

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL	34
JONAS À NINIVE Du bon usage de la ville Claude Flipo	35
THE CAUSES OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT: THE BREAKDOWN OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL COMMUNITY Mark Raper, S.J.	38
“IL VOUS CONDUIRA DANS LA VÉRITÉ TOUT ENTIÈRE” (Jn 16:13) par Alex Gillet	44
THE VOCATION OF JERUSALEM: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE Bernard Sabella	50
Msgr. BELO, LA MORALE ET LA FOI P. Mangunwijaya	56
“PARTNERS FOR PEACE” Final Statement of Faith Encounters in Social Action (FEISA) III Christian-Muslim Dialogue for Justice and Solidarity Wisma Canossa	58
CHILDREN’S ISSUES SEJUP (Servico Brasileiro de Justica e Paz)	63
COMING EVENTS	64

EDITORIAL

Our February issue opens with a short reflection by Fr CLAUDE FLIPO, SJ., on the pastoral challenges to be faced today in the big cities. How can we follow the steps of Jonas into these immense agglomerations 'apparently so sure of themselves, and yet so fragile'?

— Fr MARK RAPER, SJ., is the Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service. In his lecture, given at the Global Ecumenical Consultation in Addis Ababa, he elaborates on the multiple causes behind the massive displacements of today. The phenomena of migration and displacement have become a major challenge for all missionary congregations.

— Fr ALEX GILLET, the new director of the revue *Spiritus* invites us to a profound meditation on the central role of the Spirit in the mission of the church which is proclamation of our faith in the ever moving Spirit.

— The preparation of the Jubilee Year inspires us to reflect on the ecumenical importance of Jerusalem in a new prospective. BERNARD SABELLA's paper elaborates on the importance of the "continuity of Christ's new beginning" in Jerusalem, 'the holy'.

— The nomination of Msgr BELO from East Timor for the Nobel Peace prize, has meant very much for Christians in Indonesia. The short article by P. MANGUNWIJAYA in the Catholic Djakarta Weekly *Hidup* shows how much the confidence of the Christian community has grown in Indonesia.

— WISMA CANOSSA presents the final statement of the "Faith encounters in social action" of the FABC Office For Human Development. He formulates the demands for any inter-religious dialogue in the context of Asia.

— We conclude this issue with an alarming report from SEJUP (Brazilian Service of J/P) on the exploitation of millions of children in Brazil and their inhuman conditions.

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JONAS À NINIVE

Du bon usage de la ville

Claude FLIPO

*Le P. Claude Flipo, S.J., est rédacteur en chef de la revue **Christus**. Article reproduit de **Christus**, no. 166, 1995, pp. 149-155.*

Jonas n'est pas content du tout. Fâché à mort contre Ninive, et contre Dieu: "Je savais que tu es un Dieu bienveillant et miséricordieux, qui revient sur sa décision. Et c'est bien pourquoi je voulais fuir à Tarsis". Pour l'amener à voir les choses autrement, Dieu le prend avec humour: "Tu pleures ce ricin que tu n'as pas planté, fille d'une nuit... Et moi, je n'aurais pas pitié de Ninive, la grande ville où il y a plus de cent vingt mille êtres humains qui ne savent pas distinguer leur droite de leur gauche, et des bêtes sans nombre!"

Tarsis, Ninive. C'est Ninive qui intéresse Dieu, et le sort de tant de gens si déboussolés qu'ils en sont devenus méchants. Mais c'est Tarsis qui habite les rêves de Jonas, la maison de campagne bien à l'abri de l'agitation et de la violence, loin de cette Parole si dérangeante. Tentation tout humaine de se fabriquer une religion tranquille, et un Dieu muet: "Maintenant que Paris, ses pavés et ses marbres/ Et sa brume et ses toits sont bien loin de mes yeux,/ Maintenant que je suis sous les branches des arbres/ Et que je puis songer à la beauté des cieux [...] Je viens à vous, Seigneur, père auquel il faut croire" (*Les Contemplations*, XV ("Avillequier")).

Mais, si Dieu préfère s'occuper du sort des Ninivites, ne serait-ce pas d'abord dans la ville agitée et bruyante qu'il faut le chercher? La ville immense, large de trois jours de marche, où règne la confusion, cité de Dieu, cité du diable, mélangées. Rien ici, en apparence, de la claire opposition que célébrait saint Augustin: "Deux amours ont fondé deux cités; l'amour de soi jusqu'au mépris de Dieu a engendré la cité terrestre, l'amour de Dieu poussé jusqu'au mépris de soi a engendré la cité céleste" (AUGUSTIN, *La Cité de Dieu*, 14,28). Ici, tout crûment, la cité des hommes, bon grain et ivraie

De la distance avant toute chose

Parabole pour notre temps! Nombreux, aujourd'hui, sont ceux qui sont appelés à exercer, chacun pour sa part, la mission prophétique du Christ dans la condition commune à

tous. Mais cette mission suppose qu'on ait appris à se comporter, dans le tourbillon urbain, avec une sorte de distance intérieure. "Se tenir au-dessus de son ouvrage", disait le père de Pascal. Comment donc sauvegarder, dans la précipitation contagieuse, la possibilité même d'une écoute intérieure? Il faudrait pour cela, selon la belle maxime de Nicolas Barre, "que l'intérieur soit plus grand que l'extérieur". Maîtrise de soi, ascèse de l'action adaptée aux circonstances actuelles... On pourrait définir cette ascèse nécessaire comme "l'aptitude acquise à se maintenir dans un état psychique, nerveux, physique tel qu'on puisse être spirituellement attentif au moment présent" (René Voillaume).

Rien de neuf en tout cela, dira-t-on. Sinon qu'il faut remonter le courant. *Surfing, zapping* ne sont plus seulement des modes, mais une façon de vivre en surface, un évitement de la profondeur. Bernanos stigmatisait déjà cette sorte d'esthétisme: "Le sol humain est si riche que cette mince couche superficielle suffit pour une maigre moisson, qui donne l'illusion d'une véritable destinée".

Or, la ville, par ses incitations permanentes, ses effets de miroir et sa publicité, modèle à notre insu des conformismes. Le système exige, pour se maintenir, que la demande de biens non nécessaires soit continuellement sollicitée. Et, bien sûr, elle ne peut le faire que par des appels incessants au désir le plus 'commercial'. Comme le remarquait Aldous Huxley: "L'homme a toujours été la proie des distractions, qui sont le péché originel de l'esprit; mais jamais encore on n'avait tenté d'organiser et d'exploiter les distractions pour en faire, en raison de leur importance économique, le cœur et le centre vital de la vie humaine" (HUXLEY, Aldous, *Dieu et moi*, Seuil, Paris, p. 141).

Ne pas rester à la surface, jeter les filets en eau profonde! Chacun connaît aujourd'hui ces images à trois dimensions, appelées auto-stéréogrammes, qui, sous l'apparence d'un motif anodin mille fois répété, cachent un objet ou une scène invisible. Pour

l'apercevoir, il faut exercer son regard afin d'exploiter l'une de nos facultés, la vision stéréoscopique: lâcher prise, laisser flotter le regard à travers l'image et attendre tranquillement que les connexions cérébrales se fassent. Soudain, le galion naufragé au fond des mers ou le bouquet de tulipes apparaît, aux yeux étonnés et ravis, avec une netteté et un relief saisissants. Le bon usage de la ville suppose que l'on s'exerce à voir la profondeur des choses. "Retournez la médaille, disait Vincent de Paul, et vous verrez dans les pauvres l'image du Christ". Autrement, on ne voit rien, on n'entend rien, on en reste aux apparences. "J'ai vu la misère de mon peuple, je l'ai entendu crier — dit le Seigneur à Moïse. Et maintenant, je t'envoie...". *L'Épître aux Hébreux* dit de Moïse: "Comme s'il voyait l'invisible, il crut". C'est bien cela: la foi donne des yeux pour voir. Première contemplation évangélique des Exercices ignatiens: "Voir comment Dieu regarde la sphère du monde, pleine d'hommes...". La profondeur des choses, c'est le regard que Dieu porte sur la ville, "où tant d'hommes ne savent distinguer leur droite de leur gauche".

L'unique nécessaire

Distance, certes, mais en vue de la présence. Ici nous guette un autre piège: après la superficialité, la dispersion. Soucis de toute sorte pour venir à bout de l'agenda. La ville est le lieu du multiple et de la fièvre. Savoir s'organiser, souvent renoncer. Savoir aussi déléguer. Ordonner son action autour des vraies priorités, dégagées de l'accessoire. Art qui s'apprend, exigeant, patient.

Les anciens disaient que le moine (de *monos*, seul) n'est pas seulement un célibataire. C'est une personne qui a réalisé son unité intérieure par l'intégration progressive de toutes ses passions dans le seul désir nécessaire. Jésus n'a pas reproché à Marthe de s'occuper du ménage, mais d'être divisée, inquiète.

Dans l'ordre de l'action, cette unité intérieure s'appelle l'intention droite. Saint Thomas d'Aquin, un expert, définit ainsi l'intention: "Le mouvement de la volonté, qui se porte vers le moyen en tant qu'il est ordonné à la fin, s'appelle élection. Mais le mouvement de la volonté qui se porte vers la fin, en tant que celle-ci est atteinte par les moyens qui lui sont ordonnés, on l'appelle intention" (D'AQUIN, *Thomas, Somme théologique*, la 2ae, q 12, a 4, ad 3). Une affirmation qu'Ignace aura entendu commenter à la Sorbonne et qu'il aura recopiée de sa belle écriture pour l'intégrer à la substance des Exercices. Au fond, le problème spirituel de nos grandes villes, c'est de

ne pas mélanger la droite et la gauche, les moyens et les fins.

Les chrétiens héritent en ce domaine d'une riche tradition. "L'intention simple est l'œil simple dont parle le Christ (cf. Mt 6, 22), qui garde le corps entier, c'est-à-dire toutes les œuvres et toute la vie de l'homme, dans la lumière. Cette intention ne vise que Dieu et toute chose par rapport à Dieu. Elle chasse la duplicité. Elle rassemble dans l'unité de l'esprit les facultés dispersées et ajuste l'esprit à Dieu. C'est pourquoi il nous faut habiter dans l'unité de notre esprit par cette intention simple qui fait ressembler à Dieu et trouver le repos dans l'action même" (VAN RUUSBROEC, Jan, *Ecrits II. Les Noces spirituelles*, Bellefontaine, 1993, p. 165).

On reconnaît là ce qu'Ignace, en effet, appellera l'intention 'droite', dégagée des vues 'obliques': "Si tout est donné par surcroît à ceux qui cherchent d'abord le Royaume de Dieu et sa justice, pourra-t-il manquer quelque chose à ceux qui cherchent uniquement la justice du Royaume de Dieu et le Royaume lui-même? A ceux qui reçoivent comme bénédiction non la rosée du ciel et les gras terroirs (cf. Gn 27,28), mais uniquement la rosée du ciel? Ceux, dis-je, qui ne sont pas divisés; ceux qui fixent leurs deux yeux sur les biens célestes" (DE LOYOLA, Ignace, "Lettre à Contarini, août 1537", dans *Ecrits*, DDB, 1991, p. 654).

La ville est multiple, innombrable. Elle peut devenir légion, quand elle nous possède (cf. Mc 5, 9). Mais le cœur libéré y reste uni à Dieu au milieu des 'tracas', comme le dit Marie de l'Incarnation en évoquant les dix années qu'elle vécut à Tours au service de son beau-frère: "Je passais presque les jours entiers dans une écurie qui servait de magasin, et quelquefois il était minuit que j'étais sur le port à faire charger ou décharger les marchandises. Ma compagnie ordinaire était des crocheteurs, des charretiers et même cinquante ou soixante chevaux dont il fallait que j'eusse le soin... Et cependant tous ces tracas ne me détournèrent point de Dieu, mais plutôt je m'y sentais fortifiée, parce que tout était pour la charité et non pour mon profit particulier... J'étais fort joyeuse avec ceux avec qui il me fallait être et on croyait que je me plaisais avec eux; mais c'était l'union que j'avais avec Dieu qui me rendait aussi gaie et allègre..." (DE L'INCARNATION, Marie, *Ecrits I*, pp. 162-163). Joyeuse et paisible, dit-elle, "aussi tranquille que si j'eusse été dans la solitude la plus retirée".

Si le Seigneur ne bâtit la cité

Jonas aussi est seul. Seul, mais triste. Il fait son métier de prophète, mais le cœur à distance de Dieu et des hommes. Solitude des grandes villes qu'on peut traverser sans regarder personne, le nez collé à la tâche, indifférent. "Dans quarante jours, Ninive sera détruite". Quel intérêt, dès lors! Pourtant, Jonas avait à peine marché une journée en proférant l'oracle que déjà ses habitants croyaient en Dieu: les petits, les grands, le roi, hommes et bêtes requis de faire pénitence et de l'invoquer. Dieu vit leur réaction, mais Jonas semble, quant à lui, ne rien voir du tout. Imaginons Jonas heureux, regard transformé, revenant sur ses pas comme Dieu sur sa décision. Imaginons-le se faire concitoyen des Ninivites, pour refaçonner avec eux le visage de la ville.

Dans le rapport adopté par l'épiscopat français, le 2 novembre 1994 à Lourdes, *Proposer la foi dans la société actuelle*, les évêques soulignent combien la foi des chrétiens anime des combats pour la dignité des hommes et, plus précisément, "permet de pratiquer un va-et-vient effectif entre la lutte et la contemplation, entre la vie spirituelle et l'engagement social", spécialement en faveur des exclus. Chacun a présent à l'esprit ces figures de croyants. Un trait leur est commun: "Une certaine façon de faire face aux aléas de l'existence, d'être présent aux autres, de durer dans leurs responsabilités et de donner à d'autres le goût des responsabilités". Foi qui construit la personne, force d'inspiration et aussi instance de discernement pour pratiquer l'accueil comme le refus, 'l'accueil de ce qui construit réellement des libertés, le refus de ce qui les détruit ou les entrave'".

Lutte et contemplation! Le problème est vital. L'oraison ne peut exister d'une manière abstraite. Elle est la prière d'un homme engagé dans la construction de la cité, d'un homme politique, au sens noble de ce mot, qui désigne l'art de bâtir ensemble la communauté des hommes, de créer un espace où ils puissent se réaliser pleinement. "Si le Seigneur ne bâtit la cité, c'est en vain que peinent les ouvriers". Pour reprendre ici le langage de saint Augustin, c'est l'amour de Dieu, reçu et communiqué, qui construit la cité de Dieu, celle où la Sagesse aime jouer avec les enfants des hommes.

Tel est le problème de la prière aujourd'hui, que le Père Daniélou avait fortement souligné (DANIÉLOU, Jean, *L'oraison problème politique*,

Fayard, Paris, 1965). L'oraison n'est pas seulement anticipation de la vie éternelle, elle est aussi constitutive de l'ordre temporel, de la civilisation au sens plein du mot. Si bien qu' "entre le domaine de l'homme intérieur et le domaine de la civilisation, il ne saurait y avoir de coupure radicale". La politique, espace du débat entre les hommes et du débat des hommes avec Dieu, ne peut être abandonnée aux intérêts partisans. Elle a vocation de devenir un haut lieu de la vie dans l'esprit: "Seigneur, tu nous assures la paix. Dans toutes nos œuvres, toi-même, agis pour nous" (Is 26, 12).

La ville est par excellence ce lieu du discernement, parce qu'elle est le creuset de l'humanité, l'espace de décision où se construit l'avenir commun. Lieu du politique, certes, mais aussi de ces multiples corps intermédiaires (entreprise, santé, éducation, culture) où se forment les mentalités, tout comme les solidarités. L'Église n'a pas à en rougir: on ne peut aujourd'hui travailler dans une association de solidarité, sans y rencontrer de nombreux chrétiens, hommes et femmes pour les autres. Ils en sont eux-mêmes convaincus: "Si grande est la place que Dieu leur a assignée qu'il ne leur est pas permis de désertier".

L'image de la mission est en train de changer: elle n'est plus seulement celle des terres lointaines, mais celle des grandes cités remplies d'hommes, débordantes, parfois inhumaines. Pour y faire entendre la Parole, Jonas a besoin de recul et, pour agir, de discernement. L'activisme a fait son temps. L'essentiel n'est pas d'en faire plus, mais de poser des actes qui, par leur qualité humaine et spirituelle, soient signifiants du Christ, des actes qui parfois, certes, vont à contre-courant et suscitent l'incompréhension ou même le rejet, mais qui réveillent aussi la profondeur de l'homme et sa dimension divine.

Jonas passa trois jours et trois nuits dans le ventre du poisson. Signe de Jonas, le seul qui soit donné à cette génération. Seule, en effet, la parole du Christ ressuscité peut toucher la grande ville, si sûre d'elle-même et pourtant si fragile. Le chrétien d'aujourd'hui, en notre Occident séculier où l'évangile semble si souvent marginalisé, doit passer lui aussi par l'eau et par le feu.

Ref. *Euntes*,
Vol. 29, n. 4, 1996.

THE CAUSES OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT: THE BREAKDOWN OF SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Mark RAPER, S.J.

The International Director of the Jesuit Refugee Service (CP 6139, 00195 Rome) made this intervention at a Global Ecumenical Consultation at Addis Ababa in November 1995. The information and opinions are drawn from field reports of JRS teams and the author's frequent visits to the sites where JRS operates. The author analyses the individual, social, economic and political factors that give rise to the refugee problem in the second half of this century and suggests that the NGOs, including the Churches, have a role to play not only at the level of humanitarian services but also by asking Why? and complementing the role of the UN and encouraging their Governments to support effectively such international ventures as those of the UNHCR.

***From the beginning until now, the entire creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth (Rom 8:22).
To know our sorrow is to know our joy — somewhere a mother will rejoice***
(from the poem *Somewhere* by Es'kia Mphahlele).

One eloquent sign of our times is the mass displacement of peoples — a warning sign to us all. The population flows that are visible, a tenth of the iceberg, conceal vast personal and national tragedies, economic inequality of catastrophic proportions, collective violence, and Nation-States bent on denying human rights and repressing their own citizens.

Once alerted, our faith compels us to seek justice. But first we must unearth the causes so that our work for justice and our compassion are well targeted. Our world is changing. Old explanations must be discarded and new ones discovered. Accurate analysis and informed reflection are then available as a basis for our prayer — to face the contemporary mystery of suffering. We need to scrutinise tragic situations and discover their meanings. The refugee, too, asks for an explanation and has a right to it, even more than food or shelter.

Knowing what is happening, and why, makes it less likely that refugee helpers will be coopted into conflicts. We serve refugees best — please understand me correctly — by being critical of them. Our role is to be objective about their situation and question their ideological interpretations. If we understand the factors operating we are in a position to act more precisely, collaborate more easily and devise better strategies of presence and assistance. We will avoid treating symptoms as causes, and not blame victims for what is outside their control. We will have the chance to advocate appropriate policies, develop useful structures and challenge unrealistic procedures. We will have what it takes to prepare our field workers. We will be better prepared

to intervene earlier and to act in the refugees' long term interests. We will be less afraid.

As we learned in El Salvador, genuine reconciliation requires a process — from truth to justice to reconciliation. Nothing worthwhile can happen until the truth of what really happened, and may still be happening, is acknowledged. In each place of pain and within each crisis, the truth must be revealed. Then justice will not be sold short, nor reconciliation short-circuited.

I. INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL FACTORS CAUSING DISPLACEMENT

Refugee flight, according to the United Nations Convention on Refugees, must take place as a result of persecution. To be legally recognised under the Convention a refugee must prove well-founded fear of persecution. Some countries use the Convention definition to restrict the right to asylum. Most European countries, and the USA as well, require that persecution be individually based. The fact that someone's uncle was tortured, or that her ethnic group was under attack, is not considered an adequate reason for flight — unless she can show that she was personally targeted for persecution.

Clearly not every experience of forced flight matches these legal requirements. Today's conflicts are rarely aimed at individuals. In Guatemala whole communities are targeted. Communal fields are razed, communal medical centres destroyed, villagers *en masse* are forced off their land. The Balkans war was similar. In any case most lives are

communal, not individualistic. And reasons for flight are generally communal.

It is the rich countries that ask for individual proof before granting refugee status. Meanwhile 90 per cent of the world's refugees struggle to survive in other poor countries that adjoin theirs. Few individual questions are asked of them. Meanwhile regional definitions, like that formulated by the Organisation for African Unity for Africa, and in Cartagena for Latin America, acknowledge a broader range of reasons for flight. Experience shows that any refugees' right to asylum should be linked to their Government's failure to protect them, rather than to their experiences as individuals.

Why did You Move?

To understand refugees one must set them in a broader context. Today about 125 million people live outside their countries of birth. Most leave home seeking:

- a better education for their children,
- better employment,
- life nearer their friends or family, and
- a safer place.

What distinguishes a refugee from a migrant is the speed with which the decision to depart has to be made as well as the coercion and fear. There is generally little choice of destination, possibly to an alien or inhospitable territory.

The reasons for flight vary across a scale from alarming to urgent. Consider the following reasons given for leaving home:

- To find schooling for my children. All the schools at home were closed because of the war.
- To find a home for my family. Ours was destroyed in the fighting.
- To find work. My shop was burned — or my fields mined — or my cattle looted by the soldiers.
- To find a safe place near friends. Where I was living, anyone who looked like me or shared my beliefs risked arrest.
- To go to a safe place. Around us the violence never ceased.

Individual motivation and well-founded fears

The decision to flee, to take refuge or migrate, may be sharpened by personal motives, such as:

- fear of immediate attack, rape or violence,

- repeated attacks or threats, especially where civic institutions fail to offer even minimal justice or security,
- chronic lack of confidence, breakdown of communal trust,
- despair about the future of one's children,
- attraction of greater political or social freedom,
- the promise of better education and greater social mobility,
- the image of a better life in the West,
- the hope of family reunion,
- the desire of the diaspora to return home.

Each case differs

Refugee case studies reveal that a mix of communal factors, as well as local and personal ones, underlie most refugees' decisions to leave. The case of an amputee from Mozambique highlights the way in which war, a depressed economy and the need to find work motivate flight. A case from the Sudan demonstrates how repeated attacks, and the threat of still more, give rise to mass internal displacement. The case of a young woman from Somalia is typical of the way rape galvanises families to flee. Violence on a broad front has also effects at an intensely personal level. Conversely rape and torture, while personal, are now used systematically to subdue populations. Systematic abuses create a thirst for revenge and sow the seeds of generations of destruction.

Many valid reasons for flight fail to fit within current legal definitions. There also exist reasons for flight that elicit no one's sympathy and offer no valid reason for seeking protection. Those who commit violent crimes and then leave home for fear of reprisal, as in Rwanda's case, deserve to be called to account.

External and social causes

The analysis presented in a new World Council of Churches' document is helpful. The WCC Central Committee Statement on uprooted people, *A Moment to Choose*, classifies causes of flight under three headings:

1. The multiple causes of forced displacement: war, civil conflict, human rights violations, colonial domination and persecution for political, religious, ethnic or social reasons characterise every region and are major causes of forced human displacement today.
- The correlation between violations of human rights and situations that produce refugees is very

strong. Significantly, 90 per cent of countries with very high levels of human rights violations belong to a group of 36 countries that give rise to most of the world's internally and externally displaced persons.

2. Severe breakdown of economic and social conditions that once provided people with the means to survive in their traditional communities and in their own countries is accelerating the movement of people.

Disarray within the world economic order is a major cause of instability. The malaise affecting the capitalist system has its cruellest effects in poorer countries. African countries, especially those tied to single commodity markets, continue to slip further behind in their share of world trade. Currently 1.2 billion people live in absolute poverty, an increase of 40 per cent in the last 20 years. Those who chronically lack life's necessities become acutely vulnerable. In turn, their plight increases the likelihood, size and complexity of new emergency situations. Examine the political causes of economic hardship and the distinction between 'merely' economic migrants and refugees becomes difficult to sustain.

Demographic patterns show that the countries most at risk are those with young and growing populations, and stagnant or deteriorating economies. (Rwanda is the gravest recent example.) Northern countries with ageing populations that are stable or shrinking require labour to fill low-paying jobs. Paradoxically they both attract and resist immigrant labour.

3. Environmental devastation has emerged as a powerful motivation for large-scale human displacement.

Researchers estimate that 10 million people are already "environmental refugees", and that a further 50 million could be similarly displaced by the year 2,000.

"The Breakdown of Sustainable Community"

My subtitle, "The breakdown of sustainable global community," points to another of the major reasons for today's massive forced displacements. Community breakdown is world-wide and pluriform.

Family breakdown

At one level community is founded on the family. Again and again today's conflicts target the family unit. Earlier wars also broke the family apart: men left their wives behind to go and fight. Today, the men may be the ones left behind, a switch of 'gender roles'. In our time any method of splitting the family is fair game. Children are abducted to become soldiers, mothers are killed and young women forced to fight. How can you teach another way of life to children who know nothing but violence? (The question is acute in Liberia, Myanmar, Kampuchea and Rwanda).

The motivations behind this new kind of war are clear. First, the strategy is to divide people and then gain power via chaos and misery. Second, witnessing a family member killed is calculated to create hatred and terror, and to turn even children into fighters.

Ethnic strife destroys cohesiveness

Ethnic conflict breaks down communities. Misguided leaders purposely keep alive the memory of harsh events in a people's history to shape their sense of ethnic identity. The resentment that results can be potent, as witnessed in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. Much of the blame must be shouldered by politicians who manipulate their people's beliefs for their own ends and then ignite the flames of war.

Ethnic hatred in Rwanda was fanned by provocative radio broadcasts. The individuals who masterminded that conflict should not escape prosecution. They are emblematic of those who destroy our communities. No individual should enjoy impunity after perpetrating malicious actions at a leader's behest. Nonetheless, a hierarchy of responsibility does exist.

Other Factors may Enable a Decision to Flee

Between the need to flee and the decision to go, a potential refugee must weigh up the feasibility of escape. Some geographical factors make it easier: the proximity of international borders, the absence of major physical barriers, reasonable roads and facilities for travel. Ready access to airports leads to great numbers of asylum seekers and migrants from every part of the world arriving, often 'irregularly', at any city with an international airport.

The authorities' inability to prevent flight is another enabling factor. So too is a neighbouring country's willingness to open its borders to the ene-

mies of its enemy. Religious groups may be welcomed by their own. And the presence of ethnic kin just across a border offers the promise of a safe haven.

II. OTHER GLOBAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH AFFECT DISPLACED PEOPLE

Students of refugee issues know well that developments in many fields profoundly affect the welfare and even the survival prospects of displaced people. Allow me to review a variety of features of our world and its way of doing business that impact on refugees. They range from the collapse of political entities to the wider availability of travel. But first, the proliferation of weapons in poor countries.

Warfare as Industry

Light weapons are associated with rising levels of violence and social disintegration. Trade in small arms and the use of them goes with ethnic conflict and crime and lead to increased displacement of people. Today's wars are becoming increasingly "low-tech". In Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and the Balkans we have seen hand-to-hand combat. Meanwhile trade in arms is sometimes the only economic function that a country at war can support (Liberia, Sierra Leone and Somalia offer prime examples). Low-tech landmines also enjoy a booming trade. And low-tech tactics are growing more sophisticated. Violence experienced at a personal level destroys normal life and breeds terror.

In recent years the number of countries experiencing armed conflicts has escalated. Between 1989 and 1992 the United Nations counted 82 armed conflicts around the world, only three of them between nations. In 1994, the number of conflicts world-wide rose to 34, and their deadliness to civilians also increased. Most are conflicts within States and involve irregular fighters (militia), and even child soldiers, as well as regular armed forces. The UNICEF claims that during the last ten years two million children died in civil strife — more child deaths than soldiers'. "Civilian losses accounted for half of all war-related deaths in the 1950's, but by the 1980's they added up to three-quarters, and in 1990 some 90 per cent of war deaths were civilian". This trend is alarming.

In current conflicts, light weapons are more significant than major weapons systems. Yet most attempts at arms control focus on weapons of mass destruction, and few serious attempts have so far

been made to control the growing trade and use of small arms. I rejoice to see that the WCC has joined the campaign to ban antipersonnel mines. The arms trade and its consequences are pivotal to understanding the new multipolar post-Cold War world. Cold War manipulations helped to create the culture of war. Arms trading now feeds the same beast.

The Weakening of the Nation-State

The Nation-State, founded upon the then sacrosanct principle of sovereignty, has been weakened and even paralysed by recent global challenges. This has caused insecurity for many. Chronically fragmented States include Afghanistan, Somalia, Liberia and, already long forgotten, Chad. Burundi is in great peril. Other Nation-States, too, are fragile: they have not yet had long enough time to form an identity.

Debt is another cause of weakness in a State. Privatisation of services is a likely result. When a nation falls under pressure from excessive debt or from structural adjustment programmes, and so is unable to provide basic social services such as education and health care, a greater weight falls on private agencies, especially the churches. When democratic institutions become weak, the State becomes more sensitive to criticism and is likely to react in repressive ways: witness Nigeria, Malawi and Kenya. Moreover, the globalisation of world economies and governance mean that decisions affecting citizens are made at the international level, overriding the individual State's authority. And if the State proves unable or unwilling to offer justice and security to its own minorities, it commands less and less of their allegiance. In response to such developments, new forms of federation are emerging. And indeed they are needed.

Since the end of the Cold War, the international scene has become, by most accounts, less divided and polarised, bringing us closer to 'one world'. Yet almost imperceptibly it is fragmenting. So States, as they become more insecure, eject those they do not want in increasing numbers and turn away people seeking relief from violence elsewhere.

Interrelationships

None of the causes of flight noted above exist on their own. Yet the complex of interrelationships is difficult to unravel. By

now, many commentators can single out the main factors operating in Germany before the Second World War:

- a faltering economy that left many unemployed,
- an ethnic group available to be made a scapegoat,
- a charismatic leader who created and manipulated hatred, to gain power for his own purposes, and
- an economy dependent on arms production.

Significantly, these same factors are found in many of today's conflicts. People's sense of community, pride and identity have been hurt by their inability to care for their families. Desperation is manipulated by political figures for their own agenda. Morality declines, and masses are swept along toward a mentality that blames and attacks scapegoats. The growing conflict then destroys families, creates more fighters, fills the coffers of the weapon traders — and develops into a "spiral of violence". Some internal economies benefit from war. But the international economy benefits grotesquely from a dispensation in which the many are poor and the few rich, and where armed conflict is the result.

Refugees and security

Meanwhile refugees are increasingly regarded as a threat to security. European laws affecting asylum seekers are being formulated more with an eye to security than as immigration measures. Understandably, when a quarter of a country's population is camped outside its borders (as are two million Rwandan refugees), or one third have fled (as have 800,000 Liberian refugees), these phenomena are readily viewed as destabilising their regions.

Nevertheless, our prime consideration should be the personal security of those displaced. Moreover, we are now aware that refugees returned home unwillingly or without adequate protection are ripe to become a destabilising force and eventually contribute to a renewal of the conflict. This is one reason to be hesitant about the increasing pressure for early repatriation.

Communication media

Mention must be made of mass media and their potent effects on mass humanitarian crises. Instant images of population flows are quickly transmitted across the world, affecting public opinion and official responses. But media coverage is selective. Its power drove relief to Goma with hurricane force. But nothing could provoke

international action to prevent the genocide. Sensationalising human suffering (by CNN, and fund-raising releases by some NGOs) shows scant respect for the dignity of the refugees, distorts the reality of their situation and weakens the public's belief that solutions are possible.

The Image of the United Nations

The United Nations Organisation, established 50 years ago to help the world become a genuine "international community", is presently being defeated by what its Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros Ghali, calls the "culture of death". By this he means the fragmentation and collapse of States, the rise of ethnic militia, and the cult of violence seemingly without a rationale. Boutros Boutros Ghali admits to the UN's inability to stop the civil war in Afghanistan, the collapse of Sierra Leone and Liberia, the Indonesian repression of the East Timorese, and the Russians' bloody attempt to crush the Chechens.

The UN is not equal to these tasks. It was not built for them. It is struggling to re-shape itself for a world never foreseen by its founders. The UN is now called on to police conflicts within States rather than between States. Originally designed to be an organisation of sovereign Nation-States, it must now, at times, seek to protect people against their States.

Boutros Boutros Ghali takes the salute from an impressive army, yet he cannot order that force into action. Symbols and impartiality will not "enforce" peace for much longer. In Bosnia the UN was able to hand this task to NATO; but whom can it enlist for Angola or Burundi?

And if the UN cannot intervene, who in the future will negotiate ceasefires, rebuild political structures, ease societies towards democracy? There is no prospect of any realistic alternative to the UN. NGOs cannot perform these tasks. Nation-States see no votes in making peace abroad when they are called to be impartial. Who will reverse the trend that sees Governments morally disengaging from international responsibilities? Many forces — the Churches among them — must now complement the roles played by the UN. This will demand support for conflict resolution, for preparations for democratic government, for formation of human rights monitors. The lead role of the UN, through its Department of Humanitarian Affairs in "complex emergencies", should be strongly supported.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Opening the annual meeting of UNHCR's 50 member ExCom in October, the current High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadako Ogata, warned that asylum is now under threat world-wide. Her favourite remark is: "In order to find durable solutions to the problems of forced displacement, we must address the root causes". Almost in the same breath, the High Commissioner often adds: "Political solutions must be sought by Governments". To do this, Governments need encouragement. To encourage is a role for us, among others. And we will not succeed by repeating *clichés*.

UNHCR, with a budget of over US\$ 1.3 billion, is the strongest of the UN agencies. But powerful as it is, UNHCR is overstretched. Faced with an immense task, its officers appear to make compromises to please member States. As a result, conditions of asylum and protection appear diminished in many places. UNHCR needs support from the NGOs and Churches more than it appears to realise. PARinAC, the partnership process instituted two years ago as a result of agreement between UNHCR and the NGOs, is in my view being undermined from within UNHCR itself. The refugees and we who serve them need this partnership process to remain vigorous. We must call local officers to task, present them with opportunities to work effectively with us and encourage them by proposing methods that meet their needs. And before asking for consistency on the part of UNHCR, we ourselves must act consistently.

CONCLUSION: The Cause of Displacement — Dare to Ask *Why*?

To become a refugee today is to fall into a bad space. To be in a refugee camp is to be in an evil place. Many refugees ask: Why does God allow this? And they have the right to an answer from us based on deep reflection. Certainly this evil situation was not made by God, but by human action. But we may still ask: How can we, before God, allow this suffering? And more positively: How can we collaborate with God's action so that God's grace overcomes this evil? "The entire creation has been groaning in one great act of giving birth".

When we arrive as a refugee agency on the heels of a disaster in Karagwe or Bukavu or in the Bihac pocket, and see countless people displaced and suffering, our first temptation is to mount large scale assistance. The speed of the arrival and the congestion, the humiliation, anguish, guilt, sadness

— all of these forces create tremendous physical, moral and spiritual crises. Help is indeed needed. But a vital additional task for the Church is to face the mystery of this particular suffering and evil, to help people find a meaning within their own situation. Our task will include supplying food, water and shelter, but goes beyond this to human solidarity before our common Father.

We must know well what message of hope we dare to bring to people who have been denied hope. "Know the plans I have in mind for you" — it is Yahweh who speaks — "plans for peace not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you" (Jer 29:11). Can we believe such promises? Can we carry that message? All of 2,500 years ago, Ezekiel was charged to bring a message to a people who had suffered a long cruel exile:

I am going to take you from among the nations and gather you together from all the foreign countries, and bring you home to your own land. I shall pour clean water over you and you will be cleansed; ... I shall give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I shall remove the heart of stone from your bodies and give you a heart of flesh instead (Ez 36:24-33).

Ezekiel issued a call to change and be converted because something had gone terribly wrong. Even the victims needed to look at themselves, so as not to succumb to the evil and allow it to evolve into hate. If they were not to become like their oppressors, conversion was necessary. It still is.

The fourth song of the Servant of Yahweh in Isaiah (52:13-53:12) has a message for us when we ask *Why*? The suffering people are themselves a silent protest against corrupt human ways, including those that descend to the politics of ethnicity. The refugees are best placed to tell us clearly and correctly what is wrong. It is the innocent on all sides of a conflict who can start the miracle of reconciliation. We have seen it time and again when widows from opposing ethnic factions come together, or when landmine victims and other war-wounded meet. The suffering people themselves have a vital interest in change. Those who are in power work to maintain the *status quo*. The solution will come from the victims. Indeed it does already. God has chosen them.

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“IL VOUS CONDUIRA DANS LA VÉRITÉ TOUT ENTIÈRE” (Jn 16:13)

par Alex GILLET

L'annonce de la foi est accueil et expression du dynamisme trinitaire qui nous habite et nous anime. C'est donc dans la contemplation de l'Amour du Père, du Fils et de l'Esprit que tout évangéliste et tout évangélisé trouve la source et l'accomplissement de la Bonne Nouvelle qui nous fait vivre.

Disons tout de suite qu'il me paraît impossible de parler de l'action de l'Esprit sans parler du Père et du Fils. Tout d'abord parce que le rôle de l'Esprit est de nous rappeler tout ce que Jésus nous a dit (Jn 14,26), ensuite parce que tout ce que Jésus nous a dit venait du Père (Jn 5, 19). “Dieu créa l'homme à son image...”. (Gn 1, 27). C'est Jésus qui, en nous disant le tout de Dieu, nous dira en même temps le tout de l'homme. Il nous présentera sa famille et, ce faisant, il précisera pour nous ce que signifie l'expression “être créé à l'image de Dieu”. “Nul ne connaît le Père si ce n'est le Fils, et celui à qui le Fils veut bien le révéler (Lc 10, 22).

Cette Trinité n'est pas une théorie en l'air, mais **une vie en nous**. “Si quelqu'un m'aime, il gardera ma parole; mon Père l'aimera et nous viendrons chez lui et nous ferons en lui notre demeure” (Jn 14, 23). Une vie qui cherche à faire son chemin en nous “afin que l'amour dont tu m'as aimé soit en eux” (Jn 17, 26). C'est donc **le concret le plus concret**, le cœur même de la réalité humaine que je suis, que tu es... En un temps où on se méfie à juste titre des abstractions, *il importe de ne jamais confondre “abstrait” et “profond”*: autant l'abstrait nous écarte de la vie, autant le profond est susceptible de donner sens à notre concret quotidien.

Bien souvent, on a malheureusement très mal parlé de la Trinité. Jésus nous a ouvert sa famille; nous avons posé un tas de questions compliquées et indiscretes pour finalement décider qu'on ne pouvait rien y comprendre (“mystère”) et nous sentir très peu concernés. Pourtant, nous avons été baptisés “au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint Esprit”. C'est en ce même nom que nous avons été bien souvent absous, envoyés (Mt 28,19), que nous avons béni nos repas, chanté la louange (“Gloire au Père...”); en ce même nom toujours, nous serons un jour encensés par l'Eglise et portés en terre “marqués du sceau de la Trinité” (cf. rituel des funérailles).

C'est notre baptême qui nous a introduits dans ce dynamisme incroyable. Pour nous qui avons été “configurés au Christ” (Ro 6, 5), le commandement de la charité est égal à l'envoi en mission, à l'annonce de la foi: le Père déborde sur son Fils, les deux sur l'Esprit, la Trinité sur le monde, les “annonceurs” sur les “annoncés”, le tout pour le grand retour en Dieu “à la louange de sa gloire”, (Ep 1, 6; 1, 14; Ph 1, 11). Rappelons qu'il ne s'agit pas d'un “en haut” vers un “en bas” mais bien d'une réalité intérieure qui cherche à se communiquer.

Ce que Jésus nous dit de sa famille

Le Père, source de tout, **engendre et donne la vie**. Jésus parle souvent de “tout ce qu'il a reçu du Père” (Mt 11,27; Jn 5,26; Jn 20,21). Le Fils est celui qui **reçoit**, qui **accueille** sans cesse la volonté du Père (Jn 4,34). Il est le “recevant” par excellence. Il ne peut annoncer que ce qu'il a reçu (Jn 5,19). L'Esprit, c'est l'unité indissoluble entre les deux, **synthèse du donner et du recevoir**, de “l'annoncer et de l'être annoncé”, envoyé dans le monde à la suite de Jésus. Il est celui dont vivent aujourd'hui les baptisés, appelés qu'ils sont à être tour à tour “annonceurs” et “annoncés”, à vivre ainsi à la mesure des talents qu'ils ont reçus, les traits qui font le Père et ceux qui font le Fils. Il ne s'agit pas d'une image idéale à imiter par des comportements volontaristes, mais bien d'une *Vie à accueillir chaque jour dans la contemplation pour lui permettre de se prolonger en dehors de nous dans notre action*. Pour moi, c'est cela l'annonce de la foi: accueillir (être annoncé) et transmettre (annoncer) cet incroyable dynamisme qui veut soulever la pâte humaine. Et le rôle de l'Esprit, on le pressent, est absolument déterminant.

ANNONCER À L'IMAGE DU PÈRE

Dieu Père, Source de la vie (Jn 1, 17). De l'intérieur de nous-mêmes, *l'Esprit nous donne de donner comme le Père* à nous donner du don du Père, à nous engager dans son plan d'amour. Actif dans la générosité, de l'activité du Père. L'inertie, le laisser-aller, la paresse, le repliement sur soi apparaissent vraiment comme des fautes contre le Père.

Le Père prend l'initiative

Le Père fait le premier pas dans le don comme dans le pardon. Il se propose sans s'imposer. C'est un des fondements de la Mission: partir, sortir de soi, aller vers l'autre. Un défi permanent à toute structure tentée de tourner sur elle-même et pour elle-même, à toute vie baptismale qui cesserait d'être feu. L'initiative du Père resplendit dans l'acte permanent de la création et nous invite donc à la créativité, à l'ingéniosité dans l'annonce.

Le Père se donne dans la gratuité totale.

Il suscite la réponse mais n'en attend rien en retour pour lui-même. Il se donne parce que c'est sa nature de Père. "Amor diffusivum sui" disaient les anciens. Ces initiatives du Père sont **libératrices** (p.e. l'exode, l'incarnation de son Fils). L'annonce ne peut se faire que dans la **gratuité**: "Vous avez reçu gratuitement, donnez gratuitement (Mt 10, 8). "Que les missionnaires n'apparaissent jamais comme des concurrents dans la course au prestige, comme une nouvelle espèce de compétiteurs" disait Saint François d'Assise (Eloi Leclerc *"Sagesse d'un Pauvre"*, Ed franciscaine, p. 140). Ceci suppose une lutte permanente contre tout complexe de supériorité qui humilie. Donner pour libérer, pour susciter, pour favoriser l'initiative des autres, et donc refus de toute forme de pouvoir.

Attention à cette "générosité" qui devient facilement envahissante et qui finit par tout dominer. "Le Royaume des Cieux est semblable à un homme

qui partagea ses biens entre ses serviteurs, puis il partit (Mt 25, 15). Il part pour permettre aux autres de se lancer (ou de refuser de le faire!) à leur manière. Il se retire pour libérer, pour laisser la place. Le don du Père est un don qui fait se lever, **qui fait "exister"**.

Le Père "se repose le septième jour"

Il nous invite ainsi à nous élever **contre tout activisme**, fébrilité, contre toute activité qui ne laisserait pas place aux relations avec les autres. Le repos, le loisir contemplatif qui est fait pour le rebondissement, l'approfondissement de l'action fait intégralement partie de l'annonce "au nom du Père". "Ceux qui ne se reposent jamais fatiguent les autres" a-t-on dit. Des hommes, des femmes, des communautés où tout est en fonction du travail à réaliser et où, à cause de cela, les relations humaines passent au second plan, ne peuvent pas vraiment être missionnaires "au nom du Père".

Le Père se donne en abondance et en profondeur

Il donne les choses de la création à tous ses enfants; "il fait pleuvoir sur les bons et les méchants" (Mt 5, 45). Annoncer "au nom du Père", c'est vouloir que tous ses enfants aient vraiment accès à tout ce dont ils ont besoin pour leur épanouissement personnel et travailler dans ce sens. Vouloir aussi que le cadeau du Père soit respecté en lui-même et donc s'ériger, personnellement et socialement, contre toute dégradation de la création, contre tout détournement de ses biens.

Le Père ne donne pas seulement les choses de la création; **il se donne lui-même en Jésus**. Il est bien possible de donner pendant

toute sa vie sans jamais se donner soi-même. Le don des choses doit amener au don des cœurs. Il ne suffit pas de "porter du fruit" (Jn 15, 8), mais bien "un fruit qui demeure" (Jn 15, 16). En Mt 5, 45, Jésus dit explicitement que se donner de manière permanente, universelle, indépendante des sympathies et antipathies, "c'est cela être les enfants de votre Père qui est dans les Cieux". Un don qui, par conséquent, dépasse aussi les liens du sang, et donc tout

Il y a autant de dignité possible, autant de noblesse possible dans le recevoir que dans le donner. Donner n'est pas en soi supérieur à recevoir, car le Fils-accueil est égal au Père-don. Bien accueillir, c'est permettre à l'autre d'être Père pour moi et c'est me comporter en Fils envers lui.

tribalisme, racisme, et autres “ismes” aux dimensions simplement humaines.

Donner en profondeur, c’est tâcher envers et contre tout de partager et de **communiquer au niveau de l’essentiel**, de ce qui me fait être, de ce qui me fait vivre, car c’est à ce niveau que le Père se donne. Il s’agit donc d’un appel à de vraies relations constructives de nos communautés, de nos différents milieux de vie et, en vue de cela, lutter contre toute superficialité. *Chercher sans cesse la parole qui construit, c’est être annonceur au nom d’un Père qui, à chaque instant, crée par sa Parole.*

C’est tout cela et encore bien d’autres choses être missionnaire “au nom du Père”: accepter cette activité du Père qui agit en nous et à travers nous (Is 26, 12; Ph 1, 6; Ph 2, 13). Il est normal que notre annonce prenne les caractéristiques mêmes de l’activité du Père, car il habite notre temple intérieur par son Esprit. “Adorer le Père en esprit et en vérité” (Jn 4, 23), c’est bien plus qu’un sentiment romantique!

ANNONCER À IMAGE DU FILS

Le Fils est accueil, réception, adhésion joyeuse à la volonté du Père. “Que ta volonté soit faite”! avait écrit un enfant dans son cahier de catéchisme. C’est l’attitude profondément filiale de Jésus qui saute aux yeux en Mt 11, 26 lorsque, sous l’action de l’Esprit, il s’écrie: “Abba amen! Parce que c’est ton bon plaisir!”. Jamais Jésus ne se prend pour la source: “Je vous le déclare, c’est la vérité: le Fils ne fait rien de par lui-même; il ne fait que ce qu’il voit faire au Père. Tout ce que le Père fait, le Fils le fait aussi” (Jn 5, 19). D’où l’importance pour l’annonce “au nom du Fils” de **ce moment de “passivité”** par lequel, selon les mystiques, commence toute relation à Dieu, de cette contemplation accueillante qui veut communier à la volonté d’amour du Père pour mieux l’annoncer. *L’Esprit nous donne ainsi d’accueillir comme le Fils.*

Jésus découvrait cette volonté dans les rencontres, les événements

Partout et en tout, il voyait des signes du Royaume et s’en réjouissait. Il a beaucoup reproché aux pharisiens et à la ville de Jérusalem de ne pas savoir lire “les signes des temps” (Lc 19, 41-44; Mt 16, 1-4). **Il était incarné.**

Annoncer au nom du Fils, c’est nécessairement suivre le même chemin. D’où l’importance de comprendre en profondeur ce qui se passe, *d’être ouvert à l’événement*. Ceci est particulièrement vrai si nous sommes appelés à travailler dans une culture différente de la nôtre et nous redit que seul **le préjugé favorable** peut nous amener à réussir la relation à l’autre. La pensée positive est aussi importante que la parole constructive dont nous avons parlé plus haut. Tout ce qui favorise l’accueil vrai est dévotion au Fils et donc révèle le Père.

Prendre le temps d’accueillir l’autre en ce qu’il veut me donner, de l’accueillir en moi. On distingue quatre niveaux d’accueil, par ordre de profondeur: la simple tolérance, l’attention, l’écoute du cœur, la communion. Il est aussi difficile de bien recevoir que de bien donner. Il y a autant de dignité possible, autant de noblesse possible dans le recevoir que dans le donner. Donner n’est pas en soi supérieur à recevoir, car le Fils-accueil est égal au Père-don. Bien accueillir, c’est permettre à l’autre d’être Père pour moi et c’est me comporter en Fils envers lui. C’est pourquoi Jésus a réservé le Royaume à ceux qui deviennent comme des enfants. Ils lui ressemblent, lui l’enfant du Père!

Bien accueillir inclut risque et vulnérabilité

Jésus l’a bien expérimenté ! L’intégrisme quel qu’il soit, a peur de cet inconnu; c’est pourquoi il préfère se figer dans le passé. “Voici que je vous envoie comme des brebis au milieu des loups” (Mt 10, 16). L’aventure du véritable accueil passera tôt ou tard **par le mystère pascal**, car “le serviteur n’est pas plus grand que son maître” (Mt 10, 24). Annoncer “au nom du Fils”, c’est accepter d’actualiser aujourd’hui l’image du Serviteur Souffrant décrite par Isaïe et vécue concrètement par Jésus en son temps. Au plus profond de nos cœurs, l’Esprit nous pousse, comme il l’a fait pour Jésus, à renoncer à toute position de force, à tout complexe de supériorité, et à accepter qu’en principe, tout être humain, s’il est véritablement accueilli, peut nous faire grandir en étant pour nous épiphanie de la volonté du Père. D’où l’importance **d’une réelle écoute**, pas seulement le fait d’écouter, mais la manière: “Faites attention à la manière dont vous écoutez” (Lc 8, 18). Ce que Jésus a dit en un contexte bien précis (“Qui vous écoute, m’écoute; qui vous rejette, me rejette et rejette aussi celui qui m’a envoyé Lc 10,16) peut être largement généralisé comme il le fait lui-même en Mt 18, 5: “Quiconque accueille un de ces petits en mon nom (au nom du Fils!) c’est moi qu’il accueille”.

La deuxième béatitude

L'attitude de douceur révélée par Jésus (Mt 11, 29) est la raison pour laquelle "on vient à lui". La douceur à laquelle Paul convie sans cesse ses communautés chrétiennes (2 Co 10, 1; Ga 6, 1; Ep 4, 2; Ph 4, 5, etc.), c'est cette force calme et sûre de Dieu qui, en Jésus, a laissé tomber ses défenses et qui pour cela n'est plus qu'accueil. La douceur évangélique est essentielle à toute annonce "au nom du Fils"! Comment ne pas admirer la qualité exceptionnelle des relations humaines de Jésus, comment toujours et partout il a appelé et favorisé la rencontre comme émergence possible de la volonté du Père! "Que pas un de ces petits ne se perde!" (Mt 18, 14). Qu'à travers un accueil de tous les instants, chacun d'eux soit profondément valorisé en ce qu'il est: un don de Dieu pour les autres. Accueillir aussi la démarche de rapprochement, de réconciliation (Mt 18, 23-35), lutter contre toute froideur qui isole, développer cette attitude chaleureuse qui appelle, qui invite... "Lequel s'est fait prochain de l'homme...?" (Lc 10, 36).

Dans son accueil sans réserve, Jésus était réaliste

Le mal reste le mal. Jésus l'a condamné violemment. Mais le mal ne l'empêchait pas de voir le bien qui se faisait. Il faisait *la distinction entre le péché qu'il rejetait et le pécheur qu'il aimait profondément*. Annoncer "au nom du Fils", c'est, avec les yeux de la foi, **admirer ce que Jésus admirait**: l'œuvre du Père, la foi chez les pauvres, etc. (cf. Mt 11, 25; Mt 8, 5-13; Mt 15, 21-28; Mc 12, 41-44). Quelle différence avec les disciples qui admiraient les grosses pierres du temple (Mc 13, 1-2) ou la foule béate devant les aumônes des hypocrites (Mt 6, 2)! De ce sens de l'admiration que le mal n'avait pas terni surgissait normalement en **Jésus la prière de louange et d'action de grâces** et une confiance inébranlable en son Père (Jn 11, 41-42). Ce sens profond de l'esprit d'enfance, c'est l'Esprit de Jésus qui vit en nous et nous invite à réagir contre un certain "réalisme" terre à terre qui, surtout en certaines périodes plus difficiles à vivre, risquerait de ne plus voir que le mal et de rendre aveugle à une grande partie de la réalité.

L'Esprit nous aide à distinguer le noyau essentiel du message à annoncer de tout l'emballage propre à un lieu et à une époque déterminés. Dieu ne veut pas que nous soyons un troupeau informe d'individus sans personnalité. Bien au contraire, il nous veut chacun(e) comme vraiment unique et c'est comme cela qu'il nous aime.

La sagesse de Jésus

Elle lui faisait percevoir la profondeur de la réalité (Lc 2, 40; Lc 2, 52; Mt 13, 54) et y découvrir la pâte en train de lever (Mt 13, 33), la semence en train de grandir (Mt 13, 31). Plus tard, il dira à ses envoyés: "Je vous donnerai une sagesse à laquelle nul de vos adversaire ne pourra résister" (Lc 21, 15). Il nous faut croire intensément que ce don est en nous depuis notre bap-tême et lui permettre de s'exprimer dans *une saine appréhension de la réalité*. Il s'agit là, je crois, d'une dimension essentielle de l'annonce. C'est aussi cette sagesse qui a fait voir à Jésus que le péché n'était pas seulement individuel, mais aussi structurel: il en témoigne quand il prend conscience de la misère des foules (Mt 9, 36), prend position pour les pauvres dans sa critique de l'autorité établie (Mt 23, 1-36) et en fait l'objet essentiel du jugement dernier (Mt 25, 31-46).

C'est dans le silence du désert que Jésus devenait accueil

Se mettre en silence, s'est se mettre en disponibilité pour la Parole à recevoir et, par conséquent, refuser d'avoir réponse à tout en notre nom ou au nom d'un système. Avant de donner des réponses, il faut permettre **que les vraies questions soient bien posées**. L'œuvre de l'Esprit en nous est indispensable pour cela. Se taire pour accueillir la Parole, pour l'écouter dans notre cœur, dans les personnes rencontrées, dans les événements vécus. "Ne parlez jamais les premiers, mais vivez de manière à ce qu'on vous demande de parler" disait quelqu'un. Se taire parce que nous sommes annonceurs "au nom du Fils", lequel avait besoin du silence du désert et de la montagne pour s'ouvrir à l'Essentiel avant de pouvoir se croire capable d'en parler. L'Esprit nous conduit dans le désert comme il y a poussé Jésus (Lc 4, 1) pour que, comme lui et toujours sous la poussée de l'Esprit, nous proclamions la réalisation des promesses "aujourd'hui" (Lc 4, 14-21). Le désert profondément vécu à la suite de Jésus nous fera éviter les habitudes sclérosées, les répétitions sans âme, les ignorances coupables.

Cette mystique de la vie d'accueil, je le répète, n'est pas un programme dont nous

aurions à parcourir toutes les étapes à la force des poignets. Elle est vie au plus profond de nous-mêmes et ne demande qu'à s'épancher et à animer tous les gestes de l'annonce. Adorer le Fils "en esprit et en vérité" (Jn 4, 24), c'est accueillir tout le vécu possible au niveau de son cœur; c'est être avec Lui et en Lui "Amen du Père" (Ap 3, 14).

RÔLE DE L'ESPRIT DANS L'ANNONCE DE LA FOI

L'Esprit, c'est celui que Jésus envoie "en son nom" (Jn 14, 26), celui qui rend témoignage à Jésus (In 15, 26), celui qui nous introduit "dans la vérité tout entière" (Jn 16, 13). Unité du Père et du Fils, courant d'amour qui unit et réunit, qui appelle à la complémentarité sans abolition des différences, il est pour nous l'harmonie toujours à conquérir, dans le terrible quotidien, entre le donner et le recevoir, entre l'action et la contemplation. Une attitude qui serait toute initiative ressemblerait fort à de l'impérialisme et ne rejoindrait certainement pas la réalité de l'endroit où nous sommes appelés à annoncer. Par contre, celle qui ne consisterait que dans le fait d'accueillir sans jamais s'exprimer dans des actions concrètes deviendrait vite amour purement sentimental et platonique, figier stérile, paresse et peur des responsabilités. Tout cela n'est pas "à l'image de Dieu", "au nom du Père, du Fils et du Saint-Esprit". Jésus a été le type de l'évangéliste à l'image de Dieu et cela s'est révélé dans son être-apôtre profondément contemplatif ("annoncé") et actif ("annonceur") à la fois, "**contempl'actif**" parce que parfait équilibre entre l'accueil et le don. C'est cet Esprit de Jésus qui vit en nous et nous pousse sur les mêmes chemins.

En intériorisant le message de Jésus à chaque baptisé(e), **L'Esprit le personnalise et à la fois l'universalise**. Chacun est invité à recevoir le message de Jésus au plus profond de son cœur comme une invitation à l'amour interpersonnel. Mais il est aussi appelé à partir de ce "plus profond" pour le répercuter autour de lui. On le voit, le "donner-recevoir", double aspect inséparable de l'annonce missionnaire, est *plus une vie transformatrice de mon être, cherchant par tous les moyens à se communiquer, qu'un contenu noétique dont nous serions supposés nous faire les champions*.

En intériorisant, l'Esprit personnalise

Il porte à maturité en nous tout ce que le Christ a dit, et, en cela, il nous "conduit dans la vérité tout entière" (Jn 16, 13). Il "n'ajoute rien", "ne parle pas

de lui-même", mais rend tout vivant et fort et nous donne "d'habiter l'Évangile" chacun(e) à notre manière. Sans l'Esprit, l'Évangile reste un message objectif, extérieur, proclamé dans un contexte bien déterminé et, à la limite, décourageant par son exigence et sa radicalité. Mais tout le but de la vie de Jésus est de préparer la venue de l'Esprit; c'est bien pourquoi "il est avantageux pour vous que je m'en aille" (Jn 16, 7).

Jésus a vécu sur notre terre il y a deux mille ans: comment le vivre aujourd'hui ? Il a parlé comme un jeune homme juif de trente ans: comment alors doivent s'y prendre les gens de tous sexes, races, âges qui viendront après lui s'il n'y a pas au plus profond de chacun(e) l'Esprit qui lui murmure de l'intérieur le seul et unique message de Jésus en des termes adaptés à sa subjectivité? Une sorte de service de traduction simultanée en somme. L'Esprit peut le faire parce qu'il ne s'est pas incarné en un endroit précis.

Dieu s'est servi de l'humanité de Jésus pour nous proposer son plan d'amour. Mais l'expérience a largement montré que les conditions socioculturelles de cette humanité peuvent devenir un fameux obstacle à l'annonce de la Bonne Nouvelle (cf. p.e. la question de l'admission des gentils dans la communauté primitive en Ac 15), de même d'ailleurs que le contexte socioculturel de tout annonceur. L'Esprit nous aide à distinguer le noyau essentiel du message à annoncer de tout l'emballage propre à un lieu et à une époque déterminés. Dieu ne veut pas que nous soyons un troupeau informe d'individus sans personnalité. Bien au contraire, il nous veut chacun(e) comme vraiment unique et c'est comme cela qu'il nous aime. Par et dans l'Esprit, l'Évangile devient pour chaque baptisé(e) **une lettre d'amour** adressée à une personne bien précise en des termes qui lui parlent personnellement

L'Esprit, que l'on me pardonne cette expression, c'est un peu "**le Dieu de la situation**" comme on parle aussi, quand un problème se pose, de "l'homme de la situation" qui est capable de le résoudre. Il s'adapte à moi pour m'adapter à Jésus: mes rythmes, mes joies, mes peines, mes aspirations, toutes mes particularités. Il suscite en moi ce mouvement profondément intérieur qui me fait "connaître le Christ" (cf. Ep 3, 14-19) et m'aide à vivre en chrétien(ne) "le terrible quotidien", à voir l'Événement dans les événements. Avec lui, les événements sont les étapes du plan d'amour du Père dans le monde. Ils sont les moments d'une histoire bien plus belle et plus profonde que cela n'apparaît.

C'est là, je crois, la première démarche sans laquelle il n'y a ni "annonceur" ni "annoncé". Le Père ne se contente pas de nous annoncer sa Parole en Jésus; par son Esprit, *il crée en nous les conditions subjectives d'un véritable accueil de cette Parole*. Dans tous les sens du terme, cette Parole est vie intérieure, ou alors, elle n'est qu'une idéologie parmi tant d'autres.

En intériorisant, l'Esprit universalise

L'Esprit ne parle pas. Il donne au missionnaire de parler et de se faire comprendre. Avec lui, il y a communion des personnes au niveau de l'essentiel. C'est le langage de la Pentecôte, l'anti-Babel par excellence, où chacun entend parler sa propre langue et parle celle de l'autre, expression par excellence du "donner-recevoir". **Le don des langues**, cela va bien au-delà du vocabulaire et de la syntaxe ! Champion de l'adaptation, l'Esprit suscite la vraie rencontre qui est de se dire Jésus-Christ l'un à l'autre chez ceux et celles qui "persévèrent dans la prière avec Marie, Mère de Jésus" (Ac 1, 14). Harmonie parfaite du "donner-recevoir", il réalise progressivement en nous la conversion à la vie trinitaire dont nous ne possédons actuellement que "les arrhes" (2 Co 1, 22; 5, 5), prélude à toute vraie rencontre "annonceur-annoncé". Cela devient vertigineux!

Le don des langues, cela peut aller très loin ! Cela va aussi loin que veulent bien s'ouvrir les personnes en présence. Plus que jamais, il nous conduit "dans la vérité tout entière" (Jn 16, 13): la sienne, la

mienne, celle de mon frère, de ma sœur, la nôtre. Dans ce sens, il envoie et ne cesse d'envoyer et rend l'annonce féconde parce que partout, il précède l'annonceur qui ne peut rien faire d'autre que d'aider à révéler sa présence déjà agissante. Il permet ainsi l'approche missionnaire de l'autre comme une continuation de l'initiative du Père, **une épiphanie de la Rencontre dans la rencontre**.

La Pentecôte est plus qu'un événement initial, une irruption ponctuelle de l'Esprit qui aurait lancé le mouvement de l'évangélisation dans le monde. En Ac 2, Luc condense en un seul instant un événement bien plus fréquent qu'il n'y paraît à première vue. En fait, c'est toute l'Eglise, et en elle chaque baptisé(e), qui est appelé(e) à vivre en état de Pentecôte d'une façon permanente et toujours plus profonde. Vivre la Pentecôte et vivre la relation "annonceur-annoncé" me paraissent deux expressions qui traduisent la même réalité fondamentale: assumer aussi consciemment que possible notre intégration dans le courant trinitaire voulue par le Père réalisée en Jésus, prolongée dans tous les lieux et les temps par l'Esprit, et la vivre dans un discernement constant du plan d'amour du Père pour notre monde. L'Esprit est ainsi, au quotidien, l'élan dynamique et inspirateur de l'annonce de la foi en "l'absence de Jésus", le tout "pour la louange de sa gloire" (Ep 1, 14). "Puisque l'Esprit est notre vie, que l'Esprit nous fasse agir" (Ga 5, 25).

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THE VOCATION OF JERUSALEM: A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Bernard SABELLA

Reflection on the theme of the second Jewish-Christian-Muslim colloquium on Jerusalem: The Responsibility of Jews, Christians and Muslims for Peace in Jerusalem.

What better introduction to the vocation of Jerusalem than the joint statement that came out of the Glion meeting of May 1993. The six points of the statement can be solid ground on which to elaborate the vocation of Jerusalem from any perspective, but especially from a committed religious one. In fact, the Report on "The Spiritual Significance of Jerusalem for Jews, Christians and Muslims", in its entirety, makes an appropriate and relevant introduction. The Report clearly points out convergences and divergences as participants from the three monotheistic faiths, and from the two national groups in Israel/Palestine, tell their stories of what Jerusalem means to them and how deeply the city is embedded in their personal, communal, national, historical and religious make-up. Just by reading the various articles and going through the discussions and the various points raised, one realises the intensity of love, often possessive, that the participants have for this eternal city.

Reading the report with an open heart and mind, and seeing the clarity with which Jew, Christian and Muslim, Palestinian and Israeli, make their respective presentations, one is eventually forced to ask the elementary question: Can we set ourselves up to the task of reworking our self-definition as religions and as national groups in order to come to terms with the presence of other religions and groups on the same holy ground? Can we, in other words, come to a new understanding of our religious and national heritage within a context that includes rather than excludes the other/s? This is not an easy question and its difficulty lies in forcing people out of a comfortable position, often consensual, to a situation where the prospects of sharing with others spell compromise on dear religious and national issues. Even contemplating a dialogue with those others, or being in the same place with them, is taboo for some. A long history of enmity, spanning decades, cannot be forgotten by using sophisticated language and posing questions that are better posed in an academic institution and among groups that are

marginal, and apparently not that important, to the wider society/ies.

But how is this question of redefinition related to the vocation of Jerusalem? Jerusalem's significance is at the heart of the conflict and hence it is the most difficult part. Accordingly, redefinition touches definitely on our projections on and perceptions of the holy city. Some would argue that religion, history or political ideology make redefinition an impossible task. This is so written, the argument would go and no one and no force, whatsoever, can change what is written. The attempt at exploring the vocation of Jerusalem, as I understand it, is not to change what is written or to dispute it. People are entitled to their own beliefs and world-view, irrespective, but the challenge is how to enable three religious communities and two national groups to live their lives in Jerusalem without infringing on one another and, at the same time, for each religious and national group to feel that the city, in its oneness and historical, communal and religious richness belongs to It. The challenge really is how to share Jerusalem and to keep it unique for each and every group which inhabits it? The challenge then is one of love that shares and contributes to the health and integrity of one's community while, at the same time, allowing others the same rights and privileges of love and community.

THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

Allow me to offer you what I see as the Christian contribution towards a vocation for Jerusalem, or more modestly and realistically towards the beginning of contemplating a vocation for Jerusalem. Let me, instead of assuming the role of the academician and researcher who connects specific statements in the Old and New Testament with the Christian vocation of Jerusalem, and I have to admit that I was tempted to do just that, use the language of experience as I navigate through

an elaboration of what I believe to be a Christian vocation for Jerusalem. You will have to be patient with my experiences and recollections but, I believe, that in the end they integrate with the communal and national contexts and, unpretentiously, they call and hope for a future in which Jerusalem is shared by all in mutual respect and dignity.

As a Christian, I knew Jerusalem in my childhood years when my refugee parents sought refuge in its eastern part, specifically in the old city. The one room which housed us gave on to the most superb view of the Mount of Olives and al-Haram ash-Sharif, on one side and on the Holy Sepulchre, on the other. These views captivated me no less than the narrow streets of Jerusalem, its scenes, sounds, sunrises and sunsets, its swallows in early summer and even the odious smells of its markets. The charm that the city had on me was only heightened by my running and playing in its streets together with Christian and Muslim peers. And I still remember sunrises when sitting, at dawn, by the window of that one room, giving on the Mount of Olives, I could feel moisture in my eyes as I watched the sun rise from behind the holy mountain, at the same time that the bells of churches and the Muezzins were making their early morning prayer calls to the faithful. I was experiencing the best that was in Jerusalem as this was as close to heavenly as I could get.

But was there a missing dimension in all this? Not really. I was aware of the Jewish dimension, the third dimension, through the refugee experience of my parents and through visits with my peers, mostly unplanned, to the Wailing Wall. But my awareness was coloured by the pain of my parents, teachers and their generation as they recounted their experiences as refugees. I knew then that Jews and Arabs were enemies and that the Jews simply took away Palestine and our home. This was my introduction to the Arab-Israeli conflict: the sad recollections of my parents as they sat sipping their early morning coffee in that one single room. My parents, though, never expressed anti-Jewish statements; they were angry, especially my father, with the British and Americans for having forsaken the just cause of the Palestinians. I often heard the statement made, in discussion among my parents and their friends, of how could the British and Americans be Christian when they allowed this kind of injustice to take place? Certainly, the British and the West were perceived by Christian Palestinians, such as my parents, as having supported the unjust cause and thus were equally responsible for the suffering of the Palestinian people.

But my parents and their generation were not aware of the horrors that were perpetrated against the Jews and other national and ethnic groups by no other than "Christian" Europeans. Anti-Jewish sentiments were not exclusive to Europe as the good old bastion of democracy, the USA also had them in a more refined manner among some social strata and government and military circles. My parents and their generation had no way of knowing that they were in fact an unwilling partner in the horrible triangle that saw millions of Jews and others perish in a most atrocious act by the Nazi monster. They were, like three-quarter million other Palestinians, made to pay a heavy price of loss of home and of becoming refugees, almost overnight.

My knowledge of the Jews and Jewish history, however, was not solely based on the sad experience of my refugee parents. As a student in the Frères' School at New Gate and during catechism classes, I was introduced to chapters of Jewish history in the Old Testament with which as a Christian I came to identify. The ancient Hebrews were good, the Pharaoh evil. It was therefore natural for me to identify with the Hebrews and I could understand all the ills and punishments meted out against the Egyptians by the revengeful Yahweh. As I progressed in my catechism classes and in my Christian faith, I came to realise that there is a logical link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. The fulfilment of the Old was the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ which is the New Testament. In a biblical sense, I as a Palestinian Christian have links to the ancient Hebrews through Jesus Christ. This link superseded mundane matters and it confirmed that the New Testament is a culmination of a natural historical, religious and doctrinal process which started with the Old Testament. That the Christians and Jews parted ways on faith matters never bothered me as a Palestinian Christian and I did not see this as justification to harbour anti-Jewish feelings.

What bothered me was the experience of my parents and their generation as they dealt with their hurt and wounds following the loss of Palestine. Their experience drives a wedge of a doubt into this religious biblical affinity and makes injustice, emanating from a national conflict, cast its shadows on the commonly shared Abrahamic tradition. So national conflict interferes with the process that links Old and New Testaments and it cuts the potentially redeeming function of shared affinities across space and time. Conflict stops Jerusalem from having a vocation that can include the experience of ancient

Hebrews and ancient others, as well as present-day inhabitants of the land, of all religions and national groups. And yet conflict, in spite of all its negative aspects, forces the human spirit to accept its challenge and it forces people, on each side, to pull together and to react like one.

And so it was with the Palestinians as they regrouped and attempted to rebuild homes, lives and communities. And so it was with the Jewish people. A process of reconstruction as conflict signals the end of one phase of communal and national life and the beginning of another. The journey of pain and suffering for thousands of Palestinian refugees had just started. The 50 or 60 thousand Palestinian Christians who became refugees succeeded in rehabilitating themselves mostly in Jerusalem and in other urban areas of the West Bank, Gaza and Jordan. Other refugees could not and remain, till today in refugee camps, witnesses to an injustice that continues and to the absence of human dignity.

In the midst of all this, Palestinian Christians who fully identify with the cause of their people, have succeeded in elaborating their own perception of the vocation of Jerusalem through their year-round celebrations and through their rites, rituals and traditions that transform the earthly Jerusalem into a Jerusalem of successive centuries: an eternal Jerusalem. As Christians in the holy city celebrate Christmas but especially Easter they recount the story of the birth, death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. This recounting is a reaffirmation of community: not in a position of conflict with other communities but an affirmation that rejoices in the presence of one's own community and in the potential for its continuity. It is a reaffirmation of eternity, if one wishes to be a little pretentious. Each Christian community recreates in its own way the Passion of Holy Week. From Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday, Jerusalem's Christians actively participate, with pilgrims who come from Cyprus, Greece, Egypt and elsewhere, in all ceremonies that commemorate Christ's last days on earth. Muslim compatriots participate as Palestinian boy scout troupes, irrespective of religion, to help maintain public order and undertake later on to parade their musical talents whether on Palm Sunday or the Saturday of Light, "*Sabt an-Nour*".

The significance of Holy Week for Jerusalem's Christians is that it says all about the *raison d'être* of the community. The yearly Holy Week is a reconfirmation of the community's presence. When there are no more Holy Week ceremonies, then one

knows that the community is no longer. Let me stress here that *one of the vocations of Jerusalem is to maintain the community*: Jewish, Christian and Muslim. At a time when many communities, in countries in East and West, are finding it harder to survive as functioning sociological units, Jerusalem may well set an example to the whole world of communities that can function side by side, without friction or interference from the other communities. But religious communities cannot operate outside their socio-economic and political contexts; accordingly, when a situation of national political conflict prevails it becomes quite difficult for all communities to exercise their religious rights in the same fullness. This is why it is very important, if we care about the future of Jerusalem's communities, to consider seriously the November 1994 statement of the 12 heads of churches on Jerusalem.

The statement makes an essential distinction between the now and here and the more historical status of Jerusalem to various religious communities. While recognising that their faithful are like other citizens who are entitled to the rights and obligations thereof, they are also careful to point out the need to consider Jerusalem as a city with a continuous Christian presence focusing on up-keeping the communities, receiving the pilgrims and undertaking all sorts of activities and services in line with the importance of the city, not simply to local Christians but to Christians all over. The statement ends by stressing the need to treat each other with respect and understanding and not to try to be condescending or hegemonic when the future of the city is concerned. What we want for our own communities, with respect to rights and obligations, we also seek for the other communities. The statement makes clear that the final political status of the city is up to the two national groups and that such a status should encourage all citizens of the city to live with the dignity of peace without infringing on other groups and their right to live likewise.

It is clear from the statement that the vocation of Jerusalem is to guarantee the communities the right to live and exercise their function on equal terms. If these guarantees cannot be reached through a political agreement between the two conflicting sides, then there is a need to secure such rights through international guarantees that will need to be worked out. This is important for the Christian leaders because there has always been a Christian presence in Jerusalem, irrespective of temporal ruling arrangements. Governments, therefore, irrespective of claims, cannot automatically rescind the rights that accrued to Christians, and others, long

before specific temporal powers took control of the country. If Jerusalem is for the ages, then those who have been there throughout the ages are entitled to their own acknowledged and guaranteed rights.

For Jerusalem Christians, Jerusalem is “*Al-Quds*”, the holy, and the presence of their community in the city is confirmation of the continuity of Christ’s new beginning. This is the “mother of all churches” and there are links, claimed or real, that link Jerusalem’s Christian communities to the early church. As for Palestinians, they feel that the most fair political solution for the city lies in its becoming the capital of two States and that municipal arrangements be made in order to secure that the different populations can govern themselves and administer their affairs, without the interference of the other side, on the one hand and through maintaining the oneness of Jerusalem, on the other. Thus Palestinian Christians in the city are no different in their overall orientation for the future of the city than their other compatriots. They consider themselves and the future of their city as an integral part of the Palestinian State with its capital in East Jerusalem.

The Christians then have their own unique experience in the holy land and in Jerusalem. This unique experience spans history, crosses community boundaries and encompasses conflict.

In one important sense, there is a biblical affinity between Christianity and Judaism. Irrespective of claims and counterclaims to the authenticity of such an affinity, a Christian today has to profess the same stories and prophecies which have shaped the history of the ancient Hebrews and continue to shape modern Judaism, even in its own orthodox forms.

Second, Christian Palestinians have been deeply involved in the history, politics and society of their own Palestinian people. They are a cultural, national and political community with their Muslim compatriots. They share with them the conditions of life and they strive with them to create an independent Palestinian State with East Jerusalem as its capital. Palestinian Christians can claim an understanding and empathy with Islam, its ways and rules, that other Christians elsewhere cannot claim.

Third, Palestinian Christians have links which tie them to Christianity in its various countries. They are open to continuous exchange with these churches and they, and their churches, receive important spiritual and material support from these Christians. One form of support is the pilgrimage to the holy

places which translates into hundreds of job opportunities and other possibilities for Palestinians, Christians and others alike.

Fourth, Palestinian Christians have a community which they like to see continue with its rich traditions and in keeping with religious teachings and fulfilment of aspirations that are in line with these teachings. While proud of their heritage, both biblical and Palestinian Arab, they also like to live, in a fair and dignified manner, similarly to other communities of the city.

Looking at the six points of the Glion Statement, I can see that Palestinian Christians are in full conformity with all the points. I do not need to go over them but allow me to focus more precisely on what a Christian is supposed to do in order to fulfil these six points, in the context of his biblical, national, religious and communal identity. Fulfilment of these points would spell the vocation of Jerusalem from a Christian perspective.

First, as a Christian what I preach to others, I need to do myself. I should begin by understanding the experience of others, whether as a community or in their relationships to me or to others. This understanding should be done in a spirit of compassion, sympathy and appreciation of those I am trying to understand. While I hope for reciprocity, this is not my reward. The reward is not to do harm to others but simply to understand them as they are. Thus, the Jewish experience and the perception that the Jewish people has of Jerusalem and its love for the city must be understood and appreciated. Likewise, I have as a Christian to respect and appreciate the love the Muslim has for the city and its holiness for Islam and Muslims the world over.

Second, send a message to the powers that be, whether on the Palestinian or Israeli side, that the continuation of conflict would threaten the stability and continuity of community life not simply for one side but for all sides. Accordingly, there is a need to work out in detail ways how the city’s various communities can live side by side in peace and work towards mutual acceptance and recognition, while remaining undivided. I believe that the statement of the heads of Christian churches of November 1994 was made in this spirit.

Third, understand the fears and concerns of the other side to the conflict and not simply my side. Here, if I cannot feel sympathy for the victims of the terrorism perpetrated against innocent bus travellers

on the West Jerusalem road, how can I expect Israelis to empathise or to start to appreciate the pain of refugees in refugee camps in Lebanon, or of the parents whose children are locked in Israeli prisons or of whole families who were wiped out in the various air raids perpetrated by the Israeli air force in Lebanon. There should be one standard, irrespective of historical claims and counterclaims, for all. If there is one standard for Israelis and another for Palestinians then there can be no real peace and sharing of Jerusalem.

Speaking of standards, I need to specifically mention Western responsibility, particularly that of Britain and the United States, of addressing all peoples in the Middle East with the same standards. While I cannot judge a person like Bill Clinton for his influence by strong religious sentiments when making decisions concerning Israel, I ask him to make these same sentiments available when addressing the concerns of Palestinians. I am here affirming that one cannot be truly committed as a Christian, if through his commitment, he/she is hurting or harming some third party. Accordingly, if you are truly Christian, then you have to judge things by a Christian perspective that does not discriminate and that does not lead to injustice. A Christian cannot be fair and just to one people and, at the same time, be unfair and unjust to another. Peace in Jerusalem requires the application of one standard for all.

Fourth, work towards redressing injustice. Jerusalem must be open to all. It is not fair to allow people from all countries of the world to visit and pray in Jerusalem while excluding people from Bethlehem, Ramallah, and Gaza. But aside from the question of access to all, there are practical needs for community development, on the Arab side, ranging from educational facilities to housing, to other infrastructure requirements. The Palestinians need to be able to provide for their own needs in an environment that recognises the oneness of the city and the rights of the various communities for self-administration and management.

Fifth, to socialise my children in the ways of peace and to educate them to understand that the future of Jerusalem has to be worked out *with* their Muslim and Jewish peers. Not to expose my children to the victim complex in order to liberate them from the worst that is in the past and to enable them to develop their own thinking without undue influence on my part.

No one can get to the heavenly Jerusalem if we cannot address the problems of earthly Jerusalem. As

I told you at the beginning when I was a boy of seven or eight I used to be fascinated by Jerusalem and on reflection I thought, at moments, that I have tasted a sense of the heavenly Jerusalem. But today I am in middle age and a father of three. As I look at this expanded earthly Jerusalem, similar to so many other cities of the world with its population size, its highways and traffic jams, among other mundane problems, I wonder what I really want from this city. The answer is simple: to be able to live decently, to raise my children to be responsible people and to continue to grow with my family in an environment of mutual respect and dignity.

But these simple pursuits cannot be accomplished if I do not seek peace and the liberation that comes with it. By seeking peace, I can accomplish the vocation of Jerusalem by working for a better future for myself, my family and my people. Only through peace can we all rebuild Jerusalem as a truly one city and only through peace can we learn to appreciate our differences and discover our common links. The primary vocation of Jerusalem is then one of peace. It is the key to all other vocations. With peace the children of Jerusalem can be gathered and with peace the heavenly and earthly can finally make sense to ordinary and simple people of all three religions and of the two national groups: Israeli and Palestinian.

A MESSAGE OF CONCERN AND ENCOURAGEMENT

A group of Jews, Christians and Muslims from Israel/Palestine and from other parts of the world gathered together under the auspices of the World Council of Churches, the Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue and the Lutheran World Federation, in Thessaloniki, a city with a long history for Jews, Christians and Muslims. We exchanged views on the situation in Jerusalem as it has developed since our last meeting in Glion, Switzerland, in May 1993. After a few days of intense conversation we decided to convey the following message, which though objected to by some was agreed upon by the vast majority.

Jerusalem is a city considered holy by the three monotheistic traditions. As was affirmed at Glion: "It is (the) one God who has shared with us the gift of Jerusalem so that we might share it with one another". In each faith, holiness as revealed and bestowed by God is reflected in standards of human behaviour. It is through acts of justice and mercy that

we sanctify God's creation. Conversely, when we violate these transcendent standards, especially when God's name is invoked to legitimise injustice, violence or callousness toward human suffering, we are desecrating what we profess to be sacred.

Jerusalem is a place of encounter between God and humanity and among human beings in their diversity. Jerusalem is called to be the City of Peace, but at the moment, there is no peace. Although the peace process between Israelis and Palestinians has been initiated, there is still a long way to go before a just and lasting peace is achieved. There is a crisis of confidence that threatens to unravel the whole process. Both parties need to build trust by faithfully implementing past agreements and not predetermining the outcome of future negotiations over Jerusalem by changing the situation on the ground.

1. Violence, whether by individuals or authorities, especially the taking of human life, must be denounced and rejected. Violence does not lead to peace and reconciliation but to extremism and hatred.
2. The collective and indiscriminate closure of Jerusalem endangers the prospects for peace. We believe there are ways other than closure to reconcile Israelis' right to security and Palestinians' right to security and free movement in and out of Jerusalem. We are particularly pained, when as a result of the closure, people are denied access to their holy sites and places of worship, and their places of employment, education and health care.
3. Sustaining a conducive climate for negotiations towards peace is the common responsibility of Israelis and Palestinians. Human rights violations and acts of indignity and humiliation undermine the confidence necessary to progress towards a resolution of the disputes which hold all of Jerusalem's residents hostage to fear and hostility. In this regard we strongly urge the

Israeli Government not to confiscate land, build and expand settlements, demolish Palestinian homes or revoke Palestinian Jerusalemites' residency rights.

4. Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem are under threat. Confidence-building requires that the Palestinian infra-structure be maintained.
5. We urge our leaders to take immediate steps of confidence-building in Jerusalem so that our peoples will not be frustrated but will retain their hope for peace.
6. We encourage our two peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, and the three faith communities to develop a strategy of peace-education that is based on justice and reconciliation. Such education should engender respect for the identity, religious tradition and culture of the other. Peace education is effective when it is backed up by acts of concrete peace-making. Not only the formal educational system but also families, politicians, mass media, synagogues, churches and mosques should give this task of peace education a high priority so that the animosity dividing people in Jerusalem will be overcome and the two peoples may live in reconciled security.
7. We urge the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to regain the momentum towards peace according to UN resolutions 242 and 338, the Declaration of Principles in 1993 and subsequent agreements in order that our peoples may enjoy their national and human rights as God meant it to be.

We are convinced that meetings such as ours contribute to the reconciliatory process and should continue with as broad a participation as possible. Joint action in the name of our Abrahamic heritages is essential to translate our principles into reality, so that Jerusalem may be the paradigm of coexistence.

Ref. *Current Dialogue*,
n. 30, December 1996.

Mgr BELO, LA MORALE ET LA FOI

P. MANGUNWIJAYA

(NDLR Ce texte a été public en indonésien, le 1^{er} décembre 1996, dans le n° 48 de l'hebdomadaire catholique de Djakarta, *Hidup*. Qu'un article aussi polémique et favorable à Mgr Belo ait pu paraître dans la presse catholique indonésienne indique le chemin parcouru depuis quelques années par les catholiques de ce pays et leurs évêques qui n'hésitent plus à prendre leurs distances avec le gouvernement de M. Suharto, en particulier en ce qui concerne la question brûlante de Timor Oriental et le rôle qu'y joue l'armée nationale. Dans cet article l'auteur réagit aux attaques qu'a subies Mgr Belo dans la presse indonésienne depuis qu'il a été couronné par le prix Nobel et depuis son interview à la revue allemande *Der Spiegel* (Voir EDA 231, 232). La traduction de l'indonésien est de la rédaction d'Églises d'Asie)

Y a-t-il encore des catholiques qui osent attaquer Mgr Belo et qui continuent de crier: *Crucifiez-le! Crucifiez-le!*, alors que le ministre Hayono lui-même se montre plein de compréhension et de respect et demande à la population de se contrôler? Avons-nous encore envie de jeter le discrédit sur un évêque qui souffre de voir ses fidèles frappés, torturés, dépouillés de leurs biens, violés, devenus stériles, mitraillés, tués, leurs cadavres jetés dans des camions?

Allons-nous, nous qui nous disons les disciples du Christ, continuer à emboîter le pas de ceux qui attaquent Mgr Belo, lui qui, encore jeune, et dépendant directement du pape, porte sur ses épaules une tâche très lourde, qui le laisse meurtri, mais qui a su se retenir et faire preuve d'une très grande patience pendant tout ce temps? S'il vous plaît, demandez directement aux gens de Timor Oriental ce qu'ils pensent de leur évêque au fond de leur cœur.

Alors, si un bon pasteur, et non un pasteur salarié, s'empporte parfois parce qu'il ne supporte plus de voir les violences dont est victime son troupeau, et qu'il exprime ainsi sa colère, est-il fautif? Veuillez m'excuser, chers lecteurs croyants, mais le problème de Timor Oriental et de Mgr Belo n'est pas seulement une question politique, c'est aussi une question de morale et de foi.

Etes-vous déjà allées à Timor Oriental, surtout avant 1980? Avez-vous pu, d'expérience, vous rendre compte personnellement de ce qu'était la vie concrète des gens? Avez-vous entendu vous-mêmes des gens en larmes parler de leurs souffrances; ou quelques fonctionnaires ayant un reste de conscience faire part à voix basse de brutalités? Cris du cœur de personnes contraintes de se conduire sauvagement, mais qui, n'en pouvant plus de se faire, racontent à leur famille et leurs voisins, lors de congés dans leur village, comment ils ont dû agir contre leur conscience? Avez-vous entendu des prêtres et des religieuses de Timor Oriental (et même ceux

originaires d'ailleurs) dire combien est lourde à porter la croix du peuple de Timor: ce dont ils ont été les témoins directs, mais surtout ce qu'ils ont vu avec les yeux du cœur, un cœur encore humain? Ceci n'est pas seulement un problème politique, c'est aussi une question de morale et de foi.

Avez-vous lu parfois les rapports de la Croix-Rouge internationale et des organismes officiels des Nations Unies? Ou le rapport d'une équipe de professeurs de l'enseignement supérieur, qui a fait une étude après le massacre du 12 Novembre 1991 dans le cimetière Santa Cruz à Dili? Veuillez m'excuser, ceci n'est pas seulement politique, mais c'est aussi une question de morale et de foi. Une question de fidélité à l'Evangile et à Jésus-Christ.

Je crains que les informations et les commentaires dans les mass media ne se contentent de tourner autour du journal *Der Spiegel*, de sorte que la substance et l'essence du problème se trouvent mises à l'arrière-plan, camouflées en d'autres termes. En fait, la question centrale n'est pas de savoir qui a raison, de la mémoire de l'évêque ou de la cassette de *Der Spiegel*. La substance du problème et l'essence du message sont les suivants: est-il vrai que la façon dont est traité le peuple de Timor Oriental depuis 21 ans est tout à fait conforme aux règles humanitaires, ou bien va-t-elle à l'encontre des droits de l'homme et de la morale en général? La réponse est-elle oui ou non? Combien sont devenus infirmes à force d'être battus, ou parce qu'ils ont reçu une balle, ou stériles parce qu'ils ont été torturés trop longtemps à l'électricité, ou violés, dépouillés de leurs biens, jetés à la mer, etc., etc.? Veuillez m'excuser, mais ceci n'est pas seulement un problème politique, d'intégration ou de référendum, c'est aussi une question de morale et de foi.

Et puis, à supposer que Mgr Belo ait bien parlé comme l'écrit *Der Spiegel*, et alors? Cela veut-il dire que le bon pasteur de Dili est en tort? N'a-t-il pas le droit, de temps en temps, de parler franchement dans

la langue du peuple, qui n'est pas le langage diplomatique? Doit-on, aussitôt, le taxer de traître à l'honneur du peuple indonésien? N'avons-nous pas entendu, pas seulement à Timor Oriental, mais aussi près de chez nous, à Surabaya, à Java Central, à Bantul Yogyakarta, et même à Jakarta, des noms comme Marsinah, Kedungombo, Udin, Tjetje, et des milliers d'autres qui connaissent le même sort, auxquels s'ajoutent des dizaines de milliers de personnel qu'on exproprie, mais dont les journaux ne parlent pas. Veuillez me pardonner, chers lecteurs croyants, le problème de Timor Oriental (ne faites pas non plus semblant d'oublier les autres régions: Tanjung Priok, le Lampung Sud, Aceh, Irian Jaya, rappelez-vous!) n'est pas seulement un problème politique, c'est aussi une question de morale et de foi, de fidélité à la Bonne Nouvelle de Jésus-Christ. C'est aussi une question de vie et de mort pour le *Pancasila*, que nous tenons en haute estime, surtout le principe d'une humanité juste et civilisée. Nombreux sont les catholiques qui, à cause du cas de Mgr Belo, ont peur d'être réprimés par leur entourage. Ou qui pensent que, par politique, Mgr Belo doit être déclaré fautif, pour sauver l'existence de l'Eglise au milieu d'une majorité différente et d'une constellation de forces nationales et internationales chancelantes.

Quand Jésus a-t-il été protégé par Ponce-Pilate, et à plus forte raison par Hérode? Quand et dans quelle situation Jésus s'est-il trouvé face à ces deux symboles du monde: César tout-puissant et Mammon riche et pourvoyeur de plaisirs? Et bien que les Pharisiens aient été nombreux, n'avez-vous jamais lu qu'il y en avait un du nom de Nicodème, lequel, au moment critique, a été plus audacieux que la plupart des apôtres pour donner son tombeau afin d'y ensevelir la dépouille sainte de Jésus, devenant ainsi un lieu sacré parce qu'il a été le témoin de la résurrection de Jésus d'entre les morts? Avez-vous oublié?

Le prix Nobel fait problème? Sachez qu'il n'y a que deux sortes de régime qui n'aiment pas les décisions du comité du prix Nobel et qui s'y opposent. Vous voulez savoir lesquelles? Les régimes de type fasciste, comme l'Allemagne du temps du nazi Hitler (Einstein, Heisenberg) ou l'Afrique du Sud de l'Apartheid (Mandela, Tutu); et la Russie communiste du temps de Staline (Zakharov, Boris Pasternak) ou la Pologne communiste (Walesa). Ces deux types de régime sont morts... Et on voudrait qu'ils reprennent vie en Indonésie? N'aurions-nous donc aucune pudeur? S'opposer au comité du prix Nobel revient à s'opposer à toute la communauté internationale, qui

fait preuve d'intelligence, de bon sens, de civilisation; qui est anti-fasciste, anti-communiste, qui est contre la violence, la torture, l'exploitation, le colonialisme, qui est pour la démocratie et pour le droit à l'autodétermination, le combat pour la liberté. L'autodétermination est une question politique? D'accord, mais aussi une question de morale. Mgr Albertus Sugiyopranoto autrefois a appuyé le combat pour l'autodétermination de la nation indonésienne contre les Hollandais. Lui que le premier président de la république indonésienne a déclaré héros national, est-il sorti de son rôle de clerc et de pasteur spirituel?

Il est possible que Mgr Belo soit tellement triste, triste et écoeuré de voir son peuple traité de façon criminelle, qu'il lui est arrivé, une fois, de sortir de sa réserve et de parler comme le peuple, sans détour. Le sort a voulu que ce fut à *Der Spiegel*. A-t-il eu tort? Pas du tout. C'est le fait d'une personne normale. Mgr Belo a été en fait suffisamment patient et s'est retenu très longtemps.

Ce qui est clair, c'est que comme citoyen indonésien, comme personnage très respecté de la communauté internationale, comme évêque de l'Eglise catholique, Mgr Belo est pleinement fidèle à l'enseignement des Pères du Concile Vatican II, tel qu'il est exprimé dans le décret *Gaudium et Spes*.

Ainsi donc, chers lecteurs, le problème de Timor Oriental et de Mgr Felipe Ximenes Belo comme ferme représentant de son peuple qu'on a tant torturé et tué, n'est pas seulement un problème politique, mais encore plus une question de morale, d'éthique, de *Pancasila*, de fidélité à l'enseignement des Pères du Concile Vatican II, et aussi de foi, d'espérance et de charité.

Ref. *EDA, Hidup*,
no. 233, 16 décembre 1996.

“PARTNERS FOR PEACE”

Final Statement of

Faith Encounters in Social Action (FEISA) III Christian-Muslim Dialogue for Justice and Solidarity

Wisma CANOSSA

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 As the Church in Asia approaches the Third Millennium, we are being called to respond with a new ardour to the need to bring greater consciousness to “**A New Way of Being Church**”. We began this journey of faith in a significant way with the Second Vatican Council and the Bishops of Asia through a process of dialogue, discovery and discernment. The inaugural assembly of the Asian Bishops that began in 1970, is our response to the call of the universal Church to become a “*sign and instrument of God’s salvation in the world*” and to be at the service of humanity. To become “A Communion of Communities” in the context of Asia is to become a credible sign and instrument of God’s salvation among our people and nations. At the same time, we are invited to look at new areas of life that need to be transformed in order to be more credible witnesses of the Gospel in the Asian context. It is for this reason that the Bishops called for a new thrust and orientation, for renewal and reconciliation: “On this 25th anniversary of FABC, we have to confess humbly that the goal of conscientising the local Church and building a communion of our Asian Churches is still far from being reached, despite the truly remarkable advances already made in this regard”.

1.2 With this in mind, the FABC Office for Human Development and the Office for Inter-religious and Ecumenical Affairs have been seeking to make this a reality through the “**Faith Encounters in Social Action**” (FEISA) Series. We therefore gathered together to listen to the Lord, especially in our dialogue with our Muslim sisters and brothers, in an attempt to become a “A New Way of Being Church”. We affirm the call of the Church to **Journey together towards the Third Millennium so that we can be at the Service of Life**.

1.3 The 45 participants, made up of Bishops, Clergy, religious and laity from Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand in our ten days

together, attempted not only to understand better the world of religious dialogue but also to look at new ways of responding to the demands of the Gospel in the context of our nations and in our time of rapid change and uncertainty. We believe that this means to journey with the Spirit of Jesus in the context of our lives.

2. NEW INSIGHTS INTO DIALOGUE THROUGH EXPOSURE-IMMERSION

2.1 In keeping with our methodology of the Pastoral Spiral that evolved from our Bishops’ Institute for Social Action (BISA) and the Asian Institute for Social Action (AISA), we began our exposure-immersion experiences with our Muslim sisters and brothers in Malaysia and Indonesia. This brought us closer to the various facets of inter-religious dialogue, and for most of us this experience was a source of new insights and learning. The visits to “Pesantrens” (Religious Schools), community development workers, the contact with ordinary labourers, the interviews with committed university teachers and ordinary Muslim families gave us new perspectives of the human and spiritual qualities of Muslims and Christians working together for the development of the poor. We were particularly struck by the dedication and high degree of ethics that so many people manifested. We were edified and inspired by the way the people lived out their beliefs. We realised that the use of consultation and consensus in decision-making was an effective way of empowering people to plan their own lives. The personal encounters made us re-examine our own way of living and the deep compassionate approach needed to be at the service of the poor and marginalised.

2.2 We were touched by the common humanity we shared with those whom we met. Christians and Muslims are affected by human events in a similar way. It was so affirming to share the sadness, joy, fear and sufferings of the poor. Their warmth, openness, friendship, humility and hospitality bonded us together in a new way. Some of our

prejudices disappeared on meeting such human goodness. Their openness enabled us to enter into a new level of relationships with them. We were convinced that the sharing of our own humanity with those of other religions is a good starting point for any genuine dialogue. We were led to go beyond human encounters to the meaning and spirituality behind so much profound human goodness.

2.3 We also realised at the same time that some of our experiences were not possible in other situations and countries due to various reasons. Our common sharing of experiences enabled us to look for more creative ways of introducing such processes in our respective countries. It was so affirming to be supported and challenged by the other participants. The exposure-immersion experiences showed us that inter-religious dialogue must focus on the values we hold in common rather than on our differences. We were led to look beyond our prejudices and to commit ourselves to the call of the Church in Asia to make inter-religious dialogue an integral dimension of the living out of our faith.

2.4 Our journey with our Muslim sisters and brothers was not only the meeting of persons but also an encounter with their deep religiosity and firmly founded cultural roots. The way in which they attempted to live out their faith in the exercise of their daily responsibilities and a concern for the young and children was a source of inspiration. We were able to see a genuine yearning for harmony and a return to spiritual values in the midst of poverty and suffering. Simplicity and self-reliance were their way of giving importance to God in their lives and relationships. Their communication in parables accentuated our desire to inculturate our lives in our own traditions.

3. OUR RE-DISCOVERY OF THE MEANING OF DIALOGUE THROUGH DISCERNMENT

3.1 Our varied Exposure-Immersion Experiences and reflections upon them served as the starting point to attain a common understanding of both the world of the followers of Islam and our own Christian faith. We began to discover gradually the presence and action of God among our Muslim sisters and brothers. ‘A New Way of Being Church’, meant discerning the promptings of the Spirit as a Community in the Church, and responding to the invitation to a sincere dialogue among ourselves. The ensuing days of study and prayer enabled us to see more clearly that our vocation to be followers of Christ in the context of Asia moves us to be at the

“service of the world and promote life in all its fullness”.

3.2 We became aware of our commitment to rediscover the essential message of the Gospel not only among ourselves but for people of all faiths in Asia. This faith-imperative inspired us to look for new expressions of solidarity with our Muslim sisters and brothers, who like us are confronted by iniquities which prevent us from attaining the fullness and sacredness of life. We firmly believe that in the sharing of these tangible signs of hope the foundation for a continued and authentic dialogue with our Muslim sisters and brothers can be effectively built.

3.3 We were able to see clearly that the relationship between Muslims and Christians is marked by an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence, tolerance and respect for each other. Serious efforts to understand each other’s religious practices and cultural dimensions of life are being made. Collaborative efforts in advocacy action and in the implementation of development programmes has proven that both Muslims and Christians can work together in addressing pressing issues and problems that confront them in their respective areas.

3.4 We also realised that these hopes are dimmed by tensions and dilemmas that persist in areas where Muslims and Christians remain fearful and are engulfed in their mutual feelings of distrust and prejudice. In predominantly Christian areas, Muslims are generally alienated and suffer discrimination, so are Christians in some predominantly Muslim regions. Religion has been manipulated by Governments and/or unscrupulous politicians for political ends. Efforts to enter into genuine dialogue and solidarity is blocked by the lack of openness and fundamentalist tendencies on both sides. Christians are anxious lest their actions be construed as acts of proselytising.

3.5 We recalled sadly that it cannot be denied that in our brokenness we have failed to fully express our sense of unity and oneness with other faiths particularly with our Muslim sisters and brothers. Our efforts at reconciliation seem inadequate. We need to overcome our brokenness by unceasingly striving to rectify our shortcomings and by consistently trying to express the essence of what it is to be a true Christian today.

4. A CRITICAL REVIEW OF OUR LIVES IN THE LIGHT OF OUR DISCERNMENT

4.1 Esteem for Muslims

4.1.1 In the light of our experiences we find many facets of Islamic life which we regard with esteem. Their loyalty to their religion, the seriousness and discipline with which they conduct their prayer, fasting, and other religious duties, their trust in God and desire to surrender to His will, and their frequent awareness of God in daily life are all religious values which we as Christians revere. In social life, we respect their sense of community and solidarity, the concern for justice, and the principle of *musyawarah* – consultation and consensus – in human development and community building. In our personal encounters, we appreciate the faithfulness in friendship, the warm hospitality and simplicity of life, the caring for the needs of the poor and respect for the elderly.

4.2 Difficulties in living together

4.2.1 At the same time, we confess that we often encounter difficulties living together in society. Although personal relationships are frequently good on the day-to-day level, Christians in minority situations often feel that they are not accepted as full and equal citizens and that in some places are victims of discrimination. Political issues can be a source of tension just as concessions granted by Muslim Governments to the majority group can make local Christians feel marginalised and alienated. The politicisation of religion not only obscures the purity of Islamic faith but can result in hardship and suffering for Christian minorities. However, we admit that where Christians are in the majority and in control of political processes, we frequently fail to implement Christian principles of justice, equality, and solidarity in regard to Muslim minorities.

4.3 Obstacles to dialogue between Christians and Muslims

4.3.1 Fear, prejudice, and suspicion on both sides are prominent obstacles to dialogue and co-operation. Most Christians know little about the religion of Islam, and our understanding is often distorted by half-truths and superficial judgements and shaped by the negative image of Islam presented in the media. Exclusivist tendencies among both Christians and Muslims that regard one's own religion as the only way to salvation do not permit real dialogue or sharing of religious experience.

Sometimes, Christians seemingly exude some superiority complex, regarding themselves as better off and more advanced than Muslims, whereas on some occasions, Muslims appear to look down on Christians and treat them with disdain.

4.4 The burden of history

4.4.1 The burden of history is still with us and causes difficulties in relating. Muslims still regard Christianity as a “European religion” identified with the colonial powers and the mutual violence of the past and present. Muslims do not consider them to be truly patriotic and committed to the development and well-being of their countries. It also happens that in objecting to the geopolitical activities of Western powers, Muslims sometimes take out their anger on Christian co-nationals.

4.5 Christian failure to dialogue

4.5.1 In noting these failings among Muslims, we must also confess our own failures. We often show a lack of sensitivity to the plight of Muslims in situations of oppression and poverty. Our witness to be the “church of the poor” is inadequate. Our efforts at dialogue are too often fragmented, half-hearted, and sporadic. We are frequently guilty of passing on rumours and undocumented information that raise fears and tensions in society. The Church is often short-sighted in looking at issues, addressing symptoms but neglecting to confront root causes. Christian leadership is often more interested in championing causes that only affect Christians rather than in concretely working to build reconciliation, peace, and harmony.

4.6 Common grounds for action

4.6.1 Despite the obstacles and failures on both sides, the prospects for Christian Muslim dialogue are not gloomy. In every part of Asia, we discover groups of Christians and Muslims actively involved in working as partners for the betterment of their peoples. Despite the real differences between the two religions, Christians see in Islamic faith potentials for mutual esteem and co-operation. The holistic nature of Islam, which combines ritual, family life, and community uplift in a seamless commitment to God's will, enables Muslims to consider human development, the struggle for peace, and the defence of moral values as sacred activities.

5. OUR REFLECTIONS IN FAITH Expressed in Solidarity

5.1 ‘The history of salvation tells us that God is continually dialoguing with people’ (FABC Congress on Mission, Manila, 1979). In faith encounters with people of different religions, we can participate mutually in that divine dialogue that is in the heart of each one of us, and we are able to recognise and live our common communion in God and with God. This communion of faith, then, enables us to accept each other joyfully as sisters and brothers and to encounter each other trustfully in the joyful and painful events and realities that are common to us and to all other brothers and sisters.

5.2 This encounter in faith is truly a gift of the Holy Spirit, the spirit of communion, providing us with the divine power to approach and accept each other in forgiveness and reconciliation and in gratitude and love.

5.3 Encounter in faith among Muslims and Christians has special importance and urgency in our times. The often turbulent relations among Christians and Muslims throughout past centuries are the cause of much conflict and disharmony among a large portion of the world population professing Christianity and Islam. This must give place to life-giving encounters in faith toward the building up of the Reign of God on earth.

5.4 While faith encounter may be profitable at various levels, among individuals at the personal level and in groups of different kinds, the more practical and profitable encounter can happen in grass-roots communities. In these basic communities of Muslims and Christians, faith encounter can be more tangibly appreciated, the work of charity more easily carried out, and communion and community living more lovingly celebrated.

6. THE DEMANDS OF INTER- RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE IN THE CONTEXT OF ASIA

6.1 We realise that we live in a new era of the spiritual evolution of humanity, in a moment of grace. The whole world is shrinking into a global village, and the Divine Spirit is bringing believers of different religions to a common pursuit of truth and justice, peace and harmony. We Christians of Asia perceive in this redemptive work of the Spirit in our continent a threefold demand placed on us:

6.2 An Invitation to Reconciliation

6.2.1 To forgive the hurts of the past, to overcome prejudices and to walk with our sisters and brothers of other religions on a ‘common pilgrimage in view of finding God in the hearts of the human person’ (Paul VI, 1964). We who have fought in the name of God, need to return to this same God to ask for forgiveness and become signs of reconciliation. There can be no peace without reconciliation, with God calling us to find unity within the human family.

6.3 A Concern for Human Dignity and Rights

6.3.1 To collaborate with believers of other religions has to mean a commitment to the promotion of justice and peace, social harmony and environmental integration in solidarity with the weaker sections and marginalised sectors of Asia. There are so many facets of life on which Christians and Muslims should be co-operating. Both must face new issues in society resulting from the globalisation of economies and a cultural invasion of values that are alien to our Asian way of life. Both are concerned about the effects that the values transmitted by the “new media culture” are likely to have on future generations of Asians. Both must face various threats to society, such as the destruction of the environment, the plight of migrant workers, the exploitation and harassment of women and abuse of children in industry and tourism, the drugs menace, and the pandemic of AIDS. These are areas where we must pool our resources, share insights, and take common stands.

6.4 A Return to Authentic Spirituality

6.4.1 We must delve deeper into the spiritual wellsprings of Asia, in order to make religion an effective instrument for the integral formation of life. But dialogue must not be limited to co-operation on social issues. Muslims and Christians are two communities of faith who seek to do God’s will. We must work towards the mutual sharing of spiritual experience to inspire one another and to be enriched by the other. We believe that when a Christian and a Muslim come together in sincerity and good-will God will guide their pilgrimage towards a greater appreciation of the Truth that is beyond all understanding. This dialogue of spiritual sharing is not easy. It demands a conversion leading to trust, and trust demands friendship. This is perhaps the first task in dialogue required of the Christian and Muslim in Asia today: to make friends with each other in order to open themselves to the divine.

7. Our Commitment to a Spirituality of Dialogue

7.1 The liberative response to the erosion of moral and religious values consists in strengthening ethical values through an honest and open dialogue among believers of various religions. We realise that only a humanising spirituality that evolves through a culture of dialogue can forestall the danger of this erosion. Hence we Asian Christians commit ourselves to a new way of being Church today, that is, to the promotion of a 'spirituality of dialogue' in all realms of life.

This for us would mean:

7.2 Dialogue in the Spirit – Peace the Fruit of the Spirit

Recognising this centrality of spirituality in inter-religious relationships. We commit ourselves therefore:

- *To dialogue in the Spirit, giver of peace. In a world torn apart by strife, violence and war it is God alone who can restore peace through renewed minds and hearts converted to the Will of God.*
- *To act in a spirit of forgiveness in order to find peace in our hearts and bring peace to others.*
- *To a new pilgrimage from noise and hectic activities to silence and contemplation, that will enable us to move with compassion to all of humanity and to live in harmony with nature. This putting on of the compassionate heart of the Creator is also one that prompts to courage, that will strengthen our will to speak the truth amidst fear and hopelessness, to become the voice of the voiceless and those unable to live with dignity.*
- *To place God at the centre of our lives in the midst of the dominant culture of worshipping money and power and glorifying the individual at the expense of the community.*
- *To return to the Will of God, the sound foundation for the realisation of a genuine inter-religious dialogue, as we move towards the Third Millennium.*

We give thanks to God who has called us to be followers of Jesus Christ, our Master and Saviour. We ask God to bless all Christians and Muslims with the gifts of understanding and love so that we may

live together in peace, co-operation, and mutual enrichment. May Mary, whom the Holy Qur'an calls "a model for all humankind" accompany Muslims and Christians in our common desire to do God's will.

OHD,
Jakarta, Indonesia,
31st July, 1996.

CHILDREN'S ISSUES

SEJUP (Servico Brasileiro de Justica e Paz)

– 8.8 million children and adolescents work in Brazil.

Approximately 8.8 million children and adolescents between five and 17 years work in Brazil according to a Report in the 'Folha de Sao Paulo' of 27 October. The Report quotes official statistics of 1995 which show that 3.8 million children between five and 14 years are working – over half this group work in agriculture. This means that of all Brazilian children between five and nine years, 3.2% are working and in the 10 to 14 age bracket 21.6% are working. According to the Children's Statute, (the Brazilian law which deals with the question of children) under 14 year-olds are forbidden to work.

– 54.7% of the children who work in Brazil are not paid.

For those who receive payment, the average amount is 20% of the minimum salary or approximately US\$ 22 per month. The Folha Report claims that the average income of the child workers in the north-east of Brazil is US\$ 11 each month. 31% of all working children between 10 and 14 work more than 40 hours each week. Because of this many are not able to continue in school. In the north-east, two out of every three children are involved full time in studies and 12.7% work and do not attend school. In the south-east, 6.6% of all children work and do not study.

A typical situation is that given in the Folha Report which describes the working conditions of 800 four to 13 year olds in the brick furnaces near Teresina, State of Piaui. The 'clay children' ('criancas do barro') as they are called, work at various activities in this industry ranging from carrying the clay to piling bricks. Many work 10 hours daily and the average wage is US\$ 13 per week. According to a survey carried out by the Department of Labour office, 67.2% of the children who work in the brick furnaces of Teresina do not attend school. In the approximately 100 brick furnaces in the region no child has security equipment, access to medical help or work contracts and the amount of the weekly payment depends on production. According to the Brick Producers Co-operative (which represents the owners of the brick furnaces) the number of children working at this activity is approximately 25% of the total number of workers.

The 'clay children' follow the same routine as their parents. They are up at dawn and working by 7.00 AM. Men dig the clay, women and children carry it, shape it and pile the bricks until night-fall. Since there is no work contract, the brick workers move from one brick furnace to another searching for work. Men earn on average US\$ 50 each week; women approximately US\$

25. To produce 30 thousand bricks or what would be approximately necessary to construct a small house, the furnaces have on average seven men, five women and three children working during a week. The workers receive US\$ 520 for their week's work and the furnace owner sells the 30 thousand bricks for approximately US\$ 1500.

Between the months of January and June activities in the brick furnaces of Teresina cease due to the rains and three thousand people (including 800 children) who work in this area are forced to go in search of other activities in order to survive economically. According to the Commission of Human Rights of the Archdiocese of Teresina one of the common alternatives during this period especially for the children and adolescents is prostitution. "The young girls work around the motels and the young boys are found in the centre of the city" commented Alci Marcos Ribeiro of the Commission.

– three thousand children buried in clandestine cemeteries each year in the State of Pernambuco.

Almost three thousand children under one year old die each year in the State of Pernambuco and are buried in clandestine cemeteries without death certificates according to the 'Folha de Sao Paulo' of 31 October 1995. According to the State Secretariat for Health, the number of the un-registered deaths of children in the State is approximately 30% of the total number of deaths of children in this age group. In most cases the deaths are not registered and so the children cannot be buried in official cemeteries because of the financial problems of the parents. The average cost of registering a death is US\$ 25. "How can parents pay for such a document in a State where 50% of the families with children under six years of age earn less than a minimum salary (US\$ 110 per month)? There are also cultural questions and problems such as distance and transport in the poor regions, but certainly if the availability of the death certificate became easier, there would be more notifications of deaths" commented Paulo Germano de Frias, co-coordinator of the Salva-Vita programme which works on the diminishing of infant mortality rates.

NEWS FROM BRAZIL,
No. 250, 31 October, 1996.

COMING EVENTS

SEDOS AFTERNOON SEMINAR

— CATHOLIC BIBLICAL FEDERATION —

THE CHURCH AND THE CHALLENGE OF CULTURES IN ASIA
Archbishop Thomas Menampampil, S.D.B. of Assam, India

GESÙ CRISTO PROCLAMA LA BUONA NOTIZIA (Lc 4:14-30)
Preparare il Giubileo
Teresina Caffi, SMdM

Friday, **28 February**, 15.00 - 18.30 hrs.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, Via Aurelia, 476.

THE NATIONS IN THE MIDDLE EAST —
FACING THE CHALLENGE OF PEACE AND DIALOGUE
Afif Safieh

THE MISSION OF THE CHURCHES IN LEBANON TODAY
Helene Haigh, RJM

Tuesday, **22 April**, 15.00 - 18.30 hrs.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, Via Aurelia, 476.

TRAUMA AND VIOLENCE IN MISSION —
WAYS OF HEALING THE MISSIONARY
Dr. Robert Grant, Australia

Friday, **2 May**, 14.00 hrs.
Brothers of the Christian Schools, Via Aurelia, 476.

SEDOS ARICCIA SEMINAR 1997 (20 - 24 May, 1997)

(The Residential Seminar is *ONLY* for Member Congregations)

A SPIRITUALITY FOR MISSION INTO THE NEXT CENTURY

Ian Linden, Director CIIR, (London)

- 1) Global Justice: Essential Element in the Mission of the Church Today
- 2) A Spirituality for a Post-Modern Society — The Missionary Challenge of 'Politics in a Secular World'

Marie-Angèle Kitewo, SND (Zaire)

- 3) La Spiritualité de l'Église en Afrique et le ministère de guérison
- 4) Une Spiritualité Africaine — Défi à la Créativité d'une Église

Fr Samuel Rayan, SJ (India)

- 5) A Spirituality of Mission in an Asian Context
- 6) Local Cultures — Instruments of Incarnated Christian Spirituality