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# ETHNIC CONFLICT AND THE MEDIA:

## THE CASE OF RWANDA

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Tharcisse Gatwa

To understand the negative role played by *Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines* (RTLM), and all the group of print media which belonged to the extremists of the Rwandese political panorama (Kangura, Umurwanashyaka, Intera, Impanda, Medaille Nyiramacribiri, Umurava, Kamarampaka) one has to examine the political evolution of Africa in the 1990's. This evolution was marked by a failure in the management of the political, economic, social and cultural institutions by the military class and their accomplices of the single ruling parties.

After internal and external pressures, the dictatorships accepted political changes but at the same time took away with one hand what they were offering with the other. National Conferences, one of the innovations in the attempt to force dictators to share power, were organised in Benin, Gabon, Congo, and Zaïre. Although the results were not the radical changes which were expected by the masses, the National Conferences checked the authority of the dictator, 'President-Fondateur', 'Father of the Nation', 'Bright-guide' and other superlatives. The National Conferences were the battle-horses on which opponents not yet prepared to manage national affairs, and not rooted enough in the national territory, yet counting on the unpopularity of the regime and the people's desire for change, based most of their strategies.

At the same time, the regimes which were counting on the political and administrative structures of the sole ruling party, which was wholly devoted to their cause, were struggling to organise immediate elections to reach the majority in order to maintain power. In fact most of them continued to manipulate the systems through networks of armed militia, administrative supporters, false NGOs, and media collaborators pretending to be political opponents.

Many observers, at least in Rwanda, were predicting that three dictatorships would be difficult to eradicate: Mobutu's in Zaire, Eyadema's in Togo and Habyarimana's in Rwanda. These were built on the model of the North Korean Kim Il Sung with all

the trappings of the cult of personality, corruption of political surrogates, ideological and divisive propaganda, brain washing, networks of secret police and last but not least the determination to kill any potential opponent.

In Rwanda, the dictatorship, which in part counted on its sponsors (mainly Zaire and France), had to face at least three crises: the attacks of the Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) and former refugees, pressure from international financial institutions, and internal discontent. It was under these conditions that the new Constitution was introduced on 10 June 1991. The text opened the country to multi-party politics. A new class of politicians started to exercise pressure on the President of the Republic and his single ruling party for true political change. A so-called Government of transition led by a Prime Minister from the main opposition party was formed on 16 April 1992. This Government negotiated the end of the war with the RPF.

A new political vision of sharing power was written into the Arusha Peace Agreement, concluded on 4 August 1993. It was considered by many as the beginning of the process of reconciliation among Rwandese. But the extremists, and the entourage of the Habyarimana regime, commonly known as AKAZU, invented ways to resist it including death squads, the militia (called *Interahamwe*), racist propaganda including print (e.g. Kangura) and audio-visual (e.g. RTLM).

It was in this period that the CDR (Coalition for the Defence of the Republic) was created, an extremist political party which became the ally of the MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement), the former ruling party of Habyarimana.

### A Long Background to the Conflict

Racist propaganda was the result of a political policy which was elaborated and applied systematically from the 1920's onwards in the

media, political thought and official documents. Between 1925 and 1935 the Colonial Administration introduced social and political reforms that grouped the population according to ethnic origin. Since that period, identity cards, administrative and even academic documents mention ethnic origin. Discrimination was not excluded by Post-Colonial Governments, but rather they elaborated on it with other techniques such as the so-called 'Politique de l'équilibre ethnique et régionale' (the policy of ethnic and regional balance) of the Habyarimana regime, designed to carry out promotions in schools and employment.

In addition, organised massacres were presented as inter-ethnic cleansings. That applied to the Bahima massacres in October 1990, the Bagogwe massacres in January 1991, and the staged attacks by the RPF in Rwamagana and Kigali on the night of 4 October 1990, the massacres in Bugesero, Kibirira, Gisenyi-Ruhengeri on different occasions and in Gishyita, Shyorongi and other regions. When the human rights and international media reacted, the propaganda machinery including the extremist media accused the RPF and its internal accomplices of misinformation.

While social, cultural, linguistic and political mixing of the population made any identification of a Hutu or a Tutsi difficult, the ethnic reference in official documents was a tool used by extremists to exclude Tutsis from the administration, schools and universities, particularly in the early 1970's prior to the military *putsch* which brought Habyarimana to power.

The other important step in the preparation of the genocide, was the extension of the extremist group around the President's family through the *Interahamwe* and the RTLM shareholders. The *Interahamwe* were the army of the former ruling party, the MRND to which each member owed respect and donations. They were praised in the media and in party meeting speeches. They were given uniforms and trained in military camps. Meanwhile, the shareholders of the RTLM played an important role in the manipulation of social consciousness.

There was a brain trust group working daily to elaborate themes and false or biased messages with which the 'enemy' was charged systematically through RTLM, and the extremist print media as well as at political meetings. In RTLM print media and the political meetings of MRND/CDR the language was identical: 'Who is the enemy of the

Hutu people, who are the majority? The Tutsi. Majority, you are going to be subjugated again'. This seems to be the official message of the Habyarimana regime from the very beginning of RPF attacks in October 1990.

By the end of 1993, following the massacres in Burundi, a cartel of extremists from different political parties met at a rally at Nyamirambo stadium to denounce the responsibility of the Tutsi dominated army for the assassination of the newly elected Melchior Ndadaye. They called the 'Hutu' to unite in a so-called 'Hutu Power' to accompany the 'Hutu' of Burundi and to resist the RPF and their accomplices in Rwanda.

While the extremist campaign by the print media was not producing effective results due to illiteracy and difficulties in distribution, even the publication of the so-called ten commandments of the extremists Hutu (Kangura, No 6, January 1991) RTLM was the channel which efficiently propagated the ideology of genocide from the 'Hutu Power' group as a culmination of the Habyarimana regime's strategy to monopolise power.

From January 1994 when all the conditions for the implementation of the Arusha Peace Agreement had been met (arrival of the UN Peace Force, arrival in Kigali of RPF officials and their 600 security personnel), the attacks against the Arusha Accord and the people who were to implement it became more aggressive.

While the Kangura attacks consisted mainly of cartoons and insults, RTLM used anecdotes, stories, insults, personal messages, and so-called humorous remarks.

### **RTLM and Racist Propaganda**

The genocide as described by the United Nations and as Rwandese saw it was promoted by the RTLM which broadcast programmes inciting people to violence even before the death of the President. The main targets were particularly: the Arusha Peace Accord, accused of being a *putsch* against the republican and democratic institutions; the list of enemies of the 'Hutu people' to kill were primarily the Prime Minister, Mrs Agathe Uwiringiyimana, Faustin Twagiramungu designated as Prime Minister in the Arusha Accord, the Tutsi, the moderate political, social and religious forces; some UN Peace Corps force members including the Belgians, and the Commandant, General Romeo Dallaire.

Conceived as an instrument to ensure Habyarimana's monopoly of power, by resisting the attacks of Radio Muhabura of RPF and Radio-Rwanda, which were accused of being instruments of the accomplices, RTLM succeeded in replacing the existing media by recruiting very capable and popular journalists from both the intellectual *milieu* and from the lower classes and peasantry.

RTLM succeeded in attracting a very large audience among young people with the help of the music of Zairian artists, Congolese, Camerounian, and Reggae. Finally, their approach was deliberately called spontaneous — 'Inkuru ishushu': hot news. In reality it was a tactic to broadcast material and programmes outside any professional and ethical control such as the invented attacks of Inyenzi in Butare city or different areas of Kigali city, the arms cache, lies about Cabinet Members of the Opposition about supposed treason or misconduct in private and public life. Sometimes a right to reply was broadcast, but not always.

### **A Cartel of the Regime's Extremists**

The constitutive act of RTLM was signed on 8 April 1993 by a cartel of 50 shareholders who invested a hundred million Rwanda francs (one million US dollars at that time). The 'declared objectives' were to collect, treat and publish information; to 'inform' the population by means of 'news' publicity, and debates; to contribute to the reinforcement of a pluralistic democracy and republican institutions; to promote polls as well as the business and industry of the media.

The relationship with the Habyarimana Akazu regime and the MRNRD/CDR extremist groups was evident. Among the shareholders besides Ferdinand Nahimana, a professor of history at the National University who offered to become the Goebbels of the Habyarimana regime, there were members of the board of CDR, members of the Habyarimana close family; current and long-time ministers close to Habyarimana; journalists and technicians on Rwanda-Radio; and members of the board of the *Interahamwe*. From its early beginnings, RTLM opened its doors to members of the death squads, and the militia were quoted in every national and international report on the massacres.

According to a former adviser of Habyarimana. Christophe Mfizi, former Director General of the ORINFOR in an open letter to the Head of State on 5 July 1992 announcing his resignation from MRND, the President himself encouraged the activities of

this group characterised in the document as 'Reseau Zero' or 'Ikigurinunga'. The accusations against President Habyarimana were strongly emphasised by the international commission inquiring into the violation of human rights in Rwanda from October 1990 to January 1993. The members of the Commission, including the Paris based International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), the New York/Washington and London based, Africa Watch, the Ougagadougou Inter-African Union of Human Rights, the Montreal based International Centre of Human Rights and of Persons and Democratic Development, affirmed that the President himself very often participated and chaired the meetings of the death groups.

### **RTLM: War by Media**

Every war is prepared psychologically. Before the 1990's the genocide in Rwanda would have been inconceivable. It was necessary to prepare seriously for about four years before arriving at the result. From October 1990, Rwanda faced a war on several fronts. One was in the North against the attacks of the RPF which in theory was asking for no more than the return of refugees and power sharing. The general consensus within the country was that the time had come to allow them to return to their country. However, this attack was used by the regime as a tool to mobilise the Hutu ethnic group against the RPF and the Tutsi.

The war, nascent multi-party politics and their social dynamics, human rights associations, the proliferation of audio-visual as well as print media, everything was exploited to reshape the image of the general-dictator by persuading national and international opinion that the sole enemy of the Rwandese people was the RPF and consequently their social and political partners within the country.

Once the association was made, the strategy was to carry out imprisonments, torture, assassinations, insults and everything that could be justified by the media as the struggle against the enemy. But there was still the international community which became more and more critical of such attitudes towards part of the population.

Finally in the Government of 16 April 1992, the Department of Information was allocated to a member of the Opposition Party and an effort was made to oppose racist propaganda. One concrete example of this campaign was the sacking of the former Director General of the powerful Office of Information of both audio-visual and print media,

Ferdinand Nahimana, following his personal responsibility for the March-April 1992 massacres in Bugesera in which more than 500 Tutsi were killed. From that time, Nahimana was involved in the installation of the RTLM.

### **Where Were the Other Media and Political Forces?**

In an interview with Robert Menard of RFI, Father André Sibomana, Director of the Roman Catholic weekly *Kinyamateka*, currently President of the Association des Journalistes Rwandais and a human rights activist said: 'The political leaders, as well as all of us, have underestimated the force that RTLM represented'. For him 'that was a lethal error'.

Among the politicians to be mentioned is the former Minister of Information, Faustin Rucogoza. He authorised RTLM to transmit its programmes in the framework of democratisation and the new law of the press but became the first victim of its racist propaganda. He was murdered with his entire family by the presidential guard on 7 April 1994. Before his death he wrote many letters to the RTLM Board protesting against its anti-professionalism but nothing changed.

One must say that the political decay of 1993 and 1994 culminated in two poles: those who worked to maintain power at any cost (who were mainly from the former single ruling party, the President's family and entourage, and the army) and those officially working for change and power-sharing (including the RPF, factions of the opposition parties and civil society).

By the period prior to genocide there was a reconstitution of the social and political forces in such a way that it was impossible to find a neutral or third force. Each group or individual who attempted to become independent was attacked by one of the two groups, sometimes both of them.

The media, the churches, the NGOs were also identified as belonging to one or other of the two camps. Hence, Rwandese society disintegrated. None of the social and moral forces could persuade the two rival groups to put the interests of the population before their disputes.

However, one might say that the good relations between the former Dictator and most of the Church leaders, which dated from before this disintegration,

constituted a handicap to any of their attempts to mediate.

When the forces of change (the Opposition) were still united in what was called the 'Comité de concertation', they several times stopped the incitement to violence and massacres. Internal divisions and power struggles among them left the ground to the extremist leaders and their *media* to teach intolerance, opposition to the Arusha Peace Accord and massacres ('gukora'). Consequently, the Government of Transition was in such a fragile position that it could not stop the chaos.

### **Honesty and Integrity were Missing**

The practice of journalism rests on a fundamental principle: telling the truth. Telling the truth so that people can be helped to deliberate in private and public. Important characteristics of truth-telling are honesty, perception, integrity and professionalism. To have responsible journalism, one has to take into account use of language in publishing news and the presentation of different points of view.

The insistence of the chief editor for example on rewriting any news that could cost lives, and the elimination of deliberate bias, are of paramount importance. The option for humane journalism seems to me the best instrument for a profession that is part of humanity. If reporting the truth is at the heart of journalism, then what took place in Rwanda with RTLM and Kangura and their channels was not journalism but the fabrication of extremist groups which was used to create chaos and violence with the purpose of maintaining and monopolising power.

For this reason, people of faith in Rwanda, especially Christians, and people everywhere, as well as social, political and moral forces, are challenged by the words of the Gospel: 'Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free' (Jn 8:32). But a vital question remains unanswered: What mechanisms could be set up to prevent a repetition of this kind in Rwanda or anywhere else?

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# APRES NEUF ANNEES D'EMPRISONNEMENT

Une interview du provincial des jésuites du Vietnam,  
le P. Joseph Nguyễn Công Doàn

Georges M. Anderson, SJ

*(Le P. Joseph Nguyễn Công Doàn, est le supérieur provincial de près de quarante jésuites aujourd'hui au Vietnam. Né au Nord-Vietnam, il est venu au sud avec toute sa famille, alors qu'il était encore très jeune, lorsque le Nord-Vietnam est tombé sous le pouvoir communiste en 1954. Après son ordination sacerdotale en 1970, il a quitté son pays pour poursuivre des études à Jérusalem et à Rome. Juste avant la chute de Saigon, en 1975, il est revenu au Vietnam).*

## **Qu'avez-vous à dire à propos de votre retour au Vietnam en 1975?**

La situation s'étant sérieusement détériorée au mois de mars de cette année-là, j'ai demandé au Père Pedro Arrupe qui était le supérieur général de la Compagnie de me laisser revenir dans mon pays. Je savais que lorsque les communistes auraient repris le Sud-Vietnam, je ne pourrais plus y revenir comme résidant. Je venais d'entamer mon troisième an (dernière période de formation jésuite). Il me restait aussi à terminer ma licence en Ecriture sainte. Au bout de quelques semaines, le P. Arrupe m'a fait appeler et m'a demandé de repartir au Vietnam le plus tôt possible.

## **Aviez-vous achevé vos études?**

J'étais en train de faire mes valises lorsque j'ai passé mon dernier examen. Mais j'ai quand même pu terminer. J'ai quitté Rome le 23 avril et je suis arrivé juste à temps, la veille de la fermeture de l'aéroport de Saigon. C'était la grande confusion. Chacun essayait de s'en aller avant l'arrivée des communistes dans la ville. Un policier de l'aéroport qui m'a vu arriver en habit ecclésiastique s'est étonné et m'a dit: "Pourquoi donc revenez-vous?" A mon tour, je lui ai demandé: "Et vous, pourquoi êtes-vous là?" Il m'a alors répondu: "Il faut que j'y sois". J'ai alors conclu:

"Je reviens pour être avec vous": Six jours plus tard, les communistes se sont emparés de Saigon.

## **A l'entrée des communistes, y a-t-il eu des violences?**

Non. Durant les premiers jours, il n'y a pas eu de troubles. Ils se sont contentés de maintenir l'ordre dans la ville. En fait, durant les cinq années qui ont suivi, je n'ai pas eu de difficulté à accomplir mes fonctions de prêtre. Les communistes ont laissé les gens continuer les pratiques religieuses, bien qu'ils se soient montrés plus soupçonneux à l'égard des congrégations religieuses qu'à l'égard du clergé diocésain.

## **Pourquoi cela?**

Après la prise de pouvoir des communistes au Nord-Vietnam à la suite des accords de Genève de 1954, la plupart des congrégations religieuses, les deux-tiers des prêtres avec une majorité des évêques sont partis au Sud, si bien que les autorités ne savaient plus bien qui nous étions. Ils soupçonnaient tous les catholiques en général d'être, en leur foi intérieure, des partisans de l'impérialisme. Leur soupçon se portait plus spécialement sur les congrégations religieuses; en conséquence, ils ne leur ont pas permis d'accepter de nouveaux membres. Ce n'est qu'en 1992 qu'un décret officiel a reconnu les congrégations et leur a permis d'accueillir à nouveau des postulants.

## **Vous dites avoir pu exercer vos fonctions de jésuite pendant cinq ans sans entrave. Quel genre de travail avez-vous accompli?**

Peu de temps après mon retour, j'ai été nommé supérieur des jésuites vietnamiens. Je vivais dans une communauté de jésuites où se trouvaient aussi de jeunes candidats à la compagnie. En plus de



l'accomplissement de ma tâche de supérieur, j'ai aussi travaillé avec la conférence des évêques à la publication de leur lettre pastorale. J'ai donné des cours d'Ecriture sainte et prêché les exercices spirituels de saint Ignace. Il y avait encore le travail du centre pour étudiants. Celui-ci contenait une bibliothèque, une salle de lecture, un foyer et une chapelle. L'ensemble a été ensuite pris par le gouvernement. Les étudiants qui le fréquentaient étudiaient dans les universités d'Etat. Beaucoup d'entre eux venaient à une des cinq messes que nous célébrions le dimanche. Il est même arrivé que 2,000 d'entre eux soient présents à la messe en une journée.

### **Quand les tensions avec le gouvernement ont-elles commencé?**

Avant tout, il y a eu une série de malentendus dûs à l'histoire. Après 1975, les évêques s'étaient engagés eux-mêmes à participer à la reconstruction du Vietnam. Au départ, les autorités avaient approuvé. Mais ensuite, elles ont commencé à redouter que les catholiques ne prennent une trop grande influence sur le peuple. Elles ont pensé que cela pourrait conduire à un mouvement un peu semblable à celui de *"Solidarité"* en Pologne. Les communistes nourrissaient aussi une méfiance spéciale à l'égard des jésuites. Par exemple, dans les conclusions de notre 31ème assemblée générale (1966), ils n'avaient pas aimé la référence à la nécessité de s'opposer à l'athéisme; c'est un appel qui nous avait aussi été adressé par Paul VI en 1974, à la 32ème assemblée; il avait été renouvelé par Jean-Paul II. Les communistes l'avaient perçu comme une attaque anti-communiste. Ils n'avaient pas non plus aimé quelques-unes des conclusions de notre 32ème assemblée concernant la mission de la compagnie, à savoir le service de la foi impliquant la promotion de la justice. Une revue russe, *"Temps Nouveau"*, datée du 17 septembre 1980, vendue au Vietnam dans son édition française, avait fait paraître un article de trois pages. Celui-ci contenait une photo du P. Arrupe et critiquait très durement la compagnie, la présentant comme une organisation réactionnaire et utilisant à son endroit les arguments réservés habituellement aux ennemis du communisme.

### **Comment étiez-vous, vous-mêmes, considéré par les autorités?**

Ils me tenaient pour dangereux, parce que j'étais le supérieur des jésuites et aussi parce que je collaborais avec les évêques - qui étaient alors une quarantaine - et ils savaient que ceux-ci me faisaient confiance. Ils m'ont même suspecté d'être secrètement un évêque.

### **Est-ce cela qui a provoqué votre arrestation?**

Indirectement. Car, tout d'abord, c'est un autre jésuite travaillant au centre des étudiants, qui a fait l'objet de leurs soupçons pour avoir photocopié et distribué des commentaires des évangiles du dimanche. Il était illégal de publier sans permission. Des laïcs qui avaient été arrêtés pour subversion ont dit qu'ils connaissaient ce prêtre. Il a été arrêté le premier en décembre 1980. Dix jours plus tard les policiers arrêtaient trois autres jésuites qui travaillaient aussi avec les étudiants.

### **Ce fut ensuite votre tour?**

Le 8 janvier 1981, les agents du gouvernement sont venus à la résidence des jésuites et m'ont invité à venir au poste de police. *"Inviter"* était le terme employé lors de l'arrestation. Celui qui menait l'enquête m'a interrogé, puis à midi on m'a enfermé à la prison centrale pour prisonniers politiques.

### **De quoi vous accusait-on?**

De propagande anti-révolutionnaire. Durant les trois premiers mois, j'ai été interrogé quotidiennement deux ou trois heures à chaque fois, le matin et l'après-midi, quelquefois dans la soirée. Les questions portaient sur la Compagnie de Jésus, sur les évêques ou encore sur le 2ème concile du Vatican. Six mois plus tard, mon assistant a été arrêté et amené dans la même prison, mais nous étions gardés séparément. Finalement, nous fûmes sept à être arrêtés.

### **Quelles ont été vos conditions de vie durant les deux ans et demi passés à la prison centrale?**

Ils m'avaient mis dans une petite cellule avec des barreaux aux fenêtres et une lourde porte en bois. Au début, il y avait avec moi un journaliste âgé et un policier également emprisonnés. Plus tard, le nombre de codétenus dans la cellule a augmenté jusqu'à atteindre environ la douzaine, ce qui constituait une grande affluence. Nous partagions toute la nourriture que nous recevions de nos visiteurs. En quelque sorte, nous étions comme une famille. Le plus difficile était de ne jamais pouvoir être seul.

### **Alors que vous entriez dans votre expérience d'emprisonnement qui allait durer neuf ans, ressentiez-vous de la peur?**

Non! A mon arrestation, je n'ai pas eu peur. J'avais déjà prié très souvent sur Matthieu 10:19-20:

*"Lorsqu'ils vous livreront, ne vous inquiétez pas de savoir comment parler ou que dire; ce que vous aurez à dire vous sera donné à cette heure-là, car ce n'est pas vous qui parlerez, c'est l'esprit de votre Père qui parlera en vous".* J'ai senti alors que je recevais une grâce par l'intermédiaire de l'Esprit qui me débarrassait de ma peur. Au cours d'un de mes interrogatoires, un mois après mon arrestation, un cadre m'a dit: *"Vous êtes le troisième jésuite à être arrêté, mais vos prières ne vous ont pas aidé à échapper à nos mains..."* Je lui ai répondu: *"Je ne prie pas pour échapper à vos mains mais pour rester dans les mains de Dieu"*. Il ne m'a pas répondu. Le Père Arrupe m'avait envoyé en mission. J'avais accepté tout ce qui faisait partie de cette mission.

### **Comment avez-vous prié durant votre incarcération?**

Je récitais beaucoup le rosaire: quinze dizaines de chapelet, trois ou quatre fois par jour. Nous nous réveillions à cinq heures du matin et les interrogatoires commençaient à sept heures. Entre temps, mais aussi le matin de bonne heure, l'après midi, ma prière prenait souvent la forme de litanies. Je nommais tous les saints dont je me souvenais. Comme intentions, je citais chacun de mes codétenus. Je n'avais pas de bible. Aucun livre n'était autorisé. Ainsi la prière mentale était fort importante.

### **Pouviez-vous dire la messe?**

Durant les trois premières années et demie de ma prison, je n'avais aucune possibilité de la faire. C'était interdit. Mais chaque matin, je célébrais une sorte d'Eucharistie en récitant de mémoire les prières de la messe. Alors même que je croyais qu'ils ne me relâcheraient jamais, je me sentais en paix et prêt à passer le restant de ma vie en prison. Au cours de la seconde année, on m'a demandé de traduire du français au vietnamien une histoire de la compagnie et divers articles tirés des annuaires des jésuites contenant un aperçu des activités de la Compagnie dans le monde. Ils avaient pris ces ouvrages dans notre résidence pour en connaître davantage sur nous.

Paradoxalement, ce travail de traducteur que j'exécutais dans une autre pièce m'a aidé dans ma prière et ma méditation. C'était comme une continuation du troisième an jésuite que j'avais dû écouter lorsque j'avais quitté Rome pour revenir au Vietnam en catastrophe. Dans l'un de ces annuaires, j'étais tombé sur un article concernant Ruppert Mayer, un jésuite allemand emprisonné sous Hitler, et j'ai commencé à le prier dans mes litanies, comme

un camarade prisonnier. Il est mort peu après la seconde guerre mondiale et a été, depuis, béatifié.

### **Avez-vous été amené devant le tribunal?**

Oui, le 29 juin 1982, le jour de la fête de Saints Pierre et Paul. J'ai trouvé extraordinaire que mon procès commence le jour où les catholiques honorent deux chrétiens qui, eux aussi, ont été arrêtés et emprisonnés. Nous étions treize à être jugés: sept jésuites, un dominicain et cinq laïcs, des hommes et des femmes. L'accusation était la même pour tous: propagande anti-révolutionnaire. Le procès a duré deux jours. A la fin, on m'a permis de parler pendant 15 minutes. J'ai dit que je n'avais jamais rien dit contre le gouvernement. Mais, ils n'ont pas fait de différence. Pour eux, les jésuites étaient de dangereux intellectuels, spécialement moi, leur supérieur au Vietnam. J'ai été condamné à 12 ans de prison.

### **Après le procès, qu'est-ce qui s'est passé?**

Ils m'ont envoyé à la grande prison des condamnés de droit commun à Saigon, une construction octogonale de trois étages. J'ai été placé au rez-de-chaussée dans une cellule spacieuse mais bondée; elle contenait parfois jusqu'à 80 personnes. Durant la seconde année, il y avait tellement de monde que chacun d'entre nous, la nuit, n'avait que 25 centimètres d'espace sur le plancher pour dormir. Mais, finalement, c'est dans cette grande prison que, au bout de trois ans, j'ai pu dire la messe, clandestinement, il est vrai.

### **Avez-vous pu accomplir quelque ministère auprès des autres prisonniers?**

Oui et, plus spécialement, auprès des jeunes gens d'une vingtaine d'années. Ils avaient appris que j'étais prêtre; ils sont venus à moi et m'ont fait leurs confidences. Je les ai aidés à réfléchir sur l'Évangile, j'ai écouté leurs confessions et leur ai donné la communion. A leur tour, ils sont devenus apôtres et m'ont amené leurs camarades, se disant entre eux: *"Celui-là, là-bas est catholique, amène-le au Père!"* Ainsi, beaucoup sont revenus à la foi. Des non-chrétiens sont aussi venus me voir et m'ont parlé: quelques-uns ont demandé le baptême. Malgré notre nombre, il y avait une véritable unité entre nous. Mes camarades prisonniers m'ont protégé. Ils retenaient les gardiens pour que ceux-ci ne remarquent pas ce que je faisais. Chaque fois que quelqu'un venait me parler, ils s'écartaient de nous, pour que nous puissions avoir un peu d'intimité.



Il y avait des catholiques dans les autres sections de la prison et ils s'étaient donné le mot pour s'approcher de la porte de ma cellule lorsqu'ils descendaient de leurs étages pour prendre leur bain, deux fois par semaine. Il y avait à cet effet deux réservoirs d'eau au rez-de-chaussée où je me trouvais. Il nous était interdit de nous parler, mais il était possible de communiquer par signes. Par exemple, pour la confession, si quelqu'un voulait l'absolution, il inclinait le tête et posait la main sur le coeur en regardant dans ma direction. Je plaçais ma main sur l'oreille pour montrer que j'avais compris et j'inclinais la tête, ce qui signifiait que l'absolution lui était accordée.

### **Leur donniez-vous la communion?**

C'était possible mais seulement en nous cachant. J'avais des hosties consacrées, chacune contenue dans une enveloppe en plastique. Lorsque les prisonniers descendaient pour le bain, je me tenais derrière les barreaux de la porte. Quand un catholique désirant communier passait par là, il prenait la serviette dans ses mains et j'y plaçais l'hostie. Il repliait alors la serviette, la mettait sur l'épaule et retournait à son étage. La nuit, il pouvait alors communier quand tous les autres dormaient. Lorsque j'apprenais qu'un malade à l'infirmerie voulait la communion, je m'arrangeais pour lui envoyer le corps du Christ par l'intermédiaire d'un autre prisonnier. Grâce à la collaboration des autres prisonniers à mon apostolat, j'ai pu accomplir beaucoup de travail tout en restant confiné dans ma cellule d'où je ne sortais que pour le travail de traduction ou pour les visites qui avaient lieu une fois par mois.

### **Quelle était l'attitude de vos gardiens?**

La majorité d'entre eux étaient amicaux. Il y avait un chef de section qui se contentait de jeter un coup d'oeil sur le sac de provisions que m'apportaient mes cousins une fois par mois avant de me faire signe de passer. D'autres étaient moins bienveillants. Un autre chef de section, un jour d'inspection de la cellule, découvrit dans mes affaires un petit récipient avec du vin. C'était du vin de messe, mais je lui ai dit qu'il s'agissait d'un onguent pour mes rhumatismes. Il interrogea l'infirmier qui, par chance, était au courant de la situation. Il prit le vin et s'en frictionna la jambe, en disant: *"C'est un médicament"*. Il y en avait l'équivalent d'une tasse, une assez grande provision qui devait durer encore quelque temps.

Une seconde fois, je l'ai échappé belle. Un prisonnier qui avait demandé à être baptisé pour la

nuit de Noël m'avait prié de lui écrire le "Notre Père". Comme il était très difficile de se procurer du papier et de quoi écrire, j'avais pris du papier d'emballage sur lequel j'avais écrit avec du mercurochrome. Le prisonnier mettait le papier dans sa poche lorsque des gardiens sont entrés. L'un d'eux l'a vu. M'imaginant ce qui pouvait arriver si ce papier était trouvé, je me dirigeai vers les toilettes. Alors que les gardiens s'approchaient de lui, le catéchumène froissa le papier et me le jeta. Je le fis disparaître en actionnant la chasse d'eau. Les gardes s'emparèrent de mon ami et après l'avoir frappé, heureusement pas trop violemment, le renvoyèrent dans la cellule. Plus tard, je lui dis: *"Aujourd'hui, tu as souffert pour ton Seigneur"*.

### **Etes-vous resté longtemps dans cette grande prison?**

Un an et demi, de juillet 1983 à décembre 1984. En décembre, avec cinq autres, parmi lesquels le premier jésuite arrêté en 1980, j'ai été transporté en camion à 100 km au nord de Saïgon, dans un camp de travail abritant 800 hommes, des prisonniers politiques et des officiers de l'ancien Sud-Vietnam. Sur le chemin, un incident m'a profondément ému. Nos gardiens nous avaient fait arrêter à un carrefour devant un petit étalage. L'argent en notre possession au moment de notre arrestation, nous avait été rendu. Les gardiens nous demandèrent si nous voulions acheter quelque chose pour déjeuner. Quand les vendeurs s'aperçurent que le camion transportait des prisonniers, ils nous donnèrent quatre fois plus d'alimentation que nous en aurions dû normalement en recevoir pour la somme donnée. Les Vietnamiens sont généreux lorsqu'il voient la souffrance d'autrui.

### **Quelle était votre vie dans le camp de travail?**

Nous étions divisés en groupes de trente personnes et logions dans des baraquements, deux groupes dans chaque. Les conditions de vie étaient meilleures qu'en prison. Nous avions plus de liberté de mouvement et nous ne dormions pas sur le plancher. Il y avait des couchettes superposées en bois. Il m'était aussi plus facile de me procurer du vin de messe, car les visites étaient permises une fois par semaine, mais il fallait toujours l'apporter en cachette et le dissimuler en quelque chose d'autre.

On éteignait les lumières dans les baraques à 9 heures du soir. Je grimpais sur ma couchette. J'avais délibérément choisi une couchette supérieure, de telle sorte que le gardien ne pouvait pas me voir lorsqu'il passait devant la fenêtre. Je disais alors la messe, recouvert par le filet de la moustiquaire. Ma

célébration durait une heure. Ensuite je dormais de dix heures du soir à cinq heures du matin.

Le dimanche, toujours d'une manière clandestine, quand cela était possible, je disais la messe pour un groupe de catholiques rassemblés autour d'une table dans la cour, avec les hosties et le vin dans ma poche. Il y avait là un certain nombre de petites tables. Comme on ne travaillait pas le dimanche, les prisonniers avaient le droit de s'asseoir autour d'elles pour boire du thé ou fumer. J'étais toujours assis en face de l'entrée de la cour pour surveiller le gardien lorsqu'il rentrait. Dans ce cas, s'il se dirigeait vers nous, nous interrompions la mess, allumions des cigarettes et faisons semblant de converser. Si le gardien s'asseyait avec nous, nous lui offrions des cigarettes et bavardions avec lui jusqu'à son départ.

A cette époque, j'avais une bible en anglais - j'ai appris l'anglais à l'école - qu'un colonel détenu avec moi m'avait donnée. Je devais la cacher car nous n'avions pas encore la permission d'avoir des livres. Elle m'a aidé à dispenser la catéchèse à ceux qui y étaient intéressés. Dans le camp, il nous était plus facile de nous procurer du papier et de quoi écrire; je me servais de la bible pour rédiger une page ou deux chaque semaine sur un thème évangélique. Mes camarades les recopiaient et les distribuaient autour d'eux.

Les jours de semaine, comme nous étions libres de nous déplacer et d'adresser la parole aux autres prisonniers, je pouvais entendre les confessions après le travail. Lorsque le travail était fini à quatre heures de l'après-midi, quelques uns jouaient au *football* et je faisais semblant de regarder. Si quelqu'un voulait se confesser, il venait s'asseoir à côté de moi. Et tout en ayant l'air de bavarder, il faisait sa confession.

### **Quel était votre travail?**

Nous travaillions la terre. Nous plantions et soignons la canne à sucre, le maïs et les haricots. La nourriture nous était fournie chichement - du riz, trois fois par jour, avec quelques légumes pour le déjeuner et le dîner; de la viande une fois par mois. Mais comme à la grande prison, nos visiteurs pouvaient nous apporter de l'alimentation préparée de telle sorte que nous pouvions la garder longtemps sans qu'elle se gâte. Nous en partagions une grande partie avec les prisonniers qui ne recevaient rien de l'extérieur.

Six mois après mon arrivée au camp, le chef de mon groupe me demanda de prendre des notes sur notre exploitation, de mesurer la terre cultivée et de

déterminer le lot à cultiver pour chacun. Quelques années plus tard cette tâche me fut confiée pour le camp tout entier. Ce qui me permettait de parcourir librement les 200 hectares du camp et de contacter aisément les autres prisonniers. Au cours de ma dernière année au camp, on me demanda encore de traduire divers livres comme par exemple une histoire des missionnaires français au Vietnam de 600 pages.

### **Avez-vous pu quelquefois quitter le camp où vous étiez détenu?**

Oui, à partir de 1987 on a commencé à m'envoyer à Saigon avec deux gardes, une fois par mois, pour prendre des contacts destinés à rendre moins pénible la tâche des prisonniers âgés, pas assez robustes pour le travail des champs. Je trouvais pour eux la matière première à Saigon et, le mois suivant, je ramenaient à Saigon, le produit fini. Les gardiens me permettaient de rester la nuit à la résidence des jésuites, et y demeuraient, eux aussi, comme nos invités.

Environ vingt-cinq prisonniers du camp étaient atteints de tuberculose, sans médicaments pour se soigner. Au cours d'un de mes voyages à Saigon, j'ai pris contact avec les services de santé du gouvernement. J'ai décrit leur situation. Trois jours plus tard, le directeur est venu me voir et m'a laissé une provision de médicaments. Lors d'une autre sortie, j'ai contacté ma communauté de jésuites et obtenu davantage d'argent: si bien que sur vingt-cinq, vingt-trois s'en sont tirés.

### **Quand avez-vous finalement été libéré?**

Après 7 ans d'incarcération, ils ont commencé à réduire ma peine, qui était de 12 ans. Enfin, le 4 janvier 1990, j'ai été libéré après neuf ans de prison. Mes activités étaient encore soumises à des restrictions. Je ne pouvais ni célébrer la messe en public, ni prêcher. Mais je pouvais me déplacer dans les différentes communautés religieuses et y donner les exercices spirituels. Depuis deux ans, je peux enseigner la théologie et l'Écriture sainte aux séminaristes, les jésuites et les autres.

### **Quelle est la situation des vocations au Vietnam, actuellement?**

Il y a beaucoup de vocations, autant qu'avant la chute de Saigon de 1975. La difficulté vient précisément de ce nombre: il y a plus de candidats au sacerdoce que les séminaires ne peuvent en accepter. Il y a six séminaires dans le pays: deux au Nord, deux au Centre et deux au Sud. A cause du manque

de places, les jeunes jésuites ne peuvent entrer dans les séminaires diocésains. C'est donc nous-mêmes qui les formons.

Lorsque les jésuites candidats à l'ordination sont prêts, nous les présentons au gouvernement à qui nous demandons la permission. Cette année, nous en avons sept qui ont fini leur théologie. Il est peu probable que la permission soit donnée à tous les sept. L'année dernière, la permission qui avait été demandée pour deux a été accordée à un seul. Le gouvernement agit ainsi pour montrer son autorité. Chaque année, il ne donne une réponse favorable que pour une partie des demandes. Au cours des cinq dernières années, il y a eu cinq ordinations de jésuites, une par an.

### **Avez-vous ressenti le soutien des jésuites au cours des neuf années de détention?**

Toujours..., en dépit du fait que je n'ai jamais obtenu l'autorisation de recevoir des lettres. Cependant, une fois que j'ai été au camp de travail, des jésuites vietnamiens ont pu venir me voir en se faisant passer pour mes oncles et mes cousins. Le P. Arrupe, lui-même, m'avait accompagné à l'aéroport de Rome en 1975, lorsqu'il m'a envoyé en mission. Après ma libération, en 1990, j'ai eu la permission d'aller à Rome. C'est le P. Kolvenbach, le successeur du P. Arrupe, comme général de la compagnie, qui est venu m'accueillir dans le même aéroport.

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## WHAT CATHOLICS CAN LEARN FROM EVANGELICAL MISSION THEOLOGY

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*Catholics can learn a considerable amount from Evangelical mission theology. This article first reflects on what Catholics can learn in general, and then singles out three particular areas in which Catholics can profit from a study of Evangelical thinking about mission. While Catholics and Evangelicals have several basic disagreements. Catholics can learn from Evangelicals' insistence on (1) the missionary nature of Christian existence, (2) the centrality of evangelism in missionary activity, and (3) the resistance of the "powers" to the Gospel.*

The method that I would like to employ in this theological exploration is that proposed by the Catholic theologian and spiritual writer John S. Dunne. In a number of books, Dunne proceeds by trying to "pass over" to the other, trying his best to be open and sympathetic, allowing himself to be formed and transformed by the object of his reflection and study, but then coming back to his own experience and his own tradition as changed, renewed, and paradoxically confirmed in his identity at a deeper level. Thus, in his first book, *The City of the Gods* (1965), Dunne "passes over" to Gilgamesh's struggle with death; through Gilgamesh's struggle he is not only able to affirm with greater courage that "I, too, will die", but he is also able to confront this inevitable fact with renewed Christian faith. In *The Way of All the Earth* (1972), Dunne passes over to the world's religions, coming back to Christianity with a new sense of Jesus' message and Christianity's power. In *The Reasons of the Heart* (1978), Dunne attempts to move beyond the modern sense of the self by passing over to the human community, only to experience once again the richness of his own solitude; and, to give just one more example, Dunne's *The Church of the Poor Devil* (1982) records his efforts to pass over to the religion of the poor - concretely the poor of Brazil - in order to be transformed in his own bourgeois religiosity (see Nilson 1987).

Following Dunne's method, then, this reflection is an attempt to "pass over" from my own tradition of Roman Catholicism into the world of Evangelical Christianity. Like Dunne I have tried my best to be

open and sympathetic to the Evangelical tradition, and have tried as hard as I could to see the world and the wider Christian tradition with Evangelical eyes. As I have returned to my own tradition, I think I have succeeded in being formed and transformed not only by the richness and depth of this great witness to the power and message of Jesus; I have been formed and transformed as well by its enthusiasm and earnestness. In short, I have learned very much from my journey into evangelicalism, and I want to share the fruits of that journey. What I hope will happen as I share my journey is that those who might read this will "pass over" into my experience, and see my tradition as well as their own through my eyes. What might happen then, I further hope, is that they will come back to their own tradition with renewed understanding and sharpened clarity. Sometimes the best way to see ourselves is to see ourselves through the eyes of another.

I would like to develop these reflections in two parts: first, to make a few *general* remarks about what Catholics might learn from a sympathetic investigation of Evangelical mission theology - negatively first, and then positively; and second, to set out several specific ways in which Catholic theological thinking on our Christian missionary task might profit from Evangelical positions.

### General Reflections

I have found evangelicalism to be a truly "other" tradition in many ways. As Catholic theologian Thomas Stransky has expressed it, perhaps the deepest differences between Catholics and Evangelicals are rooted in differences about the "nature and purpose of the Church" (1991:393). As I understand it, the Evangelical tradition stands or falls on the dignity and freedom of the *individual*, particularly in his or her capacity to exercise "personal responsibility before God, in hearing and obeying [God's] Word" (ERCDOM 1986:18). Roman Catholics begin from a conviction of the radical *ecclesial* nature of Christian existence - Scripture is the fruit of ecclesial reflection and must always be interpreted within an ecclesial matrix. Both Catholics and Evangelicals, of course, can learn very much by taking each other's

fundamental position seriously - as the Final Report of the Evangelical Roman Catholic dialogue on Mission shows; nevertheless, it is from this fundamental disagreement that other basic disagreements emerge, most notably in regard to God's salvific presence among non-Christian religions and cultures (see ERCDOM 1986:35) and the need personally and explicitly to acknowledge Jesus as Lord if one is to experience God's gift of salvation (1986:47). Again, both traditions can profit from reflection on the other's convictions, but it remains true that these are areas where our Churches are in fundamental disagreement, and this rather theoretical disagreement spills over into more immediate issues, such as the relation of evangelism to action for social justice and liberation, the relationship of Gospel and culture, and the possibility of dialogue among people of living faiths. Evangelical hesitation with these issues, of course, comes from another basic principle that makes the tradition "other" for Roman Catholics, and this is the insistence on the total depravity of humanity. As the ERCDOM Report expresses it: "Roman Catholics think Evangelicals overstress the corruption of human beings by affirming their 'total depravity'... while Evangelicals think Roman Catholics underestimate it (i.e., human corruption) and are therefore unwisely optimistic about the capacity, ability and desire of human beings to respond to the grace of God" (1984:40).

However, a Catholic's passing over into the tradition of evangelicalism will be one in which fundamental areas of agreement far outnumber those of disagreement. Basil Meeking's and John Stott's report on the three dialogues between Roman Catholics and Evangelicals offer ample evidence that on a remarkable number of vital issues - e.g., the necessity of divine revelation, the uniqueness of Christ, the Trinitarian roots of missionary activity - the two traditions are in substantial and brotherly/sisterly agreement. And while he maintains a distinct Evangelical viewpoint, Donald Bloesch (1983:ix) says that he has no compunction about referring to himself as a "catholic Evangelical", because he recognises "the need for cults, liturgy and sacraments in addition to personal piety and love for the Scriptures" as well as the need to balance what is sometimes an excessive individualism and rational empiricism in certain Evangelical strains of thought. Having exposed myself in some depth to Evangelical mission theology, I can see a number of strong affinities between the Lausanne Covenant and the Manila Manifesto on the Evangelical side, and *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Redemptoris Missio* on the Catholic side. Not the least of my surprises came from reading a few pages from the vast corpus of E. Stanley Jones. The following lines from a 1934 essay might well have been written by Pius XII or John XXIII:

When I first went to India I did not want to find good in India's religions and culture. But the turning point came because of two things: first of all I had to acknowledge that there were beautiful and good and true things in the non-Christian faiths and cultures; and second, I saw that Jesus came not to destroy any of this, but to fulfil it. We

could then look with sympathy and understanding upon any truth found anywhere. We were no longer mere iconoclasts, but preservers. It is true that a great deal would have to be destroyed, but nothing good or true (1934:188; to compare with the Popes, see Bevans 1993 a:11-12).

Both in terms of where we differ and where we agree, Catholics can learn a great deal in the process of passing over into the theological and missiological world of Evangelicals. Even though we differ so fundamentally in regard to the effects caused by the Fall - a totally corrupt humanity, *versus* a wounded, sinful, but basically good humanity - Catholics can learn from the earnestness with which Evangelicals have and are at present debating the questions of Christian social responsibility, the inculturation of the Gospel, and dialogue with other faith traditions. Catholics can read with great profit, not only what the Lausanne Covenant has to say about social responsibility, but also - and maybe more so - what the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (LCWE) and the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) struggled with in their respective Grand Rapids and Wheaton consultations in 1982 and 1983 (see Scherer and Bevans 1992:253-259; 276-291). They can also learn from a study of the Willowbank Report of 1978 concerning the relationship between the Gospel and culture, and even from the tentative approach to dialogue expressed in the Manila Manifesto and by some Evangelical theologians (Scherer and Bevans 1992:296-297; Covell 1993; Anderson 1993). And since we agree so significantly in so many ways, we should continue learning from each other.

This mutual learning can be done in at least two ways. First, Catholic and Evangelical mission theologians should continue to read one another and talk to one another; I am overwhelmed by the amount of solid, inspiring, and challenging literature written by Evangelical brothers and sisters, and I always come away from gatherings like the annual meeting of the American Society of Missiology refreshed and renewed by my contact with Evangelical women and men of faith. Second, the fact that both Catholics and Evangelicals, separately and together, have called for cooperation and common witness in the task of evangelisation (see *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 50; Scherer and Bevans 1992:256; ERCDOM 1986:83-91; Atlanta 1994) means that both traditions can learn to stop suspecting one another of unworthy motives and begin learning to respect one another's sincerity in spreading the Gospel of the Lord Jesus.

A good friend of mine constantly reminds the members of our religious community, the Society of the Divine Word, that "the enemy is not us". We may have disagreements, and there may be tensions, but compared to the *real* enemies - systemic poverty, rampant consumerism, narcissistic individualism - that roam our world, we should not delude ourselves that our disagreements and tensions are all that fundamental and debilitating. In the same way, Catholics and Evangelicals *are* not, and therefore *should* not be enemies: the enemy is not us. If we can learn to talk to one another, disagree respectfully with each other, and work with each other, there may be no limit to what we can learn from each other.

### Some Specific Reflections

Having talked a bit generally so far about some of the things that Catholics can learn from Evangelicals. I devote the rest of my reflections to three *specific* things that passing over into the world of Evangelical mission theology has taught me, and all Catholics. Catholics can learn from Evangelicals that (1) the call to mission is part and parcel of Christian identity; (2) Christian mission is more than the successful inculturation of the missionary; and (3) evil, human sin, and "the powers" are forces to be reckoned with as Christians preach the Word.

### The Call to Mission is Part and Parcel of Christian Identity

The epochal move in Catholic ecclesiology at the Second Vatican Council was the shift from understanding the Church first and foremost as a hierarchy to understanding the Church as a mystery, a community, a "people brought into unity from the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" (*Lumen Gentiu*, n. 4, quoting Cyprian). Accordingly, the basic operative image of the Church at and immediately after the Council was that of the People of God: the Church was not to be imaged in terms of a hierarchical pyramid, but in terms of a communal circle. This shift was an extremely important one, and one that not every part of Catholicism has understood in all its ramifications. But already at the Council another shift was beginning to develop, one that conceived the Church not only as a community, but as a community-in-mission, a community the very identity of which is rooted in the outgoing love of the Creator God who became humanly accessible in the Incarnate Word and who continues to stir human hearts through the Holy Spirit. It is this notion of the Church and the Christian life that was expressed by the whole tenor of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the

Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), by the recurrent image of the Church as the "sacrament of salvation" (*Lumen Gentiu*, n. 1,48; *Ad Gentes*, n. 1), and by the idea that the Church is "missionary by its very nature" (*Ad Gentes*, n. 2).

As rich as this emerging ecclesiology is, however, and as often as the missionary nature of the Church and indeed of Christian life has been expressed in subsequent Catholic theology and Church teaching (see Scherer and Bevans 1992:135; *Redemptoris Missio*, n. 2), this more extroverted notion of the Church needs constantly to be reinforced in the Catholic psyche. This is where Catholics can learn from Evangelical theology, which builds the notion of missionary service into its very definition.

If someone were to ask the ordinary Catholic what it meant to be a Catholic, he or she would probably answer that it meant to believe in Jesus Christ, to honour Mary, and to obey the Pope and the Pope's representatives, the priests. A more sophisticated Catholic might answer that it meant to believe in Jesus Christ within the context of a sacramental, critical realist, incarnational world-view, and with the support of a loving, caring, and sometimes challenging community. But I believe that few Catholics would include the Church's mission in their very definition of Catholicism. I wonder if such ignoring of the missionary dimension of Christian life is possible, however, for Evangelicals. The main features of evangelicalism might be characterised as "confidence in the power of the Gospel and the authority of the Scriptures, coupled with a passionate desire to reach out and share the Good News with others" (Scherer and Bevans 1992:xvi). Or, as Bloesch expresses it:

If asked to list the key elements in a vital Christian faith, an Evangelical in the classical sense might well reply: biblical fidelity, apostolic doctrine, the experience of salvation, the imperative of discipleship, and the urgency of mission. Holding firm to the doctrine taught by the Prophets and Apostles in Holy Scripture, Evangelicals stress the need for personal experience of the reality of Christ's salvation as well as the need to carry out the great commission to teach all people to be his disciples and to call all nations to repentance (1983:17).

Again, it is not that Catholic ecclesiology does not contain very much the same content - it certainly does, as any reading of the documents of the Second Vatican Council, *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and *Redemptoris Missio*, will attest; and, as Evangelical friends have pointed out, struggle over the priority of



mission among Evangelicals is also a constant reality (see Hunter 1994:157-174). My point, however, is that I sense that the missionary conviction is more up front among Evangelicals, and that Catholics can learn from this. It strikes me that Evangelical theology has a genuine mission dimension built in: Evangelical theology is already - at least in some significant way - missiology.

### **Christian Mission Is More Than Successful Enculturation of the Missionary**

In the past year at Catholic Theological Union (CTU, where I am a member of the faculty), there has been an ongoing conversation regarding the revision of our specialisation in mission within the master of divinity programme. Such a revision is sorely needed because in my opinion the specialisation has been rather diluted over the years, and has lost the precise focus that it had when it was first introduced in the 1970's. When the revised mission specialisation programme was presented, however, what was unclear was how "mission" involved more than "cross-cultural ministry". In the draft proposal, "mission" was understood as almost identical to crossing a culture well, opening up to the reality of God that is already present in that culture, and allowing oneself to be "evangelised by the culture". The student who specialised in mission was free to take several "supporting courses" in mission, such as "Missionary Dynamics of the Church" and "Christology and Cultures", but none of the courses "in the concentration itself" (as the proposal read) were theological - several had to do with mission history, but most were courses which highlighted (in the words of the proposal) "the dynamics of culture in a particular area of study and the implications of culture for mission and ministry". What I realised with some chagrin was that what Evangelicals call "evangelism" had been pretty much excluded from the heart of our mission specialisation - unintentionally, of course, but it had been done.

I definitely think that the appreciation and study of culture is a major aspect of mission studies, and that a strong cultural awareness is essential in any and every effort of evangelisation - even in this culture as Leslie Newbigin in Britain and George Hunsberger in this country have recently pointed out. What I also believe, however, is that we Catholics have tended sometimes to obfuscate the fact that there is a message that we need to carry to our world, and that mission can be reduced to "being evangelised by a culture", learning from others, and working for justice - all of this very much along the lines of conciliar Protestant missiology in the 1960's,

the missiology which provoked the convocation of the Lausanne Conference in 1974 (Scherer and Bevans 1992: xviii).

As a Catholic, I strongly believe in the sacred, sacramental nature of human culture; I also believe in the sacredness of other religious traditions and in the need to be evangelised by practitioners of these traditions on the various levels of inter-religious dialogue. Furthermore, I am convinced that the Gospel is rightly preached only when the Church is on the side of those who do not count in the world's eyes, and when Christians take a stand for social justice, human dignity, and ecological wholeness. But I also believe in the healing, saving, and fulfilling presence and message of the person of Jesus Christ, and I think that we Catholics need to be reminded of this time and again. Crossing cultures and inculturation of the Gospel, religious dialogue, and social responsibility - all these need to go hand in hand with God's invitation in Christ to become a human community within the divine community of the Trinity. While I will not go so far as to say that this action of evangelism is primary (implying that other aspects are secondary), I certainly would agree with the Lausanne Covenant (#6) that "world evangelisation requires the whole Church to take the whole Gospel to the whole world" (Scherer and Bevans 1992:256).

In the final round of conversations on our mission specialisation at CTU, I was engaged in reading Evangelical theology of mission, and what I found really helped me to articulate my objections to the proposal as it was formulated. Central to the theology of mission, I realised, were issues clustered around the nature of the church and the reality of Jesus, and I found the way the Evangelical documents and Evangelical theologians stated these issues was clear and refreshing. Paragraph four of the Lausanne Covenant puts it unambiguously:

Our Christian presence in the world is indispensable to evangelism, and so is that kind of dialogue whose purpose is to listen sensitively in order to understand. But evangelism itself is the proclamation of the historical, biblical Christ as Saviour (1 Cor 1:23; 2 Cor 4:5) and Lord, with a view to persuading people to come to him personally and so be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:11,20) (Scherer and Bevans 1992:255).

Interestingly enough, reading Evangelical sources helped me to gain a new appreciation of Pope John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio*. I still find the Christocentrism of the Encyclical too narrow, and I wish *Ad Gentes* ' wider Trinitarian perspective could

be more developed (see Bevans 1993b), but I definitely agree that mission is more than simply helping people discover and unearth what *is already there*. *It is certainly that, but Evangelical mission theology has reminded me that this is not all that mission is.*

Such a perspective has not only helped me. Because of this, we have had even more profound conversations, not just on the academic issue of concentrations, but on the whole nature of mission and mission studies. Ironically, even though there is a significant amount of Catholic literature that could have been of help, it took a passing over into Evangelical theology to open my own eyes.

### **Evil, Sin, and "the Powers" Are Forces To Be Reckoned With as Christians Preach the Word**

Catholics are basically optimistic persons. We certainly recognise the existence of sin and evil, but we have a deep sense of the basic goodness of creation and the ineradicable presence of the divine in the world. Like Fr Flanagan of Boys' Town, the Catholic spirit insists that it has "never met a bad boy"; or as the lonely, rejected, cancer-ridden priest attests in the final line of Bernanos' *Diary of a Country Priest*, "All is Grace". For Catholics, "the world is charged with the grandeur of God".

I absolutely believe all of this, but sometimes we Catholics take our optimism too far - or better yet, while our Christian faith calls us to profound *hope*, *optimism* may not really be what is called for at all. This had come home to me in a number of extremely concrete ways in the past, but none was as crushing a blow as the murder of a former student of mine on 29 September 1993, in Waterloo, Iowa. Darek - the Polish nickname for Dariusz - was 25 years old and had come from Poland about three years before to study theology at CTU and to continue his training for the priesthood in my religious community, the Society of the Divine Word. A year before, Darek had decided that Catholic religious life (life in community, and living the vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience) was not for him, and so he left our community and continued his schooling at the University of Northern Iowa at Waterloo. While working at night in a laundromat, he was approached by a masked man who had been ordered to kill a person as part of his initiation into a gang. The man walked into the laundromat, pointed a gun several inches from Darek's head, and pulled the trigger.

Stupid, senseless, meaningless, unjustified, evil, sinful - Darek's murder was just one more killing in

Waterloo that year, and one in thousands across the country where innocent children, young and old, men and women are sometimes deliberately and sometimes mistakenly and accidentally cut down. Putting this together with the craziness in Somalia and Haiti and the absolute insanity in Bosnia, Rwanda, and the Gaza Strip, I am more and more convinced that while I might still be able to hope, it is blasphemy to be optimistic about the world and about humanity.

I still cannot accept the doctrine of total human depravity because I believe that the tragedy of sin lies less in the actuation of depravity than in a perversion of God's ever-present grace, but I am more and more convinced of the stark reality and even independent (at least in some sense) existence of evil. I remember shaking my head in disbelief when I first heard about the notion of "power encounter"; now I wonder about the reality of what Paul and Pauline literature calls "principalities and powers" (see Wink 1984; Kraft 1989 and 1992).

Curiously, as far as I know, there is no section in Catholic teaching comparable to paragraph 12 of the Lausanne Covenant (Scherer and Bevans 1992:258) which begins: "We believe that we are engaged in constant spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil (Eph 6:12), who are seeking to overthrow the Church and frustrate its task of world evangelisation" (2 Cor 4:3,4). And I believe that we Catholics can learn from our Evangelical brothers and sisters about a more cautious approach to our world and a more realistic appraisal of what are considerable obstacles to our mission work.

Though they do not always use the biblical language of "powers", members of The Gospel and Our Culture Network, many of whom are Evangelicals, point to the subtle evil in the culture of modernity - our isolating individualism, our addictive consumerism, our blinding empiricism - and insist that the only way to preach the Gospel in our day is to be overtly *counter-cultural*. Again, although I will not agree completely, this basic suspicion of the works of this world is something that we Catholics need to take to heart. Evangelical theology of the powers and of the power of evil can be used to supplement what is an impressive body of papal teaching about the dangers of contemporary secular society.

### **Conclusion**

At the beginning of his exposition of the thought of the great Cambridge theologian John Wood Oman, F.G. Healey tells the story about a visiting scholar to the

university who gave a lecture one afternoon on Oman's thought. To people's considerable surprise, Oman attended the lecture, and when the speaker finished his paper. Oman stood up to comment that he would leave the room so that discussion on the lecture could proceed more freely - but he did want to say that he did not recognise his portrait in what was drawn that afternoon! Healey comments wryly that as Oman left, "the embarrassed silence was broken only by the echoes of his retreating footsteps" (Healey 1965: vii). Schleiermacher may be right in his idea that the interpreter often knows the process of a writer's development better than the writer himself or herself, but it is also possible that a particular interpretation may be a misinterpretation. I do not know whether all Evangelicals will recognise the portrait of Evangelical Christianity that I have set out in this paper,

or whether my interpretation of Evangelical mission theology is a helpful one. What I do know, however, is that I have tried to pass over into a way of theologising that is in many ways similar, but in significant ways quite different from my own tradition. In my sojourn in this strange country, I have learned many things - not least of all that I need to plan another journey and stay longer. For now, however, I have returned to my own country of Roman Catholicism, and I have returned refreshed, inspired, and enriched.

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# ANNONCE ET DIALOGUE

## INTER-RELIGIEUX:

### UNE COMPREHENSION INCLUSIVE

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La sensibilité de l'Eglise catholique au dialogue inter-religieux a reçu une impulsion décisive au concile Vatican II. Durant la période post-conciliaire, le Magistère a prolongé cette sensibilité en l'approfondissant. Des réflexions des spécialistes, des expériences religieuses, des multiples rencontres et des formes variées de collaboration font qu'aujourd'hui le dialogue inter-religieux est d'une actualité indéniable. C'est une expérience qui enrichit les uns et les autres; elle force les membres à approfondir toujours davantage le sens des religions et leurs éléments fondamentaux. Dans le contexte de l'évangélisation, le Magistère a approfondi le rapport entre *annonce et dialogue*. Des réflexions du Magistère, retenons cette affirmation-ci: «le dialogue inter-religieux et l'annonce, sans être sur le même plan, sont tous les deux des éléments authentiques de la mission évangélisatrice de l'Eglise. Tous les deux sont légitimes et nécessaires. Ils sont intimement liés mais non interchangeables».

Cet article voudrait mettre en évidence l'apport du Synode pour l'Afrique à la compréhension et à la pratique du dialogue inter-religieux. Il s'agira concrètement de souligner comment ce Synode comprend le dialogue inter-religieux tant du point de vue de ses racines doctrinales que de son application concrète.

#### 1. RACINES DOCTRINALES

Aussi bien dans sa préparation qu'au cours de sa célébration romaine, le Synode présente l'évangélisation sur l'arrière-fond d'une triple conviction doctrinale: 1) la dimension trinitaire comme lieu de lecture de l'histoire du salut; 2) l'ecclésiologie articulée sur le Royaume de Dieu,

comme espace de rencontre avec les autres traditions religieuses; 3) la foi entendue comme une adhésion personnelle et communautaire à la personne de Jésus-Christ dans le contexte historique.

#### 1.1. Enracinement trinitaire

Que la mission soit enracinée dans la Sainte Trinité signifie principalement que celle-ci est la source, le modèle et la finalité de la mission. Se référant au Nouveau Testament, en particulier à Mt 28, 19-20, l'*Instrumentum Laboris* rappelle que la mission découle du Père, qui envoie son Fils dans le monde: le Fils envoie le Saint-Esprit pour la continuation de sa mission; l'Esprit-Saint descend sur les apôtres, et les voilà envoyés pour annoncer la Bonne Nouvelle jusqu'aux extrémités de la terre. Dans la mesure où «l'évangélisation n'est autre que la continuation de la mission du Fils dans l'Esprit», mais se fait à la lumière, à l'exemple de Jésus-Christ, «Evangile de Dieu», «le tout premier et le plus grand évangéliste». Restaurateur d'une famille humaine à l'image de la Famille trinitaire, Jésus nous invite à suivre son exemple: «comme le Père m'a envoyé, moi aussi je vous envoie». Aussi, affirme le Synode, «l'Eglise se définit-elle comme la communauté de tous «ceux qui accueillent avec sincérité la Bonne Nouvelle (...) se réunissent donc au Nom de Jésus pour chercher ensemble le Règne, le construire, le vivre. Ils constituent une communauté qui est à son tour évangélisatrice». Voilà qui amène l'*Instrumentum Laboris* à dire que la finalité de la mission consiste à «inviter l'humanité à participer à la vie même de la Trinité. Elle offre «la grâce du Seigneur Jésus-Christ, l'amour de Dieu et la communion du Saint-Esprit» (2 Co 13,13).

Un autre aspect que le Synode relève de cet enracinement trinitaire de la mission est celui de la présence de l'action du Père, du Fils et de l'Esprit

Saint chez tous les hommes et toutes les femmes, y compris leurs diverses traditions religieuses: «Le Dieu vivant, créateur du Ciel et de la Terre et maître de l'histoire, est le Père de la Grande Famille humaine que nous formons; Il veut que nous témoignions de lui dans le respect de la foi, des valeurs et des traditions religieuses propres à chacun». «Jésus-Christ, Fils Unique et bien-aimé, est venu sauver chaque peuple et en son sein chaque homme; Il est venu rejoindre chacun sur le chemin culturel où l'ont laissé ses ancêtres». L'humanité est la famille de Dieu, «un même sang circule dans nos artères, et c'est le sang de Jésus-Christ; un même Esprit nous anime, et c'est l'Esprit Saint, fécondité infinie de l'amour de Dieu». Ainsi le Synode prévient l'exclusivisme «théocentrique», dépasse le «christo-monisme» et évite le «pneumato-monisme». Royaume, Mission et Église sont structurellement articulés. L'Église apparaît clairement comme communion avec le Dieu Père, Fils et Saint-Esprit, c'est-à-dire peuple de Dieu, Corps du Christ et Temple du Saint-Esprit.

## 1.2. Une ecclésiologie articulée sur le Royaume de Dieu

L'Église, Famille de Dieu sur terre, fait partie de cette société avec ses peines, ses joies, ses espérances et ses craintes. La tâche de l'Église est

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***Il apparaît donc clairement que le Synode invite à reconnaître l'importance de ces religions, à les respecter, à y voir la présence salvifique de Dieu; le Synode encourage un dialogue franc et sincère avec elles, une collaboration dans la vie, une recherche de tout élément susceptible de favoriser le dialogue et la collaboration; le Synode insiste sur la nécessité de connaître ces religions de l'intérieur.***

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«d'offrir à cette société la Bonne Nouvelle de la Rédemption du Christ, et d'être le sacrement, le signe et l'instrument du Royaume de Dieu». L'Église est donc au service du Royaume de Dieu prêché par Jésus-Christ; elle est au service de la mission: l'Église est pour la mission et la mission pour le Royaume. «Il y a évangélisation quand les chrétiens travaillent de concert avec des hommes de bonne volonté pour réaliser le dessein de Dieu... Chaque fois que la volonté de Dieu est faite, le règne de Dieu est réalisé. La où quelqu'un apporte la vie, la

liberté et le bonheur aux hommes, là est l'évangélisation».

Certes, le Règne de Dieu est déjà présent, mais il est aussi à construire sans cesse; l'Église «est appelée à continuer sa découverte et sa reconnaissance des signes de la présence du Christ et de l'action de l'Esprit dans l'histoire, et à collaborer avec tous les hommes de bonne volonté pour le salut et le bien-être de tous». Il s'agit, affirme-t-on au Synode, de «promouvoir la paix et la justice, de restaurer la dignité humaine et de porter ce monde aussi près que possible des desseins de Dieu», et cela concerne «tous les hommes et chacun d'entre eux, ainsi que tous les aspects de la vie humaine». L'on comprend dès lors que le Synode ait privilégié l'image de «famille» pour désigner l'Église. «Lieu de reproduction, de transmission et protection de la vie, lieu d'apprentissage et d'intériorisation des valeurs culturelles, lieu de communion, de solidarité, d'entraide, de partage et d'accueil fraternels, lieu du vivre-ensemble, la famille est la base existentielle de l'homme en société». Complétée par d'autres images, dont celle du peuple de Dieu, et éclairée par la théologie trinitaire, l'image de «famille» s'applique bien à l'Église dans le contexte africain.

## 1.3. Une foi personnelle, communautaire, dynamique et engagée

Parlant de la foi, le Synode met l'accent sur l'adhésion personnelle à Jésus-Christ, un adhésion qui touche toute la personne. par la foi il s'établit entre Dieu et l'homme un lien de réciprocité, un «dialogue d'amour».

Don gratuit de Dieu, réponse positive et libre de l'homme, la foi est non seulement une expérience personnelle, mais aussi un cheminement communautaire. La conversion concerne non seulement les personnes mais aussi les collectivités et les structures dans lesquelles elles vivent. Le Synode souligne l'importance des communautés chrétiennes vivantes à taille humaine comme lieu d'une évangélisation en profondeur et d'une vie de foi personnalisée. Dans ces communautés, «règnent la gratuité, la solidarité, un sort commun; chacun y est motivé à construire la famille de Dieu, famille entièrement ouverte sur le monde, et qui n'exclut absolument personne». Ces communautés «sont le cadre approprié d'intériorisation et de vérification des valeurs évangéliques».

La foi est aussi une expérience dynamique. «Les catholiques, rappelle l'*Instrumentum Laboris*,

doivent être conscients que la foi n'est pas statique mais entre en dialogue constant avec les divers milieux humains». Toujours en cheminement, le croyant ne manquera pas au rendez-vous de «donner et du recevoir»; car, affirme le Synode, «comme serviteurs de la vie de Dieu dans le cœur des hommes, nous sommes tenus de communiquer les uns aux autres le meilleur de notre foi en Dieu, notre Père commun». Les chrétiens ne disposent pas de la Vérité comme d'un acquis; aussi sont-ils tenus de s'ouvrir à la Vérité, et de travailler pour son triomphe. Le dialogue interreligieux est un lieu d'interpellation et d'enrichissement mutuels. Les chrétiens doivent savoir que la parole de Dieu qu'ils annoncent les invite, eux-mêmes aussi, à une continuelle conversion.

La foi, rappelle le Synode avec insistance, est une expérience qui exige un engagement dans le concret de la vie. La foi, lit-on dans le Message du Synode, «n'est pas d'abord une théorie mais une vie, une rencontre d'amour qui bouleverse notre vie aujourd'hui comme au début de l'Église». L'appel au dialogue ne signifie pas un nivellement de toutes les religions ni une mise entre parenthèses de sa propre foi. Le Synode rappelle que «ceux qui s'engagent dans le dialogue doivent être cohérents avec les traditions et convictions chrétiennes, parce que dans la recherche de la Vérité, pour le chrétien, la norme c'est le Christ». Il faut savoir dire, célébrer et vivre sa foi, car il s'agit d'un partage à d'autres d'une expérience à la fois personnelle et communautaire, un rendre-compte d'une adhésion personnelle et communautaire à quelqu'un, Jésus-Christ. Prolongeant ce que le Pape Jean-Paul II dit dans *Redemptoris Missio*, le *Message du Synode* affirme que «la foi porte en elle-même une expérience missionnaire. La certitude d'avoir découvert en Jésus «la perle précieuse» du Royaume de Dieu opère une transformation qui entraîne une nouveauté de vie; elle provoque un arrachement, elle désinstalle et met sur le chemin de la mission vers l'intérieur et vers l'extérieur, jusqu'aux confins du monde».

Pour le chrétien, la place du Christ doit être primordiale. C'est en Jésus-Christ en effet qu'historiquement Dieu s'est révélé à nous; Jésus-Christ est donc le centre de notre démarche de foi. Pour mieux dire cette foi, l' *Instrumentum Laboris* estime «nécessaire de reformuler, particulièrement en Afrique, les dogmes et les expériences de foi catholique dans un langage accessible aux interlocuteurs du dialogue». L'accent christologique appelle la préoccupation ecclésiologique. Dans son action salvatrice. Jésus associe des hommes et des

femmes qui constituent son Corps. C'est en tant que membres du Corps du Christ que les chrétiens se disent Église du Christ. Cela fait partie de leur identité: ils ont à la dire, à la célébrer et à la partager.

## 2. AU NIVEAU PRATIQUE

Envisager l'histoire humaine comme une histoire menée par Dieu-Trinité, mettre en évidence une Église au service du Royaume de Dieu et insister sur le caractère personnel, communautaire, dynamique et historique de la foi ouvre un large espace au dialogue entre partenaires de diverses traditions religieuses. Telle est la conviction du Synode. Une telle conviction conduit le Synode à définir quelques orientations pratiques relatives au dialogue interreligieux. Nous en retenons quatre qui nous semblent principales: 1) exigences du dialogue intra-ecclésial et oecuménique; 2) vision positive des autres traditions religieuses; 3) reconnaissance de la tension commune vers la Vérité; 4) espérance et ténacité dans le dialogue, dans la fidélité au Christ.

### 2.1. Exigences du dialogue intra-ecclésial et oecuménique

Il est instructif de constater l'évolution qu'a subie le traitement du thème sur le dialogue depuis les *Lineamenta* jusqu'au *Message du Synode*. Progressivement en effet le chapitre consacré au dialogue a incorporé en son sein le dialogue au sein de l'Église, aspect qui ne figurait pas dans les *Lineamenta* ni dans l' *Instrumentum Laboris*. Ces deux documents s'étaient limités au dialogue entre les catholiques et les autres. La même logique se retrouve dans la *Relatio ante disceptationem*.

Dans les interventions au Synode émergent, du sein du chapitre consacré au dialogue, des aspects traitant du dialogue au sein de l'Église. Le *Message du Synode* explique en quelque sorte la raison d'une telle évolution: «l'Eglise-Famille a sa source dans la Sainte-Trinité, au sein de laquelle l'Esprit-Saint est la Relation de Communion. elle sait que la qualité de relation que permet une communauté est l'expression de sa valeur intrinsèque». C'est évident: pour l'Église, promouvoir un dialogue avec les autres exige qu'elle soit elle-même animée de l'esprit du dialogue. «Comment, se demande-t-on au Synode, l'Église peut-elle continuer de cheminer timidement dans la désunion et la division scandaleuses quand on sait que l'unité des chrétiens a été l'un des trois objectifs fondamentaux de Vatican II?».

Le Synode ne s'est pas contenté de parler de dialogue; sur le plan de l'oecuménisme, il a posé un geste concret: 7 Délégués fraternels ont pris part au Synode, représentant l'Église Copte Orthodoxe du Patriarcat d'Alexandrie, l'Église grecque Orthodoxe du patriarcat d'Alexandrie, l'Église Ethiope Orthodoxe, la Communion Anglicane, la Fédération Luthérienne mondiale, la Conférence des Églises de toute l'Afrique. Cette présence a été très appréciée de tous: «le Synode leur a été reconnaissant pour leurs adresses à l'Assemblée et pour leur participation aux travaux». par les personnes des délégués, le Synode a vu les représentants des différentes confessions qui existent en Afrique. Leur présence a été pour le Synode un rappel permanent de la nécessité de garder présente à nos esprits la dimension oecuménique de notre témoignage. Le dialogue entre chrétiens de diverses confessions est prioritaire; il répond au souhait du Christ: «pour que tous soient un, comme toi, Père, tu es en moi, et moi en toi. Qu'ils soient un en nous, eux aussi, pour que le monde croie que tu m'a envoyé». Chacun des Délégués fraternels, dans son intervention, a exprimé, au nom de son Église, la reconnaissance pour cette invitation historique, signe de la grâce de Dieu qui invite tous les chrétiens à l'unité.

Il eût certes été très enrichissant et significatif si des musulmans et des adeptes de la Religion Traditionnelle Africaine avaient été invités à participer au Synode. On sait, en effet, que les membres de ces religions sont numériquement très importants dans le continent africain. Ce constat pourrait être transformé en critique. Il faut, néanmoins, noter qu'ils étaient au coeur du Synode. Dès l'inauguration solennelle du Synode, le Pape, dans son homélie, leur adresse un message: «l'Église de Rome s'incline devant les populations africaines, et tout particulièrement devant leurs traditions religieuses qui, par leurs ardentes vénération des

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ancêtres, expriment si bien leur recherche du Dieu unique». «L'Église de Rome, continue le Pape salue tous les disciples de l'Islam qui vivent dans le

continent africain, en particulier dans sa partie septentrionale. Elle leur souhaite de recevoir la bénédiction du Dieu tout-puissant et miséricordieux».

Le même accueil leur est réservé par le Cardinal Fr. Arinze, l'un des trois Présidents délégués du Synode, dans son allocution d'ouverture: «nous n'oublions pas pas non plus les fidèles de la Religion Traditionnelle Africaine, les Musulmans du Continent Africain et vraiment tous les habitants du continent quel que puisse être leur credo. Ils seront présents à nos coeurs et à nos esprits tandis que nous délibérerons».

## 2.2. Vision positive des autres traditions religieuses

Dans le contexte du dialogue inter-religieux le Synode parle surtout de l'Islam et de la Religion Traditionnelle Africaine (RTA). Les autres religions du monde étant très faiblement représentées en Afrique, le Synode n'en parle pratiquement pas. Néanmoins, dans ces deux documents il est dit: «Le dialogue avec elles, là où elles existent, ne peut être renvoyé indéfiniment».

*Instrumentum Laboris* relève certaines difficultés que présente l'Islam en Afrique. Dans la *Relatio ante disceptationem* on note que «l'Islam est décrit dans les documents de ce Synode comme «un partenaire important mais difficile» dans le domaine du dialogue»; «par souci de vérité et d'objectivité du côté chrétien, continue la *Relatio ante disceptationem*, il ne serait pas honnête de fermer les yeux sur les nombreux cas de difficultés réelles et sérieuses dans la pratique des relations islamo-chrétiennes». La *Relatio post disceptationem* reconnaît que concernant l'Islam il y a une diversité de situations et que celles-ci «varient de très bonnes à très difficiles». La *Relatio post disceptationem* évoque certaines situations dramatiques vécues dans certains pays où l'on tue et l'on inflige des sanctions sévères au nom de l'Islam; elle évoque également l'émergence et le développement d'un Islam fondamentaliste et expansionniste.

Quant à la RTA, c'est dans *Instrumentum Laboris* que sont mis en évidence ses aspects négatifs. Par contre les réflexions ultérieures sont très ténues quant aux aspects négatifs.

Par rapport à l'Islam et à la RTA, les réflexions générales du Synode sont plus préoccupées de promouvoir le dialogue et donc de mettre en évidence l'attitude d'ouverture, d'amitié, de

reconnaissance et de respect. Le Synode insiste sur une vision positive à leur égard. Dans un passé pas si lointain, on parlait aisément de paganisme, d'animisme et de fétichisme pour qualifier la RTA, le Synode n'adopte pas ce langage. Le Synode, au contraire, recommande «un dialogue structuré autour de l'héritage religieux et culturel... avec les garants de nos valeurs culturelles et de notre religion traditionnelle». Le dialogue avec elle contribuera aux efforts d'inculturation du message chrétien en Afrique. L'on sait par ailleurs que le Synode a reconnu le caractère urgent et prioritaire de l'inculturation du message chrétien en Afrique. L'inculturation doit permettre l'éclosion d'un christianisme en profondeur, d'une rencontre personnelle et communautaire avec Jésus-Christ dans son contexte de vie. Une telle inculturation concerne toute la vie de l'Église: théologie, liturgie, catéchèse, sacrements, pastorale, droit, communication, vie consacrée, etc. Elle devra toucher l'homme en société sous ses divers aspects. Elle devra être menée par toute la communauté chrétienne en lien avec l'Église universelle, chaque membre apportant sa contribution spécifique, tous étant ouverts à l'Esprit.

Concernant l'Islam, le Synode est conscient qu'un tel regard positif pourrait paraître naïf. Au contraire, affirme-t-on au Synode, il n'y a ni «faiblesse et encore moins complaisance». Il s'agit de mettre en pratique le dialogue sans oublier de démasquer ce qui est contraire aux valeurs du Royaume. Le *Message du Synode* est clair là-dessus: «le Dieu vivant, créateur du Ciel et de la Terre et Maître de l'histoire, est le Père de la Grande Famille humaine que nous formons. Il veut que nous témoignions de lui dans le respect de la foi, des valeurs et des traditions religieuses propres à chacun. Il veut que nous travaillions ensemble pour la promotion humaine et le développement à tous les niveaux, au service du bien commun, *en assurant le respect réciproque de la liberté des personnes et des communautés. Il ne veut pas être l'idole au nom de laquelle on tuerait d'autres hommes. Il veut au contraire que, dans la justice et la paix, nous nous mettions ensemble au service de la vie*».

Il apparaît donc clairement que le Synode invite à reconnaître l'importance de ces religions, à les respecter, à y voir la présence salvifique de Dieu; le Synode encourage un dialogue franc et sincère avec elles, une collaboration dans la vie, une recherche de tout élément susceptible de favoriser le dialogue et la collaboration; le Synode insiste sur la nécessité de connaître ces religions de l'intérieur: une formation devra être assurée aussi bien aux prêtres qu'aux

personnes consacrées et aux laïcs; des Centres de recherches, des colloques de réflexion, des structures de dialogue et des rencontres pour un partage d'expériences spirituelles sont encouragés.

Cette vision positive sur les religions va plus loin. Le Synode en effet note que le dialogue ne se limite pas à l'intérieur de l'Église, ni dans le contexte oecuménique ou inter-religieux; le dialogue doit embrasser l'humanité entière, avec toutes ses valeurs, ses aspirations et ses idéaux; «car l'ensemble de l'humanité est d'une certaine manière la famille de Dieu».

### **2.3. Reconnaissance de la nécessité pour tous de tendre vers la Vérité**

Annonce et dialogue inter-religieux comportent des risques; ils rencontrent des obstacles et des résistances; il faut être prêt à les assumer, mais toujours dans l'Esprit du Christ. «Tout espoir entretenu doit s'enraciner dans la conviction que la charité du Christ peut avoir raison de tous les obstacles». L'Église est tenue de proclamer explicitement la Bonne Nouvelle, car «l'Évangile du Christ ne peut être enchaîné». Mais cette proclamation se fera avec un zèle pacifique et une audace évangélique, en fidélité au Seigneur.

Le Synode insiste sur la nécessité d'un dialogue avec l'Islam et la RTA, «dialogue entendu au sens de dialogue de vie dans le concret de l'existence, et de dialogue spirituel ou dialogue de salut dans le Christ». Avec nos frères et soeurs musulmans, «quelles que soient les difficultés de la situation, c'est un devoir de chercher de meilleures relations en mettant en lumière les valeurs religieuses et humaines que nous partageons et en intensifiant notre évangélisation par une présence et un témoignage vivant, souvent silencieux, mais toujours réel». L'exemple de la vie chrétienne, vécue dans la fidélité au Christ, est la meilleure réponse au défi de l'Islam extrémiste. «Nous savons que le Seigneur est avec son Église... Opposons l'amour à la haine, renforçons la foi de nos fidèles; par le témoignage de leur vie, et de leur amour, ils vaincront le monde avec Jésus-Christ». Aussi le Synode encourage-t-il, en milieux musulmans, la vie contemplative, le dialogue de vie, la prière, la patience, la simplicité, la prudence, le témoignage apostolique, la présence des prêtres de l'Afrique noire comme *Fidei donum*, l'action évangélisatrice des femmes auprès des femmes musulmanes, le rôle des étudiants chrétiens de l'Afrique noire. S'adressant aux musulmans, le Synode les rassure que l'Église en Afrique entend «développer avec



eux, partout sur le continent, les collaborations de la Paix et de la Justice, qui seules peuvent rendre gloire à Dieu».

On pourrait dire que «le dialogue islamo-chrétien est dépassé au moment où les courants islamistes suscitent, en certains pays musulmans, des groupes armés et dressent leurs adeptes contre tous ceux qui ne partagent pas leurs idées... La fidélité à leur vocation - dans ce contexte difficile - des prêtres, des religieux, des religieuses et des laïcs missionnaires, prouve que ce développement des courants fondamentalistes de l'Islam ne justifie pas un abandon des travaux du dialogue dans lesquels beaucoup de chrétiens, vivant auprès des musulmans, sont engagés depuis Vatican II». «Bien au contraire, affirme-t-on au Synode, l'action de ces groupes montre l'urgence d'une reconnaissance réciproque entre hommes et femmes de bonne volonté, chrétiens, musulmans et autres, pour des collaborations quotidiennes et de solidarités spirituelles, selon les formes indiquées à chacun par l'Esprit de Dieu».

### **3. ANNONCE ET DIALOGUE: DIMENSIONS CONSTITUTIVES DE LA MISSION**

Le Synode met en relief, d'une manière claire, l'interaction entre l'annonce et le dialogue comme deux dimensions constitutives du processus évangélisateur. Si elles ne sont pas interchangeables, elles se compénètrent néanmoins. Ainsi le Synode dépasse la dichotomie qui ferait de l'une l'extérieure de l'autre. Le Synode les présente selon une compréhension inclusive; une compénétration. L'annonce souligne certes la conviction personnelle de partager aux autres sa propre foi; mais ce partage, à l'exemple de Jésus-Christ, source, modèle et finalité du dialogue, ne se fait pas d'une manière orgueilleuse et autoritaire; il ne s'impose pas; il respecte la conviction de l'autre. Le Synode est conscient qu'aucun humain ne dispose de la vérité d'une manière définitive. Dans l'annonce on ne s'adresse pas uniquement à l'autre, mais à soi-même aussi; l'annonciateur se trouve autant interpellé par le message qu'il annonce que le destinataire de ce message; tous deux sont invités à marcher vers la Vérité.

Dans le processus du dialogue inter-religieux, le dialogue ne se limite pas à être une méthode, un moyen, une technique ou une stratégie en vue de «gagner» l'autre; il est d'abord un lieu d'évangélisation, une dimension de l'évangélisation. Il souligne l'universalité du salut et la dialectique du «déjà-là» et «pas-encore» du Royaume. «Nos

relations avec nos partenaires musulmans donnent à notre amour du Prochain ces deux notes spécifiques de la charité évangélique: la gratuité et l'universalité (...) L'engagement ensemble, chrétiens et musulmans, pour servir les plus pauvres, pour faire la vérité dans la société, pour assurer le respect des droits de l'homme, pour soutenir ceux des femmes ou des minorités, etc., toute cette action commune appartient aux travaux du Royaume de Dieu».

### **Conclusion**

Au Synode, l'Église d'Afrique a interrogé critiquement ses relations avec les religions, en particulier l'Islam et la RTA; elle s'est défiée de cette propension malade qui consiste à attribuer ses propres difficultés aux autres; elle s'est remise courageusement en question; elle a plaidé pour un dialogue inter-religieux franc, sincère et audacieux. Pour avoir situé le fondement de la mission dans la Sainte-Trinité, le Synode a développé une théologie des religions très positive.

Au terme de cette réflexion qui a consisté à mettre en lumière la contribution du Synode pour l'Afrique à la compréhension et à la pratique du dialogue inter-religieux, tournons-nous vers l'avenir. La période de la célébration romaine du Synode a pris fin le 8 mai. Il est prévu des célébrations conclusives du Synode dans le continent africain à travers des eucharisties présidées par le Pape. C'est au cours de ces célébrations eucharistiques que le Pape présentera les conclusions auxquelles le Synode est parvenu. En réalité, l'entreprise synodale ne s'arrête pas là. Comme on le sait, étymologiquement, le mot synode vient du mot grec *sunodos*, c'est-à-dire littéralement: «chemin parcouru ensemble». Un synode est un cheminement, un processus. Il ne peut donc être considéré comme achevé avec la clôture des Assemblées romaines ni même avec la publication de l'Exhortation apostolique post-synodale.

Le message suggéré par les travaux préparatoires au Synode et les acquis de la rencontre romaine doivent germer, mûrir et fleurir. Le suivi du Synode est aussi important que sa préparation et sa célébration romaine. Il faut que le message du Synode touche les personnes, les collectivités et leurs structures. L'aspect traité ici concerne le dialogue inter-religieux. L'Afrique en est concernée. Le Synode a reconfirmé avec force la nécessité d'engager un dialogue avec les frères et sœurs d'autres religions. Ce dialogue doit prendre les quatre grandes formes déjà mises en lumière par le Magistère: dialogue de vie, dialogue des œuvres,

dialogue des échanges théologiques et dialogue de l'expérience religieuse.

Comme nous avons pu le remarquer, nous nous trouvons devant une tâche hautement missionnaire, articulée à la mission même du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit. Chacun de nous est invité à s'y engager corps et âme. «Ce sera toujours un but à poursuivre et il ne faut jamais omettre de rechercher des chemins mieux appropriés que ceux qu'on a suivis jusqu'alors». Pour ceux et celles qui, par une «vocation spéciale modelée sur celle des Apôtres» s'appellent missionnaires, cette tâche - le dialogue inter-religieux - est certainement à considérer comme l'un des défis missionnaires majeurs de l'heure. Ils ne ménageront pas les efforts pour s'y engager et constituer une chaîne de solidarités vivantes et agissantes avec tous ceux et celles qui se laissent interpeller par les valeurs du Royaume.

Rappelons avec force que le dialogue inter-religieux, pour être profond et vrai, doit s'accompagner, d'une manière affective, du dialogue intclésial et oecuménique. Dans cette entreprise, il convient de se rappeler que «*annonce et dialogue* sont des tâches difficiles et néanmoins absolument nécessaires. Tous les chrétiens, dans les situations qui sont les leurs, doivent être encouragés à se préparer pour mieux réaliser ce double engagement. Cependant, plus encore que des tâches à accomplir, le dialogue et l'annonce sont des grâces pour lesquelles il faut prier. Que tous ne cessent donc d'implorer l'aide du Saint-Esprit, afin qu'il soit «l'inspirateur décisif de leurs plans, de leurs initiatives, de leur activité évangélisatrice» (EN, 75)».

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# APPRAISING THE UN AT 50

## THE LOOMING CHALLENGE

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### I. IS THE UN FAILING?

In the Spring of 1994 the *Economist* had on its cover a quite ghastly scene: A landscape of utter desolation, the sky and earth blood red, corpses littering the ground with a flagpole in their midst, with a UN flag flying at half-mast, and a large font caption entitling its cover story: "SHAMED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS". Such an iconography of failure is sadly expressive of public disappointment with the UN role in world affairs in light of the tragic outcomes of efforts made in Somalia, Bosnia, and Rwanda.

Such an assessment was not at all promising for the observance of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UN founding in 1995, which has already generated a multitude of discussions on the past, present, and future of the Organisation. My attempt in this article will be to account for this current attitude of disappointment, and to put in the larger setting of global restructuring, especially the displacement and realignment of the Sovereign State, an interpretation of what to expect from the United Nations.

It should be noted by way of introduction that it is the peace and security agenda that serves as the prism by which the UN is judged by the media and the public. If the Organisation fosters peaceful resolution of warfare or carries out its mandate in the Charter to protect Member States that are victims of aggression, then its achievements are noted and celebrated. In this regard, the UN reached its peak of popularity, especially in the United States, during 1991 after the Gulf War, by providing the auspices for successfully challenging Iraq's conquest and annexation of Kuwait. This aura of achievement was reinforced, at that time, by a series of seemingly successful mediating efforts during 1988-90 in

relation to long festering regional conflicts: Iran/Iraq, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Namibia, El Salvador. This string of successes, especially given the ending of the Cold War, lent some credibility to expectations of "a new world order" guided by international law, and institutionally upheld by a robust United Nations that would be gradually strengthened as public confidence in its effectiveness increased.

What, then, went wrong? Can it be corrected? At bottom, this pattern of attitudes, shifting back and forth between hopes raised and hopes dashed, reflects a failure to realise what the UN is currently capable of doing and what it is not, and this in turn, relates to what kind of Organisation it is, and whether or not, it can and will be changed to any appreciable extent in the foreseeable future. From the very outset of the UN's history it was recognised that the UN could effectively operate only if its dominant Members, the five States that were Permanent Members of the Security Council could act in concert. Constitutionally, this precondition was acknowledged in the form of the veto given to these five States, and only to them. The optimists, such as Franklin Roosevelt, felt that the UN had a good chance of succeeding at its inception because these same countries had cooperated to defeat Fascism, and should be able to suppress their differences well enough to keep their alliance together for the purpose of safeguarding the peace achieved in 1945 after such valiant and exhausting efforts. The pessimists, such as George Kennan and Dean Acheson, anticipated the Soviet challenge partly as an expected expression of the Marxist-Leninist orientation and partly as reflective of the inevitable tendency of leading States to engage in rivalry in the absence of a common enemy, and expected the UN to be quickly marginalised, thereby resting their hopes for peace in the future on a posture of containment and deterrence. As we now know, the pessimists carried the day through the entire period of the Cold War.

### II. THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE STATE

Although simple dualisms are not descriptive of complex reality, it is useful, as a first approximation, to appreciate that the UN is an extension of the States' system rather than an alternative to it. States are, of course, the only entities eligible for membership, and in the setting of peace and security, States completely dominate patterns of access and participation.

It is not only States as such, but the hierarchy of States that has given structure to international political life as the States' system has unfolded over time.

Both points are critical. From a juridical perspective, rules of membership and participation, including procedures for financing, are exclusively premised on the status of political actors as States; in the General Assembly, with its role confined to recommendatory authority, all States regardless of size are entitled to equal rights of participation — Liechtenstein's vote counts as much as does China's or that of the United States. In contrast, from a geopolitical perspective (sensitive to the hierarchy of

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***What seems evident at this stage is that the UN not take on matters it cannot expect to resolve in a satisfactory fashion. In this regard, the UN should be exceedingly wary about becoming engaged in any undertaking that involves political restructuring, overcoming governance patterns in a State that are generating pathology.***

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States that exert influence in the world) and in relation to the operational code of the UN, the most important States (at least as of 1945), were given privileged formal status, especially by their capacity to control the decisional procedures of the UN, either by mandating coercive action (as in the Gulf War) or by blocking action through the exercise of the veto (as throughout the Cold War).

But it is not only by way of formal structures that the UN experiences this geo-political imprint of inequality among States, but, it pervades the operation of the Organisation, the role and selection of the Secretary-General, financing (especially, of special budgets needed for peacekeeping), the selectivity practised with respect to threats to the peace or severe abuses of human rights, and the implementation (or not) of decisions taken by the

Security Council. In this respect, the UN is often perceived, especially in Africa and Asia, as a virtual instrument of the foreign policy of its most powerful member, the United States, exerting an influence that extends far beyond its authority as a permanent member of the Security Council. Both China and the United States are permanent members, but their relative operational influence on the behaviour of the UN is hardly comparable, nor, of course, is their share of the financial burden. An aspect of US influence undoubtedly arises from the location of the main UN organs in New York City.

In this respect, the UN, especially in peace and security, essentially embodies the prevailing geopolitical patterns of international political life. The ascendant States, in this regard, have shared a reluctance to endow the UN with autonomous capabilities either in relation to financing and enforcement, although such endowments would not place any significant strain on the resources of members. It is a matter of political will, leading Governments not wanting to relinquish control over peace-keeping responsibilities, a position currently unchallenged by weaker States or public opinion. The US Government has recently reaffirmed its opposition to either creating an independent UN Peace Force or to lengthening substantially the short financing leash that restricts UN undertakings. In this regard, the UN role in peace-keeping mirrors the priorities of leading States, and their capacity to form an operative consensus in critical situations. As in the Cold War, to the extent that the UN is paralysed formally, then such States will tend to revive more unilateral patterns of diplomacy, especially reliance on spheres of influence, or upon regional frameworks. Such patterns have been increasingly evident in the last several years, especially France's role during 1994 in containing genocide in Rwanda, Russia's continuing role in overcoming ethnic strife in the Commonwealth of Independent States and claiming for itself a sphere of influence within its "near abroad", and with respect to the revived reliance by the United States on a Monroe Doctrine rationale and practice with respect to its diplomacy in Central America and the Caribbean.

It is important not to deify the State. The State acts through its Governmental leaders, responsive to a range of social and political forces expressive of a given power and ideological configuration, and subject to change through time. Depicting these forces in relation to a given Government at a particular time is bound to be controversial and inconclusive, yet indispensable. In the United States, with a governing process shaped by elections and

constrained by a written Constitution, there is a strong presumption that public policy is responsive to the wishes of the citizenry, or else, it will be held accountable by way of electoral outcomes. Yet such a generalisation is so incomplete as to be misleading. In foreign policy leadership is crucial and capable of shifting public opinion, and more broadly, special interests in and out of Government make public policy far less responsive and accountable than general attitudes toward democracy would have us believe.

In this regard, given the UN presence in the United States, and considering the US prominence within the Organisation, it is hardly surprising that the UN has been made into a scapegoat or political football, depending on the circumstances. Also, the extent of reliance on the UN is taken as a litmus test of the persisting debate between liberal internationalists, who regard the UN as an important instrument for promoting US interests and for improving the quality of world order, and conservatives, who view the UN as useless, or worse, either a rubber-stamp or a deforming obstacle to the clear pursuit of strategic interests in the world.

Part of my contention is that States, including powerful ones, are losing their political room for manoeuvre in relation to a broad range of issues as a consequence of pressures from without the State, and to a lesser degree, from those within the State. That is, the State is losing its autonomy as a global actor, and in the process is changing its role. If this is a correct general assessment, then the UN in the peace and security area will reflect both this reduction of autonomy and this changing role.

### III. GLOBALISATION, THE STATE, AND THE UN

The deepening of globalisation, a long-term trend linked to technological innovation, business practices, and moves toward the freer flow of trade and money, is partly responsible for the new, outward orientation of the State, as well as its diminished autonomy. In such circumstances, enhanced competitiveness as a shared goal of national economic policy pushes down wages and the mobility of capital weakens the capacity of organised labour to protect the interests of workers. Such conditions are reinforced by the discrediting of socialism, the collapse of an anti-capitalist pole in international society, and the shift in economic emphasis from manufacturing to service-oriented activities. As a consequence, the State is put in the position of adapting to globalisation or experiencing

economic decline, if not collapse. A partial explanation of Soviet collapse was the inability of its command economy to adapt to the global markets. Even the far more efficient Scandinavian countries are finding their State-run welfare systems under pressure as *entrepreneurs* deploy capital where taxes are lower, regulation less onerous, and workers less secure.

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***The tendency, then, is to do something, but not enough, and to be exceedingly vulnerable to any efforts to disrupt a response. This has been the UN experience since the Gulf War.***

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The struggles over the ratification of treaties that push forward the consolidation of capital and markets at regional and global levels, such as Maastricht, NAFTA, and GATT, illustrate the strength of global economic forces and the opposition of the most rooted, territorially oriented elements in domestic society. The political magnetism of globalisation is reorienting the State, limiting the effective space open for domestic political rivalry, thereby rendering mainstream political parties incapable of providing choice and helping to give leaders an image that combines hypocrisy with ineptitude. These effects are registered most clearly, of course, in the constitutional democracies of the North, but are of systemic dimensions. The pattern is particularly manifest in the policies being pursued by socialist or left liberal leaders and parties: Mitterand in France abandoning socialism in favour of the discipline of the market, the Social Democrats in Sweden promising to bring Sweden into the market-driven European community, Clinton in the United States struggling to implement Republican priorities in relation to NAFTA overriding the opposition of the constituencies that elected him, the new leadership in the British Labour Party signalling similar intentions if returned to power, a socialist leadership in Japan renouncing its own ideology to achieve credibility for its unexpected role in running the Government. Examples could be multiplied, but the trend is evident.

The obvious question, even accepting this line of interpretation, is: "What has this got to do with the UN?" My response, "It helps explain a lot". The State, as argued earlier, reflects the play of forces upon it, and when this play shifts, then its role in the world is correspondingly adjusted. The globalised State is responsive to global economic priorities, but

not to much else. Thus, it is not surprising to discover a major mobilisation of effort in defence of privileged access to oil and regional stability, but not much concern about the spread of civil strife in sub-Saharan Africa or the restoration of order in the event of a breakdown of authority structures in economically inconsequential countries. During the Cold War, despite the parallel emergence of globalising trends, statist priorities were quite different: there was political space available for the adoption of socialist and social democratic programmes and the perceived strategic interests of both superpowers was such as to reinforce prevailing structures of governance within their respective blocs, by intervention if necessary to sustain the repression of ethnic and nationalist challenges and by limiting ideological deviation from bloc affiliation.

In effect, UN empowerment, beyond the level of shallow commitments, must engage the globalised State to fashion significant action in the peace-keeping domain. The globalising of media activity, the CNN factor, may generate public pressures to act in the face of disaster and atrocity, but not the leadership or rationale to produce serious commitments of life and resources. The tendency, then, is to do something, but not enough, and to be exceedingly vulnerable to any efforts to disrupt a response. This has been the UN experience since the Gulf War. In contrast, during the Cold War, in many ways the opposite set of attitudes prevailed, with almost every territorial struggle being perceived in global strategic terms, inviting interventions that were put forth as tests of strength and will. Without strategic rivalry among States, internal outcomes are of far less perceived consequence, with the major State interest being in containing the conflict and its ramifications, especially discouraging refugee flows. Again, the contrast is striking. During the Cold War, the Westward flow of refugees was welcomed, generally encouraged, and was construed as evidence of the repressive nature of the Communist regimes, offering valuable hostile propaganda that was deemed worth the costs incurred in resettlement. This resistance to refugees and economic immigrants is accentuated recently by higher levels of unemployment in the more affluent countries, making it far harder to incorporate additional potential workers. The UN is now encouraged to do its best to keep displaced persons from crossing borders, or remaining outside, while little effort is made to overcome the underlying cause of distress that accounted for the movement of large numbers of people in the first instance.

Thus, the UN, with its instrumental relationship to the largest and richest States, is constrained in its role to serve only perceived globalised interests: Pushing forward on the economic agenda of economic consolidation, while acting only, at most, to contain the wider impacts of genocide and anarchy, yet being entrusted with responsibility for doing the little that is done. Thus, the UN is both held up to ridicule for its ineffectuality, and not given the capabilities needed for success. A final aspect of this pattern is the restructuring of the UN with respect to its economic activity: The international financial institutions ("the Bretton Woods institutions" of the IMF and World Bank) have been strengthened and exalted, while development activities associated with the priorities of the South are stripped down. The most notable expression of this trend is the elimination in the late 1980's of the UN Centre on Transnational Corporations, mainly an information-gathering unit, but seen as potentially threatening to market-driven globalisation. A further expression has been resistance to the treatment of economic social rights as deserving of inclusion within the category of human rights, seeking to confine UN human rights activities to the protection of the individual's civil and political rights. Western opposition to "the right of development" reflects the same spirit of resisting any potential claims for redistributive justice in relation to the allocation of resources.

Globalisation, then, is accentuating a capital driven image of the role of the State, and this is reflected in the priorities pursued within the various arenas of the UN. A people-driven role for the State, in contrast, would emphasise territorial human effects more directly, and this would be expressed by way of UN activities relating to human rights and market regulation. This latter emphasis would accord priority to the concrete and rooted concerns of citizens even if this meant some setbacks with respect to market efficiency and capital opportunities.

#### **IV. PATHOLOGICAL ANARCHISM, STRATEGIC INTERESTS, AND THE MARGINALISATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

The end of the Cold War, followed by the break-up of the Soviet Union, accentuated some pre-existing powerful trends in international society: An expanding claim of the right of self-determination and a growing preoccupation with the politics of identity, relating to ethnic and national consciousness. During the decades following World War II, the emergent norm of self-determination, was

mainly confined in practice to the struggle against the colonial order. In the background, however, were various other suppressed peoples that sought to assert their political autonomy and escape from structures and memories of oppression.

Throughout the Cold War there was a consensus that transcended the East West divide to the effect that claims of self-determination had to be satisfied within existing State boundaries, a conception of limits that the United Nations helped to legitimise. But with the break-up of the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia, a new form of State-shattering self-determination came into being. The claims of the Baltic States to Statehood had a strong and distinctive pre-existing legal foundation, in view of their coerced annexation by the Soviet Union in the setting of World War II, and aside from tensions associated with Russians who had been deliberately settled to alter the demographic balance, these reassertions of independent Statehood have been relatively unproblematic. The more severe tensions were reserved for former Yugoslavia and some of the Asian Republics of the former Soviet Union where overlapping ethnic identities and passionate expressions of ethnically exclusive nationalism induced claimants of self-determination, most notably the Bosnian Serbs, to embark on “ethnic cleansing” to ensure that whatever political entity was established would to the extent possible embody their aspirations with respect to identity; it is at this point that the politics of identity has to varying degrees become genocidal, and hence pathological with respect to the values and presuppositions of a world order resting upon the major premise of the territorially (not ethnically) defined sovereign State. The United Nations, although not empowered to intervene in matters essentially within domestic jurisdiction unless a threat to the peace is posed (Article 2:7), has asserted a competence to protect the basic normative idea of ethnic pluralism and to resist several of the most severe denials of human rights of the sort that accompany such ethnic/nationalist crusades, as occurred in Bosnia and Rwanda.

Closely related, a tiny privileged *élite* exploits and brutalises its own citizenry to such an extent as to depend on the continuing Commission of Crimes Against Humanity (in the Nuremberg sense) to remain in power. The situation in Haiti after the *coup* in 1991 that displaced the democratically elected leader, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, raised to global consciousness another form of pathological anarchism. Finally, the interplay of extreme poverty, ethnic strife, tribal or clan rivalry, religious

extremism in several African countries has illustrated yet another variant of pathological anarchy that challenges the conscience and capabilities of the United Nations, especially to the extent that the media spotlight generates strong grassroots public demands for response.

Without entering into the detail of specific cases, it is possible to generalise, that these responses have contributed to the declining reputation of the United Nations, possibly unfairly. In essence, the Organisation when pressured to act, as in Somalia, has not mounted a sufficient operation to eliminate pathological elements, limiting its effective role to the substantial mitigation of civilian suffering by the provision of food, medicine, and other forms of relief in relation, especially, to those displaced from their homes. It is in this kind of setting that the instrumental relationship between dominant States and the UN is again crucial. Leading States in the post-Cold War setting do not regard pathological breakdowns of internal order in States marginal to the dynamics of the world economy as engaging their strategic interests sufficiently to justify the sort of open-ended, and possibly costly, commitments that would be needed to challenge successfully the agents of the pathology. In contrast, during the Cold War, almost no country was marginal, and the outcome of internal strife was generally perceived as weakening one side at the expense of the other, inducing strong pressures to preserve the *status quo*, however oppressive it might be, provided its ideological alignment was maintained. Under these new conditions, the call for response requires some sort of action, a politics of gesture, with the main States unwilling to accept burdens or responsibilities. Dumping the situation on the Security Council has been the result, thereby shifting the focus of blame, and eroding confidence in the peacemaking capabilities of the UN.

Yet the true locus of responsibility is elsewhere. It is in a realist tradition of statecraft that is conditioned to disregard humanitarian claims unless intertwined with great power rivalry or threatening to wider patterns of political and economic stability.

***The UN is often perceived, especially in Africa and Asia, as a virtual instrument of the foreign policy of its most powerful member, the United States, exerting an influence that extends far beyond its authority as a permanent member of the Security Council.***

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The maintenance of the multi-ethnic, secular State as the legitimate foundation of territorial sovereignty enlists widespread rhetorical support, but it is not seen as integral to either economic growth or global security. As long as the ascendant States (and their publics) are not threatened by pathological anarchism, the level of response is almost certain to remain minimal. In light of this, it is implausible to expect the UN to perform miracles, and what is more likely, and has been occurring, is a scape-goating of the UN, thereby disguising the irresponsibility of leading States, as well as overlooking the achievements by the UN in mounting crucial relief operations in situations of acute danger.

## **V. RESTORING CONFIDENCE IN THE UNITED NATIONS: A MODEST PERSPECTIVE**

The argument that has been presented is essentially structural and normative: The UN as an instrument of uneven State power is being primarily shaped by the priorities of an increasing globalised world economy. Until this preponderant pattern of influence is offset by a resurgent labour movement or the further growth of transnational democracy, the role of the UN is bound to be limited in contexts where G-7 leaders do not perceive strategic interests at stake.

Where the State is less engaged, or supportive, then the UN can achieve some impressive results. For instance, the 1994 UN Conference on Population and Environment, held in Cairo, was a great step forward for transnational efforts to address the issues at stake, especially the conditions of affliction confronting women in many societies around the world. The outcome of the Conference, reversing a longheld demographic consensus that stressed reducing fertility rates was the best means to halt population growth, emphasised instead the improvement of the education and circumstances of women as the critical focus for population policy on a global level.

In peace-keeping, the eye of the storm, the challenge is more formidable as the area engages the use of force, the special domain of the State. What seems evident at this stage is that the UN not take on matters it cannot expect to resolve in a satisfactory fashion. In this regard, the UN should be exceedingly wary about becoming engaged in any undertaking that involves political restructuring, overcoming governance patterns in a State that are generating pathology. It should, in this interim, restrict its role to relief work (as in the early stages of its Somalia involvement or in relation to Bosnia), and make this restriction clear. The strength of the International Committee of the Red Cross is that it has successfully delimited its role in manageable terms that do not generate disappointment.

The UN can go further where the rival territorial factions or parties have reached a point of exhaustion, seeking a negotiated return to normalcy, as in such countries as Cambodia and El Salvador. The UN can usefully provide auspices for this process, resting its role on the consent of the parties. As recent events in Cambodia have demonstrated, consent can be withdrawn, and then the UN role again becomes precarious.

A more ambitious approach would emphasize the need for a more autonomous UN, an Organisation more capable of responding without soliciting the heavy involvement of its leading members on an *ad hoc* basis. Essentially, this would mean a more secure, independent financial base, without hovering at the edge of bankruptcy. It would also mean, over time, an independent, specially trained UN Peace Force that would seek to intrude itself in pathological conflict situations and exert leverage on behalf of multi-ethnic tolerance as the basis of legitimate governance.

With the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Year of the UN as an occasion, it seems time to take stock of how to make the Organisation better serve the needs of the peoples of the world, given changes in the patterns of conflict and considering the new role of ascendant States as agents of global market forces. Without this wider structural understanding, efforts to build support for the UN are bound to fall short, particularly in the face of continuing pathological anarchism assuming a variety of distressing new forms.

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# THE DIGNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY OF WOMEN

## Pastoral Letter from the College of Catholic Bishops in China,

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### UN FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

The UN Fourth World Conference on Women and the Non-Governmental Organisations Forum were held in Beijing from 4th to 15th September 1995. The theme was on 'Equality, Development and Peace'. A total of about 47,000 people attended with First Ladies from over 20 countries. Hong Kong Christians, Catholics and Protestants, also participated and shared their insights when they came back.

Statistics from the Conference showed that those living in extreme poverty had increased from one billion in 1985 to 1.3 billion in 1993. Two-thirds of them were women. Of the 900 million illiterate people in the world, two-thirds are women. The 'poverty clock' at the Non-Governmental Organisations Forum calculated that from 11.15 a.m. on 31st August to 11.15 a.m. on 8th September, a total of 541,228 children were born into poor families, half of whom were girls.

Poverty has become one of the biggest obstacles to improving women's situation and raising their status. The eradication of poverty was thus one of the strong appeals of the Conference.

Two documents were issued to guide women of the world into the 21st century, namely, the 'Platform for Action' and the 'Beijing Declaration'.

The 'Beijing Declaration' basically reflected the strong calls of women of developing countries for the eradication of poverty, the amelioration of education and medical care, and opposition to violent behaviour. It also reflected the calls from developed countries for women's rights.

The 100,000-word 'Platform for Action' referred to 12 main areas, including poverty, education, health, violence, armed conflicts, economic participation, participation in power and decision-making, national and international mechanisms,

human rights, mass media, the environment, and female children.

The College of Catholic Bishops in China issued a Pastoral Letter on 18th August 1995 prior to the Conference.

According to UCAN news, the president of the College of Catholic Bishops in China, Bishop Zong Huaide, said that the Letter was completed after a process of half a year and the consent of the whole body of Bishops to the main parts of the contents. The opinions of Sisters and women Catholics were consulted in the drafting process. Bishop Zong hoped that the document would be helpful to ameliorating the status of women and would have a positive effect on society. He said that after its issuance, the Letter was sent to all the dioceses and parishes to start circulating it and undertaking education action.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,  
May God's peace be with you!

On this occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women being held in our capital city of Beijing, we are pleased that the status and dignity of women will become more and more emphasised, and women will exercise greater and greater influence in society. All the faithful in the Catholic Church in China, particularly all our sisters in Christ, must support the theme of the World Conference on Women — "Equality, Development and Peace". They must affirm their dignity and responsibility to receive the coming of a new century.

We thank Almighty God for his wonderful creation. He created man and woman, gave each of them equal human dignity and rights (see Genesis 1:27). Since then human-kind survives, develops and progresses. Men and women are different in the body, and contribute in different ways, but they are all created by God in His own image. They all have similarly immortal souls. They are parts of the same mystical body of Christ. They enjoy the glory of the

grace of God and share a joint responsibility for the whole of human-kind.

In the thirty-three years of his human life on earth, the Lord Jesus Christ had treated and respected women well. Firstly, He was wholeheartedly filial and loving of his mother, Mary. During his three years of preaching, He always showed a concern for the sorrows of women, protected women's rights, commended women's good works, affirmed their contribution to society, and let them share in his project for the salvation of the world (cf. Lk 7:36-50; Mt 9:18-36; Mk 7:25-30; Mt 15:22-28; Mk 12:42-44; Jn 19:25-27; Jn 20:11-18). In response to Jesus' merciful affection, the women responded with sincere gratitude. In the end they stood with Mary under the cross, filled with sorrow in witnessing Jesus' death. When Jesus resurrected, they were the first to witness his appearance. Filled with joy, they went

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***Overall, we have to fulfil our civic duties well and discharge our obligations fully as Christians. We must share happiness together with our country and people, jointly bearing responsibilities and overcoming difficulties.***

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everywhere to bear firm witness of Jesus' true divinity and to the propagation of the Gospel (Mt 28:1-8; Mk 16:9-10; Lk 24:1-11).

In the person of our gracious and blessed Virgin Mary, we can see most clearly the dignity, honour and purity of women, the greatness and splendour of motherhood. From the pre-existent beginning, the Virgin Mary had been destined to be the Mother of God. She conceived Christ. In the temple, she offered Christ to God the Father. She nourished Christ's growth with her perfect maternal love. She was fully devoted to helping Christ in his enterprise of spreading the Gospel. She suffered with Christ in his death on the cross. Through obedience, faith, hope and buring love, she co-operated superbly with our Saviour in the reconstituting of the supernatural life of the human spirit. The Blessed Mother is the Mother of God. In the realm of divine grace, she is also the mother of humankind (cf. *Lumen Gentium* n. 61). The Blessed Mother is the greatest and the most outstanding representative of women. Her dignity is so glorious, and her status is so honourable!

China has the most women in the world. Chinese women should have basically been an incredible force, and should have been respected. However, for thousands of years, they were the most suppressed. They have always been at the bottom of the social class, lived a humiliated and subdued life. After New China was set up, the status of women in our country underwent a tremendous turn-about. Women have gained equal rights with men in the political and economic arena, and in terms of matters such as education and employment. They can bring their talents and wisdom into full play in all fields. They are proclaimed as "half of the sky". In the era of reform and openness, women of China can continually strengthen themselves to strive with great energy to construct the nation and bolster China. They have in many ways achieved great success. The Government of China has promulgated a series of laws and regulations to safeguard women's rights and to promote the development of women, and has taken steps to implement them on all fronts. These are facts for all to see. Our sisters in the Lord have witnessed and participated in this great change during the past half a century. In this journey, they have never forgotten to follow God's will, to witness to the Gospel by their words and deeds, leaving clear traces of their every step forward.

It is clear in many parts of the world today that there are shameful phenomena of the serious trampling on the human dignity of women and contempt of women's legal rights. For example, unfair treatment of women, kidnapping, slave-trading and abandonment of women, abuse, rape, harassment, flesh trade and prostitution, and violent assault. Social justice and human conscience absolutely cannot allow this to continue. We solemnly condemn these sinful deeds. We appeal to all relevant parties and to all people to take positive action to resolutely stop and eradicate them, and never to let them persist and spread. We also notice that in many ways the status of women in China is still subordinate to that of men. Some people are obsessed with hedonism and mammonism. They treat women as commodities, as playthings. There is serious action against some of the phenomena of whoring and prostitution, and the trading and assault of women and children but they have not been halted. Therefore, we have to stand with all the people in China, to strive for the realisation of the "plan for the development of women in China" which has been promulgated by the Chinese Government.

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord, the 2,000th year of Christ become flesh is very near. The great

majority of those among you will soon become members of those who cross over to the new century. You have a heavy responsibility to bear. Here we especially address the responsibility of our sisters:

### **1. Work Hard to Raise Your Quality:**

You must build and promote a spirit of self-esteem, loving of self, self-strengthening and independence. Treasure the honourable status and human value of women. Display your strengths and make continuous advancement. At the same time, strengthen your sense of self-protection. Follow the guidance of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church, and face up courageously to the different challenges of life. Never let yourself fall into the slavery of the sin of damaging women's excellence. Be conscientious so as to set a good example to the people.

### **2. Stand Firmly With the People of China; Dedicate Yourself Positively to Building Up the Two Civilisations.**

Work well at your post, make achievements to give witness to the Lord and to glorify God. Remember the great land of our mother country is the place where all of us as countrymen live in solidarity and become sanctified. The Holy Spirit is present among us. This is our common "home". We should be imbued with the noble sentiment of fervent love for our country and people. We pray to God to grant us stability, unity, and world peace such that we can build our country in a peaceful environment in seeking the well-being of the people.

### **3. Give Importance to the Value of the Family:**

The family is the fundamental cell of society and of a country. And women play an important role in family life. As mothers, women are bearers of life. They are protectors and educators. This concerns the future of the country and its people. The reverence that children have for God and the fostering of vocations are reliant on the guidance and dedication of mothers. As wives, they support and help their husbands through their unique gifts of diligence, perseverance, warm gentleness and kindness, encouraging them to be optimistic, strong, and to

strive forward. Love each other, "husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the Church.... let the wife see that she respects her husband" (Eph 5:25-30). Jointly bear the responsibility for the family, respect the elderly and love the young, be in harmony with the neighbours, and use yourselves as examples to educate your children well. Model yourselves on the Holy Family of Nazareth and preserve in the family the vibrant virtues of faith, hope and love. Be filled with affection, harmony and fullness at all times.

### **4. Assist in the Church's work:**

As daughters of God, you should observe God's commandments. Honour your God and benefit your people. Give special devotion to the Blessed Mother. Sanctify yourselves in the routine of your lives. Help the Church within the limits of your capabilities. Support the Church in every item of its pastoral work. This is because we have received God's call to shoulder the mission of spreading the Gospel, and to ignite and cultivate male and female vocations.

Overall, we have to fulfil our civic duties well and discharge our obligations fully as Christians. We must share happiness together with our country and people, jointly bearing responsibilities and overcoming difficulties. In this way, and as a result of our good work and faith, our Church will take root in our great motherland and among the people.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord, basically we have to follow Jesus' teaching "that you love one another" (Jh 13:34). It is because "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him" (1 Jh 4:16). If everyone of us treat women and all humankind with love, all problems on earth can be readily resolved. Let us combine our efforts, always reminding ourselves to serve God with love and to bring warmth to others. We pray the Lord that the world be filled with God's love, and that all people be immersed in the grace of this divine love.

May God bless you with health and peace in body and spirit!

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