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## EDITORIAL

In the first article of this SEDOS issue, we are led into the life of the Catholic community in Pakistan, a country which is often forgotten. Fr JOHN O'BRIEN, CSSp, reveals the strengths and shortcomings of that Local Church. He believes that its future will depend on increased self reliance and intensified dialogue between faith and culture. —

Fr GIOACCHINO CAMPESE, CS, who works in a shelter for migrants on the US-Mexican border reflects on a spirituality for missionaries working with migrants. He insists on the need to become a 'migrant with the migrants' because "human experience is the privileged locus of God's revelation". —

Kenya has been back in the news for the last few weeks: the repression brought a strong response from the Catholic Bishops. CLEMENT N. ODHIAMBO presents a poignant picture to illustrate the actual situation which is urgently in need of different social and political reforms. —

In the context of their 'Fraternity campaign' of 1996, the BRASILIAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCE published a document on Politics, Justice and Peace. We are able to offer you the parts on the consequences of mondialisation, where the Bishops insist that any meaningful economy must be at the service of people. —

A few months after the ecumenical conference held in Graz, Fr BRUNO CHENU, AA, is able to propose a general evaluation of the ecumenical event. He concludes that although Graz was no 'euphoric' step in the ecumenical process of Europe, it was a realistic step forward. —

While writing the editorial for this issue today I heard the news of another stock market crash from Hong Kong to New York which alarms people. In this context, we can read the "letter on neo-liberalism" by the LATIN AMERICAN PROVINCIALS OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

## Insert on IACM for Missiological Reviews:

We would like to inform all Catholic Missiologists that a **Core Group** made up of the Missiological Faculties of the Gregorian and Urbanian Universities, Rome, and representatives from Catholic Missiological Faculties in Europe, Asia, Africa, North America and South America has met several times during the past two years to explore the possibility of establishing an INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CATHOLIC MISSIOLOGISTS (**IACM**). The nature, scope and broad framework of the statutes of **IACM** were discussed at the last meeting of the **Core Group** held in Rome from 1-3 October, 1997.

The scope of **IACM** is to promote study and research of missiological issues as we enter the Third Millennium. Its general perspective is Catholic, but the ecumenical and interreligious perspectives will also receive due attention. Membership will be open to all individual Catholics who are specialised in Missiology and related subjects. There will also be institutional members. We would like to invite all Catholic Missiologists to become members of **IACM**.

**IACM** will also be a positive response to the wishes of the Holy Father expressed in *Redemptoris Missio* and *Terzo Millennio Adveniente* to study missionary problems faced by the Church as she enters the third millennium.

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## PATHWAYS FOR THE CHURCH IN PAKISTAN

John O'Brien, CSSp

Christian praxis includes both action and reflection. Taking time to pause for reflection and evaluation is an essential element in any ecclesial journey. All the more so if a Church and the culture which surrounds it tend towards activism. By the same token, open-minded planning is an essential element in receptivity to the designs of providence. There are several indicators that the Church in Pakistan has reached that stage in its development where an overview and evaluation of the present situation is a necessary step in planning future priorities. Under God's grace it has much to rejoice in — although naturally, one of the things it would also wish to rejoice in is a willingness to be challenged to new initiatives, priorities and values. (The celebration of the Silver Jubilee of the Pastoral Institute in Multan and the publication by the Pakistan Episcopal Conference of the report "Changing Realities" represent two important attempts to read the signs of the times in relation to the future directions and priorities of the Church in Pakistan. There have been several other developments too — mostly, though not always of a positive nature — which demand our attention and evaluation. Worthy of mention is the renewal of interest in and commitment to various forms of adult catechesis as well as the growing awareness that more appropriate methods need to be found for the disbursement and evaluation of development aid. These events are first and foremost an invitation to dialogue and further reflection. The Second Millennium of the Incarnation — to be celebrated in the universal Church as a Year of Jubilee — invites a similar reflection: a taking stock; an act of repentance and hope; an opening of our collective mind and heart to the action of the Holy Spirit. Part of this repentance and openness is an intellectual conversion aimed at freeing our minds from inadequate or false assumptions, predispositions and priorities; and part of this intellectual conversion is the willingness to evaluate the *status quo*. The latter is the main focus of this article). Over the previous generations much has been achieved; or to rise above the language of success and failure, we can say that God has been faithful to his people here in Pakistan and the question may now be posed as to how we — in the on-going journey — may be faithful to God.

We may begin by attempting a first approximation at delineating some of the more obvious characteristics of the life of the Church here. Since the Church is a community which at one and the same time rejoices in the living presence of the Spirit of God and is permanently open to reform and renewal, we will attempt to describe both the "light" and the "shadow"; the positive and the negative. The

willingness to do both together is an act of mature self-acceptance; neither evading reality nor manipulating it. Our readiness to deal in reality is an aspect of our rootedness in God who is **Al-haq!**

### A) Strengths:

The Church which under God's grace, has come into being here in Pakistan has many fine qualities and strengths:

- i. It continues to exist and grow in a non-Christian and non-supportive environment:
- ii. It is very much a Church of the poor, God's chosen ones:
- iii. It is engaged in an on-going and far-reaching practical ecumenism:
- iv. It is a Church with a profound religious sensibility:
- v. There is a growth in local vocations to ministry:
- vi. At all levels it is socially involved; both "religiously" and "developmentally":
- vii. It has a highly developed organisational infrastructure:
- viii. Among the People of God there is a tangible love for "The Word":
- xi. The Church membership has retained a strong cultural identity: the Church in Pakistan is very much a Pakistani Church.
- x. The communities have a very strong identity as "Christians"
- xi. Among Pakistani Christians there is a very solid sense of family and kinship.
- xii. There is a strong devotional life with many indigenous resources; songs, pilgrimages, Marian meals etc.

This is the light; if there is light there is also shadow!

### B) Shortcomings:

- i. At nearly all levels, the Christian community can be easily divided by the factionalism (*partibazi*) which characterises social relations and by the consequences of other internalised oppression:
- ii. It is a Church massively reliant on foreign money:



- iii. It is constantly under threat externally and internally from fundamentalism and sectarianism:
- iv. The Liturgy has been translated but not inculturated:
- v. There is an impoverished Eucharistic sense:
- vi. A dependency mentality is still very strong:
- vii. Politically, psychologically and even physically it tends to be ghettoised:
- viii. The culture is consolidated but seldom critiqued by ecclesial praxis and therefore not sufficiently enriched by faith:
- ix. In general terms, the leadership remains authoritarian or paternalistic, reinforcing the dominant socio-political pattern rather than offering an evangelical alternative to it:
- x. The dignity and role of women are scarcely recognised:
- xi. There is little or no missionary outreach:
- xii. It mirrors the society in that personal freedom and responsibility are not really valued above conformity.

### C) Creative Tension

Because of the constant dynamic interchange between these sometimes complementary and sometimes divergent currents there are several points of creative tension in the life of the Church. Christian hope invites us to see these as points of creativity, inventiveness and growth: a call to become, in a more profound way, the community which is the sign of God's universal salvation in this present historical moment of the journey to freedom of the people of Pakistan as a whole.

For the purposes of facilitating further development of these ideas, I would now like to juxtapose these 12 attributes each with its light and shadow. What can emerge is a matrix of creative tension which can be the springboard for a programme of renewal.

### CULTURE: FUNCTIONALITIES AND DYSFUNCTIONALITIES:

a) The Church will continue to exist and grow — mostly through the natural growth in the existing Christian population — which for demographic reasons is quite considerable. In its mentality and actions however, it is a microcosm of the surrounding culture with all the latter's vigour and vitality, as well as its dysfunctions. Our capacity to name the latter in an exercise of socio-cultural analysis needs to be matched by a capacity

to observe how the Christian community tends to internalise them. (Socio-cultural analysis can be difficult and demanding. The clearest indication of the strength and success of the socialisation process is how few people are capable of critiquing it. This holds true for just about every culture. It is an irony that people can be immensely proud of their culture — and justifiably so — and at the same time keenly aware of the injustice and violence in their society; and yet fail to see the connections between the two. For poverty, injustice and oppression persist not only because of the socio-economic structures which perpetuate them but also — and of equal importance — because of the cultural patterns which legitimate and transmit them. The inculturation of the Gospel includes the process of discovering in a given culture, the seedbed for a new and dynamic expression of the Christian faith; but equally, since all cultures institutionalise and legitimate a power structure, it includes the process of critiquing and transforming aspects of that culture in the light of ethical imperatives revealed in the living out of the Gospel). Because of the very particular history of socio-political oppression and marginalisation of our people, the internalisation of this oppression can give rise to pathologies with a consequent propensity towards horizontal violence that can run deep. The cultural reinforcement of these patterns can give rise to a form of oppression which in its own way is just as life-denying as the consequences of feudalism or militarism. At the same time this realisation needs to be tempered by taking cognisance of the fact that in the struggle against long-standing oppression, people in general adapt the only survival techniques available to them and that in turn, consolidates their attachment to them.

### TRANSFORMATION OR DEPENDENCY:

b) By and large our Church is blessed through being rooted in the life of the poor and oppressed, and their struggle for dignity and equality and the transformation of society to which this points. The fundamentally feudal nature of society however — intensified by the authoritarianism of successive military dictatorships — as well as the internal colonialism in the wider society have tended to divert this transformative potential into an ever greater reliance on paternalism; and from an institutional point of view, on donations of foreign money. Although on the surface, the manner in which this is organised becomes ever more sophisticated and less crudely a matter of person-to-person handouts, there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that the basic pattern of dependency has in fact been consolidated. This has resulted in even less readiness to go down the road of self-reliance and transformative action.

In speaking of a Church of the poor, we should not overlook the fact that relative material prosperity among some sections of the Christian population is producing a class division within the Church itself. To the extent that the ostracising of groups like the families of sanitary workers by the wider society is mirrored — and therefore intensified — by a similar attitude among upwardly mobile Christians, serious questions may have to be asked about the hidden presuppositions in much of the Church's development programmes.

## **FUNDAMENTALISM OR CONTEXTUALISATION:**

c) Great honour is given to the Bible and compared with many older and more developed Churches in other countries, there is real familiarity with its text and message. There is a richness here which cannot be overlooked. In fact it cries out to be contextualised and deepened. The singing of the Psalms in Punjabi is a very distinctive and enriching feature of church life here. Yet this esteem for Sacred Scripture could be undermining of a real sense of Church inasmuch as it is conceived in rather Islamic terms: there is an unspoken assumption (a false one) that the Bible functions in Church life and theology as the Quran does in Islam. This leads to and is further exacerbated by the prevalence of a literalist and fundamentalist reading and preaching of the text. As a result, all sorts of self-appointed preachers abound, each offering a more exotic explanation and application of the text. Rivalries increase and with them, factionalism. There seems little sustained effort to promote a communitarian reading of Scripture, contextualised on the one hand, by the living tradition of the People of God and on the other, by the concrete struggle for justice and dignity which is the daily bread of our people.

Although at the level of the people's ordinary life especially in the area of marriage, there is a healthy practical ecumenism, there remains a serious doubt as to whether this is leading to an enriching cross-fertilisation among the different ecclesial communions. Rather, because of the overall fundamentalist approach to Scripture and the multiplication of sects, it may well be leading to a dilution of the ecclesial and sacramental sense. The result, instead of being a sharing of the highest common factor, may well be a reduction to the lowest common denominator. Moreover, the signs are that this underlying emphasis on "the book" — to be read privately at home — may have seriously diluted the perceived importance of gathering

precisely as "Church". What in principle is an enrichment, may have become in practice an impoverishment of parish and ecclesial life.

## **RELIGIOSITY OF FAITH:**

d) Anyone who has lived in a secularised society is immediately struck by the deep religious feeling in our society as a whole and also among our own people. This sense of the presence of God is not something to be simply taken for granted but constantly purified and enriched through spirituality. Yet as for example, the blasphemy laws indicate, strong religious feeling can be ethically ambiguous. It is not necessarily a measure of the faith that does justice and exercises itself in compassion and spirituality. In his own time, Jesus was not so much promoting religion in the face of irreligion, but purifying a religion caught up with the maintenance of oppressive social and ideological structures; replacing it with one based in spirit and truth, on an outreach to others in an attitude of service, rooted in the universal compassion of God for all his creatures.

In the present situation in Pakistan, the Church should not make the mistake of confusing religiosity with faith. Until the conventions of honouring the name of God in words, customs and buildings is translated into a willingness to reach out to our fellow humans and transcend our own personal and family ambition, society may indeed be religious in a socio-cultural sense, but the Christian concept of a faith expressing itself as love has scarcely taken root.

The question that arises here is the very one which has always faced the people of the Bible: not "is there a God?" but "what kind of god is God?" But this question arises not simply as an academic exercise to be solved in the seminary classroom but as a concrete project to be tackled in the way we structure our parish life and church commitments, including our institutions. For the object of our faith is not simply an omnipotent being whom we can supposedly beseech to bless and approve our social and material ambitions; but an endless, infinite love who empowers us to do justice to all as a way of sharing that same love with which he first loved us.

## **VOCATIONS: NUMBERS OR QUALITY:**

e) There is a steady increase in vocations to the ministry of Sister and Father; less steady in the case of religious Brothers and perhaps a decline — at least in some Dioceses — in relation to the ministry of

catechist. *Padri* both self-appointed and officially nominated, abound. Personnel as such is not a problem. Yet it would appear that searching questions may have to be asked in relation to training, lifestyle and ministerial approach. The traditional type of catechist may well be in the process of becoming outmoded due to — among other factors — a gradual rise in the standard of education among the Christian community. On the other hand, there is unquestionably a need for full-time married lay pastoral workers of high calibre and adequate preparation who would be adequately remunerated.

If there are questions to be asked about the training of catechists, there are even more pressing ones with regard to the training of priests. If the Church continues to depend — as, under present circumstances, it almost certainly will — on a mainly presbyteral model of leadership, then the intellectual calibre of the candidates for ordination as well as their spiritual motivation and capacity to acquire pastoral vision and skill, become issues of the utmost importance. While ordinations are increasing, the expectation that the Church could be led and serviced solely by local priests seems a long way from realisation because of an uneven growth in the number of ordinations in the different Dioceses, as well as the relatively significant numbers who continue to leave the ministry for a variety of reasons. Since trends in other countries make the assurance of a supply of presbyters from abroad somewhat problematic — even if that were to remain desirable — the training of suitable local lay people assumes even greater importance.

The ministerial potential of Sisters, except in educational and medical institutions, has scarcely been tapped. Sisters themselves need to search for an engaged way of living and serving in the Church which does not substitute the domesticity of “convent life” for the passionate commitment of “religious life”. Their role in catechesis needs to be developed but in doing so, one needs to keep in mind that catechesis is an art and a skill and is not automatically given to those who have made religious profession. Virtually all religious congregations need to address the tension in their institutes between availability for the poor and the consolidation of their own institutes.

## CONTROL OR ENABLEMENT:

f) Whereas Christians in other countries have often appeared to suffer a deculturation process because of their conversion to Christianity, in Pakistan the local cultural identity has remained very strong. The particularly strong kinship patterns in Pakistani life

afford a great sense of identity and security as well as a support system both in times of rejoicing and distress. Yet it may also be true that this incomparable sense of belonging with its many very positive aspects that should not be undervalued, also makes personal choice and a sense of personal responsibility somewhat problematic.

In various ways, the Church leadership at all levels, can be tempted to go along unquestioningly with these cultural presuppositions for they fit neatly into an authoritarian or paternalistic concept of authority and leadership. This is especially clear in relation to women and younger people. While this may make for simpler administration in the short term, it will not develop a sense of personal commitment and responsible service among the People of God and its leaders in particular.

The dialogue between culture and faith is not always a straightforward business. It is neither a case of submitting the indigenous culture to some supposedly classic faith-based culture rooted in a different experience, nor is it a matter of allowing the local cultural imperatives to be the judge of what aspects of the faith may be considered to be acceptable and life-giving. The relationship is much more dialectical and must include in the light of Gospel values, an analysis of the power structure in the local culture and an openness to critique of the cultural values which legitimate it. This process has scarcely begun. Not to begin it risks simply replicating this power structure in the organisation of the Church itself.

## ACCOUNTABILITY OR SECURITY:

g) The Church in Pakistan is marked by a deep and enduring commitment to integral human development. Through provision of land, schools, hospitals, co-operatives, health programmes, youth movements and in countless other ways, the Church has reached out to the whole person in community. It has consistently avoided the alienation inherent in reducing the Gospel to a “purely religious” message and has remained sensitive and committed to the people in their struggle against poverty and exclusion.

The particular way this commitment continues to be expressed has given rise to a massive physical infrastructure so heavily dependent on external funding, that even when the resources are fully in place, their maintenance alone is beyond the financial scope of the Local Church — and if present policies are continued, will always remain so. There are huge implications here for the kind of Church we

may wish to become and they have to be recognised and faced. Moreover there seems to be little accountability or evaluation either of the use of funds or even of the desirability or otherwise, of many of the projects for which they are obtained. In some cases, the organisation of this vast financial enterprise can exercise such a hegemony over the local Diocese that pastoral, liturgical and spiritual issues figure rather low on the real agenda. It may well be that dealing with this state of affairs is the single biggest challenge facing the Catholic Church in Pakistan at the present time.

There is the distinct but related question of examining Church-run institutions to see whom they serve and who benefits from them. It is by no means obvious that providing resources for the privileged will result in justice for the poor. At another level, the history of the Church in other countries shows that the progressive institutionalisation of Church personnel because of a greater and greater preoccupation with the maintenance of buildings and financial systems, has a disastrous effect on the linkage of Church ministers with the struggles of ordinary people. The result can often be an institutionalised Church existing for its own functionaries, leaving the people to find their own way in either popular devotionism or various strands of fundamentalism.

Because of this over-involvement in institutions and the preoccupation of the leadership with financial matters, catechetics and liturgy always take second place to “development”. An adult catechesis is not developed; liturgy is not inculturated; the celebration of the sacraments becomes minimalistic and perfunctory. The result can be a church of brick and cement but not of believing, worshipping people.

## **GHETTOISATION OR WITNESS:**

**h)** Unquestionably, Christians in Pakistan are a marginalised minority. While it might be an exaggeration to say that they are a persecuted minority, it is nonetheless true that in a variety of ways, their rights are scarcely respected. Indeed as the events of Shantinagar and Khanewal indicate, and before that the murder of Manzoor Masih, they are in a real sense, under threat: tolerated by but scarcely integrated into society. On the other hand, the question that arises for the Church and in a particular way, for the Church leadership, is what kind of minority it wishes to be.

There is great evangelical potential in being a minority for developing a strong sense of identity and

of differentiation from the surrounding society and its values system — leading in turn to a ministry of witness. On the other hand, there is the temptation to further consolidate the sense of ghettoisation that already exists. The separate electorate introduced during the dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, is a case in point. Very quickly certain power groups saw how their vested interests could be promoted by collaborating with something that was introduced as an instrument of marginalisation and disenfranchisement. After a number of years the question arises as to; in what way if any, Christian politicians are different from their counterparts in society at large. If the emerging process is one of clientalism, opportunism and dependency — all conducted on the basis of *chai-pani* — the very mirror image of the dysfunctional politics in the society at large, then in what way is it a leaven in the mass or a sign of an alternative society? Some will argue that things simply cannot be otherwise but if that is the case, then what is to be gained from simply going along with something so fundamentally flawed?

The very successful campaign on the issue of the religious clause in the identity card when the proposed sectarian legislation was defeated by grassroots action, illustrates the tremendous potential for identity and self-respect that lies in peaceful and dignified campaigning for what most people of goodwill immediately recognise as just and fair. Could not the same be true for such issues as return of schools, the teaching of Christian doctrine to Christian children in Christian schools, an integrated electorate, repeal of offensive laws such as Hadood and blasphemy ordinances?

## **EUCCHARIST OR BIBLIOLATRY:**

i) A question that sorely needs to be tackled is how a Church with a deep religious sense, rooted in a culture where various kinds of shared meals are cultural imperatives, among a people with a strong devotional sense, has been markedly unsuccessful in developing a strong Eucharistic tradition. Up and down the country the Eucharistic celebration is characterised by poor and sporadic attendance and participation, indifferent presidency, liturgical texts not readily comprehensible, and an altogether inadequate understanding of the catechesis involved.

When the Church in Rahim Yar Khan was attacked some years ago the theft of the Bible was continually bemoaned in various meetings all over the country, but even in specifically Catholic circles, the desecration of the Blessed Sacrament was scarcely mentioned.

Some reasons for this underdeveloped sense of Eucharist are:

- i. the internalisation of the “religion-of-the-book” ideology;
- ii. the shortage of priests coupled with an apparent gap in the training of catechists to conduct religious services which link up in various ways with the Eucharist, leaving them to conduct ill-thought out and unstructured “Bible services” in the style of *Padri*;
- iii. a non-inculturated liturgy which (a) scarcely draws on the religious symbols in the local cultures and (b) presents a translation of the Roman Missal which while literally accurate, is often beyond the comprehension of many worshippers;
- iv. an on-going reduction in the real — as distinct from the notional — importance attached to adult catechesis. This means that catechesis ends with the preparation of children for first Holy Communion. This preparation in turn, often consists largely in teaching them a certain number of prayers and a few catechism answers and that is considered to be the end of the matter. The fact that the Church in practice, allows this situation to continue, reinforces in the people the impression that Eucharist is not in fact, a central feature of Church life and Christian identity.
- v. a strongly verbalistic or logocentric catechesis as distinct from an exploration of the symbolic world of the people.
- vi. the divorce between liturgy and the struggle for justice.

## GROWTH OR STAGNATION:

j) There is great potential in our Church. Three areas in particular are worth mentioning (i) the ministry of women; (ii) the development of a spirit of prayer, especially contemplative prayer and (iii) outreach to people of other faiths.

In areas such as participation in the Eucharist and in different kinds of groups as well as the religious education of children and vocations to the religious life, the strong Christian commitment of women is clearly evident. Moreover there is growing evidence of a tacit or implicit openness to the person of Jesus and the beauty of the vision of life he proposes, among educated women of the majority community. Given these and many other factors — among them basic justice and common sense — it has become

strictly necessary to involve women in the process of thinking out new models of women’s ministry in the Church.

While prayer is hugely important in peoples’ lives, many think of it as a process of constructing ever longer and longer recitations replete with high-sounding clichés. Many of our Church ministers especially catechists, but also Fathers, seem to be copying this practice as if “by their many words they may be heard” (Mt 6:7). There seems little evidence of actually teaching people how to pray; teaching them the value of silent communion with God.

The Church leadership seems to forget that in the Sufi tradition — which communicated the Islamic faith to the majority community — the emphasis was on interiorised religious experience.

The love people have for their faith barely translates into any effort to communicate the joy of this faith to others whether non-Christians or lapsed Christians. The Church does not exist for itself but for the sake of its mission. Theologically, mission — rooted in the Trinitarian life — is the prior reality. Remaining closed to mission and turning in on oneself leads to stagnation and selfishness. Even in the outreach to the Katchi Kohlis, Parkari Kohlis and Marwari-Bhils, the on-going long-term commitment of local Church personnel is all too rare — although there are some edifying examples. Local Church personnel who get involved in this work rarely receive the encouragement they deserve and need and are sometimes accused of abandoning “their own”.

## FOCI FOR RENEWAL AND ADVANCE:

The truly great achievements of the past and present can launch us forward in hope. Building on the resourcefulness and vitality of the present, the challenges to be faced can be confronted with a sense of anticipation and adventure. In particular attention will need to be paid to the following areas of Church life.

- i. Education for personal and social transformation.
- ii. Building structures of growing self-reliance.
- iii. Teaching the Bible in its ecclesial and social transformational context.
- iv. Clearly communicating that membership of the Church is not only a means of receiving but an opportunity to serve and develop a spirituality of willing service.



- v. Recruiting and training of full-time lay pastoral workers or catechists with a higher standard of education, a more clearly defined pastoral and para-liturgical role and an adequate system of support.
- vi. Putting the dialogue between faith and culture onto the theological agenda both in houses of theological formation and in the pastoral deliberations of the Church leadership.
- vii. Devoting resources in a serious way to adult catechesis.
- viii. A renewed emphasis on the centrality of the Eucharist in Christian life including catechesis, liturgical inculturation and para-liturgies with its linkage to the struggle for justice and dignity.
- ix. Evaluating institutions and works primarily on the basis of how they serve the poor.
- x. Setting realistic goals re. dependence on foreign money and growing financial self-sufficiency.
- xi. Developing the ministry of women.
- xii. Building on and enriching the sense of prayer in the community through teaching people deeper ways to pray, opening houses of prayer and becoming a recognisably praying community.
- xiii. Missionary outreach — different to proselytism — to lapsed Christians and peoples of other faiths.

(It is only fair to point out that there are many fruitful and exciting pastoral initiatives already underway encompassing some of the pastoral directions outlined here. One thinks of the efforts at an inculturated theology in groups like Mukhtaba-e-Anawim; the co-operative movement, not least in the form it has taken among the Marwari-Bhils; the evidence of a renewed commitment to catechetics in the various diocesan centres; the growing awareness among women's groups; sung Eucharistic liturgies in some parishes; the training for the transformation programme in Multan as well as many prayer groups. One should also mention the work of justice, the various campaigns for human rights often conducted in liaison with progressive groups among the majority community; and in particular, the efforts to organise and empower the sanitary workers. This is by no means an exhaustive list. A very necessary task for the work of renewal is to list these initiatives in a more complete way; to outline their approaches and to evaluate their potential for renewal. Taken in concert they may well represent the voice of the Holy Spirit for the future of our Church).

## CONCLUDING REMARKS:

These are the views of one person. Though necessarily limited in perspective and scope, they are the fruit of involvement, initiative, observation and

dialogue; as well as much trial and error. By the nature of the case they are partial and open to critique and amplification. They are presented to facilitate discussion; in the form of an invitation to move towards a degree of consensus as to where we are and how we should like to move forward. Nothing remains the same and all things change; to refuse to move forward is to stagnate. But that moving forward has to be thoughtful, purposeful and spirit-filled.

## WALK HUMBLY WITH YOUR GOD! NOTES ON A SPIRITUALITY FOR MISSIONARIES WITH MIGRANTS

Gioacchino Campese, CS

Gioacchino Campese, CS, is Assistant Director of the Casa del Migrante, a shelter for migrants on the United States-Mexican border in Tijuana. The shelter provides essential services, defends the dignity of the migrants, and raises awareness for human rights for migrants. He studied theology for four years in Manila in the Philippines.

*This article proposes a relevant and tentative spirituality for missionaries who work with migrants in a world which is characterised by the phenomenon of human mobility. This spirituality is founded on four pillars: the human drama of migrations; a critique of the absolutisation of the monastic spiritual tradition; the retrieval of the biblical tradition of the migrant God, the God of the tent; and a concrete commitment to the option of the poor. It is best described by the Prophet Micah's famous imperative to "walk humbly with your God" (6:8): a spirituality for the journey inviting us to follow a migrant God together with a migrant people toward the dream of the reign.*

The interest in spirituality has been rapidly increasing in the past few decades in both Christian and non-Christian circles. Is this just a passing fad, especially in view of the end of the second millennium, or is it a sign of a more profound human yearning? From a Christian perspective I personally read this renewed concern for spirituality as a movement of earnest believers toward the very sources of their faith and commitment. It is in the context of this quest for meaningful and relevant spiritualities for our times that this famous passage of the Prophet Micah represents a powerful reminder of what Christian life should be: **"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"** (6:8). (The Bible version used for the quotations is the New Revised Standard Version). I chose the last part of this verse as the title of this article precisely because it explains eloquently what spirituality is for me. Spirituality is to walk humbly with God and with God's people. This special journey is not wandering without a goal, but according to Micah it is a movement toward doing justice and loving kindness.

When I talk about God's people, I am referring particularly to a specific section of this people: the migrants. Why the migrants? For two basic reasons. First, they are with their untiring mobility the people who concretely express this idea of journey. Migrants are people who have walked, walk, and will walk. I have seen many of them reach Tijuana with their feet and legs broken or badly bruised by their previous journeys. Yet, they are ready to continue on their way once they can walk again. Second, and most importantly, God's grace has

reached me through the migrants. The encounter with these people, with their stories of suffering and hard work, of hope and frustration, has transformed the charism of my religious congregation, the Scalabrinians [otherwise known as Missionaries of St Charles. This is a Roman Catholic religious congregation founded in 1887 by the Bishop of Piacenza, Italy, Giovanni Battista Scalabrini. The charism of this congregation is precisely the care of migrants and refugees], from something abstract to a very real and challenging flesh-and-blood reality. A public statement issued in 1981 by the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches says: "One of the most dramatic phenomena of our times is that of the involuntary movement of millions of people forced to leave their homes and their countries" (Hoffmann, G., 1989, "Solidarity with Strangers as Part of the Mission of the Church", *International Review of Mission* 78 (309):53). This world-wide phenomenon represents without a doubt one of the "signs of the time", a powerful channel of God's revelation to us today.

While I was reflecting on a spirituality which is relevant to the phenomenon of human mobility, I came across a sentence by Bishop Giovanni Battista Scalabrini which I found in a mini-calendar prepared by one of my *confrères* in Mexico. This sentence reads: "No se llega a Dios con los zapatos limpios" (God cannot be reached with clean shoes). I do not know if Scalabrini was inspired by the Prophet Micah. What I do know is that both inspire and challenge me to believe that spirituality is to walk humbly the paths of our lives with God and with the migrants. People who start this journey will never reach the goal with clean shoes.

If spirituality is to walk humbly with God and God's people, then we cannot expect an already determined and unalterable spirituality, but a spirituality, or rather spiritualities, made of notes taken on the journey. Some of these notes I want to share in this article.

## A Critique of "Traditional" Spirituality

It is not my intention here to critique our Judaeo-Christian tradition as such. On the contrary, I neither reject tradition nor do I believe that tradition is something automatically old, outdated, and, as a consequence, useless. I firmly believe that to reject tradition would be to commit suicide because without tradition, without our past, without memory, without the experience of our fathers and mothers who have preceded us in the journey, we are nothing; we would be people without history and identity. Our Christian spiritual tradition is one of those wells from which we have to drink to nourish our lives and spiritualities today (Gutiérrez, G., 1984, *We Drink From Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 5. Gutiérrez takes this now famous image of "drinking from our own wells" from St Bernard of Clairvaux).

I intend instead to critique the sacralisation of tradition which transforms it into a static reality, unchangeable and valid for all times and contexts, something to be imitated without question. On the contrary, tradition is a dynamic and developing reality. With our experiences and insights in the here and now, we are giving our contribution to the Christian tradition which goes back to the religious experience of the people of Israel. So this is a critique of a concept of tradition which is detrimental to tradition itself because it transforms this reality into something stagnant, irrelevant, and meaningless.

For centuries monastic/contemplative spirituality has been considered *the* spirituality *par excellence* of Christian tradition, the privileged path to human and Christian perfection. This spirituality detached from the particular context in which it was born has degenerated into an individualistic, elitist, and dualistic spirituality. It is individualistic because it overemphasised individual perfection, and, as a consequence, spirituality was narrowed down to a relationship between "me and my God". It is elitist because this way of perfection was reserved exclusively for people who chose religious life. It is not the case that for centuries until now religious congregations and Institutes of consecrated life have also been referred to as Institutes of perfection. For

lay people this way of life was not viable. The fact that they did not profess the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience excluded them automatically from this spiritual path. So spirituality produced two groups of Christians: a restricted circle of people who were enabled to follow the way of perfection through religious life, and the great majority of Christians who were too engrossed in worldly matters to reach the peaks of spiritual perfection. Aloysius Pieris refers to this spirituality as a "feudal spirituality", wherein the majority of Christians live on the crumbs falling from the tables of the contemplatives (Pieris, A., 1988, *An Asian Liberation Theology*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 8). The latter dedicated their energy to their interior life, to contemplation, to their spirit, trying to forget the needs of the flesh. In this way a false dualism was established between matter and spirit, this world and the heavenly world, which was supposed to be God's world. (For the first part of this section, I was inspired by Gutiérrez, 1984:13-18 and Rayan, 1992:18-19). This dualism between body and spirit is gradually disappearing from our Christian theologies, but, unfortunately, it is still present and at work in much of our preaching and popular devotions.

The problem is that this spirituality of perfection has been imposed as a standard for all Christians, including active religious congregations. So it has not only caused the exclusion of the majority of Christians, but also the frustration of active religious who have realised the conflict between their active lifestyle and the imposed "contemplative" spirituality. I believe many members of the so-called apostolic religious congregations have experienced this sense of frustration, but only a few have dared to question the tradition. I do not want to reiterate here the old dichotomy between action and contemplation. In fact one of the goals of a truly Christian spirituality is to bring these two essential dimensions of our lives together in a creative and fruitful tension. Nor do I want to do away with our precious tradition of monastic and contemplative spiritualities. However, I firmly believe that contemplation cannot be super-imposed on people from outside, from a different human and religious experience. Contemplation can only spring up from one's human and religious experience; otherwise it would not be true to real life. In this sense I do not see how a contemplative spirituality which was born out of the experience of people who lead a stable life (monastic groups besides the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience which are proper to all religious congregations also take a vow of stability) can properly work for missionaries whose main characteristics are mobility, crossing boundaries, and living in different

cultural contexts. There is no doubt that we can learn from other experiences, but it is crucial that at the centre of a spirituality for missionaries there be a contemplation firmly rooted in their missionary experience.

Gustavo Gutiérrez rightly observes: “At the root of every spirituality there is a particular experience that is had by concrete persons living at a particular time. The experience is both proper to them and yet communicable to others” (1984:37). If we do not realise the fundamental contextuality and embodiment of any spirituality, we will always fall into the same traps: dualism, elitism, individualism, and eventually, irrelevance.

Two presuppositions stand at the basis of a contextual and embodied spirituality: first, there is no spiritual life without human, historical life (Sobrinho, J., 1988:7 *Spirituality of Liberation: Toward Political Holiness*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books). Second, human experience is one of the privileged *loci* of God’s revelation (Downey, M., 1994, “Christian Spirituality: Changing Currents, Perspectives, Challenges”, *America* 170, (11): 12). Without this vital connection with human experience in its complexity, contextuality, and always changing status (Gittins, J., A., 1993a, *Bread for the Journey: The Mission of Transformation and the Transformation of Mission*. Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 25), spirituality is just a pie-in-the-sky abstraction. I believe Gutiérrez captures wonderfully the meaning of this discussion when he says that when it comes to spirituality we basically “drink from our own wells”. We can drink water from any well, but we cannot remove a well from its context. If we want our spirituality to be relevant and meaningful to our mission, it has to come first of all from our missionary identity and experiences.

### A Migrant God with a Migrant People

Any spirituality, any spiritual journey starts from a particular spiritual experience, with an encounter

with God (Gutiérrez 1984:35-53). God meets people not in a vacuum, but in their concrete life situations, in their life journeys. Actually it is precisely the encounter with God which starts or changes people’s journeys.

The Bible is filled with accounts of people encountering God which can illustrate this point. For instance, the passage of Abraham’s call in Genesis 12:1-4 shows how the encounter with God changes completely the course of Abraham’s life and that of all of Israel’s ancestors after him. A new journey begins with the promise of great descendants and a promised land, and with a blessing which includes all the nations of the earth. Most importantly, this text reveals already a crucial dimension of God’s identity which will remain constant throughout the Old and New Testaments: “One thing makes this God different from the divinities found just about everywhere in those days. All those deities were linked to particular places — mountains, rivers, cit-

ies, regions — whereas the God that speaks to Abraham is a God who is not tied down to one spot. This God is a sojourner God, a pilgrim God” (Br. John of Taizé, 1985:13 *The Pilgrim God: A Biblical Journey*, Washington, DC: Pastoral Press).

This is not a static, sedentary God, but a migrant God who accompanies and guides people in their journeys. God is revealed to Abraham

as a wayfarer (Gn 18). It is the God who accompanies the ancestors in their journeys, continually renewing the promise made to Abraham to each one of them. It is the God that after freeing a group of slaves, a “mixed crowd” (Ex 12:38) from the Egyptian oppression, makes of them a people and guides them toward the promised land (Pss 68:7-8; 77:19-20). It is precisely this pilgrim God who makes a people out of the wanderers, the slaves, and the homeless that Israel will proclaim in its profession of faith and celebrate in its liturgy (Dt 26:1-11).

This is a God who refuses to live in a temple, in a fixed space, because this is the God of the tent, the

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***It should be clear by now that a spirituality for missionaries with migrants cannot be a static, monolithic, once-and-for-all spirituality. This is a spirituality of the journey: it is the challenging invitation to follow the migrant God together with a migrant people. This is a tentative spirituality, a spirituality of the tent, a spirituality of people who are willing to be in a “permanent exodus” (Tassello 1991:22). Three main characteristics of this spirituality are fidelity, openness, and “response-ability”.***

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traveller God always ready to guide Israel in its journey (2 Sm 7:1-7). The period in which the people of Israel were walking toward the promised land, living in tents with their God, is at the foundation of Israel's identity. It is for this reason that this God, through the prophets' scathing critique of the sinful comfortability of Israel's settled life, will call the people back to their tents (Hos 12:10). Israel is called to keep a "pilgrim heart," even when it leads a sedentary life (Br. John of Taizé, 1985:53-54).

Very interestingly, the theme of the migrant God, the God of the tent, reappears in the New Testament revealing an often ignored continuity between the God of Israel and the God of Jesus of Nazareth. The author of the fourth Gospel tells us in its famous prologue that Jesus, the Word become flesh, "pitched his tent" among us (Jn 1:14) in order to bring light and salvation to the whole of humanity. (The Greek verb in Jn 1:14 often translated as "lived" or "dwelt" is *eskenosen* [from *skene* which means tent]. This verb literally means "he pitched tent". Two of the authors whom I have consulted are particularly attentive to this important detail: Gittins, J. A., 1994b, "The Christian as Stranger: Responding to Xenophobia", *Month* 27 (May): 190 and Gutiérrez [1984:41]). The Synoptic Gospels portray Jesus as always being on the road preaching the Good News to people in words and deeds. Jesus chose to be a stranger, to move at the margins of his society, and he did not only acquire the perspective of an outsider, but he became marginalised himself (Gittins, J. A., 1989:134-136 *Gifts and Strangers: Meeting the Challenge of Inculturation*, Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press). Jane Kopas reiterates this point: "Jesus both allowed the marginalised to speak their truth, and he also experienced that truth by being marginalized himself" (Kopas, J., 1993:117 "Outsiders in the Gospels", *Way* 33(2)). This Jesus does not want honour, privilege, and prestige, but he wants to be the least of all, the servant of the community (Jn 13:1-16; Lk 22:24-27). Jesus' disciples are called to follow him in this lifestyle, to be "radical itinerants", wayfarer messengers of the Good News of the reign of God (Gittins 1994a, "Beyond Hospitality? The Missionary Status and Role Revisited", *International Review of Mission* 83 (330): 402-407). (Here Gittins mentions the work of John Dominic Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (1991), who emphasises the "itinerant radicalism" of Jesus of Nazareth).

If we look closely at God's strategy in the Bible, we discover that God does not only invite people to become strangers, migrants, but God chooses people who are already migrants to become God's chosen ones. The migrants in the Bible are the object of God's particular concern. In fact, we find especially in the Old Testament passages in which the God of

Israel is presented as the chief protector of the widow the orphan, and the alien (Ps 146:9), and the Israelites are called to care for the immigrants in their land, remembering the times when they themselves were aliens in the land of Egypt (Ex 22:20-21; Lv 19:33-34; Dt 10:18-19). But, most importantly, the migrants in the Bible are often the chosen ones singled out by God to fulfil a special commission: Abraham and all of Israel's ancestors, Moses (Ex 2:22), the people of Israel in their journey toward the promised land, Jesus' ancestors (Mt 1:17) [I am referring here to the four women mentioned in the Matthean genealogy: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Uriah's wife. Although there is ongoing debate in the field of Matthean scholarship regarding the meaning and function of the presence of these women in Matthew's Gospel, there is no doubt that all of them are either Gentile or have Gentile connotations] and Jesus himself, and the first Christian communities (1 Pt 1:1; 2:11). (See the stimulating hypothesis on the addresses of 1 Peter by J. H. Elliott, *A Home for the Homeless: A Social-Scientific Criticism of 1 Peter, Its Situation and Strategy* (1990). Here Elliott basically sustains the idea that the Christians to whom this Epistle was addressed are referred to as pilgrims and aliens, not merely in a spiritual sense as people going through their earthly pilgrimage toward their heavenly home. The people forming the Christian communities in Asia Minor were real strangers and aliens and suffered the consequences of this particular social status in the context in which they lived).

It is important here to stress that election in the biblical context is a privilege which represents also a call to a special service. In one of the first formulations of God's election in Genesis 12:1-4, Abraham and his descendants are called to be a blessing not only to their own people, but also to all the peoples of the earth. This could be considered one of the true goals of election.

The picture given by the Bible raises some stimulating questions regarding the role of migrants and refugees today. Are they still the chosen ones as the migrants of old? If they are, what kind of service are they called to fulfil in today's world? In what way could they be a blessing to all peoples of the earth? What is the role of the missionaries in relation to this? I think these are very important questions for a spirituality for missionaries with migrants.

I believe that this biblical journey of ours is an essential part of our spirituality is for missionaries. This image of the migrant God attested to by both Testaments is an essential element of our biblical tradition and has to become an integral constituent of our spirituality for missionaries, and in particular missionaries with migrants.



The challenging presence of this migrant God raises a crucial question for our spirituality: "What does walking with God mean in concrete history and day-to-day life?" (Rayan, S., 1992, "The Search for an Asian Spirituality of Liberation", *Asian Christian Spirituality: Reclaiming Traditions*, V. Fabella, P. K. H. Lee, and D. Kwand-sun Suh, eds. Pp. 11-30, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis Books, 19).

## To Be Migrants with the Migrants

One of the fundamental presuppositions of contemporary theology and spirituality is that human experience is a privileged *locus* of God's revelation. If this is right, the next question is this: where is God in the almost endless field of human experience? Our contention is that we can find the migrant God especially among the migrants and refugees, the powerless and the voiceless, and the marginalized of our contemporary world. Today, as in the past, God is found particularly at the edges of our societies, in our contemporary deserts crowded with people. I have experienced personally in the Philippines, in the slum areas of Manila, how crowded and full of life these margins are. This is particularly true, as I am witnessing right now, at the geographical borders of our societies. I was truly surprised when I heard that Tijuana had just 30,000 inhabitants 30 years ago. Now with more than two million people coming from all over Mexico and Central America, it is one of the largest border cities in the world.

The crisis of today's spirituality is due to the fact that we do not look, or we do not want to look, for God in the right place. Pieris rightly observes in this regard:

The crisis today is not that there is not enough prayer — something that can never be empirically verified — but that the "modern world", with which Vatican II wants us to dialogue, advocates a fictitious Christ, a Jesus minus his cross, or seeks him where he is not found, or eclipses the real (unjust) world where he hangs crucified, calling us to join his struggle (1988:9). (Downey (1994:12) upholds in a similar

way the cross, the crucified Christ, as the vital centre of a truly Christian spirituality).

God is living today especially among the poor. God has made a preferential option for the oppressed, and we realise that we are called to exercise God's option. This means that we have to start the journey with God and move from our privileged places at the centre of society to its margins. This migrant God invites people to move from their centres toward the edges, to something new and unexpected. Brother John of Taizé affirms: "The first act of the pilgrim God in his encounter with human beings is to offer them a life similar to his own, a life on the road, a wayfaring life" (1985:15).

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***The migrants in the Bible are the object of God's particular concern. In fact, we find especially in the Old Testament passages in which the God of Israel is presented as the chief protector of the widow the orphan, and the alien (Ps 146:9), and the Israelites are called to care for the immigrants in their land, remembering the times when they themselves were aliens in the land of Egypt (Ex 22:20-21; Lv 19:33-34; Dt 10:18-19).***

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This option is what has been called by Latin American theologians "the option for the poor". We have to stress that this is not merely a nice theological concept; in fact, the reality is that the concrete practice of this option by Christians has inspired and challenged theological reflection in Latin America and other Third World countries, giving birth to numerous liberation theologies. Gutiérrez constantly insists on the fact that practice, the commitment for and with the poor, and contemplation are prior

to theology and constitute the basis on which the latter is built (1984:136). So the option for the poor is not simply an intellectual option, nor an option for poverty, but it is first of all an option for people who are commonly neglected, the non-persons, the "insignificant" (Gutiérrez 1995:7). This option requires a conversion, and this conversion requires an option because conversion is to choose sides. There is no escape nor excuse: our God calls us to choose the side of the people living at the forgotten edges of our society. Archbishop Oscar Romero, in a speech that he delivered at Louvain, Belgium, in 1980, expresses wonderfully the option that we are called to make: "to be on the side of life or on the side of death. We see very clearly that on this point no neutrality is possible ... either we believe in a God of life or we serve the idols of death" (Gutiérrez 1984:146, note 18).

This option demands that we enter the world of the poor. We cannot see reality from a new perspective, from the perspective of the marginalized, unless we are there with them and we experience what they experience. What Anthony Gittins says applies perfectly to the option required of a missionary with migrants: we have to go beyond hospitality, beyond paternalistic service. We are called to become strangers, migrants with the migrants (Gittins 1994a:414). [Gittins has been developing in these past years the model of the missionary as stranger as central to Christian mission. This model fits in a special way missionaries with migrants. See Gittins, 1989:111-138; also Bevens, S., 1991:51-53 "Seeing Mission through Images", *Missiology* 19 (1):45-57; 1991]. We have always to be aware that we are neither the initiators of mission nor the ones in charge of it. Paraphrasing Leviticus 25:23, we can state: "For the *mission* belongs to me, and you are only strangers and guests of mine". The mission finally is not our doing, it does not depend on our good qualities, but belongs to God's love, holiness, and goodness.

This option is not simply a matter of personal conversion nor individual asceticism. A sociological perception of poverty and marginalisation is necessary if we want to be aware of their subtle strategies and structures. To raise critical questions about our social, political, cultural, and religious systems is a very important element of our spirituality (Rayan 1992:24). We have to go to the roots of the problem if we want our answer to be effective. In this sense we have to become aware of the sinful social structures which are causing the forced movement of millions of people today in our world. The sociological perception of the strategies and structures which produce poverty and marginalisation in our world has to become an integral part of our spirituality (Pieris 1988:22).

We make this option in the awareness that to become a stranger among the strangers is not an easy task: it means to take risks, to become vulnerable (Gittins 1993a:13). It means misunderstanding because of a critical prophetic stance: "If you talk about the poor, people will probably regard you as sensitive and generous. But if you talk about the causes of poverty, they will say to themselves 'Is this a Christian speaking? Isn't such language really political?'" (Gutiérrez 1995:8). This kind of misunderstanding could finally lead to a violent persecution as has already happened in Central America (Sobrino 1988:87-102). Pieris bluntly points out what anybody can expect who decides to take this option: "Whoever dares to be with God on the side of the poor must renounce all hope of being a

hero. It is the criminal's fate — the cross — that Jesus holds out as a banner under which victory is assured" (1988:23).

Once we have made our option for the poor, we realise often with great surprise that the marginalized and the "insignificant" are our missionaries because they are teaching us with their very lives what it means to be a Christian. This is mission-in-reverse: the missionaries are evangelised by those they were supposed to evangelise, the masters become disciples, the speakers become hearers, and the givers become receivers (Gittins, 1993b, "Reflections from the Edge: Mission-in-Reverse and Missiological Research", *Missiology* 21(1):23). We have a wonderful example of mission-in-reverse in the encounter of Jesus with the Canaanite woman (Mt 15:21-28; par. Mk 8:24-30). Here the master, the one who went around crossing and breaking boundaries, the one who chose to be at the margins, is challenged and converted by a Gentile woman! What a masterful and challenging story for our contemporary spirituality for missionaries! We have an outstanding contemporary example of mission-in-reverse in the person of Archbishop Romero who was literally converted by his own Salvadoran people. In the field of human mobility, mission-in-reverse will take place when we begin to allow the migrants to be the surprise guests who shake our lives, who prevent us from becoming sedentary people, because there is no place for sedentary people in the world of migrants (Tassello, G., 1991, "La Missionarietà Scalabriniana a Servizio dei Migranti", *Scalabriniani: Esperienze Pastorali & Spiritualità* 18:9-30 (Rome, Italy): 28).

## A Spirituality for the Journey

The definition of spirituality that I have been trying to develop is rooted in our Christian heritage. The definition of Christian life in terms of walking and of a journey is an integral part of our Judaeo-Christian tradition starting from the journeys of Israel's ancestors in the Book of Genesis. Paul in his Letter to the Romans talks about "walking according to the Spirit" (8:4). Different contemporary theologians take on this important theme (Gittins 1993a:17-18; Gutiérrez 1984:50). Samuel Rayan describes life itself "as a pilgrimage led by the Spirit who never allows us to strike roots on the road ... but impels us forward to the yet-to-be" (1992:19). (We do not have to forget that in our Christian tradition the image of the earthly journey or pilgrimage has often been seen in a pessimistic way: the goal of the journey is our "heavenly home", so this earthly stage has to be passed by as soon as possible).

It should be clear by now that a spirituality for missionaries with migrants cannot be a static, monolithic, once-and-for-all spirituality. This is a spirituality of the journey: it is the challenging invitation to follow the migrant God together with a migrant people. This is not a spirituality for stable people, but for people who are always on the move together with the migrants and refugees of this world. This is a tentative spirituality, a spirituality of the tent, a spirituality of people who are willing to be in a “permanent exodus” (Tassello 1991:22). Three main characteristics of this spirituality are fidelity, openness, and “response-ability”.

First of all, by *fidelity* I do not mean a formal and punctilious obedience to church laws and commandments, but a creative following of Jesus. A spirit of *fidelity* is needed, which means that “we must be ever ready to accept a new conversion” in the new and changing contexts in which we live (Sobrinho 1988:9). Creative fidelity to the migrant God is to be ready to leave our security behind and to start the journey again whenever God calls us to do so. It is to be willing to “walk humbly with our God”.

*Openness* is in Rayan’s words “letting reality, significant for personal and social life and for the health of the earth, come and invade, enter, affect, disturb, challenge, mould and move us to joy, to tears, to anger, to action” (Rayan 1992:22). It is to allow the migrants and refugees to challenge our cultural and religious prejudices and our often-untested convictions. It means to be open to changes, open to the complexity of life, to the surprises of life, and to a God full of surprises. In this way spirituality will be continually renewed by the discovery of new perspectives and new dimensions of life.

Finally *response-ability* is to be willing and ready to respond to the realities that challenge us (Rayan 1992:25). It is to respond seriously and relevantly to the massive phenomenon of migration in today’s world. This must be a structural response, namely, a

response that touches and transforms the unjust structures that produce poverty, exploitation, marginalisation, and forced migration in our world (Tassello 1991:21).

There is no defined and already decided spirituality for missionaries with migrants. This is a spirituality under the banner of the crucified Christ “to the Jews an obstacle they cannot get over, to the Gentiles foolishness” (1 Cor 1:23). Sometimes we will not even be sure of the relevance and meaning of our missionary task. Sometimes we will be able to see what lies ahead in the journey and sometimes it will be too dark to see. Sometimes we will stumble and fall on the path, and sometimes we will lose our way. In other words, the path is not clear and always visible, but as the poet Antonio Machado says, the way is established on the very going (Gutiérrez 1984:3). It is in the act of walking humbly with the migrant God that we discover the path. But despite the uncertainties and risks of this journey, the migrant God will be there with us enlightening the path in the moments of crisis together with the small lights of our mothers and fathers who have preceded us in this journey.

This is not an endless journey: we are going away to go toward the reign of God. The end of this pilgrimage is somehow present already on the road and for that reason in our first encounter with the migrant God (Br John of Taizé 1985:19).

In this journey we will be surprised to meet people who have started from different spiritual traditions and experiences walking in the same path that we have taken. Eventually, we will realise that this path is enlightened by the same God and leads to the same “land flowing with milk and honey” where we will celebrate life together as brothers and sisters with the whole creation.

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## KENYA — THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TOURISTS 'PARADISE'

Clement N. Odhiambo

Violence in Kenya's coastal town of Mombasa shows how precarious the security situation in the country is as veteran President Daniel arap Moi campaigns for a fifth term. The dialogue between Moi's KANU and the opposition in the Inter-Party Parliamentary Group has agreed on some basic constitutional reforms to be done before next elections. But as the announcement of the agreement was given on the 11<sup>th</sup> September, new violence flared up in Mombasa.

Kimani Mwangi, 34, is a vegetable and fruit hawker on the sidewalks of Nairobi town centre. Six years ago he was a small farmer in the Rift Valley, but in 1992 the "ethnic clashes", in reality, the politically motivated violence, that rocked western Kenya, forced him to take refuge in Kibera, one of the sprawling slums around Nairobi.

Last August 8, he left his dwelling early in the morning despite the anticipated unrest. He had been woken up by the cries of his one-year-old son, who had the previous night cried himself to sleep while still clinging to the mother's "dry" breasts. He had quickly looked away only to land his eyes on his other three children huddled under one tattered blanket. The whole family had not had a decent meal for the last two days and the prospects for the same remained remote. Their only source of income, his vegetable stall, had been destroyed in a major operation aimed at keeping the city clean in the eyes of the tourists, and Kimani had had no time to rebuild his capital. So that morning he went first to the main market, bought what he could with his dwindling capital, and set up his goods at a busy street corner. He lost everything in the afternoon riots.

Mwangi is just one of the countless Kenyans now bearing the brunt of countrywide violence ahead of the anticipated general election later this year.

Tension is mounting by the day as Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi tries to perpetuate his stay in power. President Moi, 74, has dominated Kenya's political scene since the country's founding father, the late Jomo Kenyatta, died in 1978.

Like his predecessors, Moi's stranglehold on power has been made possible by his near-perfect use of political and economic patronage, as well as the drumming up of inter-ethnic animosity. Kenyatta came from Kenya's largest and most economically prosperous ethnic group, the Kikuyu, while Moi comes from the smaller and previously mostly pastoral Kalenjin group.

Haunted by a possibility of losing in a free and fair election, KANU in the last year has resorted to repression. Many are those who have suffered incarceration because of their dissenting views and so are those who have lost their lives, homes and property for similar reasons.

But Kenyans are yet to be totally subdued by the repression. Opposition politicians, Churches, Non-Governmental Organisations as well as other bodies have now gone full throttle in their demands for reforms before the next polls. With the ruling party KANU's intransigence, the potential for civil strife has never looked more real.

In 1991, a combination of internal opposition and international pressure forced Moi to give in to demands for the re-introduction of multi-partitism. He had all along insisted that multi-party politics would divide Kenyans along tribal lines. Having disorganised the opposition using his usual techniques, Moi went ahead to win the presidency with a mere 36 per cent of the total vote. He refused to change his style of rule, a fact that has since created in Kenya a clique of the super-rich with millions living below the poverty line. Kimani has an ironic smile when he comments, "there was more democracy when we had the one-party system".

### *Economic hardships*

Unable to fathom the situation any more, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) last month suspended a KSh 13 billion aid package to Kenya, thus giving a major boost to the calls for reforms.

Fears that political instability will plunge Kenya into a serious slump in the run up to the general elections are now widespread. On July 11, four days after the 'Saba Saba' riots (one of the series of violent clashes between the police and civilians) the shilling lost 20 per cent of its value against the dollar.

The Government on August 22 announced new revenue measures contained in a legal notice signed on 21 August 1997, by the Finance Minister, Musalia Mudavadi, aimed at bridging the budget deficit. Among them was the increase in excise duty on petrol and diesel, raising of the top Value Added Tax (VAT) rate from 15 per cent to 16 per cent and reduction in Government expenditure. The measures are expected to save KSh 5.5 billion.

Strengthening of revenue collection by the Kenya Revenue Authority is expected to bring in an additional KSh 44 million to the exchequer.

Surviving in Nairobi, especially for those three quarters of the population that, like Kimani, jam into the slums and who when they hold a job consider themselves lucky to get a monthly salary of 3,000 shillings, or about 50 dollars.

The current full scale demand for reforms began in April, when from 4-11, 600 delegates met in Limuru, about 45 kilometres west of Nairobi, and, among other things, formed the National Convention Assembly.

Among the changes that Kenyans are calling for are the reduction in the sweeping powers of the president and the establishment of an independent Electoral Commission. Earlier, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCKK), a respected coalition of Protestant Churches, put forward a list of constitutional reforms that would ensure a free and fair election.

The ruling party, KANU, said a resounding 'NO' to all their demands. In the mean time, international human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch/Africa, African Rights and Robert F. Kennedy Memorial Centre for Human Rights, in an apparent show of solidarity with the reformists, have continued to document systematic abuses of human rights in Kenya. The Government has turned down all dialogue initiatives by National Convention Executive Council (NCEC), the executive arm of NCA. The Government insists that the NCEC is not an elected body and thus lacks the people's mandate.

In the meantime the dramatic facts of the Saba Saba and Nane Nane had happened. During the Saba Saba university students sitting their examinations were attacked in the university classrooms. Like the students, the professors were beaten up. At least 12 people were killed by the police. Immediately after, two State universities were closed down for two weeks.

According to a public comment by the US Secretary of State, Madelaine Albright, the real source of political violence in Kenya is not just the Government's unacceptable strong-arm tactic, but its failure to take the essential concrete steps to create a free and fair electoral climate.

#### 1992 electoral violence

It is still fresh in the mind of Kimani and of all Kenyans that prior to the 1992 elections and a year or so later, up to 1,500 people were killed and 300,000 displaced in the infamous ethnic violence that hit western Kenya. The victims were mostly members of other communities neighbouring President Moi's Kalenjin group. The "tribal clashes" wanted to prove to the world that multi-partitism had no place in Kenya. But they also aimed at chasing from the Rift Valley all the Kikuyus and Luos, known for not liking the current regime, and so guarantee a victory for the incumbent President. They were also a reward for the local KANU leaders, who could take over the land vacated by the victims.

This time around, the powerful Kenyan politician seems to be trying the same tactic in the Coast Province. Kimani knows better. His brother has taken refuge in his shack, that was not big enough for his family. After the 1992 clashes his brothers had also left the Rift Valley and tried to rebuild a life in Mombasa. On the night of 13 August 1997, a band of about 500 armed and apparently well-trained thugs, attacked Likoni Police station, on the outskirts of Mombasa. They killed six policemen, devastated the neighbourhood, massacred another 40 people, looted the area and had withdraw with a loot of 40 guns, ammunition, money and household goods.

The police efforts to stem the mayhem have so far been in vain. Violence in the area has continued for days. Luos and Kikuyus have been the main victims, with messages to them that they should go back to their place of origin.

A week later Likoni Catholic church, where hundreds of people had taken refuge, was attacked



by the members of the same gang, who claimed they wanted to finish their job. Due to the police reaction, they killed only two people before being forced to flee. This has triggered the exodus of 50,000 or 80,000 Luos and Kikuyus (according to different estimates) who have decided to flee to their villages or to Nairobi and Kisumu in fear. While President Moi obviously declared that those responsible for the violence were Opposition members, the police detained for a few days influential and affluent local KANU supporters.

### *The stand of the Church*

**I**n a statement published on August 27 the Catholic Bishops did not mince their words. It reads in part:

- Something must be done without any delay. The Government has shown itself powerless, has not been able to explain, let alone prevent, such a well-planned and executed operation.
- Victims wonder what happened to the Special Branch, to the security forces so efficient in dealing with the Opposition. Either the Government is in control or it should admit it is not.
- The Government has not shown us yet that the criminals are going to be severely punished. There has been a history of terrible ethnic cleansing ... which is still going on.

Whenever it has suited the policy makers, the Constitution has been changed almost overnight. There have been many such changes without involving all the complicated legalities devised at this time ...

Why, ask many people who have suffered from violence, does the Government not crack down on ministers who publicly incite Kenyans against those not of their ethnic group? Why are the police allowed to be brutal, to shoot and kill unarmed citizens? Why do some politicians have their private armies of hooligans? If all these things are allowed to happen, then calls for peace are hollow and ridiculous.

Certainly, the Opposition has nothing to gain from the Coast chaos. Once more Kikuyus and Luos are fleeing, losing all their properties. The refugees will not be able to vote in the next election, being too far from the constituency where they were registered.

Kimani's brother read in the newspapers reports about the fleeing tourists and the cancellations in hotel booking for the next months, and has a bitter comment: "The tourists at least go back to their homes, but where is my home? I was chased from the Rift Valley, I am now chased from the Coast where in five years I had put up a small business in bicycle repair. Where shall I go? Why is the press worried about the tourists and not about us?"

It is clear that if the Kenya Government does not accept the constitutional reforms, the country will have within a few months the most rigged and anti-democratic election of its history and the danger of widespread violence will grow.

In Parliament, a nominated MP, Rashid Sajjad and Cabinet Minister Nicholas Biwott have been named as the billionaires bankrolling the mayhem at the Coast. Their disclaim has not convinced many. Biwott's name featured prominently in the 1991-1993 tribal clashes and so was the case in the mysterious disappearance and subsequent assassination of former Foreign Minister Dr Robert Ouko in 1990. Sajjad's name, like those of several other billionaire Asians in Kenya, has become almost synonymous with monumental financial rip-offs.

Whether the reforms crusade will realise its goal remains to be seen. What is certain, however, is that should KANU and Moi win another term, Kenyans should brace themselves for another five years of strong rule.

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## LES ÉVÊQUES BRÉSILIENS ONT PROPOSÉ AUX CATHOLIQUES UN DEBAT SUR LA “MONDIALISATION”

*Une Église soucieuse d'une "économie au service de l'homme" et tout prioritairement des pauvres ne pouvait éviter de s'interroger sur les enjeux de la mondialisation. C'est ce qu'ont fait les évêques brésiliens en proposant à la réflexion des catholiques le texte ci-dessous, dans le cadre de la Campagne de fraternité 1996. Ce texte de réflexion est non seulement un instrument utile pour comprendre ce qui se passe au Brésil, en Amérique latine et même dans la quasi-totalité des sociétés, mais il est aussi un témoignage de ce qui est aujourd'hui une préoccupation importante de l'Église du Brésil.*

*Texte de la Conférence nationale des évêques brésiliens (CNBB), Fraternidade e politica. Justiça e Paz se abraçarão, n°76 à 88, São Paulo, 1996.*

Le débat politique dans le Brésil d'aujourd'hui a lieu face à des modèles différents de société. Pour le comprendre, il est nécessaire de savoir ce que signifie le mot mondialisation. Il s'agit d'un processus qui a pour but l'unification de tous les marchés du monde sous le contrôle des multinationales, et suppose la prédominance des règles du marché sur les règlements dictés par les gouvernements. Elle marque l'entrée du capitalisme dans une nouvelle étape de son développement dans laquelle les corporations multinationales commencent à contester la souveraineté des nations. Elle considère que la fonction prioritaire de l'État est de garantir la liberté du marché, l'exécution des contrats et la propriété, et place en deuxième plan toute autre fonction, en particulier sa fonction sociale.

Le libéralisme, en termes politiques, apporta une importante contribution à la démocratie en s'opposant à plusieurs formes d'absolutisme et d'autoritarisme et en défendant la liberté du citoyen. Toutefois, en termes pratiques, certains adeptes du néolibéralisme ont préconisé de grandes coupes dans les dépenses sociales de l'État, en augmentant les taux d'intérêts, en encourageant la privatisation des compagnies nationales, même dans le secteur des transports, de la santé, de l'éducation, de l'énergie et des télécommunications, et en défendant le libre commerce international et les grands investissements financiers spéculatifs. La libéralisation autorise cependant l'État à planifier quelques politiques sociales compensatoires pour atténuer les effets du système sur les pauvres dont la situation a été générée par ce même système. La question fondamentale est que le système économique et politique néocapitaliste admet l'exclusion comme principe de fonctionnement. Dans tous les pays où il est appliqué, les comptes globaux de la nation sont déterminés par la chute de l'inflation, une balance des paiements bénéficiaire et la stabilité économique, alors que le chômage augmente et que la situation des plus pauvres empire sensiblement, augmentant

ainsi la distance qui sépare les classes sociales les plus riches des classes les plus défavorisées, créant encore plus de poches de misère.

La situation des travailleurs devient dramatique, autant pour ceux qui ont un travail stable que pour ceux qui ont un travail plus précaire qui résistent plus difficilement. (...) Étant un modèle qui inclut l'exclusion, il (le modèle néolibéral) s'oppose de front aux principes et aux valeurs de l'éthique sociale chrétienne. Loin de conduire à une société solidaire, il crée des conflits et des inégalités antifraternelles.

Les pays les plus riches du monde sont en train de provoquer une restructuration complète des institutions politiques et économiques internationales et obligent les pays sous-développés à adopter des politiques économiques néolibérales établies par des organismes financiers internationaux. Cela signifie l'institutionnalisation d'un nouveau schéma de décision internationale du travail destiné à assurer l'hégémonie de ces pays dans la nouvelle étape du capitalisme. Il s'agit d'une révision du statut des anciennes colonies et nations dépendantes, de façon à ce que dans ces pays majoritairement pauvres la mondialisation s'installe.

L'impact de la mondialisation est général mais cependant pas uniforme. Autant dans les pays pauvres que dans les pays riches existent le chômage, la baisse des salaires des travailleurs les moins qualifiés, le démantèlement des services sociaux, les risques fréquents de déstabilisation monétaire, une tension sociale croissante, la recrudescence du nationalisme, du racisme, de la violence diffuse et du crime organisé.

La mondialisation touche tout le monde: les continents, les nations, les gouvernements, les secteurs économiques et les travailleurs. Dans les prochaines décennies tous devront s'accommoder, d'une façon ou d'une autre, aux nouveaux paramètres. L'impossibilité d'inverser le processus

a été invoquée comme argument en faveur de la capitulation nationale face aux exigences des puissances mondiales. Mais ceci n'est qu'une façon erronée d'appréhender le problème. La mondialisation est peut-être irréversible mais les nations ont la possibilité d'apporter des réponses qui assurent leur souveraineté et le bien-être de leurs populations.

(...) Face à la crise des systèmes économiques qui ont conduit à des échecs et des frustrations, on propose généralement comme solution une économie de libre marché, présentée par beaucoup sous l'étiquette du néolibéralisme mais dont la portée va bien au-delà du secteur économique, et qui est fondée sur une interprétation étroite ou réductionniste de la personne et de la société.

Afin de mieux cerner le débat politique actuel, nous présentons de façon typologique les deux principales forces en jeu:

### **La solution pour ceux qui sont déjà intégrés (les moins nombreux)**

Elle consiste pour l'économie brésilienne à se rapprocher, le plus rapidement possible, des exigences de la mondialisation. Dans le cadre de l'économie internationale cela signifie d'une part, permettre que les produits et les capitaux puissent librement entrer et sortir du pays car la logique du processus induit l'existence d'un seul marché pour toute la planète. De l'autre, l'affaiblissement des relations de travail, car la logique d'accumulation de capital demandée pour le passage vers les nouvelles formes de production créées par la révolution technologique des années 70, exige un nouveau mode de concentration des capitaux. La mise en oeuvre de ces deux possibilités s'appuie sur les expériences du Chili, du Mexique et de l'Argentine. C'est ce que l'on appelle "la politique de modernisation" ou "de réformes néolibérales". Il s'agit de stabiliser la monnaie, d'équilibrer les finances publiques, de privatiser les entreprises d'État, et favoriser ainsi la sous-traitance par des entreprises tiers, faciliter l'entrée des capitaux étrangers en limitant l'action de l'État à des politiques sociales "compensatoires" qui deviennent nécessaires pour apaiser les tensions sociales. En fait, elles privent l'immense masse de la population de la possibilité d'atteindre par son travail, un niveau de consommation proche de la survie.

Au Brésil, actuellement, le débat le plus aigu place face à face les grands groupes économiques. Certains tireront de grands avantages d'une libéralisation radicale et rapide de notre économie.

D'autres en revanche y perdront richesse et pouvoir. Certains veulent accélérer cette libéralisation, d'autres la freinent. Les uns sont représentés dans certains ministères, d'autres dans d'autres ministères. Tous ont des porte-parole au Congrès, dans la presse, dans les syndicats. Les manchettes des journaux, les commentaires des colonnes spécialisées, les journaux télévisés, les "campagnes civiques" de certains journalistes de radio, sont faits afin que l'opinion publique soutienne les positions tantôt de l'un tantôt de l'autre de ces groupes.

La nature du système de communication de masse fait que la population ignore le débat entre l'élite et le peuple. Les médias ne traitent que des débats qui divisent les factions rivales de l'élite, occultant ainsi les problèmes qui remettent en question le pouvoir.

### **La solution qui prend en considération la majorité de la population**

Elle donne la priorité aux réformes structurelles destinées à créer une redistribution des richesses et de l'argent public, afin d'encourager la consommation et par ce biais, favoriser l'emploi et les revenus, les investissements dans l'éducation et la santé, la lutte contre l'exclusion sociale, et jeter ainsi les bases d'une croissance économique soutenue par l'État. Ceci ne signifie en aucune façon un refus ou une mise en garde contre les investissements de capitaux étrangers dans l'économie brésilienne. Ceux-ci, d'où qu'ils viennent peuvent être utiles au pays dans la mesure où on les utilise pour des activités productives et pas seulement spéculatives. Ces capitaux devront être rémunérés honnêtement. Ce que l'on ne peut accepter c'est l'alternative suivante car elle est complètement fautive: afflux de capital étranger ou régression du pays vers la barbarie. En accord avec les économistes, la capacité d'épargne interne, ajoutée aux revenus des exportations traditionnelles du pays représentent des ressources suffisantes pour retrouver un taux de croissance économique historique. Le PIB (produit intérieur brut) ainsi obtenu, à condition d'être équitablement distribué, sera suffisant pour assurer à toute la population un niveau de vie modeste mais digne. Ce choix ne signifie en aucune façon renoncer à la modernisation technologique, mais refuse de la rendre dépendante des décisions d'investissements des multinationales car elle menacerait l'unité nationale elle-même.

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## LES EGLISES EUROPEENNES A GRAZ

Bruno Chenu  
Assomptionniste

Un Événement comme le Rassemblement œcuménique européen de Graz (Autriche) est particulièrement difficile à interpréter, étant donné la multitude de ses facettes. Les participants eux-mêmes, selon leurs attentes et les groupes qu'ils ont fréquentés (on a compté jusqu'à 83 réunions simultanées dans cette grande foire des idées et des réalisations), peuvent avoir des jugements assez diamétralement opposés, allant de l'enthousiasme du néophyte à l'inquiétude du fervent de l'unité. On se gardera donc ici de prononcer un jugement définitif, l'arbre se jugeant à ses fruits. Mais s'il est un consensus général, c'est bien celui qui porte sur la qualité exceptionnelle de l'accueil des habitants de Graz. C'est toute une ville qui a voulu vibrer à l'unisson d'un Rassemblement qui engageait à sa manière l'avenir de l'Europe.

Qu'on se rappelle Bâle, le premier Rassemblement œcuménique européen qui s'est tenu du 15 au 21 mai 1989. Pour la première fois depuis la Réforme, des chrétiens de toute confession et de toute l'Europe (à l'exception de l'Albanie) se rencontraient. La joie des retrouvailles fut telle qu'elle contribua, dit-on, à la chute, quelques mois plus tard, du mur de Berlin. L'Europe avait célébré son unité avant l'heure. Le cardinal Martini l'exprimait ainsi à Graz: «Bâle nous est apparu 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.»

La suite du film n'a cependant pas été à la hauteur des espérances. Après l'euphorie, les difficultés ont surgi de tous côtés. Le nationalisme a prospéré sur le terrain pourri par le communisme. Alors que Bâle avait solennellement déclaré: «Dans nos pays et sur notre continent, il n'existe aucune situation qui exige ou justifie le recours à la violence» (n° 61 du document final), l'implosion de l'ex-Yougoslavie a révélé le fossé qui sépare les bonnes intentions chrétiennes des stratégies de pouvoir et de conquête. On attendait une Europe guérie, nous avons eu droit à la résurgence des fanatismes les plus archaïques. De plus, selon les mots mêmes du patriarche de Moscou Alexis II, un rideau d'argent s'est substitué à l'ancien rideau de fer, «séparant non seulement les Etats, mais aussi les habitants à l'intérieur de chaque pays». La liberté

nouvelle a suscité de nouvelles oppressions et de nouveaux esclavages. Et l'Europe de l'Est a la tentation d'accuser l'Europe de l'Ouest d'être à l'origine de tout ce qui traumatise sa population (mafias, drogue, pornographie...)

### De Bâle à Graz

Devant ces faits si contraires à l'esprit de Bâle, les chrétiens européens étaient poussés à une nouvelle humilité. Et si la Conférence des Eglises européennes (KEK), regroupant 115 Eglises, orthodoxe, anglicane, vieille-catholique, protestante, et le Conseil des Conférences épiscopales européennes (CCEE), du côté catholique, ont décidé, au printemps 1994, un nouveau Rassemblement européen, ce n'était pas pour donner dans le triomphalisme. Un thème s'imposait à tous: celui de la réconciliation. Bâle s'était situé dans la mouvance du processus conciliaire lancé par le Conseil œcuménique des Eglises en faveur de la justice, de la paix et de l'intégrité de la création. La nouvelle réunion ne pouvait qu'élargir son champ de réflexion à toutes les questions qui hantent la conscience européenne: de la désunion des chrétiens à la purification ethnique, du pluralisme religieux aux nouvelles pauvretés. La simple convivialité devenait un programme.

Pour que la démarche fût cohérente avec le thème, il fut décidé que le travail intellectuel et théologique serait plutôt réservé à l'avant-Rassemblement et que priorité serait donnée sur place à l'information, l'échange, la confrontation des points de vue. On ne s'étonnera donc pas que le document final ait moins de tenue que celui de Bâle: les organisateurs eux-mêmes ne voulaient pas trop mobiliser les 700 délégués officiels sur le ciselage de textes. Mais la prière et l'étude biblique donnaient le fondement de chacune des journées. Selon le graffiti du métro de Londres cité par le Catholicos arménien Karékine I<sup>er</sup> «Le monde est fragile. A manier avec prière».

Il a toujours été précisé que Graz n'était pas un deuxième Bâle. On ne peut donc juger l'un par l'autre. On remarquera cependant que le succès populaire a été encore plus manifeste cette année,

avec la présence de plus de 10 000 participants, en dehors des 700 délégués officiels des Eglises et des invités. Et l'on ne pouvait que s'étonner de voir les Roumains aussi nombreux que les Allemands (1 200) et les Russes plus nombreux que les Français (411 contre 330). Alors que les responsables d'Eglise exprimaient une haute conscience des difficultés de la conjoncture présente, les chrétiens de la base étaient moins soucieux de collectionner les problèmes que de recueillir l'énergie de solutions nouvelles.

## La lutte de réconciliation

Que l'histoire des hommes ne soit pas spontanément une avenue de la réconciliation, on peut en trouver la preuve en deux situations précises: l'Italie et la Grèce. L'Italie est un pays à forte majorité catholique. Mais il se trouve une petite minorité chrétienne oubliée dans les vallées du Piémont qui s'appelle l'Eglise vaudoise, avec un peu moins de 25 000 membres. La Grèce a elle aussi une majorité, orthodoxe, mais si écrasante que les catholiques latins et les gréco-catholiques (uniates) sont considérés comme des citoyens de seconde zone. La réconciliation est-elle à l'ordre du jour dans ces deux pays?

L'histoire italienne est particulièrement édifiante. Pendant huit siècles, les deux communautés, catholique et vaudoise, ont vécu séparément, sans manifester la moindre intention d'entrer en relation... à part les persécutions exercées par la première sur la seconde! C'était ainsi. La tenue du concile Vatican II a progressivement détendu l'atmosphère. Depuis quatre ans, les deux Eglises se réunissent autour de la même table pour discuter de la question des mariages mixtes. L'Eglise catholique a demandé pardon pour son attitude violente au long des siècles. Paolo Ricca, professeur à la Faculté de théologie protestante de Rome, en tire quelques enseignements:

*Il n'est jamais trop tard pour se parler. Un éléphant peut dialoguer avec une fourmi. Et tout dialogue porte du fruit, un fruit qui se reconnaît dans les changements de mentalité que la relation avec l'autre induit nécessairement. L'important ne réside pas dans les documents produits par les commissions de dialogue, mais dans le changement des personnes. Et, grâce au dialogue, elles changent.*

Lors de la préparation des délégués officiels français à Versailles au mois de mai, le groupe s'était donné comme objectif de tenter une médiation pour

faire que se rencontrent, au niveau de chacun des pays, les diverses Eglises de Roumanie et de Grèce. Finalement, les Roumains ont pu se rencontrer sans intervention extérieure. Mais la Grèce était bien partie pour des réunions séparées. Une petite délégation française a permis une grande première: le dialogue entre orthodoxes, catholiques latins et gréco-catholiques. Le Conseil d'Eglises chrétiennes en France a évoqué ses initiatives, notamment son colloque sur l'évangélisation, en juin 1995. La question du prosélytisme était ainsi discrètement introduite, sans que soient occultées les difficultés qu'ont les non-orthodoxes en Grèce à être reconnus et à obtenir, par exemple, des permis de construire. Un évêque uniata a pu alors déclarer:

*C'est la première fois que je me trouve avec mes frères orthodoxes. Ils nous accusent de prosélytisme, mais si nous le pratiquions, comment expliquer la diminution du nombre de nos fidèles? Devant Dieu, je jure solennellement que mon but n'est pas le prosélytisme. Nous voulons vraiment dialoguer.*

Mgr Jérémie, président du Comité inter-épiscopal orthodoxe de France, a pu dégonfler l'accusation de prosélytisme et demander à ses frères orthodoxes de donner une meilleure image de la Grèce au monde chrétien. Un évêque orthodoxe a conclu: «Nous comptons sur la France, de par sa situation à distance de Rome, pour nous y aider!»

L'histoire réelle de Graz est sûrement faite de ces initiatives qui n'attirent pas l'attention des médias mais qui infléchissent insensiblement des positions durcies par des siècles de controverses ou d'ignorance mutuelle. L'unité chrétienne ne se réalisera pas par de grands coups d'éclat ponctuels, mais par de petites touches persévérantes en direction de l'autre.

## La porte étroite de la repentance

Encore faut-il donner au terme de «réconciliation» toute son ampleur. C'était le propos du texte de base: «La réconciliation, don de Dieu et source de vie nouvelle». Une structure quasi liturgique s'est imposée aux rédacteurs: la joie du rassemblement à ce moment de l'histoire; l'action de grâce pour la miséricorde de Dieu; la repentance pour tout le mal commis; la justice comme préalable à la réconciliation; la déclinaison de «l'école de la miséricorde» selon les six sous-thèmes; la dimension sacramentelle de la réconciliation; une doxologie finale.



Dans l'évolution théologique de ce «texte de base», il est aisé de percevoir une insistance sur la résurrection du Christ et la confession du Dieu Trinité. A été introduit le thème de la nouvelle création:

*Selon le témoignage des Apôtres, Dieu commence une nouvelle création en ressuscitant Christ d'entre les morts. Nous sommes appelés à briser le cycle de la violence dont la conséquence se traduit par une culpabilité et un châtement, une colère et une vengeance continuel. Nous pouvons et devons sortir des liens de la culpabilité et des relations rompues, vers la paix de Dieu (A8).*

Il n'y a pas de réconciliation sans conversion. «La réconciliation qui vient de Dieu nous conduit par la porte étroite de la repentance jusqu'à la large vallée de la vie réconciliée» (A 12). Il revenait à Mgr Kurt Koch, évêque de Bâle, de développer cette exigence dans sa prédication du culte de clôture à partir du texte de Jean 20, 19-23 (l'apparition du Christ ressuscité, envoi des disciples, don de l'Esprit Saint):

*Entre la venue du Christ dans la solitude peureuse des disciples et notre départ à nous chrétiens, il y a la rupture de notre propre conversion [...] Car nous sommes nous-mêmes avant tout et toujours ceux qui reçoivent: les affamés de paix, les assoiffés de justice et les mendiants de réconciliation. Mais ce que nous recevons de Dieu, nous devons le redonner et le partager avec les autres humains, de sorte qu'ils puissent eux aussi participer à ce cadeau. Entre les deux se situe le chas d'aiguille de notre propre conversion, sans laquelle rien ne peut changer.*

Dans sa démarche de réconciliation, l'assemblée de Graz a pu tirer profit de l'exemple de l'Afrique du Sud, avec la fameuse commission «Vérité et réconciliation». Mme Brigalia Hlophé Bam, secrétaire générale du Conseil des Eglises d'Afrique du Sud, a présenté ce travail avec une remarquable finesse d'analyse. Rappelons qu'il s'agit d'une instance d'écoute des victimes et des bourreaux, composée de 17 commissaires, qui doit «trouver un équilibre délicat entre l'approche du "Procès de Nuremberg", adoptée après la seconde guerre mondiale, et celle d'une "amnistie générale", adoptée dans de nombreux pays d'Afrique à la fin des guerres de libération» (Voir *Etudes*, mai 1997: Karine Muller, «Le pardon contre la justice»).

Et Mme Bam devait conclure de manière imagée:

*Le processus "Vérité et réconciliation" et les autres processus similaires de transition en Afrique peuvent être comparés à un long service funèbre typiquement africain. Ce qui est "enterré", c'est un passé douloureux. Mais dans les habitudes typiquement africaines, "enterrer", au sens strict du terme, ne signifie pas effacer de la vie ou de la mémoire. En Afrique, nous croyons aux mortsvivants. Ainsi le passé, comme les morts, ne peut pas être totalement enterré. Cependant, comme dans les rites funéraires, toutes les diverses étapes, les tabous et les conventions doivent être accomplis correctement. Sinon les âmes des morts ne trouveront pas le repos. Les mauvais esprits reviendront et dévoreront les enfants. Les défunts auront trop froid dans la tombe, ainsi ils reviendront pour nous hanter. Cela peut servir de leçon à l'Europe. Alors que le XXe siècle arrive à sa fin, il est peut-être bon pour l'Europe d'être confrontée à ses propres fantômes. Par exemple, les fantômes des deux guerres mondiales et leurs horribles conséquences pour le monde entier. Il ne peut y avoir de réconciliation si on ne fait pas la paix avec son passé. Il faut aller au-delà: la réconciliation ne peut pas être seulement une question de discours et de bons vœux. Il faut mettre en place des programmes et des projets concrets qui visent à rendre une vraie réconciliation possible.*

## Les fantômes de l'Europe

Pour décliner la réconciliation sur le terrain d'une réalité conflictuelle, le Rassemblement de Graz s'était donné six sous-thèmes: La recherche de l'unité visible des Eglises; Le dialogue entre les religions et les cultures; L'engagement pour la justice sociale, notamment pour vaincre la pauvreté, l'exclusion et d'autres formes de discrimination; L'engagement pour la réconciliation entre les peuples et la promotion de méthodes non violentes de résolution des conflits; Une pratique nouvelle de la responsabilité écologique, eu égard, en particulier, aux générations futures; Le partage équitable avec les autres régions du monde.

Que retenir de ce débat tous azimuts qui voulait chasser les fantômes de l'Europe? Au niveau œcuménique, l'attitude orthodoxe mérite une attention spéciale: nous lui consacrerons la fin de cet article. La définition de l'unité chrétienne à Graz insiste à la fois sur la visibilité et la diversité comme richesse. Le plus stimulant se trouve dans les «recommandations» faites aux Eglises pour des engagements concrets:

1.1. *Nous recommandons aux Eglises qu'à l'occasion de l'an 2000, elles expriment leur communion fraternelle par la préparation d'initiatives et d'actions symboliques, liturgiques et pastorales. Elles devraient surtout s'efforcer, en entrant dans le troisième millénaire, de pouvoir célébrer ensemble la fête de Pâques commune et de procéder à une reconnaissance mutuelle officielle et festive du baptême par toutes les Eglises.*

1.2. *Nous recommandons aux Eglises de rédiger un document commun qui contienne les droits et les devoirs œcuméniques fondamentaux, et d'en déduire un certain nombre de directives, règles et critères qui aideront les Eglises, les responsables et tous leurs membres à faire la distinction entre prosélytisme et témoignage chrétien, ainsi qu'entre fondamentalisme et vraie fidélité de foi, et de façonner en définitive les relations entre Eglises majoritaires et minoritaires dans un esprit œcuménique.*

Les relations avec le judaïsme ont fait l'objet d'une attention particulière. En se rappelant que Jésus est né juif et a vécu comme croyant juif, l'Eglise doit retrouver ses racines juives et combattre toute forme d'antisémitisme. D'où l'idée de consacrer une journée par an à la connaissance du judaïsme et à la rencontre avec la foi juive vivante, comme le font depuis peu les Eglises d'Italie.

Pouvait-on échapper aux revendications féministes? C'est devenu un rituel dans les rencontres œcuméniques. Le monde anglo-saxon y est plus sensible que le monde francophone. Graz a connu une manifestation pittoresque aux portes du hall de l'assemblée plénière. Les femmes se plaignaient d'avoir un lieu de réunion à bonne distance du centre du Rassemblement. Elles ont surtout déploré que les Eglises n'aient pas envoyé la proportion souhaitée de femmes déléguées, à savoir 40%. Mais les participantes non déléguées ont largement rétabli l'équilibre des sexes. Et la violence à l'égard des femmes, dans la société, mais aussi dans les Eglises, a été clairement dénoncée.

Sur fond d'ex-Yougoslavie, l'assemblée ne pouvait ignorer les bouffées de nationalisme qui avaient embrasé des régions entières. Comme le notait le texte des commissions Justice et Paix d'Europe en vue de Graz:

*Un défi pour l'Europe d'aujourd'hui consiste à transformer le sentiment national, qui a été un instrument positif de lutte contre les totalitarismes de notre siècle, en une force d'ouverture et de solidarité. Le sentiment national, loin de nous enfermer dans notre identité et nos rancunes, doit devenir une modalité de la solidarité universelle.*

Au niveau de la construction européenne, les Eglises insistent sur le volet social. «L'intégration d'Etats d'Europe centrale ou orientale dans des structures d'économie et de sécurité européennes occidentales court le risque de créer de nouvelles formes d'injustice et de marginalisation». La critique du néolibéralisme régnant ne manque pas de vigueur:

*Au miroir de la miséricorde de Dieu, la société de concurrence, fondée sur les intérêts purement monétaires et la quête forcenée du profit, paraît profondément brutale et impitoyable. Nous prôtons dans nos Eglises le développement de systèmes économiques qui visent à protéger les faibles partout sur la terre et prennent pour critère la dignité inhérente à tous les êtres humains. Nous recherchons des systèmes qui encouragent les êtres humains à développer leur créativité non seulement pour le profit, mais aussi pour la solidarité et la solution des problèmes sociaux au travers d'un partenariat entre l'Etat et les initiatives individuelles et collectives (A27).*

L'ouverture aux autres régions du monde peut se traduire concrètement par le soutien à une politique juste et humaine de l'immigration et par la remise de la dette des pays pauvres. Sur ce dernier dossier, l'argument est le suivant:

*En collaboration avec d'autres partenaires, les Eglises devraient veiller à ce que les gouvernements européens collaborent dans le cadre du FMI et de la Banque mondiale, pour parvenir à des règlements réalistes et durables. Depuis 1984, des gouvernements africains ont transféré 150 milliards de dollars US à des instituts de crédit du Nord. La campagne doit assurer que les dettes ne se renouvellent pas, que leur remise aide ceux qui sont les plus pauvres et les plus vulnérables et ne profite pas aux élites corrompues. Ce thème sera hautement prioritaire à l'ordre du jour de la réunion du G-7 à Birmingham (juin 1998) et Berlin (1999).*

## **Le repli orthodoxe**

Revenons au problème crucial qui s'est posé à l'œcuménisme européen dans le contexte immédiat de Graz. Ce n'est un secret pour personne que l'Eglise catholique, en la personne de son pape Jean Paul II, mise énormément sur un rapprochement entre catholiques et orthodoxes. Il suffit, pour s'en convaincre, de mesurer la différence de traitement en ce qui concerne les Eglises d'Orient et les Eglises protestantes dans l'encyclique *Ut unum sint* (25 mai 1995). Jean Paul II aimerait voir se réaliser un pas décisif à l'occasion du Jubilé de l'an 2000. Le paradoxe vient du fait qu'au cours des années 90, les difficultés n'ont cessé de se multiplier. Et le Rassemblement de Graz a été le parfait reflet de la fracture persistante entre l'Est orthodoxe et l'Ouest catholique ou protestant.

Au mois d'avril dernier, tout semblait bien se présenter. Dans une déclaration en date du 24 avril, la KEK annonçait que les deux patriarches Bartoloméos I<sup>er</sup> de Constantinople et Alexis II de Moscou avaient fait part de leur intention d'être présents à l'ouverture de la rencontre de Graz. Bartoloméos lirait un message et donnerait une bénédiction lors de la célébration œcuménique d'ouverture. Plus tard, dans la même journée, Alexis II prononcerait un discours lors de la séance plénière d'ouverture. Et l'on annonçait même un tête-à-tête entre les deux patriarches, le 20 juin, à Vienne, pour la première fois depuis le conflit de juridiction qui avait éclaté début 1996 sur l'organisation ecclésiale des communautés orthodoxes d'Estonie.

Au même moment, le Vatican et Moscou planifiaient en grand secret une rencontre entre Jean Paul II et Alexis II, deux fois reportée en 1996, le 21 juin, rencontre qui devait constituer un événement de première grandeur, puisque la première depuis le schisme de 1054. Mais l'information filtrait dans les médias et sur les lèvres du cardinal Silvestrini, avec la suggestion même d'une rencontre des trois «patriarches».

Premier coup de tonnerre dans le ciel des relations ecclésiales: le 30 mai, le patriarcat œcuménique de Constantinople fait savoir que le voyage de Bartoloméos I<sup>er</sup> en Autriche est reporté et que le *primus inter pares* ne se rendra donc pas à Graz. Le communiqué officiel ne nomme personne, mais évoque une «lutte pour la supériorité de la part de certains» qui, selon les observateurs, vise en priorité Moscou. En termes voilés, Constantinople laisserait entendre que l'Eglise orthodoxe de Russie aurait des visées hégémoniques sur l'Orthodoxie. Voilà donc une pierre dans le jardin de Moscou.

Deuxième coup de tonnerre: le 11 juin, le Saint-Synode de l'Eglise orthodoxe de Russie annule la rencontre historique entre Alexis II et Jean Paul II. Le communiqué officiel «constate avec regret qu'actuellement [...] les conditions pour organiser une rencontre fructueuse entre les chefs des deux Eglises ne sont pas réunies». Le patriarche russe laissera entendre, le dimanche suivant, à la télévision, que le communiqué final proposé a été modifié de manière unilatérale par le Vatican, pour supprimer la mention du prosélytisme et le rappel que le mouvement uniaste ne conduit pas à l'unité de l'Eglise. Voilà une pierre dans le jardin de Rome.

Mais le durcissement orthodoxe ne se fait pas seulement sentir dans les relations avec les catholiques. Le Conseil œcuménique des Eglises (COE) est à nouveau l'objet de critiques acerbes: on met en cause sa volonté de se donner un statut ecclésiologique; on dénonce son souci de l'homme et du monde plus manifeste que son souci du Christ; on supporte mal le féminisme et l'écologisme d'un organisme sensible à tout vent de relativisme doctrinal. Conséquence: le 20 mai, l'Eglise orthodoxe de l'ancienne république soviétique de Géorgie décide de quitter deux grandes organisations œcuméniques: le COE et la KEK, co-organisatrice de Graz. Cette décision a été prise lors d'une réunion d'urgence du synode de cette Eglise, à la suite des pressions exercées par les grands monastères qui parlent de l'«hérésie œcuménique» du patriarche Elie II et menacent de rompre la communion avec celui-ci. A Graz même, on apprenait qu'un journal de Belgrade avait annoncé la décision de l'Eglise orthodoxe serbe de quitter elle aussi le COE. Voilà pour la pierre dans le jardin de Genève.

### La mesure des difficultés

Devant cette accumulation de décisions négatives à l'égard de l'œcuménisme contemporain, il ne faut sûrement pas accuser trop vite les partenaires du dialogue, mais prendre conscience de la situation actuelle des Eglises orthodoxes. On ne peut pas dire que celle-ci soit brillante. Le patriarcat œcuménique se trouve dans un environnement turc particulièrement hostile et il peine à exercer son ministère de communion à partir d'une implantation aussi fragile. De son côté, l'Eglise russe se remet difficilement de son épreuve stalinienne. Elle a perdu beaucoup de sa crédibilité auprès des jeunes générations à cause de ses compromissions. Elle n'a pas encore pris la mesure d'un changement social, qui exige un effort pastoral catéchétique et théologique ne pouvant être la simple ritournelle de «l'âme russe». Pour ne rien arranger, les relations inter-orthodoxes demeurent envenimées

par les fièvres nationalistes. L'organisation de l'Eglise selon le principe de l'autocéphalie n'a pas que des mérites et entraîne de réelles tensions. Tout concourt donc à affaiblir la conviction œcuménique incontestable d'homme comme Bartoloméos et Alexis. Ils butent sur une opposition au sein même de leur Eglise et le souci de la communion les invite à prudence.

Si nous concentrons notre attention sur les rapports entre Moscou et Rome, nous nous apercevons que les griefs de l'Eglise russe à l'égard de l'Eglise romaine n'ont pas bougé au cours de dernières années. En janvier 1995, Alexis II avait explicité devant son Saint-Synode les trois raisons du malaise persistent avec les catholiques. La première concernait les «méthodes agressives (...)comme les occupations d'églises et autres actions violentes» de l'Eglise gréco-catholique en Ukraine sortie de la clandestinité en 1990. Le second reproche venait de la nomination par le Saint-Siège le 13 avril 1991, de trois administrateurs apostoliques pour la partie européenne de la Russie, la Sibérie et le Kazakhstan: selon Alexis II, ces structures ecclésiastiques «dépassent les besoins réels catholiques» et manifestent «une tendance à l'expansion et au prosélytisme». Les catholiques se comporteraient comme si la Russie était un désert spirituel. Enfin, le patriarche se plaint du non-respect sur le terrain des consignes données par l'Eglise catholique à ses membres, après un dialogue conséquent avec l'Eglise orthodoxe russe. Notamment le texte de la commission «Pro Russia» du 1<sup>er</sup> juin 1992, «Principes généraux et normes pratiques pour coordonner l'évangélisation et l'engagement œcuménique de l'Eglise catholique en Russie et dans les autres pays de la CEI» (La Documentation Catholique, 1992, p. 786-790.), et la déclaration de Balamand du 23 juin 1993 (La Documentation Catholique, 1993, p. 711-714.). Alors que l'Eglise catholique s'était engagée à ne prendre aucune initiative en terre russe sans en informer au préalable les autorités orthodoxes, Alexis II estime que «nous sommes toujours mis devant le fait accompli.»

Du côté catholique, on a bien conscience que l'attitude catholique n'est pas toujours en conformité parfaite avec les textes cités. Le moment n'est plus aux grandes déclarations d'intention, mais à une présence à l'autre aussi désintéressée que possible. Il suffit de parcourir la littérature que le patriarcat de Moscou offre sur l'Eglise catholique pour comprendre que les vieux stéréotypes à l'égard de «l'ennemi de l'intérieur» ne sont pas morts et qu'il faudra du temps pour les dépasser.

En même temps, si l'Eglise catholique veut bien reconnaître ses torts, elle aimerait que le partenaire en fasse autant, notamment à propos de la spoliation des Eglises gréco-catholiques après la seconde guerre mondiale. Rome ne peut biffer d'un trait de plume l'existence de ces Eglises uniates, même si elles incommode Moscou. Ce n'est pas par hasard que Jean Paul II notait dans son message à Graz: «Nous avons besoin d'une purification de notre mémoire historique, qui porte encore les traces d'un passé troublé et parfois violent». Et l'on précise à Rome que le patriarche Bartoloméos avait été soigneusement tenu au courant du projet de rencontre entre Jean Paul II et Alexis II.

L'avenir de l'œcuménisme européen est donc lié plus que jamais à l'évolution de l'attitude orthodoxe. Certes, malgré les soubresauts récents, aucune porte n'est fermée. Chacun proteste de sa volonté de dialogue. Mais les Eglises d'Occident devront prendre plus au sérieux les revendications orientales; non pour les entériner automatiquement, mais pour suffisamment les comprendre, et alors exprimer en quoi elles paraissent légitimes ou illégitimes au regard d'une foi chrétienne œcuméniquement purifiée. Le métropolite Staikos, président du Conseil des Eglises d'Autriche, a le mot juste: «Nous n'en sortirons pas sans un dialogue ouvert, transparent et honnête, dans un esprit d'autocritique et d'humilité.»

On aura compris que le Rassemblement de Graz ne constitue pas une étape euphorique du processus œcuménique européen, mais simplement une étape réaliste. Devant les difficultés actuelles, il ne s'agit pas de prôner un œcuménisme à plusieurs vitesses, mais plutôt d'accepter de s'attendre, et surtout de s'expliquer. La seule certitude est que le chemin sera long.

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# A LETTER ON NEO-LIBERALISM IN LATIN AMERICA

## by The Latin American Provincials of the Society of Jesus

Feast of Saint Joseph Pignatelli  
Mexico City, 14 November, 1996

Dear Brother Jesuits,

1. As Provincial Superiors of the Society of Jesus in Latin America and the Caribbean, hearing the call of the 34<sup>th</sup> General Congregation to deepen our mission: **“to proclaim the faith which seeks justice”**, we wish to share **some reflections about the so-called neo-liberalism in our countries** with all those who participate in the apostolic mission of the Society of Jesus throughout the continent and all those who make common cause with our people, especially the poorest. To claim that the economic measures applied in recent years in every Latin American and Caribbean country represent the only possible way of shaping the economy, and that the impoverishment of millions of Latin Americans is the inevitable price for future growth, are claims we cannot accept with equanimity. These economic measures are fruit of a **culture**. They propose a vision of the human person and mark out a political strategy that we must discern from the perspective of models of society to which we aspire and for which we work along with many men and women motivated by the hope of living in a more just and human society and of leaving it so for future generations.

2. The reflections presented here do not claim to be the scientific analysis of a complex issue that merits study with many disciplines. They are reflections concerning the criteria and effects of neo-liberalism, and the type of society we long for. Our main concern is ethical and religious in nature. The economic and political practices that we discuss reflect, in the public sphere, the counter-values and limits of a culture founded upon a conception of the human person and society incompatible with the values of the Gospel.

### THE SOCIETY WE ARE PART OF

3. On the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, communications link us closely, technology offers new possibilities for knowledge and creativity, and markets permeate all social spaces. In contrast to the past

decade, the economy in most of our countries has begun to grow again.

4. This material expansion could create hope for everyone, but instead it leaves multitudes in poverty with no chance to participate in building up a common destiny; it threatens cultural identity; it destroys natural resources. We estimate that in Latin America and the Caribbean at least 180 million people live in poverty and 80 million subsist in extreme poverty.

5. The economic forces that produce these perverse results tend to turn into ideologies and lift certain concepts up as absolutes. The market, for example, which used to be a useful and even necessary instrument to improve and increase supply and reduce prices, has become **the means, the method, and the goal** that govern relationships among human beings.

6. This cause is behind the spread of so-called “neo-liberal” economic measures throughout the continent.

- They consider economic growth — and not the totality of men and women in harmony with creation — to be the economy’s *raison d’être*.
- They restrict State intervention to the point of stripping it of its responsibilities for the minimum goods that every citizen deserves in virtue of being a person.
- They eliminate comprehensive programmes meant to generate opportunity for everyone and replace them with incidental assistance to specific groups.
- They privatise businesses on the assumption that, in all cases, the State is an inefficient administrator.
- They open borders to the flow of capital, finance and merchandise without restrictions, leaving the smallest and weakest producers without enough protection.
- On the problem of the foreign debt whose servicing requires drastic cutbacks in social investment, they keep silent.

- They subordinate the complexity of the public treasury to the adjustment of macroeconomic variables: a balanced fiscal budget, inflation reduction, and a stable balance of payments; as if from this would flow all common good without creating new problems for the population.
- They insist that these adjustments will create growth which, when substantial, will increase income levels and trickle down to solve the situation of the disadvantaged.
- In order to create incentives for private investment, they eliminate any obstacles entailed by legislation to protect workers.
- They exempt powerful groups from taxes and environmental obligations and shelter them in order to accelerate the industrialisation process, thus leading to an even greater concentration of wealth and economic power.
- They place political activity at the service of this economic strategy, by removing every restraint, every political and social control, in order to guarantee the hegemony of the free market in every field including the free contracting of labour.

7. We acknowledge that the structural adjustments have also had some positive effects. Market mechanisms have increased the supply of higher quality products at better prices. Inflation has been reduced throughout the continent. Governments have given up tasks outside their competence in order to attend, as is their duty, to the common good. General awareness has risen of the value of fiscal austerity which uses public resources better. And trade relations among our countries have moved ahead significantly.

8. But these factors far from compensate the immense imbalances caused: a great concentration of income, wealth and land tenure; an exponential increase in masses of urban unemployed or those who subsist with unstable or unproductive jobs; the bankruptcy of thousands of small and medium-sized businesses; destruction and forced displacement of indigenous and rural populations; spread of drug-trafficking based in rural sectors whose traditional products are no longer competitive; disappearance of food security; increase in criminality, often exacerbated by hunger; destabilisation of national economies by the free flow of international speculation; imbalances in local communities caused by projects of multinational companies that do not take the local population into account.

9. As a result, concomitant with moderate economic growth, social unrest is on the rise in nearly all our countries, as expressed in strikes and public protests. In some areas, armed struggle has re-emerged, which

solves nothing. There is a growing repudiation of the general direction of the economy which, far from improving the common good, is deepening the traditional causes of public discontent: **inequality, misery, and corruption.**

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE HUMAN

10. Underlying the “neo-liberal” economic logic there is a conception of the human person which limits the greatness of man and woman to their capacity to generate monetary income. This intensifies individualism and the race to earn and to own, and easily leads to attacks on the integrity of creation. In many cases, greed, corruption, and violence are unleashed. Moreover, as this conception permeates social groups, it radically destroys community.

11. A set of values is imposed which puts priority on individual freedom of access to satisfaction and pleasures; it legitimises, among other things, drugs and eroticism without limits. It is a freedom that rejects any government interference in private initiatives, opposes social planning, ignores the virtues of solidarity, and acknowledges the laws of the market alone.

12. Through economic globalisation, this manner of comprehending man and woman penetrates our countries with highly seductive messages and symbols. Thanks to the control which this vision exercises over the mass media, it destroys the identity of local cultures that lack the ability to make themselves heard.

13. The leaders of our societies, usually linked to these movements of globalisation and imbued with the wholesale acceptance of the market logic, often live as strangers in their own countries. Rather than dialogue, they perceive the people as an obstacle and threat to their interests, not as brothers and sisters, companions or associates.

14. This subtle and attractive conception considers it normal for millions of men and women on the continent to be born and die in misery, unable to generate enough income to obtain a **more human level of life.** Consequently, Governments and societies are not shocked by the hunger and insecurity of multitudes left hopeless and bewildered by the excesses of those who abuse society's and nature's resources with no thought for others.

## THE SOCIETY WE WANT

15. Thanks be to God, different cultural and ethnic groups and generations, different classes and various

social sectors are taking initiatives designed at transformation that suggest the emergence of a new world.

16. Inspired by these efforts, we want to help build a reality closer to the Kingdom of justice, brotherhood and solidarity found in the Gospel, where life with dignity is possible for all men and women.

17. We long for a society in which all people have access to the goods and services they deserve by virtue of having been called to share this life as a common path toward God. We do not demand a welfare society of unlimited material satisfaction. We call for a just society in which no one remains excluded from work and from access to basic goods necessary to achieve personal fulfilment, such as education, food, health, family and security.

18. We want a society in which all can lead a proper family life and look toward the future with hope, share the natural environment and bequeath its marvels to the generations which will succeed us.

19. A society which respects the cultural traditions that have identified the indigenous peoples, those who came from other regions, Afro-Americans, and those of mixed race.

20. A society sensitive to the weak, the marginalised, those who have suffered the impact of socio-economic processes that deny first place to the human being. A democratic society, structured in a participatory manner, in which political activity is a viable choice for those who wish to serve the broader interests important for everyone.

21. We are aware of the high cost to be paid for achieving this kind of society in terms of the changes required in attitudes, habits, and priorities. We are challenged to adopt as our own the positive elements of modernity such as work, organisation, and efficiency, without which we cannot build that society we dream of. Finally, we want to contribute to the construction of a Latin American community among our peoples.

## TASKS

22. An enormous task lies ahead of us to be accomplished in different fields:

- For our universities and research centres to collaborate with many others on the basis of theology, social sciences, and the philosophy of man and nature, in a serious study of neo-liberalism followed by effective publication, with

a view to discovering its underlying rationality and the effects which strike at human beings and destroy the harmony of creation.

- To **compare and discern** the courses of action that flow from the analysis so as to take the appropriate options.

23. This understanding and these decisions should lead us:

- To share the plight of victims through communities of solidarity, in order to safeguard the rights of the excluded and undertake with them, in dialogue with decision-making sectors, the building-up of societies which are open, non-excluding and mutually supportive.
- To strengthen the cultural and spiritual traditions of our peoples so that they may become involved in global relationships based on their own identity, without jeopardising their symbolic richness and community spirit.
- To incorporate into educational work, which we do with many others, the order of values necessary to form persons capable of protecting the primacy of human beings in the world we share.
- To give our students the necessary training to understand this reality and work for its transformation.
- To resist the consumerist society vigorously and its ideology of happiness based on the unlimited acquisition of material satisfaction.
- To communicate and disseminate widely in all media the findings of this analysis of neo-liberalism, the values that must be preserved and promoted, and to make the possible alternatives known.
- To propose viable solutions in those arenas where global and macroeconomic decisions are made.

24. Beginning from the spirituality of Saint Ignatius of Loyola which is engaged in the transformation of the human heart, we will work to strengthen the value of gratuity in a world where everything has its price; to stimulate a sobriety of life and a sense of simple beauty; to promote internal silence and the spiritual quest; and to reinforce a responsible freedom that resolutely incorporates the practice of solidarity.

25. To make our undertaking credible, to show our solidarity with the excluded of this continent, and to demonstrate our distance from consumerism, we will not only strive for personal austerity, but also have our works and institutions avoid every kind of ostentation and employ methods consistent with our poverty. In



their investments and consumption, they should not support companies which violate human rights or damage the eco-systems. In this way we want to reaffirm the radical option of faith that led us to answer God's call to follow Jesus in poverty, so as to be more effective and free in the quest for justice.

26. With many others we shall strive for a national and Latin American community of solidarity, where science, technology, and markets are at the service of all people in our countries. Where the commitment to the poor makes plain that working for the well-being of all men and women, without exclusions, is our

contribution both modest and serious to the greater glory of God in history and in creation.

We hope that these reflections stimulate efforts to improve our service to the peoples of Latin America. We ask our Lady of Guadalupe, Patron Saint of Latin America, to bless our peoples and intercede with God to obtain for us abundant grace to carry out our mission.

Ref.: *Promotio Iustitiae*,  
No. 67, May 1997.



# SEDOS SYMPOSIUM

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

Brothers of the Christian Schools, Via Aurelia, 476,  
(Translation: English, French, Spanish, Italian)

Inscriptions: 18.30 hrs.

Entrance Fee: Lire 7.000

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