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EDITORIAL

The Ecumenical Encounter in Graz has revealed how patient and understanding the Churches must be on the long road to greater unity. Cardinal CARLO MARIA MARTINI, Archbishop of Milan, in his conference told the assembly that Graz is another invitation to believe in the power of the Holy Spirit who is constantly able to create “the new and beautiful” among us. —

Fr STEPHEN P. JUDD, MM, takes the upcoming Pan-American Synod as a welcome starting point for his reflection on the missionary reality of the Americas and Latin America especially. He hopes that the common Synod will help to close ‘the chasm between the Americas’. One of the hopeful signs in Latin America is, mainly due to the well organised missionary congresses, the strengthening of a new missionary dimension ‘ad gentes’. —

PEDRO CASALDALIGA PLA, Bishop of São Félix do Araguaia, expresses concern at the multiple fears within the Church today. Looking at Jesus’ Kingdom and the freedom and the challenges it brought, may give new pastoral energy to a Church ever young and dynamic in the Holy Spirit. —

DIEGO IRARRAZAVAL, Director of the Institute of Aymaran studies, discovers new paths and insights which can help to formulate a missionary theology in and from Latin America. —

GULIO GIRARDI, pays tribute to the unforgettable memory of the great Ecuatorian Pastor of the Indigenous people, Bishop Leonidas Proaño of Riobamba, in his short article. The author proposes to give the *Jubilee* celebration a special meaning in this context, and to celebrate it as a real liberation for all the Indigenous people. —

Fr SEAN P. KEALLY, CSSp, a former lecturer at Kenyatta University in Nairobi, sees in the conclusion of the millennium a clear invitation to reflect on the missionary efforts made by the Church in Africa. A Church marked by growth and missionary generosity is called to change her attitude towards mission in the totally new social and political realities. —

We conclude our October Issue with a very stimulating reflection by JOHN and PRISCILLA POPE-LEVISON on Jesus in Africa. In an African context, Jesus could be presented creatively as: Elder Brother, Ancestor, Chief, Healer and Liberator.

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New Superior General

COMBONI MISSIONARIES:
Rev. Manuel Augusto Lopez Ferreira, MCCJ
(Portugal)

LA RECONCILIATION FAIT PARTIE DE LA FOI QUE NOUS PROFESSONS

Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, S.J.

Intervention du cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, archevêque de Milan (Texte français du Secrétariat du Rassemblement Oecuménique Européen à Graz. Titre et sous-titres de la DC.)

1. «Écoutons, écoutons ce que nous dit le Seigneur: justice et paix se sont embrassées». Ces paroles, sœurs et frères très chers, résonnèrent comme une invitation ininterrompue, dans l'hymne composée pour la Première Assemblée œcuménique européenne sur le thème *La paix dans la justice*, Assemblée qui s'est tenue à Bâle, du 15 au 21 mai 1989. Cette Assemblée, j'eus la joie de la présider, en communion et coresponsabilité fraternelles et cordiales, avec Sa Sainteté Alexis II, Patriarche de Moscou et de toutes les Russies, alors Métropolite de Leningrad et Novgorod, et président de la Conférence des Eglises européennes. De même encore, durant la grande prière finale sur la place de la cathédrale, l'invocation *Dona nobis pacem* jaillit, spontanée et insistante, du cœur et des lèvres de toute l'assistance.

Ainsi prenait fin, il y a huit ans, l'événement important et significatif de Bâle. Il s'agissait d'une rencontre impensable encore quelques années plus tôt: pour la première fois, des délégués de toutes les Eglises d'Europe, des délégués venus de l'Est et de l'Ouest, du Nord et du Sud, - étaient absents seulement les représentants des communautés chrétiennes d'Albanie - se trouvaient réunis par-delà les frontières confessionnelles et politiques (cf. *Document final*, 1). Tous ensemble, durant cette semaine de la Pentecôte, nous avons expérimenté la joie et vécu la difficulté de voir ce que signifie, aujourd'hui, servir l'homme.

Ensemble, nous avons prié, nous avons débattu et sommes arrivés à des déclarations communes, dans la conviction et l'espérance que l'Esprit Saint pourrait se servir aussi de nos efforts pour réaliser la réconciliation, le renouvellement et la conversion des Eglises, et pour donner une réponse aux menaces et aux problèmes qui tenaillent l'humanité (cf. *Document final*, 4). Nous étions animés de la certitude que la paix invoquée et à construire est celle qui vient de Dieu, et qui trouve sa pleine réalisation en Jésus et dans son Evangile. Cette paix implique le désarmement des cœurs et l'engagement pour une justice supérieure; elle requiert que l'on agisse pour un ordre social, économique et politique plus humain, et pour un plus grand respect de l'environnement. Nous nous sommes demandés ce

que nous aurions pu faire mieux ou de plus, comme Eglises; nous avons compris que notre foi commune en Dieu nous permettait et en même temps nous obligeait à repérer et à parcourir des routes communes d'engagement et de responsabilité, faisant place et donnant visage, ainsi, à «l'œcuménisme de la charité». C'est pour toutes ces raisons que Bâle a été «un événement exceptionnel» et «une importante pierre milliaire dans la coopération œcuménique» (cf. *Document final*, 92.3).

Déjà lors de cette rencontre «pentecostale» de nos Eglises, la référence et l'appel à la réconciliation sont apparus avec clarté et urgence, soit dans les rapports introductifs, soit dans le *Document final*. En effet, la réconciliation fait partie intégrante de la foi que nous avons professée ensemble; en outre, elle constitue une tâche qui nous interpelle comme chrétiens et qui est une provocation pour nos Eglises, face au scandale de leur division (cf. *Document final*, 26-27.32.40).

Les nouvelles divisions en Europe

2. Quelque temps plus tard, - comme nous le savons tous -, en l'espace de quelques semaines ou de quelques mois, se produisirent, dans la vie et dans l'histoire de notre Continent, des changements radicaux et fragiles à la fois. Ce qui commença, vers la fin 1989, fut vraiment un authentique «*kairos*» divin, chargé de grâce, de nouveauté, d'espérance et de responsabilité. C'est ainsi que Bâle - comme déjà la rencontre œcuménique européenne d'Erfurt, en octobre 1988 - nous est apparue soit comme une «anticipation» et une «préfiguration» de ce qui est arrivé par la suite et qu'il nous a été donné de vivre, soit comme une «impulsion» et une «incitation» à pareil changement. C'était la réalisation logique de cette «écologie de l'Esprit» qui retentissait dès les premières mesures, dans la Foire aux échantillons de cette cité de Bâle, carrefour de diverges cultures, nationalités, langues et religions, dont l'antique pont sur le Rhin exprime et rappelle bien la séculaire vocation à la paix.

Mais à la «joie» et à l'«espoir» de beaucoup, et peut-être à l'«euphorie» qui peut avoir envahi certains, durant ces mois, a bien vite *succédé une sorte de «désillusion»*, sinon directement de «déception».

Notre Assemblée, frères et sœurs, est signe de réconciliation, mais elle est aussi provocation à une réconciliation plus vraie, provocation qui concerne et interpelle avant tout chacun de nous et nos Églises.

Nous pourrions exprimer tout cela par les paroles du prophète Jérémie: «Nous attendions la paix, mais rien de bon; le moment où nous serions sauvés, mais c'est la peur qui vient» (14, 19).

L'Europe, aujourd'hui encore, à quelques années de distance de l'écroulement des murs et de la dissolution des deux blocs, *risque d'être à nouveau divisée* et séparée en d'autres ensembles ou d'autres blocs: des blocs marqués, d'une part, par une monnaie forte, par un système économique relativement stable, par des organismes efficaces de défense et de sécurité, par des systèmes démocratiques bien établis... et marqués, d'autre part, par une monnaie plus ou moins faible, par des systèmes économiques précaires, par des risques d'aventures militaires et de luttes sanglantes sans qu'il y ait des instances capables de rétablir l'ordre ou disposées à le faire, et par la nostalgie des diverses formes d'autoritarisme. Et, à l'intérieur de toutes ces situations, il ne fait pas de doute que certaines habitudes de vie introduites par l'urbanisation, l'éclatement de la société et sa complexité, ainsi que certaines dynamiques préoccupantes d'ordre économique, parfois aggravées encore par la globalisation, ne favorisent et n'alimentent des poussées et des forces antisolidaires, souvent liées à des racines morales et spirituelles profondes.

Tout cela contribue à dessiner le visage *d'une Europe qui a besoin et qui est assoiffée de réconciliation*. Des chrétiens pris individuellement, des communautés, des groupes, des mouvements et aussi des Églises entières prennent sérieusement en considération les problèmes qui traversent la vie du Continent et soulignent cet urgent besoin de réconciliation. La réconciliation est vraiment un devoir de tout le peuple de Dieu qui est en Europe.

La réconciliation, une initiative divine

3. C'est ici que plonge ses racines l'Assemblée qui commence aujourd'hui, et à l'occasion de laquelle nous sommes invités à nous confronter au thème *«Réconciliation: don de Dieu et source de vie nouvelle»*.

En tant que chrétiens d'Europe, nous voudrions être un témoignage vivant de vérité et de liberté, de justice et de paix, afin que tous les hommes s'ouvrent à l'espérance d'un monde nouveau. Nous voudrions trouver *une idée forte, inspiratrice et coordonna-trice*, un fondement solide sur lequel prendre appui pour une réponse globale, et non seulement partielle, aux exigences du moment. Cette idée et cette force ne peuvent nous venir que du Seigneur Jésus et de la communication de son Esprit.

Ici, durant ces jours, nous devons travailler, avec ténacité et réalisme, à des projets concrets de réconciliation. Mais la recherche de ces projets sera d'autant plus efficace qu'elle sera davantage portée par une vision plénière de cette réconciliation qui vient de Dieu, qui se manifeste et se réalise en Jésus, et trouvera dans la «parousie» - que nous attendons dans l'espérance - son accomplissement total et définitif.

Oui, sœurs et frères, nous le croyons et ici de nouveau nous le confessons et le proclamons: *la réconciliation est un don de Dieu*, parce qu'elle comporte une vie et une joie qui dépassent et surpassent toute entreprise humaine et tout désir terrestre, une vie et une joie qui ne trouveront leur réalisation définitive que dans la maison du Père, dans un monde renouvelé, dans le Royaume éternel préparé pour tous les fils de Dieu. C'est un don venu d'en-haut: c'est Dieu qui nous a réconciliés avec lui par le Christ (cf. 2 Co 5, 18). Ce n'est pas une action venant de nous; c'est une initiative dont nous sommes avant tout les bénéficiaires et non les artisans; nous, c'est-à-dire l'humanité entière. Cette initiative passe par la Pâque du Christ et l'effusion de l'Esprit pour la rémission des péchés. C'est un don de Dieu qui descend jusqu'à nous à travers le côté transpercé du Christ crucifié; c'est un don toujours transcendant, qui assume, purifie, sauve et élève les germes de bonté semés dans l'histoire humaine par les mains du Dieu créateur; c'est un don qui attire tout au Christ Seigneur «élevé de terre» (in 12, 32), suscitant ce mouvement sacramentel et historique qui convoque l'Église et la rassemble et qui, en elle, pacifie pleinement l'humanité entière avec Dieu et les hommes entre eux. Il s'ensuit que c'est seulement près de la Croix glorieuse de Jésus

que nous pouvons et devons puiser la force et le courage de tout acte de réconciliation, en partant de la réconciliation à l'intérieur de chacune de nos communautés, pour parvenir, dans un grand élan missionnaire, et en passant par la réconciliation au niveau œcuménique, à la réconciliation du monde.

Mais, en même temps, nous reconnaissons et affirmons bien que la réconciliation est confiée à l'homme, parce qu'elle est réellement - bien qu'imparfaitement - anticipée et préfigurée dans toutes les formes de réconciliation qui doivent et peuvent être réalisées ici-bas, sur la terre. Comme telle, *la réconciliation est source de vie nouvelle*: elle l'est et doit l'être dans tous ces domaines et aspects qui constituent la demi-douzaine de sous-thèmes qui seront abordés dans les travaux de cette Assemblée. Il faut souligner aussi la nécessité d'une réconciliation entre les hommes et affirmer que le mouvement de réconciliation, qui part de Dieu et qui a pour terme la communion sainte de l'humanité avec lui, tend à englober tout et tous. Il faut veiller, cependant, à ne pas tomber dans la tentation de supposer, de manière simpliste, qu'un progrès dans la réconciliation chrétienne va immédiatement produire une réconciliation sur le plan social et civil, et que, à l'inverse, un progrès dans l'entente mutuelle s'identifie sans autre avec la réconciliation chrétienne. Cela dit, notre Assemblée devrait nous aider à découvrir et à déterminer concrètement ces engagements moraux qui, d'une part, incarnent historiquement la réconciliation chrétienne et, d'autre part, donnent solidité et espérance aux relations sociales. Autrement dit, il s'agit de créer des ouvertures et des espaces adéquats à travers lesquels la force de la réconciliation puisse pénétrer dans les structures et les processus de la convivialité humaine, pour les soumettre à la grâce de la paix messianique.

Le besoin de se sentir peuple de Dieu

4. Durant ces jours, c'est sans doute un *grand travail* de réflexion, d'étude et de confrontation qui nous attend. Dans tout ce travail, que nous anime une grande capacité de nous sentir responsables à l'égard des Églises qui nous ont envoyés et à l'égard de tout le Continent. Que nous anime aussi et nous soutienne un grand esprit de fraternité et d'accueil mutuel, dans un climat de prière vécue. Que ce soit précisément la prière, nourrie par la Parole de Dieu et riche d'une grande vision de foi, qui constitue la force de cohésion de cette semaine, comme ce fut le cas à Bâle, il y a huit ans. Que la prière et la foi nous donnent de savoir situer, dans la juste dimension et la juste interprétation, même les nombreuses différences que nous avons apportées avec nous;

qu'elles nous aident à les exorciser là où elles ont besoin d'être exorcisées, et à les valoriser là où elles doivent être valorisées.

Mais durant cette semaine, nous sommes surtout appelés à «vivre» et à «expérimenter» *le don et la responsabilité de la réconciliation*. Nous sommes ici, ensemble, pour vivre le mystère de l'Église, de l'œcumène chrétienne appelée à la communion, à une plus parfaite unité, à une plus profonde réconciliation, afin que le monde croie et vive dans la paix et dans la justice. Nous sommes ici pour vivre ensemble le fait d'être Église, une réalité qui nous lie les uns aux autres et qui nous fait un dans le Christ Jésus (cf. Ga 3, 28). Le fait de «nous trouver unis» - comme c'était le cas déjà pour nos frères de l'Église primitive (cf. Ac 2, 1) - n'est pas seulement un fait social ou un événement extraordinaire; c'est une expérience qui nous identifie comme chrétiens et nous aide à être un seul peuple: le peuple saint de Dieu. Nous avons besoin de nous sentir et de nous reconnaître comme peuple de Dieu; nous avons besoin de vivre et d'exprimer cette réalité dans la richesse de nos différences, et dans la vraie et inlassable tension vers une unité plus pleine encore et plus authentique. Coude à coude, durant ces jours, nous pourrions sentir que ce qui nous unit est immensément plus grand et plus important que nos multiples appartenances culturelles, sociales, ecclésiales ou que les diversités qui sont encore cause et occasion de séparation et de division.

Un chemin de pacification exigeant

5. Notre Assemblée, frères et sœurs, est signe de réconciliation, mais elle est aussi *provocation à une réconciliation plus vraie*, provocation qui concerne et interpelle avant tout chacun de nous et nos Églises. La réconciliation, en effet, comporte l'exigence d'un fort engagement œcuménique, lié au devoir missionnaire qui nous définit comme Églises. Elle ne peut pas être vécue de manière pleinement authentique, ni attestée de manière crédible, si nos Églises ne se placent pas toutes sous la Croix de Jésus Christ, pour confesser humblement leur péché qui a produit et maintient encore dans l'existence le scandale de leurs divisions, pour implorer dans une prière incessante la grâce de la miséricorde divine et le don de l'unité, mais aussi pour assumer avec détermination et joyeuse espérance l'engagement œcuménique, avec toutes les difficultés qu'il comporte, afin de pouvoir cheminer sur les voies de la pacification.

Le chemin œcuménique qui nous attend est certainement exigeant et pénible. Mais il est aussi

inévitables, si nous voulons être fidèles à la parole de Jésus qui nous exhorte à l'unité, et à l'action de l'Esprit Saint qui nous pousse à la réalisation de la communion ecclésiale sur le modèle de la communion trinitaire. Comme l'a dit Jean-Paul II, à Wroclaw, le 31 mai dernier, «L'Europe a besoin de nous tous, unis et solidaires autour de la Croix et de l'Évangile» (n. 3). Et il ajoutait: «Nos Églises et Communautés ecclésiales ont besoin de réconciliation. Pouvons-nous être pleinement réconciliés avec le Christ sans être pleinement réconciliés entre nous? Si nous ne sommes pas réconciliés entre nous, pouvons-nous rendre au Christ un témoignage commun et efficace? Et pouvons-nous nous réconcilier entre nous sans nous pardonner mutuellement?» (n. 4). Il s'ensuit que nos Églises doivent se sentir «appelées irrévocablement à la recherche d'une unité toujours plus profonde, non seulement intérieure mais aussi visible; une unité qui devienne un signe pour le monde, afin que le monde connaisse et afin que le monde croie. Il n'est pas possible de faire marche arrière sur le chemin de l'œcuménisme!... Nous devons tout faire pour recouvrer la plénitude de la communion. Nous ne pouvons pas nous arrêter sur ce chemin» (nn. 3, 5). Nous devons aller de l'avant avec confiance, sans nous contenter de la tolérance réciproque ni même de l'acceptation réciproque, parce que le Christ attend de nous un *témoignage commun*! C'est le témoignage que cette Assemblée aussi doit favoriser et alimenter.

C'est pourquoi, que ces moments que nous allons vivre ces jours-ci soient des moments de communion et de fraternité, prélude et présage d'une communion toujours plus profondément ressentie et vécue entre nos Églises; prélude et présage aussi d'un échange mutuel de dons, en faveur du peuple chrétien, au service de la paix et de la fraternité entre les peuples, pour l'honneur et la gloire de Dieu. Nous ne pouvons pas rester séparés! Nous devons marcher ensemble, car telle est la volonté de notre Seigneur! Courage, donc, frères et sœurs! Comme a dit, il y a maintenant deux ans, Sa Sainteté Bartholoméos Ier, Patriarche œcuménique de Constantinople: «Allons de l'avant et annonçons la réconciliation et l'unité! Ne craignons pas les bêtes féroces, parce que nous avons un Consolateur, l'Esprit Saint, l'Esprit de vérité, le Trésor des biens et le Dispensateur de la vie» (Rome, Basilique Saint-Pierre, le 29 juin 1995).

Nous sommes tous graciés

6. Mon souhait et mon vœu, c'est qu'en ces jours notre conscience devienne plus transparente et s'ouvre davantage au don de Dieu, et que chacun de nous aille à la recherche et à la rencontre de frères

avec qui partager la joie de savoir que le don de la réconciliation est un don que le Seigneur nous fait depuis toujours et qu'il nous fait ici et maintenant. Ici, *nous sommes tous graciés par Dieu*: voilà notre identité la plus vraie! Et si l'Assemblée que nous ouvrons ce soir nous rend plus convaincus encore d'être graciés, tous au même titre, par la miséricorde du Père, par l'amour gratuit du Christ et par le don de l'Esprit, alors nous serons transformés en signes et instruments de vie nouvelle pour nos cités, nos peuples, nos Églises, notre Europe, le monde tout entier.

Vivons cette Assemblée dans la certitude que *quelque chose de nouveau et de beau pourra naître entre nous*. Engageons-nous sur ce chemin commun avec la conscience et le regard affinés en nous par ces paroles d'Isaïe: «Ne vous souvenez plus des premiers événements, ne ressassez plus les faits d'autrefois. Voici que moi, je vais faire du neuf qui déjà bourgeoine; ne le reconnaissez-vous pas?» (43, 18-19). Nous ne pouvons pas ne pas le reconnaître parce que, devant nos yeux, se profile l'image de la cité sainte, de la nouvelle Jérusalem, qui descend du ciel (cf. Ap 21, 2). C'est l'image d'une cité réconciliée! Il s'agit, certes, d'une réalité eschatologique, mais ce n'est pas un rêve: c'est une réalité déjà présente. Elle l'est pleinement en Jésus; elle l'est aussi, selon la logique de la semence qui germe, en quiconque est dans le Christ, c'est-à-dire dans le chrétien et dans la communauté chrétienne. Nous sommes et devons être le signe de cette nouveauté. Nous le serons si, dans une société éclatée et caractérisée par des relations conflictuelles, rigides et formelles, nous savons vivre des relations solidaires, spontanées et attentives aux personnes.

En terminant, nous exprimons le souhait que la rencontre qui commence aujourd'hui constitue *une véritable expérience de l'esprit Saint* - comme ce fut le cas de celle de Bâle - et que, comme telle, elle marque *un pas de plus sur notre chemin œcuménique*; qu'elle nous engage à vivre notre «diaconie» pour l'Europe et pour le monde, et nous en rende capables.

Ref. *La documentation catholique*,
no. 2165, Août 1997.

BUILDING UP THE BODY OF CHRIST IN LATIN AMERICA: THE U.S. CATHOLIC MISSIONARY MOVEMENT ON THE EVE OF THE SYNOD FOR THE AMERICAS

Stephen P. Judd, M.M.

This article has grown out of a reflection process set in motion by a task force at Maryknoll formed to prepare us for responding to the challenges of a Synod of this kind. If you need further references, they can be acquired through Father Edward Hayes, M.M. who is the Maryknoll Society's Procurator General in Rome as well as a former colleague from my term on the General Council (1990-96).

Setting The Stage For The Synod

The call made by Pope John Paul II nearly five years ago in Santo Domingo for a Synod of Bishops from throughout the Americas has moved closer to reality sooner than most observers expected. At the time, Church leaders from both South and North America voiced their surprise upon hearing this announcement. Many wondered whether a Synod would interrupt a long process of Church renewal underway in Latin America since the founding of CELAM in 1955 and that gained notoriety and momentum at Medellin in 1969, Puebla in 1979 and Santo Domingo in 1992. Others thought such a gathering might present enormous difficulties in allowing for a more desirable grassroots participation and consultation among the local Churches prior to a Synod.

Whatever objections or obstacles there were and are, Christian communities from across the Americas gradually have come to see the wisdom for a convocation of this kind. On the eve of the Third Millennium it is viewed as an opportune occasion to reflect on a shared history of solidarity and collaboration as well as an often stormy relationship marked by conflict and suspicion. No sector within the North American church should welcome this development more than the U.S. missionary movement — past, present and future. And from the perspective of this movement I seek to address the context and challenges of what some are calling the Synod for the Americas.

Now more than ever, in the face of a more inter-dependent global economy and communications revolution the challenge of building and strengthening the connections between peoples of the North and South becomes all the more urgent. Paradoxically, we discover that, in general, those connections are not all that strong at the present time despite heroic efforts and great sacrifices in the past. An occasion like this, then, would seem to set the stage for a more honest assessment of where we

stand in relation to each other. On all sides lies a deep realization that the relationship cannot be taken for granted nor the opportunity for greater understanding squandered.

One response from the United States that has awakened a degree of interest is the process initiated by the Latin American Secretariat of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. One facet of that process involved a massive survey of U.S. Catholic Dioceses, religious communities, universities and other institutions to measure the depth of involvement with Latin America over the span of the past 35 years. This era corresponded to the peak of the modern missionary movement from North America to Latin America that coincided with the great influx of missionaries that arrived in the 1960's. That era has also been one marked by periodic tensions because of the frequent shifts in U.S. foreign policy.

The waning of the missionary movement in sheer numbers alone is cause to step back and look at recent developments in the world and the Church. A first fruit of the survey is a well documented account and interpretation of the data received, which surpassed expectations for its high percentage of respondents found in the book by Sister Mary McGlone, CSJ, entitled *Sharing Faith Across the Hemisphere* (Orbis). One can only hope that now Church leaders will be able to successfully engage the general Catholic populace in the U.S. in a preparation for the Synod, though time is of the essence with a Working Document (*Instrumentum Laboris*) still not generally available.

Christ Crucified Today In Latin America

Above and beyond the quantifiable statistics and variables that point to a mutual transformation of people in both hemispheres, however, there is still much room to raise concerns that would challenge U.S. Catholics to pay more attention to developments in Latin America and in

the Latin American Church that can give shape to a better climate of mutual understanding. In order to build a healthy relationship between our peoples and a “discipleship of equals” we need to examine attitudes about the new historical moment in which we now live.

Vast changes brought about by the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 led to new global alliances, alignments and world orders. What was perceived by some observers as the triumph of capitalism contributed to an uncritical embrace of neo-liberal economic models by most Latin American Governments. If U.S. involvement and interest in Latin America was no longer guided by the interventionist policies of the Reagan years, aggressive trade policies and the lure of new markets epitomised by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) began to characterise the unequal relationship between North and South America on a less than level playing field. For Latin Americans mired in the throes of debt repayment, the consequences of the economic downturn of the “lost decade” of the 1980’s and years of civil war and political violence, NAFTA types of economic arrangements seemed the only route to go toward economic and social development. Moreover, they seemed to be one of the only alternatives to shore up the fragile democratic governments that had emerged after years of dictatorship.

Because of a social location of insertion, by design or otherwise, into the world of the poor, missionaries were among some of the first to witness the contradictions in the new globalisation schemes that were set in motion. Early in the 1990’s the consequences of the model with structural adjustment policies and privatisation of State-owned enterprises began to take its toll on the poorest of the poor. Maryknollers meeting in São Paulo, Brazil, in 1992 addressed a letter to the Latin American Bishop delegates at the Santo Domingo Conference to raise this concern over a deterioration in the quality of life of millions of Latin Americans. That concern was more recently echoed in a widely acclaimed letter of the Latin American Jesuit Provincials. No longer do we speak of the oppressed but of growing numbers of “excluded and disposable” peoples among Latin America’s poor that include the homeless and most vulnerable, the orphaned and working children who occupy the streets of Latin America’s megacities in scandalous poverty. Only with the Chiapas rebellion of early 1994 did many notice the contradictions of economic globalisation, NAFTA and a concentration of power in the hands of the few at the expense of the poor.

Unfortunately, for a majority of the U.S. public, attention focused more on the phenomenon of immigration and fears raised about it than to the effects of NAFTA on the poor of Mexico. Had the Bishops of California not taken such a strong stand against Proposition 187 in the 1996 elections, no one else would have voiced concerns about social justice issues related to immigration and immigration policy. That view was echoed in a document published jointly by the leadership of the three Maryknoll groups entitled *We All Live In a Global Context* (1996).

Raising Up The Body Of Christ

From 1968 onwards the Churches of the North looked to Latin America as one of the new sources for hope and renewal. The Medellín Conference of that year and the theological movement around liberation theology represented a new way to express Christian witness in a world where the gap between rich and poor was more and more evident. Many commentators in the Post-Berlin Wall period have cynically dismissed liberation theology as an obsolete “Marxist inspired” theology no longer applicable to address the problems of the present moment as if liberation theology was co-terminus with Eastern European Socialist States. Yet with the intensification of poverty in Latin America theologians and committed Christians alike have not ceased to ask that fundamental question of “what is going on here?”

Missionaries in the field, liberation theologians and the directors of CELAM (The Conference of Latin American Bishops) alike out of an abiding commitment to the poor continue to point up the glaring injustices of unbridled capitalism and frame them in a faith reflection built around new images of a crucified people. The Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino in El Salvador speaking of the principle of mercy envisions the task as “one of taking Jesus down from the Cross”. But today there is a different voice giving expression to the broken body of Christ in myriad forms. Latin American people like the young Peruvian indigenous artist Anthoni Huillca give expression to this notion in a graphic painting of the Way of the Cross that depicts Christ crucified today as a young person forced by economic conditions to pan gold in Peru’s jungle areas. Not only do they suffer exploitation and forced labour, but the young Quechua Indians in the painting grieve over the destruction of the jungle’s fragile eco-system by uncontrolled mining interests.

If Maryknollers can state in their new mission vision that “in our interdependent yet fragmented and disconnected world, we seek to build up the

Body of Christ through presence and active witness in places where it is most broken", it is because we have known people like Anthoni Huilca and a Mexican Zapotecan woman, Sofia Robles from Oaxaca. Sofia brought the plight of indigenous peoples from the perspective of indigenous women to the U.N. sponsored Women's Conference in Beijing as well as to a group of missionaries last year when she likened the protest that is being heard all over Mexico to a sign of the Resurrection. The thousands of Guatemalan refugees returning to their homeland after years of exile in Mexico speak in terms of having undergone an apprenticeship in a school of confronting harsh new realities with renewed hope in their ability to resist and rebuild their identity.

All of these people point us in the direction of a "protest against oppression but it is a protest with a proposal", *una protesta con propuesta* along the lines spelled out by the Nicaraguan Jesuit economist Xavier Gorostiaga. They also challenge missionaries, few as we may be on the eve of the Third Millennium, to rethink the ways we situate ourselves in mission, to strategise and maximise a presence that can make a difference both in the places we are sent as well as in our own country of origin. Whatever strategies that are devised, however, must be born of a compassionate love for the people and places to which we are sent. A key starting point and underlying principle remains the building up of the Body of Christ where it is most broken. As Sobrino challenges all of us, to bring that body down and hold it up for all to see.

Challenges To Building Up The Body Of Christ

The "globalisation from below" that Gorostiaga speaks about in his much quoted essay, "Latin America in the New World Order", (1992) requires the use of some of the same levers of power especially the access to technology that the powerful employ in implementing a global economy, but with a big difference. The difference comes about from the perspective that one takes in building up networks of poor people, women's groups, indigenous communities and movements and an awareness of ecology in function of strengthening civil society. But, in order to accomplish this North Americans must retrieve a precious legacy in our own country's history, namely the tradition of creating and promoting intermediate associations and voluntary groups. In Latin American societies built on the corporate model this tradition and perspective may seem foreign, but in the face of the widespread breakdown and crisis of institutional life, it can

contribute to the fashioning of a new more participatory style that the architects of a new civil society increasingly call for. Traditional organisational models no longer suffice to meet the demands of highly mobile peoples and movements.

One of the best and most challenging features of the new missiology expressed so richly in Pope John Paul II's 1990 Encyclical, *Redemptoris Missio* derives from what he calls the new social phenomena that give rise to new missionary situations (cf. nn. 33-37). This is both an invitation to live out in new ways one of the hallmarks of this 35 year history or what Gustavo Gutierrez calls, "the physical and spiritual nearness to the poor". Witness in mission at these cross-roads and new marketplaces will place one squarely across what are the "religious and ethnic fault lines" of the global landscape where both new cultures and conflicts emerge side by side. More often than not, actions of conflict resolution and reconciliation will be of primary importance in these situations. To respond to such a changed social reality missionaries, especially priests and those involved in pastoral ministries of a parochial nature, will have to rethink and reimage the geographical parish as the chief locus of Church life.

All during the decade of the 1980's, especially in terms of the U.S. intervention and complicity in Central America, missionaries played a critical role in actions of solidarity that raised awareness of the shortcomings of this U.S. presence. That a wholesale and destructive intervention in Nicaragua was prevented was due, in no small part, to the multi-leveled efforts of missionaries acting to stem the official policies of the Reagan administration. A most effective and singularly exemplary and courageous action came about from the Sanctuary Movement in aiding people fleeing oppression in El Salvador and Guatemala. CIA involvement in Guatemala, likewise, was exposed by the relentless lobbying efforts of missionaries working through networks of human rights organisations in our nation's capital.

Today the need for this kind of action is no less necessary, but is likely not to arouse such widespread attention. An exceptional case is that of the campaign to close the U.S. Army's School of the Americas at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Though not as visibly prophetic but no less urgent, lobbying efforts to change economic and financial policies and programmes, call for the engagement of missionaries who know first hand how such policies impact the poor in concrete visible ways.

An area that is bound up with controversy and potential conflict is in addressing an increasingly

pluralistic religious world in Latin America where Protestantism has enjoyed a spectacular growth. Missionaries from a religiously pluralistic culture and society like ours can play a critical role in witnessing to a more dialogical relationship. Latin Americans of whatever persuasion still have not come to terms with what will most certainly be a culture and society less possessed of a Catholic cultural substratum that was underscored at Santo Domingo in 1992. The challenge to enable dialogue to take place around common human problems and the witness of life in the midst of death dealing structures is another way we build up the Body of Christ that encompasses all Christians, Catholic, Pentecostal and Evangelical.

Finally, the challenge to the witness of North American missionaries on the eve of the Synod is to participate more fully in the process of animating a mission commitment from Latin America to other continents. For some years the Latin American Church in a way unbeknownst to most North Americans has been busily engaged in a process to animate this Church to become more active in its responsibility to mission *ad gentes* through a series of missionary congresses, called COMLAs (Congreso Misionero Latinoamericano).

The most recent COMLA in 1995 held in the Brazilian city of Bela Horizonte reflected the diversity and creativity of the Latin American Church. Although there is still a small percentage of Latin American missionaries in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, North America and Europe, dramatic growth has taken place to build on the earlier renewal in Church life and structures that came out of Latin America with the Base Communities and liberation theology. Participation in the COMLA process is merely one way to raise awareness of Latin America's missionary responsibility.

And that participation can only be enhanced and enriched by the missionaries' commitment to an inculturated local Church, so that Latin America in mission is expressive of a rich culturally diverse mosaic. Missionaries have long laboured among the indigenous peoples of Latin America and among those of Afro-American descent. By promoting the cultural values and religious world views of Latin America's peoples and cultures we strengthen Catholic identity globally. Engagement in the inter-religious dialogue with indigenous theological movements and world views called for at Santo Domingo carries with it implications for a radically different pastoral practice that many Church leaders fear.

Closing The Chasm Between The Americas

The above challenges do not exhaust the number of areas that fall within the scope of a Synod, although they do serve as a barometer for measuring the agenda and potential outcome of a gathering of this scale and high exposure. If the Synod is to become more than a perfunctory event on the way to the Third Millennium and really take root in the lives of the people, we would hope that consideration be given to examining the effects of globalisation on the poor. Secondly, we hope that the place of Latin America in the global community be explored as to its vast potential to influence the future course of history and the common aspiration of greater communion among peoples.

Missionaries like ourselves no longer play the major, high profile role we once did in the life of the local Churches of Latin America. Other protagonists have rightfully moved up to take their place. Yet, we carry within us a living memory and a present witness to how God's grace works in and through people in their brokenness to disclose new sources of hope. Now more than ever we are called to be that bridge and vital link that keeps peoples connected over the chasm that separated Lazarus and Dives (Lk 16:16-31).

We can only hope that our witness has served and will serve in some way to counteract what that most prophetic of all voices of our North American Church, Thomas Merton, once wrote in an all too little known essay:

"If only North Americans had realised, after a hundred and fifty years, that Latin Americans really existed. That they were really people. That they spoke a different language. That they had more than something to sell! Money has totally corrupted the brotherhood that should have united all the peoples of America. It has destroyed the sense of relationship that had already begun to flourish in the years of Bolivar" ("A Letter to Pablo Antonio Cuadra Concerning Giants").

If the Synod and Church succeed in closing just a small bit of this chasm that widens and expands at each historic juncture, it will have heralded a new era in hemispheric relations and ushered in a most promising new day for building up the Body of Christ. It is an opportunity not to be missed and will provide one of history's rare second chances to enable a more authentic encounter with the living Jesus Christ.

ANOTHER WAY OF BEING CHURCH

Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga Plá

Pedro Casaldáliga, Bishop of São Félix do Araguaia in Brazil, speaks of the fears within the Church today and of the search for a new way of "Being Church".

From the beginning it is important to state that we are not talking about "another Church, but another way of Being Church" with the good will of being the Church of Jesus Christ without pride or belittling others. It is possible and necessary to be the Church of Jesus, but in a different way.

Throughout history, the Church of Jesus has taken on different forms and there have always been different ways of being church within it. Today, we are experiencing great insecurity and fear simultaneously in the Church, and in the Churches in general. The great German theologian, Rahner, spoke years ago about the "winter" of the Church. And for years we have been talking about "involution".

The word has even made its way into public use, with journalists talking about involution in the Church.

There is insecurity and fear, but on the other hand there are also demands which are growing more explicit and even collective, and becoming experiences of liberation. There has never been so much diversity in the Church of Jesus as today, particularly in terms of the laity. This is true not only in Latin America, but also in Europe. The base communities are an alternative experience of Being Church compared to the traditional parish model, for example.

The Church's many fears

In Nicaragua, a magazine published a special issue dedicated to the Church today. The title of the special issue was: "Why we believe in the Church". In this issue there was an article written by Rev. Victor Codina, a Jesuit working in Bolivia. He describes the Church's fears, he offers a litany of

fears, which I am going to describe with brief comments.

— There is still fear of Marxism, which has not been overcome despite the collapse of real socialism.

— There is fear of the modern secular world that has pushed the Church out of the public sphere, relegating it to the private sphere.

— There is fear of ecumenical dialogue, which has cooled off in recent years. The Churches have withdrawn to defend and protect their own identities.

— There is fear of inter-religious dialogue, the proliferation of all

kinds of religious expressions world-wide, which is macro-ecumenism as we stated in the First Assembly of the People of God in Quito in 1992 to mark the 500th anniversary of Latin America.

— There is fear of Episcopal collegiality and the resurgence of local churches. You know that there are certain Bishops who frequently have problems with the centre because of Episcopal collegiality and the resurgence of local churches. Centralism exists in the Church and we need to recognise it. The Church is a port on the one hand, and landlocked on the other.

— There is fear of the laity, that they have a public opinion of the Church and its political and social commitments. Despite all the talk about the protagonism of the laity, when lay people express their commitment we either leave them alone or, on some occasions, condemn them.

— There is fear of women, which is one of the greatest fears, and their contribution in deci-

sion-making, although this right is defended. If women can and should be equal to men in society, why not in the Church?

— There is fear of theologians. There have been many books written by theologians that have not been published and will not be published because they might be censored. I personally know of several cases.

— There is fear of cultures. This happens because of inter-religious dialogue because evidently dialogue between cultures means dialogue between religions.

— There is fear of young people, although there are efforts to attract them, because youth is youth. It is critical, noisy and free. Its loud volume is troubling.

— There is fear of Latin American Liberation Theology. You know that during his Visit to Central America a journalist asked Pope John Paul II if liberation theology had ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The Pope said that liberation theology was no longer a problem. I believe, with due respect, that it never was a problem. For us, it was of great importance, a relevant solution and it continues to be. But there continues to be a certain level of fear of liberation theology, of less traditional theologies, and also of Asian and African theology.

— There is fear of base communities and an effort to get them back into the parish.

— There is fear of religious life inserted in the community, that is involved on the margins. In Santo Domingo and with good faith — but who knows if there were some Bishops with other intentions — religious men and women were asked to return to the classroom. I think education is important, but without abandoning work on the margins.

— There is fear of sects, to such an extent that we begin to call everything a sect. Evangelical churches are “sects”, everything is a sect.

— There is fear of reviewing things like the ordained ministry, optional celibacy, lay ministries, to say nothing about women’s ordination.

— There is fear of liturgical changes and bad experiences.

Demands and new freedom in the Church

Along side the fears I am also going to summarise the demands. There is a document circulating in Europe that has been signed by millions of Christians. It is called: “We are the Church”. It began in Austria and it asks for: the construction of a fraternal Church with full equality for women’s rights; free choice between celibacy and not being celibate; and valuing sexuality as an important part of the human being created and accepted by God. It calls on the Church to adopt a message that is happier, full of hope and even tenderness, instead of its message of control, restriction and threats.

This is what the people who have signed this document want. I know that Bishops in Europe who are not considered revolutionaries think this document is acceptable and sensible, that it deserves attention and that the large number of signatures indicate that it is a collective demand. Maybe

what the people who have signed it are saying in a loud voice, is what millions more in the Church of God are saying quietly. So, there is fear and concern on the one hand, and demands and freedom on the other. I think that we are living through an important time in the Church, and the process can only accelerate. The Church will become increasingly less hierarchical. There will continue to be a hierarchy, but it will be less hierarchical. The laity will have greater protagonism.

We will be more communitarian. When we talk about base Christian communities we say that what is most important is not the community or the many communities but the spirit of community. At times when democracy in the Church is discussed I say: I do not want democracy in the Church, I want much more. Democracy is not enough, especially the formal type of democracy we are accustomed to. We want a fraternal community with the full participation of all people, each person with his or her service or ministry but with total participation.

I believe that in the Church, as well as in the grassroots movement, we have moved forward even if it does not always look that way. There is

A new approach to theology could lead to a new ecclesiology. A Church that is more communitarian, serving, dialogue-based, inserted in history and in reality with the poor, thirsty, concerned and hopeful, as the Council asked us to be in Gaudium et Spes.

involution at the upper echelons, but there is evolution at the grassroots level. There is much more participation in both the Church and the grassroots movement. Those who have lived in Latin America in the past 25 years can perceive this very clearly.

It seems to me that when we talk about the Church, about our own problems and anxieties, and take on the challenges that correspond to us as church, we need to categorically affirm that we are “church” just as much as anyone else, including the Pope. We are more or less church if we are more or less followers of Jesus. The Pope is as much church as any other baptised Christian. The Pope has a ministry, which is singular and indispensable, but as church. We are church from Baptism, all else is ministry and service. We need to affirm this categorically, live it and give thanks for it.

We are church. In the Church we are the inheritors of those witnesses, as the Letter to the Hebrews tells us. And we are going to leave an inheritance to others. This awareness of Being Church should fill us with gratitude, responsibility and freedom of spirit which should enable us to live it with greater awareness, freedom and reality.

The Church: mystery, history, sacrament of salvation

We need to highlight three dimensions of the Church:

— One dimension is that of mystery. The Church is a mystery of faith and we can confess that, “I believe in the Holy Church”. It is a mystery of faith: the Church is the bride of the lamb, it is the Body of Christ.

— In the second place the Church is an institution and history. As such, like many institutions in human history, from the beginning of time, and today and tomorrow, the Church is, was and will always be holy and at the same time a sinner. Or as the first Christians said graphically, “chaste and a prostitute”. The reformers throughout time have been good for the Church because they shook it and reminded it that it had to change with the times.

There is fear of women, which is one of the greatest fears, and their contribution in decision-making, although this right is defended. If women can and should be equal to men in society, why not in the Church?

Then, as a institution and as history, we can criticise the Church, recognise the nonsense it has created, creates and will create. We are all church, the hierarchy, the grassroots ... Of course, the nonsense of the hierarchy is more evident because we are at the top and because until now the Church has depended directly on us, the hierarchy. And this we need to humbly recognise. I believe that we should not be afraid to ask forgiveness for our omissions and even our crimes: slavery, the crusades, the conquest of America. We always begin the Eucharist asking for forgiveness. A good act of penance is always opportune. It is a good way of recovering credibility.

— Finally, we cannot forget that this Church that is steeped in mystery, that is institution and history, is the sacrament of universal salvation. The universal is the kingdom and the Church is a sacrament of the universal kingdom, universal salvation. A sacrament, a mystery.

— Who knows if theologically and pastorally the correction that we must make in the Church is this: think, insist in the ministry of the entire Church on the service of the Kingdom. The ministry of the Kingdom is the great ministry of the Church and all other ministries are secondary to this. And in the ministry of the Kingdom we are all ministers. A priesthood common to all the faithful. This means, above all, a priesthood that celebrates, announces and waits for the Kingdom. And we all feel committed. We no longer talk about the Church as institution, we talk about ourselves and others and that each of us assumes his or her responsibility. This will open spaces where they are still lacking because this is their right through Baptism.

Another Way of Being Church

A new God, a new church, a renewed option for the poor

Ijoke at times that when we arrive at the threshold of heaven the first thing we will realise is that from the threshold on in and for all eternity we will never again talk about religion or church. There we will talk about the Kingdom and those of us who were church and those who were religious and even those who were not — we are all

the children of God — will be part of the family of God and live the fullness of God's Kingdom. So it would be good if we started here because perhaps we are poorly trained and we will start discussing theology until the Holy Spirit gives us peace.

We, Christians, must emphasise that our great paradigm will continue to be the same paradigm held by Jesus: The Kingdom. This is the paradigm.

In this great paradigm we can and must insist on Being Church in a more or less new way, to become this church that we dream about and believe in with humility but also with freedom and joy. This is the church that Jesus dreamed about. Finally, we can highlight three paradigms, or three sub paradigms:

— We need to begin with a new theological approach. Do not be scared. I have changed my God and I will always be changing my God. Thank God for that. Thanks to the one and only God, I continue changing my God a little each day. And when we reach heaven the first thing we will do is completely change our God. Only then will we see how God sees us. And we will see that God is something else. It will cause a glorious scare, a great happiness. This is what the ancients called the "beatic vision".

— A new approach to theology could lead to a new ecclesiology. A Church that is more communitarian, serving, dialogue-based, inserted in history and in reality with the poor, thirsty, concerned and hopeful, as the Council asked us to be in *Gaudium et Spes*.

— A renewed option for the poor, who today are excluded, from their full liberation. The worst thing

that we could do, the greatest heresy we could commit in our Latin America, in the Third World, is to think that the option for the poor is no longer important. There are many people who in their own interests or because they have gone astray think that "they have talked enough about this option for the poor". At times friends or journalists have asked me what remains of the option for the poor. And I say, "the poor are still with us, as is the God of the poor".

I think that as long as the God of the Poor, who is the God of Jesus, exists and we want to believe, and as long as there are women and men who love and serve this God as Jesus did, then the option for the poor will continue. Furthermore, liberation theology will continue as long as there are minds that think about God and the poor. Unfortunately, as Jesus warned us, "the poor will always be among us". What he did not say is that there would always be increasingly more poor people. This is what neo-liberalism tells us as it washes its hands like Pilot did.

"Another way of Being Church", with simplicity but also happiness, liberty of spirit, must mean being the Church of Jesus. A way of being evangelical, incarnate and placed within history. Being Church is what we want. We do not want anything else, we do not think about a parallel church in the pejorative sense of the word. We must be church and this depends on us.

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RE-FOUNDATION OF MISSION A LATIN AMERICAN STUDY

Diego Irarrazaval

A reconstruction of missiology, in the Latin American context, is due to inter-religious dialogue; new paradigms; and theologies of Mestizo, Indigenes, and Black peoples. The Spirit is renewing and transforming each community, culture, and religion for the sake of a joyful humanity in the Earth, where the Spirit creates life. In this sense, missiology goes beyond colonial and neo-colonial structures so that once more we may accept the good news of liberation.

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May I share some feelings and insights so that we may all continue re-rooting mission? My words are not impartial nor impassionate. One of my steadfast convictions is that people who are looked upon as insignificant (and are considered "targets" of evangelisation) are in fact fabulous sources and communicators of the faith. Many ordinary persons are passionately involved in small and wonderful missionary tasks that contribute to the formation of a new humanity. My particular vision is due to a local church, and to socio-cultural and spiritual conditions in the Andes, and also due to collaboration in theological networks within and outside Latin America.

In our South American continent and elsewhere, we are entering a historical period that demands new actions and meanings of liberation (Gutiérrez, Gustavo, "La teología: Una función eclesial", *Páginas* 1994, 130:15). The voices of the poor, of Indigenes, of Blacks, of Mestizos, and of women are beginning to transform our churches and mission. I believe that these plural-cultural-political religious voices do enrich the Christian tradition.

In this article I will discuss the contributions of other religions to Christian praxis, a particular and universal understanding of Christian faith, new paths and insights in emerging Latin American theologies, and conclude with discussing the claims on missiology.

I will underline a re-foundation, a re-rooting of mission. This happens if missionary endeavours develop a dialogue with the "little ones of the earth"; in this case mission builds on its roots and discovers a new horizon. It may even be said that ordinary people offer a reverse mission toward church workers and theologians.

Other Religions Revitalise Christianity

Most people who define themselves as Christians (and in a special way as Catholics) are simultaneously bearers of aspects of other religions. This is true among

Mestizos, Indigenes, and Afro-American peoples, Amazonic groups, and urban majorities (with their syncretic and new religious phenomena). (cf. Moreira, A., and R. Zicman, *Misticismo e novas religioes*, Petropolis, Brazil: Vozes., 1994; essays by Hoornaert, E., P. Sanchis, and R. Siepierski, *Historia da Igreja na America Latina e no Caribe*, Petropolis, Brazil: CEHILA/VOZES, 1995; and Parker, C. *Otra logica en America Latina: Religion popular y modernizacion capitalista*, Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1993). A careful appraisal of our Christian situations shows that each person and group has some type of affiliation with another symbolic-religious system. The degree of participation in another religion depends on a variety of human and spiritual factors. On the other hand, these phenomena awaken much controversy (for example, syncretism in Latin America, new religious structures). Here I will take note only of contributions to the Christian tradition.

Let us consider one case: a ritual within a meeting of open-hearted Andean Christians (ethnically Quechua, Aymara, and Mestizo). I briefly describe a six-hour ritual, during the fifth annual workshop on Andean Theology: "Indigenous Community and Modern Changes" (1994). The participants were Peruvian and Bolivian active members and leaders of the Catholic Church, meeting in Ayaviri, Peru, as follows:

It is dark and very cold, as some 40 people walk up the slope of a holy mountain. We are participants in a theological workshop, together with members of lay societies devoted to the Virgin Mary and to the cross. We assemble on the top of the mountain. We tower above the city lights. Everyone shivers due to the cold wind; we are at an altitude of over 13,000 feet. Previously, in the meeting place we began the six-hour ceremony with the preparation of the offerings: one of incense for God; one offering of coca leaves, sweets, and flowers for Pachamama (Mother Earth); another offering for the ancestor spirit residing in this mountain; and one for the other sacred mountains. Each one prayerfully places the offerings of three coca leaves (with our personal and communal prayers of petition for family needs,

economic well-being, health, etc.). Inside the chapel on the mountain top, led by a Roman Catholic priest indigenous to this area, we pray as we raise a plate of burning incense and light candles to the holy images, especially to Our Lady. There are some spontaneous prayers by members of the group. We enjoy meaningful silence and deep emotions. We then go out into the dark where some have prepared a fire with pieces of wood and dried animal dung. Now we are led by an indigenous religious leader (*pako* in the Quechua language) and two assistants. We pass from hand to hand the sacred cloths, containing the four offerings, and with fervour kiss each sacrificial bundle. We all address, in silence, the mystery that surrounds and penetrates our hearts. It is midnight and freezing cold. The *pako* places the four offerings in the fire, as sacrificial gifts from all of us. They are consumed by the sacred entities; it is a ritual banquet. We later go down the mountain, with our hearts full of faith, trust in life, and thanksgiving to God and to Mother Earth. We return to the meeting place where once again women share coca leaves with all those present (placing the leaves in one's mouth). We also share alcoholic drinks, most welcomed in that cold and joyous night; these drinks have a meaning of renewing bonds with all living beings.

All these symbols nourish our faith and our theology. However, one has to acknowledge the abyss separating Christian institutions (present here for more than 400 years) and indigenous structures. If there is some dialogue and interaction, it happens because of people's experience; their Christian praxis is poly-religious.

May I summarise some key contributions of people's indigenous religion to Latin American Christianity? Ritual activity carried out by Christians includes love of creation (called Mother Earth, soul of plants and trees, spirit of water, etc.). An ecological spirituality corrects an anthropocentric type of Christianity. Community (not the modern I-ism) is the basis of expressions of faith. Divine reality includes the feminine and the masculine, their reciprocity and their differences. Offerings to God, ancestors, and many sacred entities are due to reciprocity and a permanent experience of the mystery of life. Material and spiritual well-being are everybody's responsibility and there are abundant moments of peace sharing and of building relationships. Personal aspirations and needs of a poor population become a common human project and a celebration (what we often call liberation).

In general terms, several religious traditions are present in Latin American Christianity (its rituals,

ethical perspectives, religious organisation, leadership, and indigenous wisdom). Because of them, the Christian faith becomes inculturated and present in these religions (we may say that faith becomes inter-religionised). Let us not forget that many of these elements have been part of our Andean-Black-American heritage, but were suppressed or marginalised by colonial or by neo-colonial structures. However, those elements are positive contributions to Christianity and allow its re-rooting. Moreover, it can be said that those non-Christian elements are ways in which the God of life is present among us (Cf. Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, [The Church: 21 November, 1964], nn. 16, 17; *Gaudium et Spes*, [The Church in the Modern World: 7 December, 1965], n. 22; *Nostra Aetate*, [The Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, 28 October, 1965], nn. 1, 2, 4, 5; Pontifical Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, 1991, nn. 19, 29); there is one history and mystery of salvation in all humanity, n. 35: the kingdom is present in members of other religious traditions). This implies that our church life and our missiology interact with other religions. Otherwise, our Christian community does not grow holistically, and does not enjoy all the manifestations of life's mystery.

A Particular-Universal Understanding of the Faith

The contemporary search for and the invention of paradigms taking place within the scientific community in fact express desires and praxis of common people. Everybody today is concerned about a healthy and meaningful existence. This concern, this passion, is growing day by day because we are not satisfied with the world as a total market full of individual absolutes (of I-isms). We seek life in the midst of societies where two-thirds of the scientists are involved in war-related enterprises and in marginal areas where most persons are sick, hungry, impoverished, and unorganised. So we all long for new realities, and for paradigms that show us the way toward the new. According to Leonardo Boff, the new paradigm is to see Earth as an unlimited community in which we are members, and here "the particular good arises from being in communion with the universal common good on our planet" (Boff, Leonardo, *Principio-Terra*, São Paulo, Brazil: Atica, 1995: pp. 36, 79).

I will now outline theological aspects of an Andean paradigm. It is a paradigm for daily existence and also for missiology. This is the product of a series of meetings in Bolivia and Peru from 1990 onward. [For a detailed presentation of this Andean paradigm, see Irarrazaval (1995 "Un pensar

creyente: Minusculo y universal”, *Boletín del Instituto de Estudios Aymaras* 49/50/51: pp. 61-94)]. With our modern sensibility we construct paradigms that cover the whole world. In the case of these Andean theological workshops, persons formulate “small” or particular paradigms with universal relevance. With this vision, missiology can be re-founded. Christian mission is given a new orientation. My outline has four aspects: ritual basis for thought; culture and liberation in a holistic perspective; modern responsibility; and names of the Deity.

People’s rituals are the indispensable roots for the understanding of the faith and for its communication. So mission does not take rituals from one society to another context. Regarding Andean theology, it is nurtured by its own rituals and symbols; it is not limited to univocal concepts. As was stated in our workshops, “celebration is the model of human action”; “ritual, that is to say, life, is the place to do theology” (Irrarrazaval, *ibid.*, 1995, p. 70). This guarantees a missio-logy that is inseparable from spirituality and from community.

It is a holistic journey. All beings have links among themselves; culture is lived in the midst of history, reason and ethics interact with each other, etc. Andeans do not have dualisms (like Westerners), where one reality eliminates the other. They rather acknowledge difference, complementarily, and interaction. As has been said, “each culture is particular, but it has a universal vocation, and it builds relationships of equal rights with other cultures”; “culture and history blend well”; “theology is done within people’s history ... discovering the message of Jesus for Andean culture” [Irrarrazaval: “How Is Theology Done in Latin America?” *Voices from the Third World* 18 (1):59-78. EATWOT (Bangalore, India, 1995, pp. 77-78)]. Thus, there is no room for unilateral models, nor for dualistic thinking. Missiology is a holistic endeavour.

Modernity is assumed with critical eyes so that it benefits all. The Andean population fears that modernity may not leave room for their way of living. On the other hand, Andeans see it as a universal human project that is locally reinterpreted and transformed for the sake of everyone’s well-being. According to the participants in our workshops: “modernity is like sowing; we choose the seeds, and seeds later give fruits”, “from the standpoint of our culture we build a just world, since this is desired by all the poor” (Irrarrazaval, *ibid.*, 1995, pp. 79, 81). Thus, modernity is seen as a task in people’s hands, without discrimination. There is no fatalism in the sense of a world market and social means of communication that set up absolutes for

everybody. Andeans have their own paths and values which allow missiology to be original.

Finally, evangelisation and theology listen to a polyphony of names of God. It has been said: “we are the earth; sons and daughters of the earth”; “God is father and mother”, “we live because we walk in the presence of the Creator, of good spirits, of Mother Earth”, “communion with God in life and celebration, and not in one’s mind”; “with Indigenous eyes and hearts we welcome Christ”; “the Son of God walks in the history of Andean peoples”; “the Holy Spirit is here ... and moves us to love without placing barriers” (Irrarrazaval, *ibid.*, 1995, pp. 82-83). It seems to me that these are expressions of a universal theology in inculturated images. No person or thing is excluded. All is taken into account, in its being real. Life’s mystery is given different names and has concrete meanings. Therefore, missiology is polyphonic when it is faithful to mystery.

So we have a particular-universal paradigm. It does not conceptualise the faith with the arrogance of modern rationality. Rather, it approaches, loves, and understands God particular-universal with the eyes and hearts of the “little ones” in an Andean context. This implies that missiology is done prayerfully, in the midst of rituals, with the praxis and wisdom of common people, and also takes into account the modern critique. This paradigm also affirms reciprocity and differences between men and women in the human community and in its representations of the divine presence. Regarding liberation, it is understood as a daily task and as grace, as a way of being human in an Earth open to mystery. Through all these “small” or particular insights and symbols, Andean people have a universal significance; they place themselves in contact — and invite others to be in contact — with the ultimate foundations of the human condition, where the Spirit creates life.

New Paths and Insights

A common church procedure is to start from a message that is given to persons; likewise, theological inquiry explains a sacred source to a community. In both instances, specialists occupy all the space; People of God are considered objects of the proclamation and the teaching of the faith: there is no dialogue between the faithful and their ministers. We here have a unilateral hermeneutic; and mission also becomes unilateral.

But things have begun to change. In the past 30 years, small and alternative paths have been opened.

The preferential option for the poor touches everything and everyone. The People of God are considered responsible for (and not targets of) mission and its theology.

In the Latin American context we now have our own theological tradition, methodology, spirituality, and ethics. We have new processes and new subjects celebrating the faith and doing theology. They open good roads. God is understood as being present and transforming our history and our identities. Unfortunately, what is being done is often misinterpreted as if it were only social change, or as being one more example of contextual thinking. What we have in our continent and elsewhere are new theological constructs, [cf. Irarrazaval, *ibid.*, 1995 and other essays about world religions in that issue], which give a radical re-orientation to missiology. Mission may now be rooted in the “other” (and not seen as a salvation of others); it is work done within the faith and thinking of the common people.

There are numerous paths that have a common thrust. All of these theologies are done out of love. Jon Sobrino calls it an “*intellectus amoris*” (Sobrino, J. *El principio misericordia*. Santander: Sal Terrae, 1992:71); it is from the standpoint of the heart, of communion, and of struggling together that we understand faith and we celebrate life’s wonders.

In Indigenous theology, ritual (as mentioned above) is what gives birth to understanding. It is holistic and concrete because it has the symbols, narratives, and wisdom of communities. The Christian heritage is assumed and reconstructed. God’s presence is felt in Mother Earth, in relationships with ancestors, and in all life-giving forces.

Black theology arises from the history and wisdom of Afro-Latin Americans. Its thinking is communitarian, underlining religious traditions together with struggles for justice and against all forms of dehumanisation and discrimination. God is one who strengthens Black women and men who encounter Christ in their own passion and resurrection.

In Mestizo theology, the history of salvation is understood in a special way through life stories. It considers symbols and daily spirituality of the people, underlining Marian devotions and also the reading of the Word by communities of faith. It affirms — in a similar way to Indigenous and Black thinking — a particular identity and community seeking universal salvation.

Theology done by women is also developing a gender perspective. It deepens a critique of patriarchal structures in society and church. Women’s theology is relational: sharing life, being open to divine mystery, and inventing concrete, historical alternatives. The gender perspective allows women and men to reconstruct differences and co-relationships, to envision God and Jesus with the wisdom of each and of both genders, and to celebrate the Spirit’s renewing the cosmos and all living beings.

These emerging Latin American essays strengthen and expand the original insights of God’s loved ones, the “little ones”, who are subjects of theology, as members of communities of faith. May I insist on this: today there is a spectrum of persons participating in the theological ministry: Indigenous and Black people, women, youth, Mestizos, Asian-Americans, etc., who are developing particular-universal paradigms. The Church in Latin America, formed mostly by poor and wise people, has abundant theological charisma and ministries.

All of us become responsible for the Earth and the well-being of humanity. Mission is therefore part of the cosmic and human journey, where the God of all peoples calls us to be church, sacrament of salvation. Regarding mission theology, it is not the private property of a few; it is rather being expressed in a polyphonic way by the whole People of God.

Claims on Missiology

My last section summarises what has been said in terms of the mission entrusted to us by God for the sake of freedom and joy for all human beings. Since other religions enrich the Christian life, then our mission may be inter-religious. A particular-universal paradigm calls for missionary inculturation of Christ and the Spirit. The emerging understandings of the faith arise from the proclamation of God’s salvation according to many names. I will underline these three major claims.

May I here include a word of caution? Missiology deals with perspectives, debates, and a Christian discernment of what we do. In regards to policy and strategy, mission is in the hands of the church community and its hierarchy. So a theologian may offer insight, ministry, and systematisation; one does not set out guidelines.

The conclusions are both bold and realistic. I insist that there is a new paradigm; common people

are potential and real communicators and thinkers; they cannot be treated as objects of evangelisation and theology. But in the midst of every people there is evil, lack of obedience to the Message and to the Spirit, human and spiritual mistakes, sin. So mission carried out by the people is not the last word. The first and last word belong to God; they belong to a divine Message placed in the heart of the Christian church.

Realism also implies facing gigantic obstacles to mission. Modernity is in part a secular phenomenon, but it is also mostly polytheistic. Its world market and its I-ism function as secular absolutes. Today's progress includes symbols that are incompatible with the Beatitudes. Moreover, churches are very involved in religious "marketing". At times evangelisation fosters spiritual consumerism, instead of communion with the Creator-Spirit. Since we face these huge obstacles, it is necessary — as suggested by Jose Comblin — to "work like ants" in the midst of challenging contexts (Comblin, J. *Cristaos rumo ao seculo XXI: Nova caminhada de libertacao*, São Paulo, Brazil: Paulinas, 1996: 373). Yes, we are called to behave like clever ants and to boldly reformulate mission. What realistic projects are ahead of us? Allow me to draw conclusions from the first three sections of my essay.

1. In Latin American and Caribbean contexts, as Christians we share elements with — and of — other religions. Mission can favour interaction among religions. In this interaction, Christian faith (with its religious mediations) is offered to all people, because we believe that in Christ humanity dies and rises. At the same time, other religions have specific input for everyone's experience of salvation. This implies that religions do not merely coexist, nor that we resign ourselves to religious pluralism. Speaking in positive terms, an inter-religious dialogue can deepen communion within the mystery of life, due to the contribution of each human-religious tradition. In terms of our Christian symbols and beliefs, we acknowledge elements of different religions present in our communities (in their particular identities and histories).

2. As missionaries we communicate the truth as we discover it present in people's understanding of the faith. Any communication has cultural, gender, economic, and other components. These components are not the unchangeable Gospel, but they can be signs pointing toward the truth. For example, in the Andean understanding of the Christian faith, there are numerous sacred entities. When one proclaims salvation in Christ, one can remember local beliefs in protectors within nature and in ancestors who take

care of us. Personally, I can now relate more intimately with the cosmic Christ and with the communion of saints because of what Indigenous people are teaching me. On the other hand, Indigenous communities that receive the message about the body of Christ may discover christological meanings in their relationship to Mother Earth.

3. Evangelisation and mission are — and should be more — in the hearts, hands, and mouths of common people. Jesus handed over his mission to "insignificant" people; the Church must do likewise today. Each Christian community has its gifts from the Spirit, its theologies, and its talents for the task of evangelisation. In the Latin American plural-cultural and plural-religious scenario, the missionary vocation belongs not to an *élite* nor to foreigners, but to Mestizos, Blacks, Indigenes, Whites, Asiatics, and in a special way to youth and to women (who are *de facto* doing the good work). They, with their community experience, religions, cultures, and theologies, are the main bearers of the Good News. But they are also handicapped. Often they assimilate and reproduce our colonial and neo-colonial church structures. Another problem is the powerful influence of foreign personnel and methodologies. So it is always necessary to reformulate and re-root missionary endeavours. How is this reconstruction done according to the Spirit of Christ? The Spirit is the source of inculturation and liberation in our mission, renewing and transforming each Christian community, each culture and religion. Because we live in the Spirit, we say that Christ is the Saviour of humankind and the heart of heaven and earth.

These and other major claims on mission are — I believe — promptings of the Spirit like tongues of fire in today's Pentecost. The warmth and courage of the Spirit is received by the "little ones of the earth". In spite of — and as a protest against — marginalisation and violence, people continue celebrating life. They also demand from the Church and from missiology that the joy of faith be the foundation of all.

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POUR UN AUTRE JUBILÉ DE L'AN 2000 SE MOBILISER POUR LA LIBÉRATION DES PEUPLES INDIGÈNES ET DES OPPRIMÉS

Giulio Girardi

Le texte que nous publions ci-dessous propose une façon "différente" de célébrer le jubilé de l'an 2000. Il puisse simultanément aux sources bibliques du jubilé et aux situations actuelles des peuples indigènes en Amérique latine. Il est dédié à la mémoire de Mgr Leónidas Proaño, ancien évêque de Riobamba en Équateur, ami et défenseur des Indiens. Les réflexions ici proposées n'émanent pas directement d'un auteur latino-américain (contrairement à nos habitudes), mais d'un homme dont plusieurs textes ont été récemment diffusés par les médias latino-américains de défense des droits de l'homme ou liés au courant des théologies de la libération. Il s'agit de Giulio Girardi, philosophe et théologien, membre de la Coordination italienne de solidarité avec les peuples indigènes. Cet article dont nous publions la seconde partie a été diffusé par Cencos Iglesias, décembre 1996 (Mexique).

Le jubilé dans la perspective d'Israël et de Jésus

Le jubilé chrétien prétend s'inspirer de la tradition biblique et surtout du message de Jésus. Le pape rappelle (*Il s'agit de la lettre apostolique Tertio Millenio Adveniente* [NdT].) que dans l'Ancien Testament (comme par exemple dans le *Lévitique*, 25 et dans le *Deutéronome* [Dt 15, 1-11]), le jubilé était un temps particulièrement consacré à Dieu au cours duquel on laissait se reposer la terre, on devait libérer les esclaves juifs et remettre toutes les dettes. Un temps au cours duquel on proclamait également "l'émancipation" de tous les habitants qui aspiraient à la liberté. À cette occasion, tous les Israélites recouvraient la possession de la terre de leurs pères, si éventuellement ils l'avaient vendue ou si, étant réduits en esclavage, ils l'avaient perdue. Par conséquent, l'année jubilaire devait restaurer l'égalité entre tous les fils d'Israël et rétablir entre eux la justice sociale. Cela supposait que le gouvernement et la législation s'étaient donnés pour tâche de protéger les plus faibles et de garantir leurs droits face à l'arrogance des plus riches.

À partir de cet arrière-fond biblique on comprend la profonde réinterprétation du jubilé que Jésus propose quand, se présentant aux habitants de Nazareth, il leur cite le passage d'Isaïe : "*L'Esprit du Seigneur est sur moi parce qu'il m'a conféré l'onction pour annoncer la bonne nouvelle aux pauvres. Il m'a envoyé proclamer aux captifs la libération et aux aveugles le retour à la vue, rendre la liberté aux opprimés, proclamer une année d'ac-cueil par le Seigneur*" (Lc 4, 16-19). Pour Jésus, le

jubilé est un temps de libération totale; or, la libération constitue précisément l'essence de sa mission.

Il est cependant bien difficile de trouver un écho de cette conception du jubilé dans la façon dont elle est envisagée par le pape car elle manifeste un ecclésiocentrisme qui éclipse le point de vue des opprimés (...).

Certes, la référence aux pauvres et aux exclus qui sont l'objet d'une option préférentielle de la part de l'Église est présente dans les préoccupations du pape. "Il faut dire avant tout que l'engagement au service de la justice et de la paix dans un monde aussi profondément marqué que le nôtre par tant de conflits et par d'intolérables inégalités sociales et économi-ques est un aspect éminent de la préparation et de la célébration du jubilé." Cependant, la préoccupation qui se manifeste sincèrement dans cette déclaration ne supprime pas la distance qui existe entre le jubilé de l'Église romaine et celui de la Bible, entre le jubilé proclamé par le pape et celui qui fut proclamé par Jésus. D'une part, parce que la référence aux pauvres et aux exclus n'apparaît plus comme l'essentiel du jubilé mais qu'il en est seulement un aspect secondaire auquel le pape ne s'intéresse qu'à la fin du document lorsqu'il explique quel sera le contenu de la préparation de la troisième année. D'autre part, parce que cette référence ne faisant plus allusion à la libération des esclaves a perdu la charge subversive qui la caractérisait du point de vue de la société dans la conception biblique et surtout à travers la proclamation jubilaire de Jésus.

Pour un jubilé célébré du point de vue des indigènes engagés dans un mouvement de libération

Je veux à présent faire une proposition qui permettrait de retrouver le sens originel du jubilé du point de vue de la pénitence et de la libération et de redonner à l'option pour les pauvres son rôle central en tant que caractéristique de l'événement. L'idée a surgi de la concomitance entre la transition du deuxième au troisième millénaire et la décennie internationale des peuples indigènes telle qu'elle a été proclamée par les Nations unies (10 décembre 1994 - 10 décembre 2004). La proposition consiste à envisager la transition du deuxième au troisième millénaire du point de vue des peuples indigènes qui émergent à la conscience et à la dignité en tant que sujets.

En 1992, nous l'avons déjà rappelé, bien des personnel, des groupes, des mouvements, des comités se sont mobilisés pour s'opposer aux commémorations du cinquième centenaire de la conquête et de l'évangélisation et surtout pour refuser l'idéologie qui les avait inspiré, une idéologie de conquête et de domination. Ce refus allait de pair avec la mise en valeur du point de vue des peuples indigènes au sujet de ces exploits et de l'ensemble de l'histoire. Il me semble également urgent de procéder à une analyse de l'idéologie qui inspire le projet de célébration du millénaire, compris comme une exaltation des 2 000 ans de civilisation chrétienne. Car il est impossible de ne pas avoir le même jugement sur le cinquième centenaire et sur les deux mille ans. La conquête coloniale et les conquêtes qui ont engendré la modernité sont l'aboutissement naturel d'une idéologie et d'une pratique impériales qui ont marqué notre ère de bout en bout.

Certes, l'impérialisme ne marque pas seulement l'ère chrétienne, car celle-ci se contente de faire se perdurer des idéologies et des pratiques antérieures. Cependant, ceci constitue pour les croyants le nœud du problème qui les angoisse: Pourquoi le christianisme n'a-t-il pas changé le cours de l'histoire? Pourquoi n'a-t-il pas réussi à briser la loi du plus fort et s'est-il incliné devant elle? Pourquoi le message libérateur exprimé par Jésus est-il si souvent devenu, dans l'interprétation proposée par les Églises, un appel à la soumission et à la résignation? Est-il légitime de penser que le christianisme n'a pas changé le monde parce que le monde a changé le christianisme?

S'interroger sur le sens des deux derniers millénaires revient à se hasarder à une évaluation de

la civilisation de l'Occident chrétien et, par conséquent, de l'évangélisation. S'interroger sur les perspectives du troisième millénaire revient à se demander si celui-ci doit se situer en cohérence par rapport aux deux premiers ou si ne s'impose pas plutôt par rapport à eux une rupture et une inversion de tendance.

Dans ce contexte, affirmer notre identification avec les peuples indigènes signifie assumer leur point de vue dans l'estimation de l'histoire passée et la prévision de l'histoire à venir, assumer le point de vue des exclus de notre civilisation et non celui des puissances dominantes. Il s'agit là d'un choix de civilisation qui est inséparable d'un choix de vie.

Envisager le jubilé du point de vue des exclus revient à retrouver son sens originel de pénitence et de libération, à redécouvrir son poids de subversion. Cela signifie que toutes les Églises devraient proclamer le message de Jésus en s'engageant aux côtés des peuples indigènes et de tous les opprimés du monde dans leur combat pour leur libération, c'est-à-dire dans leur effort pour s'affirmer comme sujets de leur propre histoire. Cela signifie qu'il faut dénoncer courageusement le crime et le péché structurels qui induisent l'exclusion de la plus grande partie de l'humanité ainsi que l'idéologie libérale qui les produit. Cela signifie que la priorité de la mobilisation jubilaire doit être non pas l'unité entre les Églises mais la solidarité entre les peuples et continents; une réconciliation qui transformera non seulement les relations interpersonnelles mais surtout les relations structurelles entre le Nord et le Sud.

Cela signifie encore qu'il faut lutter pour que les pays riches remettent la dette des pays pauvres car celle-ci est devenue l'instrument le plus mortifère de leur exploitation et de leur domination; bien plus, il faut que les pays riches reconnaissent la dette qu'eux-mêmes ont contractée à l'égard des pauvres au cours de leur histoire et qu'ils s'engagent à la leur payer. Cela signifie enfin qu'il faut soutenir les peuples indigènes dans la lutte qu'ils mènent pour récupérer la terre de leurs ancêtres qui leur a été violemment enlevée par les conquistadors d'hier et d'aujourd'hui.

Le jubilé de l'an 2000 temps de conversion pour les Églises

Envisager le jubilé du point de vue des peuples indigènes impose également aux Églises l'obligation de reconnaître leur responsabilité dans la genèse d'une civilisation génocide non seule-

ment du côté des chrétiens mais aussi du côté des Églises en tant que telles et de leur pratique évangélisatrice; il faut pour cela mettre en question le projet jubilaire d'autocélébration et entreprendre au contraire un cheminement de conversion. Il leur faut alors assumer à présent et jusque dans ses ultimes conséquences l'option en faveur des opprimés, prendre parti pour les peuples qu'ils ont contribué et contribuent encore à asservir, reconnaître la dette historique, culturelle et économique qu'elles ont vis-à-vis de ces peuples et s'engager à les rembourser.

Pour ces Églises, la manière la plus chrétienne de célébrer le jubilé serait de prendre l'initiative de restituer aux peuples indigènes les terres qui leur furent enlevées par les conquistadors et les colonisateurs et qui aujourd'hui font partie du patrimoine ecclésiastique. En ce sens il me semble extrêmement important de souligner le témoignage, souvent inconnu ou caché, des prêtres et des évêques qui ont eu le courage de reconnaître dans la pratique cette dette historique de l'Église et ont commencé à la rembourser, ce qui leur a valu de devoir affronter la persécution non seulement des grands propriétaires, des gouvernements et des bandes paramilitaires mais aussi de certains de leurs frères dans le sacerdoce, de l'épiscopat et de la curie romaine.

Annoncer au monde un jubilé de libération ne serait nullement crédible si les Églises n'avaient pas le courage de le ratifier, comme le fit Jésus, par le témoignage de leur propre engagement. Pour toutes les Eglises locales la célébration du jubilé serait plus authentique si elles consacraient au service des opprimés et de leur libération tous les moyens qu'elles vont investir dans l'organisation de pèlerinages massifs vers le "Centre de la chrétienté". Car le centre authentique de la chrétienté c'est le Seigneur présent dans la vie, la souffrance et la lutte des opprimés.

Le témoignage prophétique et subversif de Mgr Proaño

Dans cette perspective la figure de Mgr Leónidas Proaño, évêque de Riobamba, Equateur, apparaît comme une figure emblématique: il a consacré sa vie à la promotion des peuples indiens dans la société et dans l'Église, en leur rendant leur fierté d'être indiens, héritiers de grandes cultures et de grandes religions. Il ne s'est d'ailleurs pas contenté d'un simple engagement politique et culturel mais il a remis aux Indiens des terres du diocèse, reconnaissant par là le droit

historique qu'ils avaient sur ces terres et considérant que ce geste n'était qu'une restitution (*Mis en accusation par les grands propriétaires terriens, par le gouvernement et suspecté par une partie de la hiérarchie catholique, Mgr Proaño fut l'objet d'une enquête ordonnée par le Vatican en décembre 1972. Cf. DIAL D 85, 87, 156, 190, 331, 350 [NdT].*).

Je tiens à rappeler cette page glorieuse de l'histoire de l'Église en rapportant les paroles de Mgr Proaño lui-même: "En effet, la population du diocèse de Riobamba était composée de deux tiers d'indigènes. J'ai constaté que leur situation était déplorable à tous points de vue: économique, social, éducatif, politique, religieux. Ils vivaient dans la misère la plus totale; ils étaient victimes du mépris de tous; ils se trouvaient terriblement marginalisés par la société et même par l'Église. L'Église de Riobamba était propriétaire de grandes étendues de terres et avait hérité de systèmes postcoloniaux. C'était une honte, mais la réalité était ainsi.

Munie des autorisations ecclésiastiques nécessaires et au terme d'un long processus préparatoire, l'Église a remis gratuitement 370 hectares de terre à une coopérative de familles indigènes qu'elle avait elle-même contribué à promouvoir.

Peu de temps après, quand le gouvernement équatorien de l'époque a promulgué la première loi de réforme agraire, l'Église, moyennant une convention, a fait don de l'une de ses plus grandes propriétés pour que soit mise en place la réforme agraire pour des milliers de familles indigènes. Dans le même but, quelques années plus tard, elle s'est défait du reste de ses propriétés.

L'Église de Riobamba a ainsi purifié son visage souillé depuis des siècles par sa condition de grande propriétaire terrienne. C'est ainsi que, le visage pur, elle a pu se mettre du côté "des plus pauvres parmi les pauvres" dans leur juste lutte pour revendiquer leur droit à la terre".

Les initiatives de Proaño ont suscité une prise de conscience des Indiens et ont contribué à les mobiliser pour qu'ils réclament leurs terres aux autres propriétaires et aux évêques. Telle est l'origine de la guerre que leur ont déclarée d'une part les grands propriétaires et d'autre part les évêques. C'est ainsi qu'a commencé un processus de "déproanisation" qui perdure et s'est amplifié après sa mort et qui prétend non seulement enlever toute légitimité à ses initiatives et à les bloquer mais qui s'est aussi donné comme objectif de détruire, comme

étant subversif, le message évangélique qui inspire sa pensée théologique et pastorale.

Je voudrais lancer ici un appel aux chrétiens d'Amérique latine et d'Europe qui sont engagés aux côtés des indigènes pour que, dans le contexte du jubilé et de sa préparation, ils coopèrent à la défense du patrimoine des peuples indiens et de l'Église en soutenant moralement et matériellement la Fondation peuple indien de l'Équateur, (*Fundacion Pueblo Indio del Ecuador, Ruiz de Castiela 216 y Sosaya, apartado 17-03-16 A, tel 529-361, fax 235-098 Quito - Ecuador directora ejecutiva: Nidia Arrobo Rodas.*) instituée par Mgr Proaño lui-même, laquelle reste fidèle à sa pensée et contribue aux célébrations du dixième anniversaire de sa mort (1998).

Le jubilé, temps d'ouverture macroœcuménique

Il ne s'agit pas seulement pour les Églises de rendre les terres à leurs propriétaires légitimes mais encore de reconnaître leur responsabilité dans le génocide culturel et religieux subi par les indigènes et, par voie de conséquence, de se demander honnêtement quelle est la conception de l'évangélisation qui a légitimé ces crimes objectifs (sans pour autant méconnaître la bonne foi et le dévouement de tant de missionnaires).

Dans ce contexte, l'œcuménisme du jubilé est appelé à faire un saut qualitatif. D'abord, en dépassant les frontières des Églises pour s'étendre à toutes les religions qui sont engagées dans la libération des hommes et des peuples et tout particulièrement aux religions ancestrales des peuples indigènes. Ensuite, en établissant avec ces dernières une relation de dialogue et de réciprocité, ce qui suppose l'abandon du présupposé de la supériorité et de l'ethnocentrisme historique du christianisme. Troisièmement, en inscrivant expressément parmi les objectifs commune la restitution des terres aux peuples indigènes de la part des Églises. Quatrièmement, et particulièrement pour les Églises qui comptent une forte présence indigène, l'œcuménisme suppose la capacité de reconnaître leur identité historique, de la confronter à la culture européenne et de se renouveler en permettant aux indigènes d'être des acteurs à part entière, en contribuant au sauvetage de leurs cultures et de leurs religions et en s'ouvrant à leur apport spécifique: ceci implique qu'elles se transforment en une Église indienne, qu'elles mettent en place une liturgie indienne, une lecture indienne de la Bible, une théologie indienne, etc. Pour l'Église universelle, l'expérience de ces Églises locales représente un

appel radical à la conversion et à la mobilisation qui soit en cohérence avec l'option pour la promotion des opprimés en tant que sujets autonomes. Je veux conclure cette réflexion en rappelant les paroles que Mgr Proaño prononça de son lit, quelques heures avant sa mort (*Cf. DML Hors série A 73 et D 1357 [NdT]*): "Il me vient une idée, il me survient une idée: c'est que l'Église est la seule responsable de la situation d'oppression des Indiens. Quelle douleur! Quelle douleur!". Ce testament nous provoque de façon terriblement efficace à une relecture évangélique du jubilé en tant qu'appel au repentir et à la conversion des Églises d'une part et d'autre part en tant qu'annonce de libération pour les pauvres.

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REFLECTIONS ON MISSION AT THE CLOSE OF THE SECOND MILLENNIUM

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Introduction

An urgent need to reflect on mission is required as we come to the end of the second millennium. We stand in the middle of the decade of evangelism; a time when so many are confused, some are angry and others redoubling their efforts to promote their view of the Gospel. We have experienced the fall of communism, religious changes in Eastern Europe, World War II moralising and the shock of the apparent failure of Christianity in Rwanda.

Pondering on what is happening

The 20th century began with an all too naïve trust in progress, science, reason, enlightenment and modernity. The article on, 'Torture' (*The 1911 Encyclopaedia Britannica*) was often held up as a summary of the liberal spirit of the period symbolised in its comment, "The whole subject is now one of only historical interest as far as Europe is concerned". The truth, however, is that the same demons, long thought buried, are alive and well once again. Fundamentalist religions have been revived in their most intolerant and aggressive forms.

Fundamentalism described as, "a reactionary emotional movement that develops within cultures experiencing social crisis", spells out clear answers for people so that they do not have to make decisions alone. In the U.S. it is strict and most demanding in denominations such as the Southern Baptists. These are growing faster than the liberal churches that continue to lose members. Evangelical publishers now sell a third of the total domestic book market.

Prudent leaders like Czech Vaclav Havel see little hope in the technological-economical-political culture of the West with its "failure of nerve", its "paralysis by analysis", its "rampant consumerism", its "possessive individualism" and its "materialistic

hedonism". As the world is trapped in what Henry Miller called an "air-conditioned nightmare", Westerners cease to be practising Christians at the rate of 7,600 per day. There are more Muslims in England than Methodists or Episcopalians in the U.S.A. The overall number of Muslims in the world is drawing level with that of Catholics.

The growth of Christianity in Africa

Statistics have obvious limitations, but they provide food for thought. For instance, the following:

In A.D. 30, there were no practising Christians in Africa. But David Barrett (*The World Christian Encyclopaedia*, O.U.P. 1982) estimates that by A.D. 100, 2.3% of the population of the continent had become Christian, while 52.3% were aware of Christ and the Gospel. Rapid growth continued so that by A.D. 300, 32.6% were Christian, although the percentage aware of Christ and the Gospel had developed only to 55.4%. The climax was reached by A.D. 500 when 40% of Africa's population were Christian although only 45% of the increasing population were aware of the Gospel. In the seventh century, the spread of Islam led to the gradual erosion of Christian membership and of knowledge of Christ and the Gospel until as recently as 1800. The estimate is that only 1.4% of Africa's population were Christian and only 5.7% were aware of Christ and the Gospel.

As the 19th century opened, the world mission field presented a depressing picture. There were two million Christians with only about 270 active workers in the whole mission world. Napoleon dissolved *Propaganda Fide* in 1808 and suppressed the missionary societies in 1809. One member of the Holy Ghost Congregation returned "precariously" to Paris in 1802 to find his 76 year-old uncle, the

Superior General, almost blind, crippled by disease and wholly incapable of exercising his office. The other surviving members were scattered and involved in serving the local church throughout France, then, suffering from a scarcity of clergy. The position seemed hopeless, worse than at the end of this millennium. But, there is no way to predict the future as is expressed by the Nigerian writer, Ben Akri, in a brief chapter from his book, *Songs of Enchantment*:

We didn't see the seven mountains ahead of us. We didn't see how they are always ahead, always calling us, always reminding us that there are more things to be done, dreams to be realised, joys to be rediscovered, promises made before birth to be fulfilled, beauty to be incarnated, and love embodied.

We didn't notice how they hinted that nothing is ever finished, that struggles are never truly concluded, that sometimes we have to redream our lives, and that life can always be used to create more light.

We didn't see the mountains ahead and so we didn't see the upheavals to come, upheavals that were in fact already in our midst, waiting to burst into flames. We didn't see the chaos growing, and when its advancing waves found us we were unprepared for an era twisted out of natural proportions, unprepared when our road began to speak in the bizarre language of violence and transformations. The world broke up into unimaginable forms, and only the circling spirits of the age saw what was happening with any clarity.

This is the song of a circling spirit. This is a story for all of us who never see the seven mountains of our secret destiny, who never see that beyond the chaos there can always be a new sunlight.

Africa experienced rapid growth in Christianity during the 19th century. A tremendous surge of missionary activity led to the founding of many new societies for the missions. A host of publications emerged to stimulate public interest. By 1900 Africa had 9.9 million Christians of all traditions or 9.2% of a total population of 107.9 million. By mid-1970 the figure exploded to 143 million or 40.6% of a population of 351.8 million. It increased to 45.4% of 520.4 million in 1985 and is projected to 48.4% out of 813.4 million in the year 2,000. The world projection for foreign missionaries for the year 2,000 is

half-a-million up from 62,000 in 1900 and 332,000 in 1995.

The future of religion in the world

In *Megatrends, 2,000*, by John Naisbitt, Patricia Aburdene and William Morrow, New York, 1990, it is stated that, "There are unmistakable signs of a world-wide multi-denominational religion revival" (p. 270) under the gravitational pull of the year 2,000. The authors conclude by admitting that, "We are drowning in information and starved for knowledge". They further predict the following ten overarching trends or gateways to the 21st century:

- i) The booming global economy of the 1990's
- ii) A renaissance in the arts
- iii) The emergence of free-market socialism
- iv) Global lifestyles and cultural nationalism
- v) The privatisation of the Welfare State
- vi) The rise of the pacific rim
- vii) The decade of women in leadership
- viii) The age of biology
- ix) The religious revival of the new millennium
- x) The triumph of the individual.

The authors' purpose is to stress world trends leading to opportunities rather than the popular approach of giving too much attention to the problems facing humanity from crime, drugs, AIDS, corruption to double-digit deficits. They also observe that privatisation and models of self-reliance are on the ascendancy in the poorest nations in Africa (in the 1980's an estimated five per cent of Africa's State-owned companies were privatised). They further note how American baby boomers who rejected organised religion in the 1970's are either returning to church with their children or joining the New Age Movement.

Our society is emerging from a 20th century version of the Dark Ages produced by a combination of industrialisation, totalitarianism, the intrusion of technology and the dawning of a renaissance in the arts and spirituality. Reconstructionist Jews who edited the supernatural out of prayer books 40 years ago are restoring references to miracles, mythology and the Messiah. Mormons have just had their best year. Harvey Cox, famous for his study, *The Secular City*, teaches a course, 'Jesus and the Moral Life', for 1,000 students at Harvard. He sees a revival in Islam, Shinto, Buddhism and Judaism. Twenty years ago, forecasters thought that religion would disappear because of modernity. But, people are

increasingly repudiating blind faith in science and rediscovering myth and their emotional side. The study further reveals that while mainline Protestant and Jewish (Catholics are just keeping their numbers) groups have shrunk in the U.S.A., “hundreds of smaller, more decentralised ‘made-in-America’ churches, both fundamentalism and alternative have flourished” (p. 276).

The new world trend

The New Age Movement has no membership lists, no coherent philosophy or dogma, but it is one of the most extraordinary signs of the search for spirituality today. Most book shops have New Age sections. The holistic spiritual movement has consumer products ranging from beauty care and fashions to music and health therapies to a surprising interest in angels. Writers include scientists, social scientists and business professors.

A deep dissatisfaction with the Enlightenment achievement as well as with the science and technology that generated it abounds. They are seen to have failed. For those who believe that Christianity shaped the Enlightenment, their problem ranges from the depersonalisation of medicine to the pollution of the environment. They say that the analytical dualism of Christianity led to the patriarchal system and the exploitation of women. In his book, *What is the New Age Saying to the Church?* Collins, London, 1991, John Drane asks the right question. He reflects on the ambivalence of the Christian heritage and history, the disquiet with dualism, and the fact that so many Christians seem to be thoroughgoing rationalists. Jacob Needleman in, *Post Christianity*, Doubleday, New York, 1980, concludes that while many New Agers see Jesus as attractive, they do not see the Church as meeting their spiritual needs or offering practical guidance to help people change. Drane ends by emphasising that Christians should see the New Age as an opportunity and not as a threat.

A survey of recent mega-selling authors from Scott Peck, Thomas Moore to Joseph Girzone, by Dennis M. Doyle, *Commonweal*, 9 September, 1994, pp. 218-22, concludes that the primary discipline underlying most of their books is psychology. All draw on Carl Jung and/or the 12-step programmes of Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A) and criticise any approach to therapy which ignores a person's spiritual life. In brief, according to Doyle, these writers:

- (i) Emphasise that the life journey is an on-going process involving difficult

problems with no easy answers (ii) Distinguish sharply between the ego (the smaller or narcissistic self) and the soul (the larger self) (iii) Encourage people to be self-reliant in their spirituality and to take personal responsibility for their lives (iv) Encourage people to rely ultimately on God or a higher power (v) Distinguish between spirituality and formal religion, praising the former while criticising the patronising of the latter (vi) Assure people that ultimately everything is O.K.

These themes are quite compatible, from a Christian perspective, although they omit the distinctive Christian themes. They emphasise that, “There is more to life than subjective feelings, that personal fulfilment requires community, that the flip side of autonomy is responsibility, that when we run out of self we find God”. According to Doyle these books can be read, “As a pre-evangelisation for a more liturgical rooted, socially conscious, and biblically grounded presentation of the Gospel message” (p. 22).

A change in attitude towards mission

Before the last millennium it was popular to expect the end of the world. The Abbot of Fleury (945 - 1004), a monastic reformer, described his reaction when he heard such a sermon about the end of the world preached in the Cathedral of Paris in the following words, “I opposed this sermon with what force I could from passages in the Gospels, Revelation and the Book of Daniel”.

The Emperor, Otto III, was a spiritual reformer who dreamed of revolutionising the world in a true Christian spirit of friendship rather than conquest with the newly converted Slavic world. Unfortunately he died of malaria in 1002 aged 22 and his dream of a spiritually guided empire was shattered by a Roman uprising. Many of the problems, which he so earnestly tried to solve, are still the same, according to Oscar Halecki's, *The Millennium of Europe*, Notre Dame Press, 1963, p. 128.

It is important to reread the mission texts of the New Testament in the light of Lucien Legrand's book, *Unity and Plurality: Mission in the Bible*, Orbis Books, 1988. In it he draws on his experience as a missionary in India and insists that there is no uniform notion of mission in the Bible. Yet, there is coherence, not anarchy, and convergence. He points out:

(i) Mission is first and foremost the God who cares. God's love and redemptive force must extend to the entire world and to every creature (ii) Mission is not the act of a prospector staking out a claim. Mission is exercised in function of a people, creating this people, and developing through community (iii) At the heart of this people is the Word of God, the explosive joy of the good news of Jesus, that gathers it in, judges it and guides it (iv) The Word became flesh in the person of Jesus of Nazareth and in the people he gathers — mission is as concrete as the life of a people (v) This people is characterised by the authenticity of the witness it bears the word, its consecration in truth, its intransigence *vis-à-vis* the Evil One, and its love of unity. This people is also characterised by prayer, and its goal is to glorify God (vi) Mission will ever be the vessel of hope in the ultimate redemptive work of God on behalf of all peoples.

Legrand insists that mission is continually called to a multiple conversion: a basic conversion to God, conversion to the Word of the Gospel, conversion to the Spirit, the soul of every absolute, conversion to the Church, conversion to hope, and finally conversion to silence. He concludes with the following words from St. Ignatius of Antioch's, *Letter to the Ephesians*:

Those who have well understood Jesus' words will be able to understand his silence, as well. That silence will bring them to full spiritual maturity; and now their own words will have the force of action, and their silences the meaning of a discourse (15:2).

A controversial topic in mission today is seen in the epigraph of German scholar, Reinhold Bernhardt's study, *Christianity Without Absolutes*, S.C.M., London, 1994, stating that, "No sin is so reprehensible as to despise one's brother because his creed is a different one". Bernhardt insists that he is not proposing a Relativism in which all religions are ways in seeking God equally. Dialogue is not negotiation with the purpose of reaching agreement on beliefs. Rather it is practice in the art of seeing oneself with the eyes of the other. He sees the purpose of Christian theology to contribute towards reconciliation. He distinguishes the Kingdom of God, "From the ambitions of some Christians, in history and the present, to exercise domination ... to oppose exaggerated claims to the truth, for the sake of the truth of (Jesus') message".

The opening six chapters are a critical analysis of fundamentalism, mainly in its Protestant form, but also the Catholic variety. The next eight, survey the historical development of Christian absolutism. He suggests that the frequently quoted biblical texts in support of the absolute position (Jn 14:6; Acts 4:12; Col 1:15-20) come from specific historic situations and should not be seen as universally valid supra-historical judgements on the religions of the world. He concludes that the polemic has no further justification. In his final chapter Bernhardt contrasts the 1910 World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh with its call, 'Evangelisation of the World in this Generation' and its spirit of 'Eurocentric imperialism and colonialism' with the call to 'Reconciliation with those of other religions' issued by the W.C.C. Assembly in Canberra (1991). The change occurred because of the Western world experiences: the end of European colonialism, the silence of many Christians in the face of the Holocaust, the greater and more rapid contact with other cultures and religions and the awareness of the global environmental issues. Co-operation rather than aggressive confrontation is the spirit of the Gospel and the true mission that is God's mission.

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JESUS IN AFRICA

John R. and Priscilla Pope-Levison

Taking into consideration the contexts is one of the maxims of The Catholic Biblical Federation. Of special importance is the context of the readers, their lives, their situation, their preoccupations, all of which determine their way of reading (Hong Kong Final Statement 8.1.1).

John R. Levison and Priscilla Pope-Levison have co-authored "Jesus in Global Contexts" (Westminster/John Knox Press 1992) which contains in far greater detail the substance of this series of articles.

In the political realm, those who assumed the vacant positions of leadership were often the African *élite* who had been groomed by the colonials. From the midst of the African *élite* came forth leaders — such as Kenyatta of Kenya, Nyerere of Tanzania, and Kaunda of Zambia — who embodied the best of leadership.

Unfortunately other leaders emerged who were like Idi Amin of Uganda, who killed an estimated three-hundred thousand of his own people, or Bokassa of the Central African Republic, who spent twenty million dollars to install himself as emperor.

In addition, political divisions within Africa are heightened by tribalism, which remains a powerful force in daily life. Through favouring members of one's own tribe, a leader can control educational and employment opportunities.

In the cultural realm, colonialism devastated African customs and practices.

This is particularly true in religion where, according to the South African Christian leader Desmond Tutu, a religious schizophrenia exists in the African soul between traditional African culture and Western Christianity.

Frequently, Western culture was imposed on Africans along with the Gospel. For example, the rhythm and sway of African music and dance all too often were replaced by Western hymns accompanied by an imported organ.

When theologians in Africa strive to relate the Gospel to their diverse contexts, it is not surprising that some give priority to political questions (liberation theologians), while others give priority to African culture (inculturation theologians).

Most liberation theologians, until recently, have been in South Africa where Black theology related the Gospel message of liberation to the oppressive context of *apartheid*. For these theologians, Jesus is a liberator.

Throughout most of sub-Saharan Africa, however, the dominant form is an inculturation theology whose goal is to integrate Christianity into the life and culture of the African people.

Inculturation theologians champion portraits of Jesus as elder brother, ancestor, chief, or healer. These images resonate with the pulse of African culture.

Jesus as Elder Brother

A popular interpretation of Jesus in Africa is that of an elder brother. Christians in Angola sing, "Jesus Christ is our Elder Brother/He is African!" This song interprets Jesus as one who fulfils the kinship responsibilities of the elder brother, who defends the younger siblings in quarrels, mediates between younger siblings and parents in matters such as marriage, and even bears responsibility for younger siblings' actions.

This interpretation draws African theologians to the figure of the high priest in Hebrews who is a brother whose solidarity with his family leads to salvation: *For the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father. For this reason Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters ... Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest ... Because he himself was tested by what he suffered, he is able to help those who are being tested* (cf. Heb 2:11, 17-18).

This portrait of Jesus also introduces a significant point of identification between Jesus and his African brothers and sisters: sharing in the rites of passage by which an individual becomes fully human within the boundaries of tribal life.

Although rites of passage differ markedly from tribe to tribe, they often include birth rites (such as the proper disposal of the umbilical cord), puberty rites (such as solitude and seclusion followed by re-entry and celebration), marriage rites, and death rites. These rites of passage are required to establish Jesus' full humanity in an African context.

The Gospels supply specific instances of the rites of passage Jesus underwent to become a mature member of his community. Genealogies in Matthew and Luke clarify his tribal affiliation. His parents give the prescribed offerings, and his mother undergoes a period of maternal seclusion to restore purity after his birth.

With Baptism Jesus joins in solidarity with his people. Following a period of seclusion in the wilderness, he enters public life as an adult, healing and teaching among his brothers and sisters.

His life ends in the final rite of passage, death on the cross, which, for Africans, symbolises completeness rather than shame.

Jesus as Ancestor

If Jesus becomes a full member of the human community as an elder brother through rites of passage, he becomes a member of the ancestral community through his Resurrection.

The centrality of the Resurrection raises the possibility that Jesus is not only firstborn of the living as elder brother but also firstborn of the living dead as ancestor.

The portrait of Jesus as ancestor resonates with the portrait of Jesus in the Gospel of John in three specific ways.

First, ancestors are mediators of the *élan vitale*, the life-flow, to their community. In the same way, Jesus is like a vine that mediates life to the branches (cf. Jn 15:4-7). He is living water (cf. Jn 4:14), living bread (cf. Jn 6:51), and abundant life (cf. Jn 10:10).

Second, ancestors mediate the prayers and offerings of the living to God. This is how many Africans

understand the familiar words, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6).

Third, ancestors provide a watchful presence over the community. Jesus, too, refused to leave his disciples desolate (cf. Jn 14:18), and he left his presence or Spirit with them until they entered the community of the living dead.

Jesus as Chief

Salvation in traditional African religion is wholeness within this life. It entails social equilibrium — harmony with the living and the dead. It also entails personal equilibrium — inner harmony that produces physical well-being. It occurs here and now in the blessings of friendship, plentiful offspring, and a long life.

For Jesus to become a saviour to Africans, he must do more than procure for them an eternal destiny. He must control the forces from which Africans themselves struggle to be saved here and now, whether that be infertility or malevolent spirits. One figure within African communities who has the responsibility of accomplishing this sort of salvation is the tribal chief.

The chief is the guardian of the African community, the one person who embodies the religious and political aspirations of the tribe. The chief must be a courageous, heroic figure, able to triumph over enemies in the terrestrial and spiritual worlds. The chief derives strength from his position as the intersection of terrestrial and spiritual realms. The chief's authority derives from the ancestors.

Among the Akan tribe, for example, the chief gains intimate access to the ancestors through a ritual of initiation when the chief is lowered and raised three times on the chair of his most renowned ancestor. Once installed, the chief is, in a sense, an ancestor himself.

The chief is the mediator between all the constituents of the community: the tribe, the ancestors, and even those unborn. Further, the community derives its identity and coherence from the chief. Such solidarity between the tribe and chief matches that which exists between the Church and Christ. As the tribe is identified with the chief, so the Church is identified with Christ (cf. 1 Cor 12:27).

As the chief mediates blessings from the ancestors, so Christ mediates blessing to the Church.

Christ is “the head ... from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love” (Eph 4:15-16).

There is another dimension to this mediatorial role. When communal misfortunes occur and the social equilibrium becomes imbalanced, the chief must subordinate his own well-being to the needs of the community.

This requires doing all he can to allay the tensions that disrupt the community. In other words, mediation becomes reconciliation. Jesus’ ultimate act of reconciliation took the form of complete self-subordination to the community.

On the cross, Jesus reconciled the world to God (cf. 2 Cor 5:18) and created one new humanity free from hostility (cf. Eph 2:11-16). Jesus is lord or “chief” precisely because he humbled himself in life and in death (cf. Phil 2:5-7). Therefore the entire cosmos — which is itself a web of relationships that exist under, on, and above the earth — will confess that Jesus Christ is “chief” (cf. Phil 2:8-11).

Jesus as Healer

Another key figure in African tribal life is a person responsible for restoring wholeness and salvation. This is the witch doctor (*nganga*) or holistic healer. A Congolese theologian explains that the healer is the most powerful and complex person in that society.

In fact, the word “healer” can also be translated as priest, chemist, doctor, magician, prophet, and visionary. Whatever the name used, the constant of African healing is its holistic quality. It requires determining perhaps the spiritual cause of a physical ailment or the social cause in communal tensions.

Once the ailment is diagnosed, the healer prescribes remedies that range from sacrifices to dances to restoration of social relationships. Often healing requires the use of the particular fetishes, or sacred devices, of the healer.

The Synoptic Gospels are replete with accounts of Jesus’ healing, which reflect an African healer’s holistic approach. Three similarities in particular underlie the portrait of Jesus as healer.

First, like an African healer, Jesus acknowledged a relationship between body and spirit. Along with

physical healing, Jesus absolved the unhealthy guilt (“Your sins are forgiven” Mk 2:5) and commended the sick for their faith (“Your faith has made you well” Mk 10:52).

Second, Jesus placed healing within the context of social reintegration. Lepers had to report to the priest (cf. Mk 1:44; Lk 17:14); the Gerasene demoniac had to go home to his friends (cf. Mk 5:19); and Peter’s mother-in-law took up her role as hostess immediately upon her healing (cf. Mk 1:31).

Even the simple words, “Go in peace”, were redolent of social wholeness and restored health (Mk 5:34).

Finally, Jesus’ methods of healing approximate those of an African healer. He applied saliva or a mixture of saliva and dirt to the unhealthy body part (cf. Mk 8:23); he spat on his finger and touched the tongue of a deaf mute (cf. Mk 7:33); and he made noises interpreted variously as a sign, snort, or groan (cf. Mk 7:34).

Jesus as Liberator

South African Black theologians turn to the historical Jesus of the Synoptic Gospels, where, like other liberation theologians, they discover a liberator of the oppressed.

But they incorporate into their portrait of a liberating Jesus influences from the Black Consciousness Movement that calls Blacks to embrace the beauty of their blackness.

Integral to this embrace is a reclamation of their history and their tradition.

It is no longer a history told by Dutch and English oppressors about Black heathens, but a history about Black martyrs who sought justice for their Black brothers and sisters. It is not a history of exclusion and subjugation, but of inclusion and liberation.

These theologians recognise that Jesus spent his life restoring to the oppressed their lost histories and traditions. Healed lepers could now make the prescribed offerings to the priests. Healed cripples could now worship on the Sabbath.

The blind, the lame, and children could now follow Jesus directly into the Temple. Prostitutes could lay claim to entrance into God’s reign. Tax

collectors could now be called, “children of Abraham”.

All these people, the sick and sinners who were once excluded from the traditions and history of their people, had their history and institutions returned to them by Jesus.

Jesus’ point of departure for his ministry was the inauguration of the year of Jubilee, when debts were cancelled and land that had been taken as payment of a debt was returned to its original owner (cf. Lk 4:16-21; Lv 25:8-17).

For South African Blacks in homelands and townships, the year of Jubilee represents far more than financial restoration. There is a vital link between the people and the land. It is the locus of the community: a sacred place of initiation for

generations. It is the rocks, trees, and rivers where the ancestors commune with the living.

When the colonisers violently displaced the Blacks and put them into foreign homelands, they stripped the Blacks of their history, consciousness, and community.

Jesus’ proclamation of the year of Jubilee, in this context of displacement, is a reconnection of the Black umbilical cord of history.

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SEDOS SYMPOSIUM

***** AMERICA — THE KAIROS OF A SYNOD *****

Tuesday, 18 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	R. Muñoz, SSCC Santiago, Chile.	<i>La evolución de la Iglesia en América Latina vista a través de sus Conferencias de Medellín, Puebla y S. Domingo</i>
20.45 hrs.	Alvaro L. Ramazzini, Bishop, Guatemala.	<i>La Iglesia en América Central ante la diaria realidad de la droga y sus consecuencias</i>
Friday, 21 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	María Riley, OP Center of Concern, US.,	<i>Women: Changing Roles, Changing Consciousness — The Challenge of Mission</i>
20.45 hrs.	John H. Ricard, Bishop, Florida.	<i>The Church in the United States and the growing problem of marginalisation and alienation in contemporary society</i>
Tuesday 25 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	Javier Giraldo, SJ Bogotá, Colombia.	<i>Los Pobres sometidos a los poderes de este mundo — Pastoral de Justicia en América Latina (Colombia)</i>
20.45 hrs.	Patrick F. Flores, Archbishop, San Antonio, Texas.	<i>The Latins in our Local Churches — A Call to Pass Over and Creative Renewal</i>
Friday 28 Nov. 19.30 hrs.	Elza Ribeiro, IPG Ex-President of CLAR, Brazil.	<i>La Vida Religiosa — Signo y Esperanza en el Continente Latinoamericano hoy y mañana</i>
20.45 hrs.	Alejandro Goic, Bishop, Osorno, Chile.	<i>Hacia una Iglesia Renovada a partir de la Participación del Pueblo</i>
Tuesday 2 Dec. (morning) 9.00 - 13.00 hrs. SEDOS Gen. Assembly	Robert Schreiter, CPPS. CTU Chicago.	<i>World Order, Conflict and Mission at the Turn of the Millennium</i> <i>Reconciliation as Good News in a Divided World?</i>
Friday 5 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	Jamie Phelps, OP CTU Chicago.	<i>The Long March of the Black Catholics to Recognition & Identity in the Roman Catholic Church within the U.S.</i>
20.45 hrs.	Julio Terrazas, Archbishop, Santa Cruz, Bolivia.	<i>La Iglesia en Bolivia ante la situación de pobreza crónica</i>
Tuesday 9 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	M.T. Porcile Santiso, Montevideo, Uruguay.	<i>Ser teóloga desde América Latina — Urgencia y desafío de ver la salvación desde la mujer</i>
20.45 hrs.	Erwin Kräutler, Bishop, Xingu, Brazil.	<i>Xingu-Amazonia — Iglesia profética y participativa al servicio de una vida para todos</i>
Thursday, 11 Dec. 19.30 hrs.	Juan Bottazzo, SDB Quito, Ecuador.	<i>El rostro multiétnico de América Latina — un reto para la Iglesia</i>
CONCLUSION 20.45 hrs.	Paulo Evaristo Arns, Cardinal, São Paulo.	<i>La Iglesia frente al desafío pastoral de las grandes ciudades</i>

Entrance Fee: Lire 7.000