the cause of the oppressed.

Ref. LADOC

4, Vol. XXIII. March/April, 1993  
Apartado 18-0964,  
Lima 18 Peru.

## YOUR LOOK

*A look, full, sincere, calm tender,  
like the stars, the fresh wind  
and songs of dawn and clarity.*

*She crossed frontiers and had no time  
to say goodbye to a disappeared sweetheart,  
she cried truth in the world,  
spoke before military assassins,  
and her voice was not stilled.*

*She overcame fear,  
accepted the accompaniment of solitude in far lands  
crossing frontiers, waiting for a plane  
from there to here, from here to there*

*She is the daughter, the granddaughter of the Maya.  
She is the one born under the blue sky.  
She is the memory of Chimel.*

*She is for me, a beautiful woman of my land.*



## mission moments

### PRAYERS FOR RAIN

(MALI)

"Father, you are wanted on the telephone. There is a call from Diéma. Come quickly." I went to the nearby hospital. On the end of the line was Daniel, a Protestant, and a catechumen called Mama. "A delegation has arrived from the village of Méréla. They want a priest to go to them and pray for rain. The first sowing has already been ruined, and the drought is threatening the next." I replied that I did not feel altogether happy with the invitation.

We held a little council and quickly came to agreement: we should accept the invitation. On Friday, 16 October, about six o'clock in the evening, we arrived in Diéma. A short conversation made it clear that the appeal had come from the whole village and that the situation was genuinely critical. "We know that God hears you because your way is straight and true." It was confirmed that the village was Muslim but that all had agreed on this step. Mama and I explained, as delicately as we could, that there was no question of our praying in place of the villagers. We would lead the prayer, but we would all pray together. We further explained that we were not

miracle-workers and that we would not be leaving them any sébé, or magic texts.

I spent some time with Mama to prepare our prayer, and at 3.00 p.m. we arrived at the rendez-vous. Some twenty household heads were there, including the village chief and the imam. Younger people were seated at a little distance. There were no women for, unfortunately, the old men consider that this is not the place for them. Everyone was seated on mats and I began by offering good wishes and then read some passages from Sirach. I offered a work of comment on the words of Scripture and made some petitions, including a prayer for forgiveness, explaining that Jesus invited us to make such a prayer at the beginning of each celebration.

I dwelt especially on the verses in which Sirach says that the just man will be tried by God and that trials can help us to grow in faith. The just man should not simply complain when he experiences difficulty. I concluded this portion of our service with a story. A man appeared before God with three loads on his head and complained that God had overburdened him. God replied: "The first load, the heaviest, comes from you and from your behaviour. It does not come from me. Put it down." God then pointed to the second load, also very heavy: "This one comes from your neighbours and your relatives. It is not from

me either. Put it down also!" Full of joy, the man responded: "Now I am comfortable. Even a small child could carry this third load which is all I have left." "This is the load which comes from me," said God; "what are you complaining about?" I concluded the service by adapting a prayer for rain which had been prepared for our catechists. I got the community to repeat certain phrases. We concluded with final blessing.

I have spent thirty-eight years in Mali and this is the first time that I have led prayers for a Muslim community. It is also the first time that I have responded to such a precise appeal. I noted that the appeal had been made through Christians, who insisted that we should go. These Christians were the Church, as far as the Muslims were concerned, for one of the two villages, Méréla, had never seen a priest; although it is also true that the Christians are Bambara from Bélédu, where the Christian community is growing. Another noteworthy feature of the experience was its disinterested character. While we were having our polite conversational exchanges, Mama had remarked that he hoped some catechumens would one day come forward. The response was polite but clear: "Leave that to God. It is not for that purpose that we asked you to come."

Have we helped to develop a trust in Jesus, whom the

Muslims recognise as a prophet? or have we perhaps only strengthened the Muslim belief in an intermediary who can relieve people of their own responsibilities? These are some of the questions I put to myself. But my principal sentiments as I think of these moments of prayer with Muslims are of gratitude.

Ref. Aymar de Champigny, M.AFR  
PETIT ECHO,  
White Fathers, March 1993,  
No. 839 C.P. 9078,  
00165 Rome  

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#### FUTURE FARMERS

(BRAZIL)

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Monica and Sylvania are students at a very special school nestled in the tropical forest not far from Cacoal, State of Rondonia, Brazil - the Ezekiel Ramin Farm School.

Comboni Father Franco Violetto, explains what makes the boarding school so special: "Farm schools are needed here, if farmers are to survive in this frontier area of Brazil. The problem with most such schools is that students live for too long away from their families; they lose touch with reality and will not be accepted when they return home with all that knowledge and no one to share it with. This school is different. It enrolls 150 students, but only 75 at the time are actually present. They alternate: two weeks in school and two weeks at home. This way the families are directly involved in their progress: students and families have the chance to practice together what the kids learn in school."

Farm schools in Rondonia are an absolute necessity. Over the years poor farmers from the impoverished areas of Brazil have flocked to the Amazon Basin in search of a better deal and a piece of land. On arrival they were assigned plots of forest to clear and to cultivate. At first they made some money by selling the lumber, then they started farming, only to realise that the forest's top soil is extremely poor and not suited for prolonged use. The temptation to undersell the plot to agribusiness and to lumber companies and return East is overwhelming. Lumber companies and agribusiness have steadily pursued a policy of wild deforestation that is endangering the ecosystem and the survival of the indigenous groups living in the forest.

Because of these problems the population of Rondonia is decreasing: 300,000 people, out of a population of an estimated 1.6 million, left the State last year alone. "For Sale" signs abound in the capital city of Porto Velho, where the stability offered by farming communities has given way to the corrupt and shifty lifestyle of garimpeiros, the gold diggers. Gold, in fact, is being extracted from the Madera River bed. This 20th century gold rush has brought to the area an increase in violent crime, rape, prostitution and disease. The rural areas are not better off. Cacoal itself has seen a phenomenal growth in recent years, but not thanks to the dispirited farming community. Drug money keeps the town afloat, buys elections and people of influence (Cacoal is only a 20 minute flight away from Bolivia).

The Ezekiel Ramin Farm School was born to face these problems: teach farmers how to improve the conditions of the

soil, restore the fragile balance between farming land and forest, restore harmony between farmers and indigenous people, ensure a way to the market.

How can these farmers hold their own against the encroachment of drug money, agribusiness, the exploitation by land owners? "We must not lose hope!" replies Fr. Franco. The signs of hope take many different shapes. In Cacoal and in its farming communities the Ezekiel Ramin Farm School is one of them.

Ref. Joseph Bragotti, MCCJ  
COMBONI PRESS  
via Luigio Lilio, 80  
00143 Rome

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#### READ THE BIBLE 50 TIMES

(U.S.A.)

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Former Lebanon hostage Terry Anderson, writing for the first time about his experiences as a captive, said a Bible given to him by his captors provided consolation and counsel to him constantly over the years.

Anderson, a Catholic, said he read the Bible cover to cover more than 50 times in the first few years of his captivity.

Anderson, who now lives in an undisclosed location in the Caribbean, said he has had both physical and psychological after-effects of his captivity, which he is combating with daily weight lifting sessions at a gym and meetings with two psychiatric specialists in hostage and prisoner decompression.

It will take a long time, and it is hard work, he said of his

readjustment. But it is joyful work, learning again about the people I love, and about myself.

A poem, or maybe more a meditation, which he wrote secretly about his captors, was also published.

I'm not Christ, the poem says in part. But I'll try to achieve forgiveness - because I know that in the end, as always, Christ was right.

Ref. CHRIST TO THE WORLD

Jan.Feb. 1993, Vol.XXXVIII  
via di Propaganda,  
lc - 00187 Rome

## WOMEN, WORK AND IDENTITY

(GERMANY)

Since August of 1992 we have been living with and among the people of Marzahn. This is a satellite town in East Berlin and was built by the former government of East Germany. In those days in order to get an apartment with central heating and warm water, you had to be a member of the Communist Party. Approximately 180,000 people are living in Marzahn and the average age is 35 years-for Germany, very low. These young families were privileged by the former system. There were enough places for their children in the kindergarden, enough schools and youth centers, and the families paid a low rent.

With "unification," all that had meaning for the people here was suddenly bad. Everything that had been part of the history of East Germany became the object of aggression and hatred, had no value and the people did not have the

strength or the courage to defend what they felt was positive in their system. The Communist way of life deeply influenced the life of the people. Now it is very easy for them to give in to the feeling that their life has no value. Privatization has been used by the newly-elected Democratic system to sell the "property of the people" to those who have money, mostly people from the West.

Unification has resulted in the colonisation of the East.

- A capitalistic economic system destroyed more working places than it will ever be able to create.

- Unification costs more money than expected and since the first-world economy is in a recession, promises made will not be fulfilled.

- To develop an equal lifestyle between East and West, people in the Western part of our country must be willing to forego an increase in income for 10 years - a dream one can forget.

- Since the problem between East and West Germany is already so great, you can imagine what this means for the further development of the countries in Eastern Europe - not to mention Africa, Asia or Latin America.

In Marzahn, we live in an apartment of the Catholic parish center which was built in 1987. Of the 180,000 people in Marzahn, 2,000 are Catholic and 6,000 Protestant. The group of single women with children is very high, and women are doubly the victims of unification, because they are OSSIS (from the East) and they are women. More than 90 percent had a job before the wall came down, but now 60 percent are

unemployed and experience no place for them in the new economic world.

Women here tell us: "The emancipation you dream about in the West has been a reality for us here in the East, but we took it for granted and therefore do not know how to defend it now. Women in the West have a better understanding of their role in society and can talk about it, but they cannot necessarily live it; for example, in the Socialist system we earned the same salary as men did."

Most of the women here in Marzahn had their own income and were financially independent from their husbands. Now they are forced to stay at home and take care of their children. People from the West tell them there are four ways to guarantee an income: the salary of an employee, social benefits paid by the government, income from private property, and gain earned as the owner of a business. The women here answer, "You forgot a fifth way: the income a married woman gets from her husband!"

The beginning has not been easy for us. We are women from the West and therefore we experience a "new wall" between the two parts of Germany. It takes a lot of patience to find small ways to break the barrier. At the moment, we are both working in an ecumenical center for women, Michaela with her knowledge in economics and Angelika as a music therapist. With different approaches we want to help women here find their identity again.

Ref. Michaela Bank, MMS

Angelika Kollacks, MMS

INTERCONTINENT, March 1993

No. 204 Medical Mission

Sisters, 8400 Pine Road,

Philadelphia, PA 19111

U.S.A.

## COMING EVENTS

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**May 18-22**

**AFRICA: QUESTIONS AND PROPOSALS  
TO THE CHURCH**

*VILLA CAVALLETTI*

Speakers: Bishop Anselme Sanon - Sister Teresa Okure, SHCJ

(The seminar is fully subscribed.)

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**October 28**

**ACCEPTING THE OUTSIDER:  
THE REFUGEE PROBLEM IN EUROPE**

Scheduled as a one-day programme: 9.00 - 17.00 p.m.

Place: *Christian Brothers*, via Aurelia 476

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**December 7**

**SEDOS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY  
INCULTURATION IN AFRICA AND ITS PRACTICAL APPLICATION**

Place: *Christian Brothers*, via Aurelia 476

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