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Sœur **Susan Smith**, RNDM, dans *The Holy Spirit and Mission in Some Contemporary Theologies of Mission*, fait état de l'intérêt grandissant pour le rôle de l'Esprit Saint qu'on relève dans les théologies contemporaines de la mission. La prise de conscience de la présence de l'Esprit à l'œuvre dans le monde encourage le dialogue au cœur de notre manière de vivre la mission.

Jean Pirotte nous présente, dans son article *Annonce chrétienne et mondialisation*, un point de vue d'historien sur la propagation de certains schèmes occidentaux et la diffusion du christianisme. Il s'interroge sur la manière de vivre le christianisme qui favorise largement l'uniformisation et l'universalisme. Il note aussi le respect et la défense des particularités culturelles qu'on trouve ici et là.

Dans son article *Christianisme palestinien et dialogue interreligieux*, le père **Frans Bouwen** se penche sur la question des rapports de la communauté chrétienne palestinienne avec les musulmans. Dans le prochain numéro, l'auteur examinera ceux qu'elle entretient avec le judaïsme.

Dr **Maynor Clara Cheng**, dans *Integrating Inner-Healing into Missions Education*, évoque les difficultés éprouvées par les nouveaux missionnaires qui arrivent dans une culture différente de la leur. S'il est nécessaire de préparer le futur missionnaire sur le plan de la connaissance du ministère qu'il aura à exercer, il importe aussi de lui donner une préparation sur les plans émotif, social, psychologique et spirituel.

Bonne lecture !

Bernard East, o.p.
Directeur exécutif de SEDOS

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The Holy Spirit and Mission in Some Contemporary Theologies of Mission

Susan Smith, RNDM, is a Catholic sister who has worked in Bangladesh and Papua New Guinea. She now lectures in New Testament Studies at the Catholic Institute of Theology in Auckland, New Zealand, and is particularly interested in exploring the agency of the Spirit in mission. Address: Catholic Institute of Theology, 16 Waterloo Quadrant, Auckland, New Zealand. E-mail: s.smith@ihug.co.nz.

There is an emerging trend in some contemporary Church documents and missiological writings to emphasize the agency of the Spirit in mission. Pope John Paul II in his 1990 Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio* refers to the Holy Spirit as “the principal agent of mission” (n. 30).

There are at least three reasons for this emergence of a renewed interest in the Spirit and mission. First, there is a growing awareness and appreciation that the work of the Spirit has priority in time and place over and beyond any ecclesial activity. The mission of the Spirit precedes the mission of the church. Because the Holy Spirit is present in all creation, in all cultures, this can encourage a movement toward dialogue as a preferred way of being missionary. To enter into dialogue with another suggests that both have something important to bring to the conversation. It implies that neither party has a monopoly of the truth. This permits movement beyond a monologic model that emphasizes the proclamation of the word but that both have a partial truth that they wish to share with the other. To accent dialogue allows for a critique of an ecclesiocentrism that either understands mission as proclamation leading to Church expansion and growth, or a Christocentrism that involves an uncritical espousal of the unique salvation offered through Christ.

Second, the theology of the Spirit of some Christian feminists can encourage a search for alternative approaches to mission that are free from androcentric biases. American theologian Elizabeth Johnson, as we shall see later, offers a theology of the Spirit that has important implications for missiology (Johnson 1992). English feminist theologian Anna Primavesi attempts to articulate a more inclusive theology of God that emphasizes God’s immanence. She writes: “the Spirit of God is not only the crown of the world tree, but also its root. It fills both daughters and sons of God with power and the earth with knowledge of divine” (Primavesi 1991:140).

Third, concern about the environment, and the criti-

cism that Christianity is partly responsible for today’s environmental degradation has alerted Christians to identify theological positions that enable them to address contemporary environmental issues. To appreciate the immanence of the Spirit in creation can provide a theological rationale for Christians to involve themselves in care of creation.

Some Contemporary Theological Writing on the Holy Spirit and Mission

A number of theologians, concerned to advance our understanding of the relationship between the Spirit and mission, hone our understanding of the Spirit as the principal agent of mission. In particular, I wish to examine the approaches to pneumatology of Elizabeth Johnson, Stephen Bevans, Robert Schreiter, Jacques Dupuis, Leonardo Boff, José Comblin, and Jürgen Moltmann, all of whose theological explorations allow us to appreciate some of the missiological implications of understanding the Spirit as the “principal agent of mission”. Johnson’s emphasis on God’s Spirit immanent in all creation opens up possibilities regarding our understanding of the universal presence of the Spirit, while her exposure of the androcentric nature of much traditional theology as a significant cause of oppression, is important. Bevans and Schreiter explore the need for a theology of mission that can respond adequately to some of the missiological questions raised in the contemporary Church, particularly those relating to interreligious dialogue. Dupuis is concerned about culturally appropriate and theologically sensitive ways of approaching interreligious dialogue and religious pluralism. Comblin and Boff engage in retrieving the biblical understanding of the Spirit active in human history on behalf of the poor. Moltmann believes that a pneumatology that directs attention toward the Spirit present in creation can offer a theological foundation for developing eco-theologies.

Elizabeth Johnson's Pneumatology and Its Possibilities for New Missiological Understandings

Johnson suggests that to use pneumatological categories is a privileged way of understanding God's presence in the world, because our first experience of God is that of the Spirit. The universal reality of the Spirit's presence reaches into all creation. There are three ways through which we can experience the Spirit's presence in creation: first, the Spirit immanent in nature; second, the Spirit's absence and presence in relationships; and, third, the Spirit's absence and presence in societal systems and structures. I will now examine these three dimensions of the Spirit's presence in more detail.

The Spirit Immanent and Present in Nature

Johnson's most significant work to date concerning the Spirit and creation is *Women, Earth and Creator Spirit*. Here she draws attention to the presence of the Spirit in nature (Johnson 1993). This presence is important for two reasons. First, it alerts us to the creative agency of the Spirit (see Gn 1:1; Wis 7:22 and 8:1), allowing us to understand the revelatory capacity of nature (see Rom 1:20). Second, the presence of God's Spirit in creation is an invitation to us to "extend moral consideration to species beyond our own, and moral standing to ecological systems as a whole" (Johnson 1992: 66-67).

Johnson's ecological theology is helpful for those seeking to identify the parameters of an environmental ethic. She relies on a liberationist analysis to critique patterns of domination and exploitation to uncover the causal nature of the depletion of natural resources. This depletion constitutes a critical justice problem, particularly for those who are already economically diminished. Her analysis suggests that patriarchal culture permits nature, like women, to become the "other", to be exploited, tamed and controlled by males. As Johnson observes: "Women, whose bodies mediate physical existence to humanity thus become symbolically the oldest archetype of the connection between social domination and the dominion of nature" (Johnson 1993:13), for both nature and women are vulnerable to patriarchal patterns of domination. Therefore women, as victims of patriarchal culture, can be significant protagonists on behalf of exploited nature, also the victim of patriarchal domination. But a critique of patriarchal culture, and the oppression of women and nature that it tolerates, is insufficient to resolve problems of exploitation and domination.

However, if we can appreciate the Spirit as the principle of inclusivity and mutuality, drawing us into non-exploitative relationships with Creation, then we have identified one important way of redeeming envi-

ronmental abuse. Acceptance of a theological position that emphasizes the immanence of the Spirit in all creation, challenges humankind to shift from an anthropocentric view of the world to an eco-centric view, grounded in belief in the presence of the Spirit in creation. This presence makes it difficult to hold fast to a position that understands creation as hierarchically ordered, for a hierarchical order often legitimates exploitation and domination of those considered to be inferior in the order of creation.

The Spirit of the transcendent God, immanent in all creation, should encourage in the human person a respectful love for creation that goes far beyond appreciating its therapeutic values for humankind. It invites us to acknowledge that humankind is but one expression of God's creative power, united to all other expressions of God's creativity. An awareness of this religious kinship should encourage women and men to cherish and seek "intelligently to preserve biodiversity, for when a species becomes extinct we have lost a manifestation of the goodness of God" (*ibid.*: 39). Overtaken by a divine passion for liberation, women and men denounce what hides the Spirit. They readily and creatively engage in alerting others to the presence of God's Spirit within all creation. They believe that the truth of this kinship must inform human attitudes and behaviour toward creation, in this way enabling them to reframe their relationship to creation, conscious of their common origins and their common goal of reconciliation in the *eschaton* (see Eph 1:13-14).

Johnson identifies three possible ways that humankind can relate to creation, each of which should provoke reflection and action. First, Johnson describes the kingship model based on hierarchical dualism, which understands humankind as separate from and superior to the rest of creation. This model legitimates human exploitation of the earth's resources. It is this model that has been so detrimental for creation particularly in the industrialized sectors of the world. A second model is the stewardship model, which has the potential to modify radically the kingship model. However, it is still predicated on an anthropocentric understanding, finding its theological justification in Gn 1-2. It still tolerates a hierarchical structure in which humans are to be stewards of the earth's resources rather than exploiters. Despite its anthropocentric character, the stewardship model should not be dismissed. An important missionary task could be to encourage society's economic and political institutions to allow the stewardship model to inform their decision-making. A third model, the kinship model, recognizes the organic unity between humankind and nature, and does not postulate different ontological levels within the order of creation. Destruction of any particular species by human-

kind has profound influences on the rest of creation given the interconnectedness of all creation. This is a far more radical option. While it is the goal toward which human beings should aspire, it would involve significant theological and cultural shifts. But if some Christians were to make such “an option for creation”, it would have a certain witness value for the wider community (*ibid.*: 29-40).

The Spirit is Present in Personal and Interpersonal Relations

A privileged revelation of the Spirit occurs in the love of human persons for each other. The wish to reach out to another in love is an experience of transcendence that can alert us to the experience of the source of all love. To experience the love of another is life-giving for both the giver and recipient. Johnson writes: “We seek and are found by the Spirit in the person-creating give and take of loving relationships, in each fresh, particular discovery of the other’s beauty in the strength of ongoing fidelity” (Johnson 1992:125).

In the same way, the absence of that love in human life is an experience of the absence of God’s Spirit. Such painful absences are best resolved by waiting for the movement of the compassionate Spirit urging us to action despite the darkness and ambiguity of the situations in which we may find ourselves. Painful experiences of absence “can motivate critical resistance to evil; the willingness to utter the prophetic word” (Johnson 1992:126). It is such experiences that can motivate us to be concerned about unjust social structures.

The Presence and Absence of the Spirit Are Experienced in Social Structures

The Spirit is experienced as present when such structures serve human love through the birthing and nurturing of systems which ensure justice for all, particularly for those marginalized by political and economic *élites*. The absence of God’s Spirit is experienced most acutely when social structures are dehumanizing, when difference becomes a reason for discrimination, not for celebration. Johnson believes that those who seek to subvert racist, sexist, economic and militaristic structures that operate in favour of a privileged few are signs of the Spirit at work in the world.

The Importance of a New Language for Discourse about the Presence of the Spirit

To appreciate the liberating agency of the Spirit in creation requires a non-androcentric Spirit-language that “presses a strong critique against traditional speech about God” (*ibid.*:18). Traditional God-talk is oppres-

sive for women because its emphasis on the centrality of God imaged as male has been damaging for women and for creation. Christian theology, influenced by Greek philosophy, has tolerated a dualism that legitimates the domination of women and the exploitation of nature. This is why there is a need to unmask patriarchal language about God that legitimates a patriarchal culture that excludes women and exploits nature.

Attempts, therefore, to redress androcentric biases in theological language offer an important missionary focus to those who wish to liberate sectors of human society from the restrictions that patriarchal ideology imposes on them. Johnson believes “Christian feminist liberation theology is reflection on religious mystery from a stance which makes an *a priori* option for the human flourishing of women” (*ibid.*: 17). The goal of this option is not to encourage a reverse sexism whereby women become the dominant group. “Instead the goal is the flourishing of all beings in their uniqueness and interrelation — both sexes, all races and social groups, all creatures in the universe” (*ibid.*:32). Patricia Fox notes that Johnson’s task is to “retrieve the symbol of God as a God of intrinsic relationality and communion” (Fox 1994:283). A retrieved Spirit-language that understands the Spirit as God’s salvific presence in creation can chart a way out of the impasse that androcentric theologies have caused for women and creation.

Johnson’s pneumatology invites us to understand and appreciate the Spirit of God dwelling among us, immanent in all creation, awakening us to reach out for kinship with all that is marginalized, and thereby welcoming the other into the dance of life. This happens because the Spirit is the source of relationality, a “relationality [which] is intrinsic to her very being as love, gift and friend both to the world and within the holy mystery of God” (Johnson 1992:148). Johnson’s emphasis on understanding the Spirit as the principle of relationality requires humankind to come to grips with the oppression of women, the reality of the poor and with environmental degradation, for the presence of the Spirit urges humankind to let justice reign down on the whole earth.

Johnson’s contribution to those seeking to appreciate the agency of the Spirit in mission is significant. However, the contemporary reader, while acknowledging Johnson’s contribution, does need to keep in mind the following provisos. First, her work is a work in process,¹ and the reader needs to be aware of the provisional nature of work in process. Second, Johnson is perhaps somewhat romantic in her understanding of creation. Certainly she realizes and accepts the apparent disarray of creation, but she seems to suggest that the presence of the Spirit in creation endows nature with a benevolence that perhaps borders on a certain unfounded

optimism. In other words, Johnson has yet to address in a systematic way humankind's experiential knowledge and awareness of the reality of suffering in creation, and what this says about the Spirit's presence in creation.

Stephen Bevans and a Missionary Theology of the Holy Spirit

The importance of Johnson's pneumatology is recognized and developed by Catholic missiologist Stephen Bevans, who endorses Johnson's perception of the universal presence of the Spirit. In his reflections on the Spirit's agency in mission, he makes four points that are pertinent to our discussion.

First, he explores the shape of a missionary theology of the Holy Spirit (Bevans 1998a:102-105), which could profoundly affect the way in which Christians understand their relationship with the world and with other religions. Bevans invites us to think of God as transcending immanence, a concept that understands God's Spirit as involved in the world and in its history. Or, as Bevans defines it, "[t]he Spirit is God so involved in the world (immanence) that we need constantly to be amazed and challenged by God's presence (transcendence)" (*ibid.*:105). It is this transcending immanence in which all mission should be grounded. Bevans agrees with Johnson that there is no part of creation that is untouched by the presence of God's Spirit. This awareness of the universality of the Spirit's presence, a presence that extends to cultures and peoples formerly thought to be pagan and in need of salvation ought to encourage a commitment to inculturation and interreligious dialogue rooted in the belief of the presence of the Spirit in the other.

Second, support for this position is found in certain synoptic texts (see Mk 1:10, 12; Mt 1:18; 4:1; Lk 1:35; 2:25-26; 4:1,14) that point to the Spirit's prior agency in mission, active in the world prior to the public ministry of the historical Jesus. Bevans suggests that we need to work from the parameters of a Christology that understands Jesus as "the face of the Spirit; in his concreteness we encounter mystery, but we never fully grasp it" (*ibid.*:104). Because the mission of God through the Spirit enjoys chronological priority over the mission of the historical Jesus, we diminish that truth when we concentrate on the mission of the historical Jesus as the privileged and foundational entry point for subsequent missionary endeavours. Such a narrow Christocentrism may foster a Christology that does not augur well for interreligious dialogue grounded in an understanding of Spirit whose presence is universal. It can ensnare the missionary into prioritizing proclamation over other forms of missionary endeavour. For example, an emphasis on Christology that is concerned primarily with an explanation of the Christ

event in rational and dogmatic categories suggests one is able to control the message. Not that a pneumatological emphasis should minimize the importance of Christology. The Christology that is now required urges us to understand Jesus as the "face of the Spirit" (*ibid.*:104), "the human concretization of that Spirit in human history, the one who gave God's 'anonymous' presence a human face" (Bevans 1998b:108).

Third, Bevans is aware that his affirmation of the Spirit as the principal, prior and universal agent of mission, may suggest a dichotomy between the work of the Spirit and the work of Jesus. He rejects such a dichotomy, and refers to Jesuit theologian Frederick Crowe's explanation of the relationship between the Spirit and Jesus. Crowe asks if perhaps we need to reverse the order in which we commonly think of the Son and Spirit in the world:

Commonly we think of God first sending the Son, and of the Spirit being sent in that context, to bring to completion the work of the Son. On the contrary, God first sent the Spirit, and then sent the Son in the context of the Spirit's mission, to bring to completion — perhaps not precisely the work of the Spirit, but the work of God conceived as one work to be executed in two steps of the twofold mission of first the Spirit and then the Son (Crowe 1985:8).

To emphasize God's first sending of the Spirit does not mean subverting the Trinitarian foundations of Christianity. If we think of the mission of the Spirit as invisible, while the mission of the Son is revealed to humankind in a privileged moment in human history, in the visible mission of Jesus of Nazareth, the relationship of the Spirit to the Son is easier to grasp. We need to acknowledge that what is visible "must be first in the cognitional order of discovery" (*ibid.*:11). If we are to think ontologically rather than cognitively, then we may reverse that order, thereby acknowledging the universal and prior mission of the Spirit. At the beginning of time, God gifted creation with the Spirit, and in the fullness of time, God gifted creation with the Son, sent "not in opposition, but in unity, not in subordination, but in complementarity" (*ibid.*:11). In this perspective, both Spirit and Son continue the work of God, as do those in whom the Spirit of God dwells. The time between Easter and the end-time is indeed the time of the Spirit whose presence ensures that individuals and communities remain faithfully creative to the mission of God. Crowe's perspective is helpful because it dismisses the possibility of a dichotomy between the work of the Spirit and the work of Jesus. The mystery of the Spirit's universal presence in the world and the gift of the Spirit from the Risen Jesus to

his disciples oblige us to hold two seemingly contradictory positions. On the one hand “Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the Father” (*Ad gentes*, n. 4), and on the other, “the Holy Spirit was already at work in the world before Christ was glorified” (*ibid.*). What must never be overlooked is that there is one divine economy, in which the functions of the Spirit and Son are complementary. The Incarnation, at the centre of salvation history, is actualized in history through the action of the Holy Spirit (see Lk 1:35; Mt 1:18).

Fourth, accepting the Spirit as transcending immanence has implications for the Church’s exercise of mission. It suggests that the Church is one instrument through which the Spirit acts in creation, rather than the Spirit being given to the Church for the sake of the Church’s mission. The disciple is to be “the ‘face’ of God’s Holy Mystery in history and to give concrete shape and focus to the creative, life-giving, challenging, renewing, uniting power of the Spirit that has always been loose in the world” (Bevans 1998a:103). This implies that the Church has a privileged role, but not a solo role, in the exercise of the mission. In this perspective, the Church “is rather to point *beyond* itself to be a community that preaches, serves and witnesses to the Reign of God” (Bevans and Schroeder 1999:200). As Bevans writes, “thinking missiologically about the Holy Spirit can turn the Church inside out, perhaps making it more responsive to where God is really leading it in today’s world” (Bevans 1998a:105).

Robert Schreiter: *Trinity and Mission Today*

Catholic theologian Robert Schreiter is another whose theology advances discourse and understanding about the Spirit’s agency in God’s mission (Schreiter, 1990). He asks how God is present in other religions and how salvation can occur without the explicit mediation of Christ. There are Christian missionaries who affirm that knowledge of and belief in the salvific mediation of Christ are essential aspects of mission work. However, such an explicitly Christocentric approach can run the risk of collapsing into christomonism.² Concern about the inappropriateness of Christocentric and christomonistic approaches can generate a reaction in the form of a theocentric approach to mission, which argues that salvation is possible by a name other than that of Christ, because all religious traditions are talking about the one reality, though in different names. Some hold that such a position may be more conducive to inter-religious dialogue.³ However, caution should be exercised before setting aside a Christocentric approach in favour of a “theocentric” one, given the New Testament’s emphasis on the primacy of Jesus’ role in God’s mission (see Acts 4:12). A perceived major difficulty with

Christocentrism, however, is that it fails to explore satisfactorily the question of how God might be working in other religious traditions.

One way of addressing the problem is to revisit and reframe traditional Western articulations of the trinitarian origins of mission in order to appreciate better the agency of the Spirit. The Latin insistence that the Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son accounts for the strong Christocentrism characteristic of Western missionary practice and this has as its corollary an under-developed theology of the Spirit. The traditional Western reliance on the “high” Pauline and Johannine Christologies has tended to encourage an excessively Christocentric approach to mission. On the other hand, the “lower” christologies of the synoptic Gospels allow us to understand the Spirit as empowering Jesus for his mission (see Lk 1:35; 3:21; 4:1; 4:18-19). An approach to mission that highlights the role of the Spirit could serve “as a safeguard to refrain from making our *solus Christus* a replacement for a [pre-Vatican II] *sola ecclesia*” (*ibid.*:435). The contemporary shift toward understanding Jesus as empowered by the Spirit for mission does not mean sacrificing Christology, or espousing a theocentrism that requires a non-normative Christology. It means reclaiming the trinitarian origin of mission, and appreciating that a greater emphasis on the agency of the three persons of the economic Trinity can lead to a better understanding of the work of the Spirit in history.

Such twentieth century trinitarian developments are important for mission studies for three reasons. First, the emphasis on the economic Trinity and the particular role of the Spirit invites us to “reshape our understanding of the *missio dei*, which is at the heart of so many mission theologies” (Schreiter 1996:89). Second, the emphasis on relationality, on personhood, encourages giving a higher profile to the Spirit in conversations on mission. If the Holy Spirit is given more of a profile as a person, and not simply understood as the Spirit of the Risen Jesus, then it is easier to understand the Spirit as “a presence of God’s saving grace in cultures and religions beyond Christianity” (*ibid.*). Such belief in the Spirit can affect our more traditional understandings of mission. Third, the movement in Western theology to emphasize relationality in the immanent and economic Trinity means that we might move from “a monist metaphysics to a more pluralist one. This would have tremendous implications for Christian self-understanding and therefore for Christian understanding of mission” (*ibid.*). A strong Christocentric bias that encourages christomonism and ties the Spirit so closely to the Son “that all of the Father’s activity is manifested through the Son” (Schreiter 1990:434) would be avoided. This would allow us to more readily accept the Spirit as the principal agent of

mission. It still would mean that the entry point into contemporary missiological discourse is the Trinity, but if the relationality of the Trinity were emphasized rather than a “monist metaphysics” then the goal of mission can be more properly understood as the building of relationships that in some measure reflect trinitarian relationships in their emphasis on inclusivity, mutuality and participation, thereby complementing redemption and Church growth as the only entry points into contemporary discussions on mission.

Jacques Dupuis: Religious Pluralism and Mission

Belgian theologian Jacques Dupuis’ ministry as an academic theologian in Asia and in Europe has led him to try and identify theological bases that are helpful for those involved in interreligious dialogue and in understanding religious pluralism. Given the unique significance of Jesus in God’s salvific plan, how are we to understand that salvation is mediated through other religious traditions? Perhaps, he proposes, through emphasizing that the universal action of the Spirit occurs before, during and after the Christ event (Dupuis, 1999). Therefore, it is important to identify the parameters of a missionary model that is an alternative to a Christocentric model. Though the Catholic Church affirms the salvific presence of the Spirit outside the “visible confines of the Mystical Body” (*Redemptor Hominis*, n. 6), Dupuis believes that the salvific presence of the Holy Spirit in other religious traditions is not accorded the significance it warrants. These traditions are salvific because the Holy Spirit is present and active “in members of other religions, and in the religious traditions themselves” (Dupuis 1999:28). But an acceptance that the “universal action of the Spirit in human history and in the world surpasses the Christ event” (*ibid.*:27), and challenges the contemporary theologian to hold in creative tension belief in the definitive revelation of the historical event of Jesus Christ and the universal and salvific action of the Spirit of God in the one divine economy.

Second, this raises the question as to the appropriate entry point into interreligious dialogue. Should it be the historical particularity of Jesus, or the universal presence of the Spirit? The “historical particularity of Jesus undeniably puts limits on the Christ event” (*ibid.*: 28) because we understand that event through the historical particularity of Jesus. While the trans-historical Christ can never be separated from the historical Jesus, the manner in which the historical Jesus and the Christ-event have been proclaimed has not always respected the religious sensibilities of others. Because the Spirit is not located historically in the same way as Jesus, the universal presence of the Spirit may offer a more sensitive entry point into interreligious dialogue. Dupuis

writes that the work of the Spirit and the work of the Son represent different but not competing aspects of the one mission of God. “The Word and the Spirit — the “two hands of God” (Irenaeus) — are joined by their universal action to endow with truth and grace the religious life of human beings, and to mark with ‘salutary values’ the religious traditions to which these individuals belong” (*ibid.*: 30).

Dupuis believes that a trinitarian theology which asserts that the work of the Spirit and the Logos cannot be restricted to the historical ministry of Jesus and the Church offers an alternative to exclusivist, pluralist and inclusivist positions. It implies that Hindus and Buddhists be acknowledged as “covenant peoples [who] deserve to be called ‘peoples of God’” (Dupuis 1997:226), guided and directed by the Spirit. Christians should remember that though the revelation of Jesus is privileged over other revelations of God’s salvific actions in history and in creation, it does not exhaust the revelation of the Spirit and the Logos, for “the religious traditions of the world convey different insights into the mystery of Ultimate Reality” (*ibid.*: 279). In interreligious dialogue the Spirit is gifted to both parties even if only the Christian can articulate the mystery of this gift in trinitarian categories. In dialogue, both parties can discover previously unrecognized movements of the Spirit that make community and communion possible.

Dupuis’ major contribution is in providing a trinitarian framework for Christian dialogue with the great world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Islam. He pays little attention to indigenous religions, though by extension his belief that the Spirit and the Logos are implicitly active in world religions assumes that they are likewise active in indigenous religions. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism* is indeed a masterly summation of contemporary Catholic thought on religious pluralism grounded in traditional trinitarian doctrine.

José Comblin: The Spirit and Liberation

Belgian liberation theologian José Comblin’s particular contribution to the present investigation is to explore the relationship between the Spirit and mission understood as liberation. He is one of the few writing theologically on God’s Spirit, liberation, and work for justice as essential aspects of mission.⁴ Comblin writes:

Latin American theology, we must acknowledge, has not developed a specific theology of the Holy Spirit. Until now, theology on our continent has been in the debt of the theology of the Latin Church, which, instead of developing a the-

ology of the Holy Spirit, has only repeated what it has received from the patristic era. So far, Latin American theology — like all Latin tradition theology, both Protestant and Catholic — operates under the sign of a “christomonism” (Comblin 1993:146).

One helpful way of moving beyond christomonism in mission is to emphasize the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of liberation, a role that historically has been overlooked because the Spirit’s role is frequently anonymous, though always present, in those historical actions of the poor in their search for liberation. Throughout history, the Holy Spirit has been active in history on behalf of the poor. Within the Judaeo-Christian tradition, people have been challenged by the problem of poverty. Throughout history, a variety of responses to the problem of poverty and its dehumanizing effects are discernible: the denunciations of the Old Testament prophets, the teachings of Jesus and the first Christian communities, the inheritors of that prophetic tradition, the voluntary poverty embraced by various religious movements, almsgiving and charitable works carried out on behalf of the poor. Such responses to the reality of poverty reflect the movement of the Spirit in the hearts and minds of humankind. Today that same Spirit calls people to struggle against injustices that marginalize people. The Spirit encourages new forms of community to bring “life and leads history to life on this earth ... for the sake of transformation of the world, through the liberation of the poor and oppressed” (Comblin 1989:76). It is the Spirit’s creative and energizing power, which can motivate communities of the poor to become agents of their own freedom, and to work toward a renewed and just society. That is why Comblin insists that in “today’s liberation movements among the peoples, the Spirit of God is at work” (Comblin 1993:155). He writes that it is the Spirit:

who gathers the poor together so as to make them a new people who challenge all the powers of the earth. The Spirit is the strength of the people of the poor, the strength of those who are weak.... The church is this people of the poor crying out for its liberation and rising up against oppressing powers (Comblin 1989:115).

Comblin suggests that the Church is “profoundly different from human societies and profoundly human” (*ibid.*: 116). It is different from other human institutions because it proceeds from the Spirit who is present in all its members empowering them to transform cultures and societies that do not reflect God’s justice and love. It is likewise profoundly human pre-

cisely because the Spirit’s prophetic action in society is mediated through those who respond to the Spirit’s movements. Comblin is opposed to reducing the Spirit “to the sphere of interiority [for this] is to project upon the Christian scriptures a restriction of meaning that will later appear in the established church” (Comblin 1993:154).

Because the Church is “profoundly human”, it is “totally historical; it comes from history and changes history” (Comblin 1989:119). Within the context of Latin America, liberation theology suggests that the task of changing and transforming history belongs to the poor, particularly those who are gathered in the Basic Christian Communities. Yet, it is not their task alone. It is a task that belongs to other local Churches, and the Churches of the non-poor have a particularly important role in conscientizing the societies in which they live concerning the structural nature of the deprivation experienced by so many. Comblin’s theology of the Spirit and mission provides the first systematic treatment of the Holy Spirit from a liberation perspective and is important because it seeks to name the action of the Spirit in the lives of the poor, in the history of oppressed peoples. However, it could be argued Comblin’s ecclesiology invalidates his argument concerning the universal presence of the Spirit for he seems to suggest that the Church differs from society precisely because it proceeds from the Spirit (*ibid.*:118-120). Christians believe that it was the action of the Spirit that brought the Church into being at the first Pentecost, but that is different from asserting that the Church is different from society because of the presence of the Spirit.

Leonardo Boff and the Action of the Holy Spirit in History

Brazilian Leonardo Boff is another liberation theologian who explores the action of the Holy Spirit in history (see Boff 1988:189-212; 1993:77; 1991:6). He is concerned about a pneumatology that restricts the Spirit’s work to an inner quest in the individual. He writes:

There is a religion of God the Holy Spirit, found particularly among charismatic groups, whether in popular milieus or among the social elite. Its hallmarks are enthusiasm, spiritual creativity, and respect for the intimate meaning found by each individual in an inner quest. In this experience, valid as it is in itself, interiority prevails to the detriment of the historical dimension and to the neglect of a crucial concern for the impoverished and their concrete, integral liberation (Boff 1993:77).

To counteract reductionist understandings of the role of the Spirit, Boff identifies characteristics of the

Spirit he believes are important for theologians seeking to develop a liberation pneumatology. First, the Spirit is a renewing energy that empowers one for the sake of the Reign of God (Boff 1988:192). Both the Old Testament and the New Testament attribute creative powers to the Spirit (see Gn 1:2; Lk 1:35; Mt 1:18-20; Acts 2:1-4). Creativity is different from evolution, and so when we talk of the Spirit as a creative force, this suggests a disjunction with what has gone before. The presence of the Spirit presents a challenge to institutions for it looks to the possibility of radical change to those institutions, including the Church, that can regard themselves as finished realities.

Second, "the Spirit in the New Testament is the *memory* of Jesus' deeds and words" (Boff 1988:193). The New Testament reveals Jesus as the definitive revelation of the Father through his life, death and resurrection. In his ministry as servant and prophet, Jesus is indeed the way for others to follow. It is through the Spirit that such discipleship is possible, and keeps the dangerous memory of Jesus alive, as a sign of hope for the poor and marginalized.

Third, "the Spirit's mission is to *liberate* from the oppressions brought into being by our sinful state" (*ibid.*:194). In the context of liberation theology, these oppressions are the historical conditions of political, economic, racist and gender discrimination. Paul teaches that the Spirit empowered human beings to free themselves from the confines of legalism (see Gal 4:6-7). Today, the same Spirit continues to empower humankind to free itself from oppressive structures.

Fourth, the Spirit is "the principle that creates differences and communion" (Boff 1988:194). The Spirit's presence in the believing community is manifested in the different ministries and gifts of a particular community, of a particular local Church, ministries and gifts that are used for the sake of the reign of God. To the extent that such ministries and gifts are there for the building up of the reign of God, they are signs of the Spirit at work in the community. Therefore the Spirit as the principle of living transcendence, empowers human beings to transcend situations of diminishment and to reach out toward communion with one another.

Fifth, it is the presence of the Spirit in all cultures and in all places that allows inculturation to occur, preventing the Gospel from reduction to a single expression. The Spirit can liberate from cultural domination that hinders the birth of an Amerindian Church. Boff concludes: "The Spirit is the divine imagination. It will not be hemmed in. It is the mobility of the church, its ongoing distillation, its dissatisfaction with itself, stimulating it to ever new efforts along the pathways of all peoples" (Boff 1991:86).

Sixth, the Spirit is a Spirit of freedom for the oppressed. The Spirit is to be seen as the "*Pater pauperum*,

'father of the poor' and oppressed who suffer in captivity and who long for liberty" (*ibid.*:85). The Spirit, who has traditionally empowered prophets to denounce injustice, empowers contemporary Christians and Christian communities to continue that prophetic ministry.

It could be argued that Comblin and Boff, in speaking of the action of the Spirit in the lives and history of the poor are simply substituting the action of the Spirit for the action of God. However, to speak of the Spirit is to be faithful to that Old Testament trajectory that understands the Spirit as the creative, salvific and prophetic presence of the transcendent God in creation. Furthermore, it is faithful to those trinitarian positions that emphasize the relational quality of the Trinity.

Jürgen Moltmann's Theology of the Spirit and Care of Creation

German Protestant theologian Jürgen Moltmann's pneumatology is an important contribution to Christian conversations about care of creation (see Moltmann 1985). Moltmann recognizes that an adequate Christian theology of care for creation must take seriously the role of the Spirit. We are meant to understand the Spirit as creative, life giving, and redemptive. He writes:

... creation in the Spirit is the theological concept, which corresponds best to the ecological doctrine of creation, which we are looking for and need today. With this concept we are cutting loose the theological doctrine of creation from the age of subjectivity and mechanistic domination of the world and are leading it in the direction in which we have to look for the future of an ecological world-community (*ibid.*:12).

Moltmann distinguishes three stages in creation: *creatio originalis*, *creatio continua*, and *creatio nova* (*ibid.*:55). *Creatio originalis*, or initial creation, is that divine creation which is a free act of God: the world is contingent. But this creation is not immutable or unchanging. *Creatio continua* is also *creatio mutabilis* (*ibid.*:207), open to history and open to change. Such change is not unfocused or non-directed, but is aimed at a *creatio nova*, which has as its goal "[t]he *eschatological creation* of the kingdom of glory, [which] finally proceeds from the vanquishing of sin and death, that is to say, the annihilating Nothingness" (*ibid.*:90). The purpose of this eschatological transformation is that the world can become the home of God, in which God's presence will be experienced in a new and more direct way. In order for this to happen, it is important to de-emphasize an understanding of divine transcendence that accounts for that "ruthless conquest and exploitation of nature which fascinated Europe during

this period [modernity] and found its appropriate legitimation in that ancient distinction between God and the world" (*ibid.*:13-14). The work of the creation belongs to the Trinity — Father, Son and Spirit. Moltmann writes:

The One who sends the Son and the Spirit is the Creator — the Father. The one who gathers the world under his liberating leadership, and redeems it, is the Word of creation — the Son. The one who gives life to the world and allows it to participate in God's eternal life is the creative Energy — the Spirit. The Father is the creating origin of creation, the Son its shaping origin, and the Spirit its life-giving origin. Creation exists in the Spirit, is moulded by the Son, and is created by the Father. It is therefore from God, through God and in God (*ibid.*:97-98).

It is this trinitarian concept of creation that holds together the transcendence and immanence of God. In particular, the contemporary ecological crisis means Christians need to reaffirm the immanence of God's Spirit in creation. If Christians fail to recognize the Spirit's presence in all creation, they fail to recognize their kinship with the rest of creation, and so are likely to continue those patterns of behaviour that ignore the presence of the Spirit who sustains all creation in a holy fellowship (Moltmann 1992:9-10).

Moltmann's pneumatology means he understands the Spirit in a number of ways. First the Spirit is the creative energy and life force that permeates all creation. He writes "the Spirit is the creative energy and the vital energy of everything that lives" (Moltmann 1989:91). Second, he argues that we need to understand "every created reality in terms of energy, grasping it as the realized potentiality of the divine Spirit" (Moltmann 1985:9). Third, Moltmann, aware of the risk inherent in understanding the Spirit only as energy and potentiality, counters such a possibility by insisting on the subjectivity and divine agency of the Spirit. Fourth, Moltmann's emphasis on the social and relational reality of the Trinity leads him to identify the Spirit's mission as one that encourages right relationships. Just as the inner life of God is relational, communal and loving, then so too is God's relationship to the world, seen in the activity of the Spirit who renews, energizes and reconciles, enabling all creation to realize its eschatological goal of a new creation. As Moltmann describes it: "In the gift and through the powers of the Holy Spirit a new divine presence is experienced in creation. God the Creator takes up his dwelling in his creation and makes it his home" (*ibid.*:96).

Moltmann's theology emphasizes that the story of humanity cannot be divorced from the rest of the creation story. Both stories originate in God, and both are

oriented to God. For Moltmann, Christian hope is not about redemption *from* the world but redemption *of* the world.

Are We Witnessing the Emergence of a New Missionary Paradigm?

To seek to understand the Spirit as the principal agent of mission represents an important development in contemporary missiology. Our brief survey of some contemporary theological writing on the Spirit and mission suggests that there are signs of the emergence of a new missionary paradigm that may provide alternatives to ecclesiocentric and christomonistic paradigms.

First, a movement towards a pneumatological paradigm requires a reassessment of those Christological perspectives that encourage a certain type of triumphalism that is inappropriate in a pluralistic world where interreligious dialogue is prioritized as an important missionary task. Christologies, which assert the unique role of Jesus Christ in salvation, may hinder dialogue developing as conversation between two equal partners.

Second, an awareness of the universal presence of the Spirit invites the contemporary Christian to redraw the parameters of mission so that it is no longer restricted by those institutionally defined parameters that prioritize *missio ad gentes*. To suggest this is not to imply a dichotomy between the Spirit's presence in creation and the Spirit's presence in the Church. Rather it is to warn against a truncated and reductionist understanding of the mystery of the Spirit. There is no clear solution as to how to live with the mystery of the particularity of the Spirit present within the Church, and present in non-Christian traditions and cultures. If the presence of the Spirit is not spatially or temporally restricted, then individuals and groups can experience the mysterious presence of the Spirit in ways not always recognized or acknowledged by the Church.

Third, understanding the Spirit as the principal agent of mission encourages a critique of the dominant ecclesiocentric missionary paradigm. It challenges that perspective which emphasizes the presence of the Spirit in the Church as the guarantor of its teaching or as the agent of personal conversion. Such a paradigm can pay little attention to the presence of the Spirit active in history and cultures outside of the Church.

Fourth, an appreciation of the Spirit's universal and active presence encourages an inductive approach to mission. The task of the missionary is not to bring God to those who do not have God. Rather it is to discern with others the action of the Spirit within a particular context and culture. This permits the emergence of contextual missiologies. An emphasis on culture and context as an entry point into mission can allow a more secular mean-

ing to attach itself to traditional understandings of mission. The importance of these inductive methodologies, “based on the analysis of social conditions and the issues raised by culture” (Schreiter, 1997:ix) characteristic of liberation, feminist and creation theologies on the contemporary understanding of mission should not be under-estimated.

Fifth, the universal presence of the Spirit suggests that mission can be entrusted to the local community, and not simply directed from the centre. As the Latin American experience of liberation theology suggests, a local community is well placed to identify an effective missionary *praxis*. This should not lead the contemporary missiologist to prioritize “localism” over “universalism”. If that were to happen, local theologies shaped exclusively by the local context would run the risk of being reduced to “a crude contextualization ... simply a product of its surroundings” (Schreiter 1997:3), and just as dangerous as universalist theologies that deny the local. An awareness of the universal presence of the Spirit ought to encourage dialogue and networking between different communities. Such global networking differs from bureaucratic communication that seeks to control from the centre, for global networking respects the insights and activities of the local. This allows the local community to understand its story and to critique its *praxis* against the wider story. This global networking can challenge the belief that universal and authoritative significance belongs to one voice only. These global conversations can be appropriately described as “antisystemic global movements” (*ibid.*:16), intended to counteract the power of those centralized economic, political and religious systems that are alienating and impersonal. Pertinent examples of such global networking include the general chapters or international gatherings of Catholic religious women and men, and theological gatherings such as the IAMS assemblies. Such gatherings help facilitate global conversations, allowing for authentic crosscultural dialogue that is mutually enriching and makes possible effective networking structures.

Sixth, understanding mission in pneumatological categories widens, deepens, and broadens contemporary understanding of mission. Being aware of the Spirit’s universal presence makes it possible for the contemporary missionary to move beyond institutionally set boundaries. An appreciation of the universal and salvific effect of the Spirit can reduce the divisions between believer and non-believer, between the spiritual and the material, between clerical and lay missionaries.

Seventh, the pneumatological approaches to mission cited do not entail a rejection of the traditional trinitarian and Christological dimensions of mission but they are redrawn so as to prioritize the work of the Spirit in a substantial way. This movement toward un-

derstanding mission in pneumatological categories is not concerned with subverting the ontological foundations of the economy of salvation. Rather, it is concerned with plumbing the depths of what *missio Dei* can mean for a fractured and divisive world.

Eighth, Comblin’s and Boff’s contributions to our understanding of the relationship of the Spirit to mission understood as justice is to be acknowledged. Their theological reflections suggest that the Spirit’s presence empowers the poor to seek liberation. Similarly it is the presence of the Spirit that encourages some of the non-poor Christians to denounce the inertia of institutions, challenging them to commit themselves to the cause of the poor. The Spirit invites the non-poor to make “an option for the poor” thereby allowing them to identify themselves as partners of the poor in their struggle for liberation.

Ninth, it is possible to extrapolate some important implications for mission understood as care of creation from the pneumatological theologies of Johnson and Moltmann. A close relationship between Spirit and creation should contribute toward collapsing dualistic theologies that tolerate human estrangement from the rest of creation. Christianity, as the heir of classical neo-Platonism and apocalyptic Judaism, sometimes encouraged a dichotomy between nature and the Spirit that allowed for a debased view of nature. This led to understanding redemption as an inner and higher spiritual reality whereby one was redeemed from a material and sinful world. However, to recognize the salvific and active presence of the Spirit in history and in creation suggests that redemption is a this-worldly reality. A retrieval of the Spirit’s immanence in creation means that humankind will value its connectedness and kinship with the rest of creation.

Tenth, to value the interdependency of all life forms links an understanding of mission as care of creation to mission as liberation and work for justice. All too often, the poor are those who live in the broken places of existence, in ecologically diminished urban and rural areas. In such environs, they experience the totality of inadequate social structures and environmentally threatened living space.

Eleventh, it is important that women and men recognize that their dwelling place is also God’s. The ecclesiocentric model privileged the presence of Christ in the Church, in the Christian community, and in the case of the Catholic tradition, particularly in the Eucharist. Liberation theology invited us to recognize Christ above all in women and men diminished by the reality of poverty (see Mt 25:31-46). When we believe that the Spirit is immanent in all creation, then creation too is in fact the privileged dwelling place of God. This invalidates disparaging attitudes toward the material world. The world is God’s home, and ours, and so we have a key role in sustaining it. When we appreciate God’s Spirit as present in all creation, we more readily

understand that God's presence is not restricted to special sacred places or people, and absent from so-called profane spaces. There is a long tradition, rooted in the New Testament, of referring to the church as the body of Christ, and to our bodies as temples of the Spirit. Now we are asked to understand not only our bodies but also the world as the dwelling place of the Spirit.

Twelfth, the radical significance of contemporary efforts to reframe the relationship between the Spirit and creation should not be underestimated. As recently as 1964, *Gaudium et Spes* taught that "[m]en and women strive to *subdue* (italics mine) the earth by their knowledge and labour" (n. 53). Therefore the contemporary movement toward a pneumatological theology which emphasizes the presence of the Spirit in all creation, and sees this as involving humankind in relationships of inclusivity and mutuality with all creation is not simply an academic retrieval and revisioning of traditional theology. It is also an important theological imperative for Christians committed to addressing the ecological crisis.

Concluding Comments

It is not possible to be more than tentative in discerning the possible emergence of a pneumatological missionary paradigm. We have already commented on the rediscovery of the presence and power of the Spirit by the Western Churches. In the Catholic Church, this was most obviously seen after Vatican II in the appearance of the charismatic renewal movement, in the various theological writings that appeared on the Spirit, in the Christian feminist impulse to move toward pneumatology as a way of redressing androcentric theologies, and more recently, in conversation about mission and the Spirit. However, the relationship between mission and Spirit raises some important issues.

First, when we talk of the Spirit as the principal agent of mission in the economy of salvation, we are required to redefine our understanding of the relationship of the Spirit to the historical Jesus. Perhaps the most appropriate response is to see the historical Jesus in his exercise of mission as a privileged and unique revelation of the Spirit's salvific presence in the world. As the missionary activity of God does not begin with the redemptive activity of Jesus, but with the activity of the Spirit at the beginning of creation, this provides a valued alternative by which to explore further the relationship of the Spirit to the historical Jesus.

Second, it may be necessary to redefine our understanding of the relationship between the work of the Spirit and the work of the Word. If the first expression of mission in the economy of salvation is God's act of creation, then as Gn 1 attests, the Spirit and the Word are active in giving expression to the

plan of God. The Scriptures bear witness to the mission of the Spirit throughout history. Prophecy, freedom, liberation, and creativity seem to be the characteristics of the Spirit. The incarnation of the Word focuses our attention on the historical Jesus who gives a particular concrete expression to the mission of God. But the actions of Jesus in history acquire a cosmic significance precisely because he is the Incarnate Word indicated in the "high" Christologies of John and Paul (see Jn 1:1-14; Phil 2:6-11). The pre-existent Word becomes flesh in order to carry forward God's saving action in a new historical way. In the Western Churches, this perception of the Word historically has tended to lead to a diminishment of the role of the Spirit. That is why it is necessary to reframe the relationship between the Spirit and the Word so that the agency of the Spirit is reaffirmed.

Third, the belief in the universal and salvific presence of the Spirit raises questions concerning the relation of the leadership of centralized and hierarchical Churches to the local Christian communities. On the one hand, the institutional Church can no longer presume that the Spirit dwells within it as the guarantor of orthodoxy. On the other, it is required to understand that the presence of the Spirit in marginalized communities may encourage the expression of a prophetic dimension not readily recognized by the institution. The freedom from institutional structures may alert such communities to new missionary tasks that further the mission of God.

Fourth, to believe in the universal presence of the Spirit helps overcome some of the divisions between the secular and sacred. Perhaps it removes the need to emphasize *missio ad gentes* whereby the fruits of missionary activity tend to be measured primarily in terms of the growth of local Churches with their own involved lay and ordained ministers. Rather, missionary activity should be directed to bringing about the Reign of God which has as its goal the transformation of human history so that humankind is liberated "from evil in all its forms" (*Redemptoris Missio*, n. 15). In this perspective, the world becomes the new arena for all missionary activity.

Fifth, there may be a danger that some will disconnect the Spirit from its trinitarian foundations if the Spirit is emphasized as the principal agent of mission. Perhaps a minority of feminists, reacting against androcentric trinitarian theologies, may now find that "their God may no longer be the God of Jesus Christ, but a non-personal, benevolent cosmic energy holding reality together in some mysterious way" (Schneiders 1998:22). There is evidence in my own country, New Zealand, that some have moved away from belief in a trinitarian God to understanding God as Spirit, as a cosmic force, as divine energy (see Webster, 1992).

However, these positions are in the minority, and should not deter Christians from reclaiming the Spirit as the principal agent of mission. To appreciate this fully involves us in an almost Copernican revolution in our understanding of mission that may at times lead some to suspect the separation of the Spirit from the trinitarian communion.

However, through reclaiming the Trinitarian origins of all mission we begin to understand the agency of the Spirit in mission. Mission is an activity of the triune God and to emphasize the agency of the Spirit is to reclaim that Trinitarian reality and to bid farewell to those ecclesiocentric and Christocentric perceptions that diminished not only creation, women and the poor, but also diminished the Trinity. Missionary activity begins with the creative agency of the Spirit through whom God is active in human and cosmic history, and not with the redemptive ministry of the historical Jesus.

Notes

¹ Johnson writes: "I am in mid-stream now, and feel that there are miles to go before I sleep. I would like to begin by stating the obvious, namely, that theologically I am a work in progress". See Elizabeth A. Johnson, "Forging Theology: A Conversation with Colleagues", in *Things New and Old: Essays on the Theology of Elizabeth A. Johnson*, ed. Phyllis Zagano and Terrence W. Tilley (New York: Crossroad, 1999), 91-92.

² Richard P. McBrien defines christomonism as "a kind of 'unitarianism' of the Second Person in which God as Creator and Judge, and God as Reconciler and Sanctifier are effectively replaced by God who is at our side in the service of the neighbour as the 'man for others'. Christomonism has diminished our understanding of the Church and the Christian life. How else to explain the recent extraordinary discovery of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit by the West, if not as an acute reaction to the practical exclusion of the Spirit from Latin Christian consciousness, devotion and even theology?", Richard P. McBrien, *Catholicism*, vol. 1 (East Malvern: Dove Communications, 1980), 345.

³ Although Schreier does not cite particular theologians who suggest that theocentrism is a legitimate response to Christocentrism, Catholic missiologist Paul Knitter, is an example. Knitter suggests that we consider a movement toward "theocentric Christology", whereby God is the key to the theological interpretation of Christ, rather than Jesus being the revealer of God. See Paul Knitter, *No Other Name?* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985). Knitter uses the expression "theocentric" to describe the attempt "to establish a dialogue with other religions on the basis of a non-normative christology", (*ibid.*:146). Dupuis writes that a

theocentric perspective is one according "to which Jesus Christ and his saving mystery no longer stand at the centre of God's saving design for humankind. That place belongs to God alone towards whom all the religious traditions, Christianity included, tend as to their end". Jacques Dupuis, "Religious Plurality and the Christological Debate", *Focus*, 15/2-3 (1995): 4.

⁴ José Comblin, *The Holy Spirit and Liberation*, Theology and Liberation Series, trans. Paul Burns (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), appears to be the most comprehensive treatment available at present. Comblin writes that "the experience of God found in the new Christian communities of Latin America can properly be called experience of the Holy Spirit. Most of the Christians who make up these communities do not know that this is their experience; because of their religious upbringing, the Holy Spirit is still the great unknown to them" (p. xi). Leonardo Boff, *Trinity and Society*, Theology and Liberation Series, trans. Paul Burns, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988, 189-212, also offers a liberation theologian's reflection on the Holy Spirit and liberation, particularly Chapter XI.

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Jean Pirotte*
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 Louvain la Neuve

Annonce chrétienne et mondialisation *Réflexions d'un historien*

Longtemps, et certainement depuis le début de l'évangélisation des mondes nouveaux à l'aube du XVI^e siècle, la dynamique missionnaire chrétienne a vécu sur le modèle de la culture unique, vecteur obligé de l'évangélisation. La propagation mondiale de certains modes occidentaux de vivre et de penser a coïncidé avec la diffusion du christianisme. Au XIX^e siècle, le renouveau missionnaire de l'époque romantique et coloniale a poursuivi dans ce sillage, au point que l'historien ultramontain Godefroid Kurth pouvait écrire en 1886 ces mots fleurant l'apologétique et l'autosatisfaction : "Qu'on trace sur une mappemonde les frontières de la civilisation, on s'apercevra qu'on a tracé celles du christianisme... En un mot, civilisation et christianisme, sont deux termes équivalents"¹.

Les controverses actuelles sur la mondialisation amènent l'historien à poser certaines questions.² Le christianisme a-t-il été, jadis, un vecteur de la mondialisation ? Par nécessité ou par accident ? Pour le meilleur ou pour le pire ? Dans le passé, les valeurs universelles contenues dans l'évangile ont-elles favorisé un universalisme uniformisant ou un respect des valeurs particulières ? Aujourd'hui, comment se situent le christianisme et les religions dans ces enjeux planétaires ?

Un christianisme uniformisant ou garant des valeurs particulières

Aisément, l'historien pourrait établir une liste de faits saillants montrant les implications étroites du christianisme dans les phénomènes d'uniformisation des environnements culturels. Toute l'histoire de l'Occident médiéval est traversée par cette poussée du christianisme travaillant le monde chaotique issu des grandes migrations des V^e et VI^e siècles et faisant peu à peu émerger un système socio-politique relativement homogène, connu sous le nom de "chrétienté"³. Sans doute pour cette époque, qui fut moins monolithique qu'on l'a souvent prétendu, faudrait-il parler d'un moyen-âge "en voie de christianisation". Pourtant, quels que soient les degrés d'évangélisation imparfaite des individus, se mettent alors en place des institutions qui imposent à la société des normes qui se prétendent chrétiennes.

Quelques jalons de l'uniformisation

Alors que le christianisme vécu dans le bassin oriental de la Méditerranée et au Proche-Orient a pris assez tôt les visages diversifiés des Églises byzantine, copte, syriaque, chaldéenne et autres, il n'en fut pas de même en Occident. Là, les tentatives de vivre autrement un christianisme même rigoureusement orthodoxe ne résistent pas. Le cas de l'Angleterre est révélateur. Dans la grande île britannique, deux courants chrétiens ont cohabité au VII^e siècle : le christianisme de tradition celtique, venu d'Irlande puis d'Écosse et se répandant en Angleterre à partir du nord ; le christianisme de tradition romaine implanté depuis 596 dans le Kent avec Augustin de Cantorbéry et ses moines, se répandant à partir du sud. Au cours du VIII^e siècle, le christianisme de tradition celtique avec ses coutumes propres, sa liturgie et son organisation est complètement éliminé, laminé par la tradition romaine. Le cas n'est pas unique : les difficultés rencontrées au IX^e siècle par les évangélisateurs de l'Europe centrale, Cyrille et Méthode, sont tout aussi symptomatiques. Leur liturgie slavonne, interdite par Rome en 873, approuvée en un second temps, fut à nouveau rejetée par Étienne V, tandis que leurs disciples fuyant la Moravie transmettaient leurs rites aux Bulgares et aux Serbes. Ces épisodes sont autant de préludes à l'uniformisation du monde chrétien d'Occident ; ils manifestent une difficulté de l'Occident de vivre le christianisme sur des modes diversifiés.

Laissons aux spécialistes le soin de débattre des origines de cette "allergie" à la diversité. Serait-ce le monopole du latin comme langue de culture et de culte en Occident, alors que l'Orient vivait à cet égard une pluralité ? Serait-ce la prégnance dans les esprits des notions d'imperium et d'auctoritas héritées du génie romain et réactivées plus tard par les carolingiens ? Une chose est sûre, les ruptures de la Réforme au XVI^e siècle amèneront un nouveau durcissement : les métamorphoses imposées suite à cette crise par le Concile de Trente feront éclore, à partir de la société chrétienne médiévale, l'Église catholique romaine sous la forme institutionnelle qui fleurira ensuite dans le monolithisme.

Par la suite les querelles des rites, catastrophiques

pour les missions de l'Inde du Sud et de la Chine, manifestent cette même difficulté des structures ecclésiales catholiques d'admettre une pluralité culturelle. Pourquoi fallait-il que les tentatives inculturatrices inaugurées par Matteo Ricci en Chine (+1610) et Roberto de Nobili en Inde (+1656) se soldent au début du XVIII^e siècle par un tel rejet, par l'Église officielle, de toute pénétration des cultures chinoise ou indienne dans la vie chrétienne de ces peuples ?

Par la suite encore, au XIX^e siècle, le renouveau missionnaire de l'époque romantique et coloniale sera vécu sur un mode uniformisant ; c'est l'époque où l'Église, se percevant comme assiégée par la société moderne qui s'organisait autour des libertés et de la primauté de la raison, va resserrer les rangs autour de la papauté déclarée d'ailleurs infaillible en 1870⁴. Tant dans les terres d'ancienne chrétienté que dans les missions lointaines, le catholicisme se vivra dans le monolithisme ; convertis chinois et néophytes africains chanteront longtemps les mêmes neumes grégoriens sous les mêmes voûtes néogothiques et, lorsque le mouvement de formation des clercs autochtones s'amplifiera, c'est la même scolastique et les mêmes normes tridentines qui structureront le paysage mental des cadres autochtones de l'évangélisation. Par ailleurs, il faut dire que les mentalités coloniales qui imbibaient, par osmose presque naturelle, les pratiques missionnaires invitaient à l'imposition d'une culture occidentale peu valorisatrice des traditions autochtones.

Enfin, on observe que dans les cultures où l'annonce évangélique était confrontée au mode de vie nomade des habitants, le travail des missionnaires consistait généralement dans un premier temps à sédentariser les populations en les groupant dans des villages. Certes on note des essais méritoires de suivre les nomades dans leurs pérégrinations, comme ce fut le cas de franciscains suivant au XIII^e siècle, dans des couvents mobiles faits de chariots et de tentes, les Mongols du Khanat de la Horde d'or se déplaçant entre Europe orientale et Asie. Toutefois ces expériences tournèrent souvent court. En amenant ces nomades à l'état sédentaire, les missionnaires jouaient un rôle décultivateur, réduisant par le fait même la diversité des modes humains d'habiter l'espace terrestre.

Les religions, vecteurs d'une universalisation inéluctable ?

Au-delà des péripéties anciennes de l'évangélisation qui captent souvent l'intérêt de l'historien volontiers fasciné par les enchaînements chronologiques sur le court terme, on peut s'interroger plus profondément et sur une plus longue durée, au sujet du rôle des religions à vocation universelle dans certains processus d'une marche inéluctable de l'humanité vers

l'universalisation. Les péripéties de l'histoire des missions ne seraient-elles que des épiphénomènes, ridicules de surface s'agitant au-dessus de courants plus profonds à l'œuvre dans l'humanité ?

On peut se rappeler les hypothèses, contestées sans doute mais stimulantes, formulées voici trente ans par Robin Horton à propos de l'évangélisation de l'Afrique⁵. À un moment de leur histoire, des peuples vivant dans un système de représentations cosmologiques correspondant à une société cloisonnée et une économie fermée ne ressentiraient-ils pas le besoin, lorsque l'amplification des échanges ébranle les structures traditionnelles, de se tourner vers des systèmes de représentation du monde plus universalistes et vers des grandes religions ? L'adoption d'une religion nouvelle ne s'inscrit-elle pas dans un syndrome plus complexe manifestant une poussée de populations entières vers la recherche de nouveaux genres de vie ? Le passage de plusieurs populations d'Afrique à l'islam ou au christianisme s'analyserait alors comme un processus d'ajustement intellectuel vers des religions de salut plus universalistes, au moment même où s'opère un décroisement économique et social. Dans cette vaste mutation, la présence active de religions jugées plus adaptées au mode de vie aurait agi comme catalyseur.

Comme le faisait remarquer Henri Maurier, tout l'effort missionnaire du christianisme ne doit pas être considéré comme un phénomène isolé, mais être lu sur le long terme et situé globalement à l'intérieur de mouvements complexes du "déploiement démographique, civilisationnel et universalisateur de l'humanité"⁶, dont il sera question ci-dessous. Analysant l'insertion du christianisme dans ce vaste mouvement et démontrant que le christianisme n'est pas "supportable" (au sens étymologique du mot) par n'importe quelle civilisation historique, le même auteur ajoutait que "le christianisme est intrinsèquement, en vertu de ses structures propres, universalisateur"⁷.

Par ailleurs, en portant notre réflexion au-delà de ces conjonctures historiques de la rencontre du christianisme avec les civilisations, on peut se demander si l'annonce évangélique n'est pas en elle-même porteuse d'uniformisation. L'annonce d'un Dieu unique s'adressant à tous les hommes, l'égalité foncière de ces hommes devant l'appel de Dieu, font que désormais, il ne peut plus y avoir "ni Juif ni Grec, ni esclave ni homme libre, ni homme ni femme", car tous sont appelés à ne faire qu'un dans le Christ⁸. Toutefois, au nom même de cette égalité foncière, n'est-on pas en droit de revendiquer le respect de toutes les expressions culturelles des sociétés diverses ?

Entre uniformisation et particularismes

À notre époque la diversité culturelle apparaît

comme un produit fragile, peut-être le plus fragile de l'histoire des hommes. Dans le vaste marché mondial des productions gastronomiques, audiovisuelles et autres, le combat pour la différence, les richesses régionales et l'«exception culturelle» garde toute son actualité. La culture universelle du futur doit-elle être conçue comme un moule uniforme construit par une armée d'amnésiques sur la ruine des valeurs particulières ? Si tel devait être le cas, dans ce «meilleur des mondes», les êtres humains seraient mûrs pour les pires espèces de conformisme et d'embrigadement, dégustant les mêmes hamburgers, se régaland des mêmes séries télévisées, s'assoupissant sous les mêmes rengaines idéologiques.

Sans doute l'humanité de demain sera-t-elle métisse et ce sera sa richesse nouvelle. Il faut insister sur le métissage fondamental de toutes nos cultures, condition du dépassement des situations anciennes ; le moyen âge occidental n'a pu donner ses fruits que par l'union douloureuse d'un monde antique finissant, de la vigueur des multiples envahisseurs et de la fécondation par le christianisme. Cependant, pour qu'un métissage réussisse, il faut que chaque élément apporte la pleine richesse de son être. L'homogénéisation niant les diversités serait-elle annonciatrice de mort pour l'humanité ?

Dans le monde de l'évangélisation, un concept, créé voici quelques décennies, harmonise au mieux la mise en valeur des diversités légitimes et l'ouverture à l'universel. Désignant le processus par lequel la vie et le message chrétiens s'incarnent dans les diverses communautés culturelles, le concept d'inculturation du christianisme offre un modèle intéressant, fonctionnant à l'image d'une plante qui donne des fruits variés en fonction de la diversité des terreaux d'accueil.

Dans l'histoire de la diffusion du christianisme, ce respect ne semble pas toujours avoir été de mise. Pourtant, même lorsque l'imposition de contenus culturels importés d'Occident apparaît comme le modèle massivement dominant, il est intéressant d'observer les résurgences obstinées de particularités locales dans lesquelles les agents missionnaires jouèrent comme catalyseurs, voire comme acteurs. Si, par rapport aux religions et cultures précolombiennes, on peut légitimement déplorer la politique de la table rase pratiquée par les missionnaires du XVI^e siècle en Amérique, il faut par ailleurs reconnaître les efforts de ces mêmes missionnaires pour défendre les populations locales à la fois contre les abus des colons et contre l'hispanisation systématique. Par exemple, si le quechua au Pérou et le tupi au Brésil ont réussi à se maintenir face aux langues nouvelles venues d'Europe, c'est sans doute grâce aux efforts des missionnaires dans leurs réalisations catéchétiques et liturgiques faisant passer ces idiomes au statut de langues écrites.

Sans prétendre relever dans tous ces siècles uniformisateurs les inlassables surgissements du particulier, observons les années plus récentes. Le catholicisme romain quelque peu monochrome implanté au XIX^e siècle outre-mer commence à reprendre des couleurs plus locales. Née de la réflexion, mais aussi de pratiques dans des contextes humains différents, la recherche théologique se diversifie. Sans cliquer les positions de façon abusive, on a vu au cours des quatre dernières décennies apparaître des accents nouveaux : la réflexion sur les conditions socio-politiques et économiques et sur la libération a incontestablement marqué les théologiens d'Amérique latine ; la problématique des valeurs culturelles et sociales traditionnelles a inspiré les théologiens africains ; la spiritualité et les valeurs des grandes religions ont influencé les théologiens d'Asie. Peu à peu le christianisme s'inculture, prend des visages locaux différenciés, à l'instar de l'arbre portant des fruits aux saveurs marquées par le terreau où il pousse ses racines.

Dans le monde catholique, il faudra trouver les moyens de respecter les diversités tout en maintenant la communion. Dans cette direction, une voie à prospecter serait, à l'image des patriarcats antiques mais sans archéologisme, la création de groupes d'Églises locales plus libres de mettre en place des expressions inculturées de la foi, plus libres aussi de s'organiser suivant leur discipline propre, qui pourrait diverger par rapport au patriarcate d'Occident. On est encore loin du compte. Les vieux réflexes centralisateurs restent solides. Les forces centripètes toujours vigilantes s'efforcent souvent de masquer la diversité, de la récupérer dans la sauce uniformisante. À titre d'exemple, le Synode Africain qui souleva des espoirs sur le continent noir suscita également dans les milieux romains des craintes de voir l'Église d'Afrique s'engager dans des voies propres. Si cette assemblée fut finalement convoquée du 10 avril au 8 mai 1994 ce fut, d'une part, non pas en Afrique mais à Rome même et, d'autre part, sous l'intitulé plus modeste d'«Assemblée spéciale pour l'Afrique du Synode des évêques». Comment une telle réduction a-t-elle pu s'opérer ? On pourrait imaginer que l'argument financier pesa lourdement pour des Églises moins nanties. La même peur de la diversité ne se manifesterait-elle pas en liturgie dans le rite couramment appelé «zaïrois», mais officiellement codifié dans le *Missel romain pour les diocèses du Zaïre* ?¹⁰

En dehors du monde catholique, le phénomène des Églises nouvelles fait exploser le christianisme et réduit les chances d'un hypothétique retour à l'unité structurelle. Ces divisions prennent parfois l'allure d'un émiettement. Faut-il craindre et combattre cette prolifération qui ouvre la porte aux dérives ? Ou bien suffit-il de l'accepter et de positiver, en arguant que les

champs aux mille fleurs ont plus de fraîcheur que les massifs imposants et monotones ? Quelles que soient les sensibilités à cet égard, l'œcuménisme entendu comme communion profonde dans le Christ et pratiqué comme un chemin de collaboration entre les Églises diverses est prometteur.

Les religions dans les enjeux planétaires

Il est évident que pour l'humanité qui ne cesse de croître en nombre, il est vital de penser les problèmes au niveau planétaire et de créer des formes nouvelles de civilisation permettant de gérer de vastes regroupements de population. L'invention de ces formes nouvelles doit se lire sur le moyen terme à l'échelle des cinq derniers siècles écoulés. Ce processus, qui ne s'est pas déroulé sans violence, est loin d'être terminé. Les douleurs de ce nouveau monde en gestation se perçoivent dans les nombreux paradoxes qui traversent les sociétés actuelles.

Quelques paradoxes de la mondialisation

Le premier paradoxe dans cette humanité en voie de mondialisation galopante n'est-il pas celui d'un individualisme de plus en plus poussé ? Un autre paradoxe, qui n'est pas sans lien fort avec le premier, est celui d'une liberté démocratique affirmée comme valeur dans un monde où, par ailleurs, la liberté économique marginalise de plus en plus d'êtres humains. Démocratique en apparence, le principe du "renard libre dans le poulailler libre" ne peut aboutir qu'à l'écrasement du plus faible. Or, il ne peut y avoir de paix universelle tant que de graves frustrations collectives naîtront d'inégalités criantes dans la répartition des biens vitaux (nourriture, santé), mais aussi dans la répartition du savoir et du pouvoir. Il est évident que les logiques économiques de mondialisation sont des logiques concurrentielles de pur profit immédiat qui n'intègrent pas les impératifs éthiques. Il est par ailleurs tout aussi évident que les exigences morales ne suffisent pas à elles seules pour nourrir les populations. La mode actuelle de reconnaître les crimes du passé en demandant pardon est elle-même ambiguë : les enfants ne doivent certes pas porter le poids des fautes de leurs pères, sauf s'ils continuent à en tirer des profits. À cet égard, l'idée émise de troquer la dette du tiers monde en échange de la reconnaissance du poids de la colonisation ne manque pas d'intérêt ; elle pourrait faire prendre conscience à la portion nantie de l'humanité que son bien-être d'aujourd'hui repose dans une large mesure sur la misère de l'autre partie.

Un troisième paradoxe est celui de la montée des intégrismes dans un monde de brassages culturels et de rationalité scientifique et technique. La proclamation d'identités religieuses fortes face aux incertitudes

des situations nouvelles constitue certes un danger, mais ce danger ne doit pas faire perdre de vue qu'il plonge ses racines dans les angoisses et les frustrations du monde moderne. Les événements des dernières années et surtout des derniers mois depuis le 11 septembre 2001 semblent désigner le fondamentalisme islamiste comme un péril majeur pour les années à venir. Pourtant l'historien doit rappeler que, dans le monde catholique, notre propre crise face aux déstructurations modernes n'est pas surmontée depuis si longtemps : d'une part, à la fin du XIX^e siècle, au moment où l'Église se jugeait assiégée par le monde moderne, la montée de l'ultramontanisme a conduit à des attitudes autistes ; d'autre part, au début du XX^e siècle, la fièvre des luttes anti-modernistes témoigne de la difficulté d'admettre l'intrusion de la critique moderne dans l'interprétation des textes fondateurs du christianisme. Pour en revenir au fondamentalisme islamiste, on peut espérer que ces sursauts seront les derniers avant une acceptation définitive de la critique et de la modernité. Toutefois un regard lucide sur nous-mêmes nous force à reconnaître que nous ne sommes pas non plus à l'abri d'un retour des certitudes offensives.

Face à la persistance et au renforcement des identités religieuses agressives, il serait simpliste de dénoncer le domaine religieux comme seul fauteur de menaces à l'échelle mondiale. Faire confiance aux seuls échanges commerciaux et économiques comme facteurs de rapprochement des peuples s'avère un leurre aussi dangereux que faire confiance au seul jeu des bons sentiments... leurre dangereux car la seule loi des marchés aboutit à l'écrasement des plus faibles et à l'amplification des frustrations ; leurre inefficace car les économistes eux-mêmes s'accordent pour reconnaître le poids du mental et du symbolique dans la mobilisation pour le développement. À l'heure de la mondialisation c'est sur tous les tableaux qu'il faut jouer, y compris le mental.

Manifestement les rivalités qui ont abouti aux violences de septembre-novembre 2001 aux États-Unis et en Afghanistan sont tout autant d'ordre symbolique que d'ordre matériel. Cette justice sacrificielle impliquant une escalade dans les répliques destructrices, ramène l'humanité aux pratiques anciennes du jugement de Dieu. Il s'agit d'un duel rituel à l'échelle mondiale entre le champion du monde libéral et un challenger s'efforçant de retourner contre lui ses propres armes. En maniant le fer, le feu, le poison ou des moyens plus modernes, chacun des champions en appelle de façon spectaculaire à la sanction divine. C'est en quelque sorte une ordalie archaïque qui se déroule en ce début du troisième millénaire, chacun des adversaires s'efforçant de détruire les symboles de l'autre. Peut-être, pour reprendre l'expression de René Girard, s'agit-il d'une

rivalité mimétique, dans laquelle la volonté de ressembler au plus fort (que fondamentalement on admire) engendre la concurrence et le désir de le détruire. Quoi qu'il en soit, on est frappé par l'archaïsme d'une telle situation à l'heure où des moyens de plus en plus sophistiqués multiplient les possibilités de destruction. Dernier paradoxe !

Contre cette violence en chaîne, à la fois moderne et archaïque, il n'y a pas vraiment de recette : l'humanité s'enracine dans un univers de violence ; elle peine depuis ses origines pour endiguer cette violence et en contrôler les mécanismes. La mondialisation ne fait qu'en accroître les effets et le côté sensationnel.

Apprendre à "être avec"

Et l'annonce chrétienne ? Comment doit-elle se situer face à ces problèmes de mondialisation qu'elle a contribué à mettre en place ? Sans renoncer à l'annonce évangélique, le christianisme doit apprendre à vivre avec d'autres. Après l'ère conquérante, il importe de réussir l'entrée dans celle de la collaboration, en renonçant à trop vouloir "agir sur" les autres, mais plus humblement en acceptant de travailler à "être avec" eux dans la construction du monde. Le mouvement est plus qu'amorcé. Dans les dernières décennies, le monde chrétien a dû se faire à l'idée d'une cohabitation avec d'autres dans un monde en train de sortir de Dieu : l'hypothèse "Dieu" n'est plus évidente pour tous. Les théologiens attentifs aux signes du temps intègrent peu à peu cette donnée à leur réflexion. L'aménagement de la cité des hommes, seul commun dénominateur qui s'impose comme un impératif absolu à nos sociétés, amènerait, vainement sans doute, à s'interroger sur les desseins de Dieu. Si Dieu s'offre à certains comme clef d'intelligibilité du monde, comme soutien paternel à l'homme qui doit prendre son autonomie, il ne s'impose manifestement jamais.

Quant à ceux qui, en suivant d'autres voies, croient également à cette présence de Dieu dans l'histoire, il importe de trouver avec eux des pistes analogues de cheminement, pour tenter de briser le cercle des violences et des représailles que la mondialisation pourrait accroître. Le seul remède est sans doute dans la voie du dialogue entre les religions. La rencontre des "religions du Livre" est sans doute l'un des grands enjeux de l'avenir, puisqu'elles pourraient apprendre à progresser ensemble vers le partage de valeurs fondamentales : un Dieu unique, identique, s'adressant à des hommes concrets, dans des cultures diversifiées et attendant d'eux des réponses personnelles, partant personnalisées.

Il est vrai que, dans le passé, la rencontre des trois "religions du Livre" a donné beaucoup de fruits amers, mais l'histoire nous montre aussi que des fruits meilleurs

pourraient être espérés. On pourrait évoquer l'influence bienfaisante des pensées arabe et juive des XI^e-XII^e siècles qui, au temps d'Avicenne, d'Avicbron et de Maimonide, féconda la pensée et les sciences de l'Europe chrétienne. Par rapport à l'islam, le pire serait d'en revenir à la rivalité des croisades que les historiens considèrent comme un désastre moral. Ici aussi, il faut apprendre à "être avec", trouver les voies d'une écoute patiente, de l'éducation à une tolérance, puis une estime réciproque et la critique par chacun de ses propres manques.

Notes :

* Historien, Jean Pirotte est directeur de recherches au Fonds national de la recherche scientifique, professeur à l'Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve, membre du CRÉDIC et du Centre Vincent Lebbe.

1. G. Kurth, *Les origines de la civilisation moderne*, Louvain, 1886, t. 1, p. XXXIII.

2. Pour prolonger ces réflexions on lira : J. Dupuis, *Vers une théologie chrétienne du pluralisme religieux*, Paris, 1997. - Ch. Roucou, *La foi à l'épreuve de la mondialisation*, Paris, 1997.

3. Cette situation de "chrétienté" qui se mit peu à peu en place, globalement entre Constantin et la Réforme, se caractérise notamment par le rôle structurant joué par un christianisme servant de fondement à la cohésion sociale, l'union étroite du religieux et du politique, l'intervention de la papauté dans les grandes affaires.

4. Voir J. Pirotte, *La conquête enrayée ? Une mise en perspective de la crise et des surgissements missionnaires des années 1950-1980*, dans *Nouvelles voies de la mission. 1950-1980, Actes de la session conjointe du CRÉDIC et du Centre V. Lebbe*, Lyon, 1999, p. 11-27.

5. R. Horton, *African Conversion*, dans *Africa*, t. XLI, 1971, p. 85-108 ; *On the Rationality of Conversion*, *ibid.*, t. XLV, 1975, p. 373-399. Un autre point de vue a été exposé par H. J. Fisher, dans *Conversion Reconsidered*, *ibid.*, t. XLIII, 1973, p. 27-40.

6. H. Maurier, *Les missions. Religions et civilisations confrontées à l'universalisme. Contribution à une histoire en cours*, Paris, 1993, p. 203.


7. *Ibid.*, p. 26.

8. Galates, 3,28.

9. Voir notamment E. Dussel, *El episcopado latinoamericano y la liberación de los pobres. 1504-1620*, Mexico, 1979.

10. Approuvé par la Congrégation pour le culte divin, 30 avril 1988.

Réf. : *Spiritus (Expérience et recherche missionnaires)*, n. 166, mars 2002.



Christianisme palestinien et dialogue interreligieux

Dialogue avec les musulmans

La communauté chrétienne palestinienne se rend très bien compte que la qualité de ses relations interreligieuses est partie prenante de sa propre existence et qu'elle est une condition nécessaire à sa présence future dans cette partie du monde. Une chose facile à comprendre considérant sa démographie. Les chrétiens ne sont qu'un pour cent environ de la population totale d'Israël et de Palestine et entre trois et quatre pour cent de la population palestinienne. De plus, la communauté chrétienne palestinienne a été profondément influencée et intimement modelée, à la fois dans son histoire et de par sa situation présente, par des relations séculaires avec des fidèles d'autres croyances, spécialement de l'islam et du judaïsme.

D'où la question suivante : Comment la communauté fait-elle face à cette réalité ? Comme une fatalité ? Ou comme une opportunité ? Ou, comme nous chrétiens, nous dirions, comme une vocation ? Il est impossible de donner une réponse générale à ces questions, particulièrement dans le contexte actuel. Un certain nombre de distinctions claires doivent être faites. Par exemple, nous devons distinguer non seulement entre les relations avec l'islam et le judaïsme, mais très souvent également entre la situation en Israël et celle des territoires palestiniens. La plupart du temps, il est aussi plus précis de parler de relations avec les musulmans ou/et avec les Juifs, plutôt que de relations avec l'islam ou/et avec le judaïsme, parce que ces relations interreligieuses sont situées et vécues au niveau d'une réalité concrète et non au niveau de principes abstraits et théoriques.

Il semble approprié de débiter avec les relations entre chrétiens et musulmans parce qu'elles constituent la réalité la plus immédiate pour les chrétiens palestiniens, pour plusieurs raisons.

Dans l'ensemble, je pense que nous pouvons affirmer que chez les Palestiniens, les relations entre chrétiens et musulmans sont traditionnellement bonnes. On peut même ajouter en général qu'elles sont meilleures que dans bien d'autres pays arabes musulmans. Une des raisons principales semble venir du fait que ce pays, qui depuis plusieurs siècles s'est appelé Palestine, a été à travers l'histoire une croisée de chemins et un creuset pour une longue liste de peuples

qui y ont passé et qui s'y sont installés à diverses époques. Le pays est également ouvert sur la Méditerranée et au-delà, sur le vaste monde. En conséquence, une certaine forme de diversité et de pluralisme est partie prenante de l'histoire et de la constitution de la Palestine et de son peuple.

Ces liens traditionnels entre chrétiens et musulmans palestiniens se sont affirmés et renforcés au cours du siècle dernier du fait que les deux groupes étaient engagés dans la même lutte nationale : ils ont souffert le même exil et désirent bâtir ensemble la future entité nationale.

Avant d'aborder la situation présente, il serait intéressant de noter que ces liens traditionnels peuvent être très différents selon le niveau social et quelques fois aussi selon l'implantation géographique. Au niveau plus élevé de la société, parmi les gens de formation académique et les professionnels libéraux, il n'y a absolument pas de problèmes dans les relations entre chrétiens et musulmans : les deux groupes ont un standard intellectuel, social et financier identique. D'autre part, à un niveau plus populaire, il existe un certain degré d'ignorance mutuelle et de préjugés, transmis d'une génération à l'autre. Entre ces deux extrêmes, on peut trouver une large tranche de sensibilités et d'attitudes diverses. Les relations peuvent également être très différentes selon l'implantation géographique. En ville ou dans un village, les chrétiens peuvent constituer soit une petite minorité, soit une part égale, soit encore une claire majorité. Les relations mutuelles seront alors différentes selon la situation. Un climat particulièrement sensible sera perceptible lorsque la majorité aura penché d'un côté ou de l'autre dans le cours d'une même génération. On peut penser par exemple à Nazareth et Bethléem où les chrétiens représentaient généralement les deux tiers de la population avant 1948, alors que maintenant la balance a penché vers les musulmans pour le même pourcentage. Il n'est pas difficile d'imaginer que l'adaptation à cette nouvelle situation demande des réajustement pénibles et qu'elle puisse être la cause de frictions sporadiques. Néanmoins, il est possible de dire que dans l'ensemble, au niveau de la société palestinienne, chrétiens et musulmans ont élaboré au cours des siècles une sorte de sagesse pratique qui leur permet de vivre ensemble et de surmonter les possibles moments difficiles.

Cette vision globale positive ne nous empêche pas de reconnaître le fait que ces relations passent parfois

par des moments de tension et de crise. De cette façon, nous pouvons également reconnaître que pendant les quinze dernières années environ, sont apparus certains nouveaux éléments qui demandent une analyse et une réaction nuancées.

Il est généralement admis que l'impact du facteur religieux dans le conflit israélo-palestinien a considérablement augmenté au cours des dernières décennies. Concrètement, du côté palestinien, la dimension islamique de la lutte nationale a été de plus en plus soulignée. Il est normal qu'un peuple qui lutte pour son identité et son indépendance nationales mobilise à cette fin toutes les énergies disponibles. Ce qui ne signifie pas que tout musulman, qui trouve inspiration et force dans sa religion, soit nécessairement un extrémiste. Cependant, il est vrai que dans le peuple palestinien également certains mouvements islamiques fondamentalistes et extrémistes ont surgi et gagné de l'influence. Pratiquement, partout à travers le monde, des situations sociales, économiques et politiques désespérées sont des terrains fertiles pour les mouvements fondamentalistes qui se disent inspirés de l'islam. La situation palestinienne ne fait pas exception. Une situation sociale désespérée, particulièrement dans la bande de Gaza, et une situation politique sans issue pour le futur immédiat ont permis à des mouvements, tel le Hamas, d'étendre leur influence d'une façon considérable. C'est bien sûr un motif d'inquiétude pour la communauté chrétienne palestinienne : quelle sera la place des chrétiens dans une société palestinienne future lorsque l'islam exercera une influence prédominante ? En fait, il n'y a pas actuellement de problèmes du côté des dirigeants : de part et d'autre, même au sein de ces mouvements, les dirigeants se rencontrent à l'occasion et, parmi eux, il est entendu qu'il n'y a pas d'antagonisme religieux mais que le but ultime est la lutte nationale. Malheureusement, à un niveau plus populaire, ces distinctions ne sont pas toujours clairement comprises, des tensions peuvent s'élever qui donnent lieu à des confrontations occasionnelles. Il appartient alors aux dirigeants des deux groupes de calmer les ardeurs et de renforcer les relations. Habituellement, ils y réussissent. Une attention renouvelée et soutenue est cependant nécessaire.

Le développement futur de ces relations entre les religions et entre les communautés dépendra pour une bonne part de l'issue du processus de paix entre Israéliens et Palestiniens, peu importe la forme qu'il prendra. En fait, les événements récents nous ont montré que chaque fois que le processus de paix est bloqué, pour une raison ou une autre, les mouvements extrémistes gagnent de l'influence, alors que dès que des ouvertures prometteuses apparaissent, ils voient leur audience diminuer. Le plus rapidement possible sera trouvé une solution politique, mieux il en sera pour

tous, Juifs, chrétiens et musulmans. Plus le conflit actuel durera, plus difficile il sera de trouver une solution et d'arriver à une coexistence harmonieuse.

Dans le contexte actuel, et construisant sur les relations traditionnelles, divers efforts ont été mis sur pied pour promouvoir une nouvelle réflexion sur les façons de promouvoir des relations interreligieuses plus conscientes et une éducation plus directe au pluralisme.

La vision à la base de ces efforts est fondamentalement la suivante : dans le monde arabe, particulièrement en Palestine, les chrétiens et les musulmans partagent une histoire, une langue et une culture communes. Cet héritage commun est la base qui permet l'édification ensemble d'un futur commun. Cette approche est présente dans divers documents de l'Église, certains propres à l'Église catholique, alors que d'autres ont été publiés en commun, par exemple, dans le cadre du Conseil des Églises du Moyen-Orient. J'aimerais référer aux deux lettres issues des sept Patriarches catholiques du Moyen-Orient. La première, publiée en 1992, s'intitule : *La présence chrétienne au Moyen-Orient : Témoignage et Mission*. Son contenu est évidemment plus large que la seule question des relations islamo-chrétiennes mais elle contient des principes et des orientations de base dans ce domaine. Une lettre subséquente, publiée par les mêmes Patriarches en 1994, est entièrement consacrée à cette question, sous le titre : *Ensemble devant Dieu pour le bien de la personne et de la société : Coexistence entre musulmans et chrétiens dans le monde arabe*. Permettez-moi de citer quelques lignes de la première lettre pour faire ressortir l'esprit qui la sous-tend :

"En dépit de toutes les difficultés, notre coexistence, par-delà de nombreux siècles, est le terrain commun sur lequel nous devons fonder notre action commune, maintenant et pour le futur, au service d'une société égalitaire et harmonieuse dans laquelle personne, quel qu'il soit, ne puisse se sentir hors contexte ou rejeté.

"Nous nous appuyons sur un héritage unique de civilisation. Chacun de nous a contribué à son élaboration selon le génie qui lui est propre. Notre parenté de civilisation est notre patrimoine historique. Nous devons le préserver, le développer, le renforcer et le revitaliser pour qu'il soit la fondation de notre coexistence et de notre respect mutuel en tant que frères et sœurs. Les chrétiens du Moyen-Orient sont une part inséparable de l'identité culturelle des musulmans. De la même façon que les musulmans du Moyen-Orient sont une part inséparable de l'identité culturelle des chrétiens. Pour cette raison, nous sommes responsables les uns des autres face à Dieu et à l'histoire".

"(...) Nous sommes convaincus que nos valeurs spirituelles et religieuses authentiques peuvent nous aider à dépasser les problèmes qui assaillent notre coexistence. Ceci nous oblige à nous regarder les uns les autres dans un esprit d'ouverture mutuelle avec le désir de nous connaître réciproquement (...)" (no. 48).

À ce moment-ci, nous pourrions nous demander s'il existe un quelconque dialogue entre chrétiens et

musulmans palestiniens. Tout dépend de ce que nous entendons par dialogue. Le dialogue religieux et théologique, au sens strict du terme, demeure difficile et limité, à la fois pour des raisons religieuses et culturelles. Cependant, le dialogue de la vie est activement poursuivi, sous des formes variées. Par dialogue de la vie, on entend la recherche consciente d'une meilleure compréhension mutuelle, l'acceptation et la collaboration face à une œuvre commune dans l'édification d'une société ouverte et juste. Dans cette perspective, des réunions et des discussions sont organisées entre musulmans et chrétiens sur des questions d'intérêt commun : les droits humains, la liberté religieuse, l'éducation, la justice sociale, etc. Chaque participant étudie les questions du point de vue de ses croyances religieuses afin d'en arriver à une compréhension mutuelle et pour trouver une base acceptable pour une action commune. Dans les circonstances actuelles, un tel dialogue de la vie semble beaucoup plus important que toute discussion théologique. En regardant ensemble vers un futur commun et en œuvrant ensemble vers un même but, les relations mutuelles sont non seulement renforcées par des vues plus justes mais aussi par un engagement commun et une responsabilité partagée.

Réf. : *Petit ÉCHO (édition française)*, 2002/3, n. 929.

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Maynor Clara Cheng

Integrating Inner-Healing into Missions Education

Dr Maynor Clara Cheng is from Hong Kong. She holds two Master's Degrees, the Master of Divinity and the Master of Arts in Missions. She has been a pastor of two Chinese churches in Hong Kong and a church planter with an international team in Japan.

Her dissertation on "Person Formation for Hong Kong Missionaries" was completed for the Ph.D. Intercultural Studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. Dr Cheng's goal is to train missionary students, internationally, in their spiritual, emotional and social wholeness. Address: 570 N. Los Robles Avenue, Apt. 2, Pasadena, CA 91101, USA.

Introduction

When missionaries undergo culture shock, they often experience feelings of uncertainty, apprehension, frustration, helplessness, a sense of inferiority, and anxiety. All these feelings threaten the self-image and self-esteem of the missionaries undergoing culture shock. New missionaries in general are more vulnerable to emotional depression. Satan would also utilize the cultural stress and the feelings of inadequacy new missionaries experience to aggravate their sense of low self-esteem.

In spite of this expected effect of culture shock for new missionaries, theological educators for missionary students still tend to train students more in their ministry competency than in their hearts. The area of missionary care in missionary education is still underdeveloped. Missionary care is more on the remedial than on the preventive side.

We should, however, be proactive in "creating" healthy workers for the Lord's vineyard. In training missionaries, therefore, we should offer an evaluation time for students to understand their own emotional, social, and spiritual condition. If we would actively look to see if there are any emotional bruises in the students while they are still in training, we would also help them to be restored to sound emotional, social, and spiritual wholeness. Therefore, inner-healing should be an indispensable part of missionary training.

Vulnerability of New Missionaries

When people cross cultures, they are actually undergoing a process of loss. They lose their familiar cultural environment and network of emotional and social contacts. They experience a loss of self-esteem in the beginning of language and culture learning. Depression is closely related to such loss.

I remember when I first left language school in Japan. I was sitting in a Bible study in my designated church planting site; I was lost and unable to understand what the Bible study group members were saying. I was very disappointed with myself. Even after having spent two years learning Japanese full-time, I was not able to follow the conversation. I sat there and could not participate, much less teach them the Bible as a missionary.

In spite of my theological training and pastoral experience, I sat there feeling like a fool. I said to myself, "Clara, go home. It does not make any difference whether you are here or not. You make no difference!". I remember that day, I went home and cried for an hour. Surely, I was heading toward low self-esteem.

In his 1983 book *Culture Shock*, Myron Loss tells us clearly that cross-cultural stress is "a process of making oneself vulnerable to disorientation and ... many emotional storms" (Loss 1983:47). "Individuals have low self-esteem when there is a great distance between what they want to be and what they are" (*ibid.*:38). The cultural stress missionaries undergo, especially in the early stage of cultural and language adjustments, puts the missionaries' self-esteem and self-love to the test.

Dr Marjory Foyle, a veteran missionary psychiatrist, explained that when missionaries undergo culture shock, they experience feelings of uncertainty, apprehension, frustration, helplessness, a sense of inferiority, anxiety, false guilt, and hurt feelings from being misunderstood (Foyle 1987:105-107). All these feelings threaten the self-image and self-esteem of the missionaries undergoing culture shock. This is because "feelings of security and significance are probably vital for self-esteem" (Jones 1995:83).

Among all the cross-cultural causes of stress, interpersonal relationships is widely identified as the primary one. That the missionary force itself has become increasingly international complicates the situation even more. Sometimes cultural stresses can be so overwhelm-

ing that missionaries are not even able to identify the cross-cultural causes of stress.

When missionaries undergo cross-cultural stress, they are most vulnerable in their social and psychological aspects. Although practically there are many problems and stresses that missionaries face, it is the missionaries' wholeness which determines their well-being. It is their well-being that determines how they manage the stresses and problems in cross-cultural missionary life.

Crossing Culture and "Bruises"

Cross-cultural missionaries are faced with personal issues that they had never been faced with before. Ken Williams has coined a term called "bruises". He defines bruises as hurts caused by earlier traumas in one's life. I would extend Williams's definition of bruises as past traumas to any unmet developmental psychological need that is still impacting a person negatively in his/her personality or character.

Williams categorizes the stresses and problems missionaries encounter overseas into external stresses and internal stresses. The field situations are the external stresses, and the emotional burden from bruises the missionaries have carried onto the mission field are the internal stresses. "What missionaries take to the field is far more important than what they find there" (Williams 1993:1). Bruises magnify and aggravate the internal stresses of a cross-cultural missionary and the internal stresses also magnify the stresses perceived. Therefore, missionaries with bruises are very vulnerable during the initial period of time when they cross to a new culture. If the missionary team or organization is composed of members from various cultures, the vulnerability increases even more.

Definitions

Before proceeding further, it may be helpful to define a few terms that I will use frequently in this article. They are "person-formation", "emotional bruise", "damaged emotion", and "inner-healing".

"Person-formation" refers to the deliberate programmes in the theological education in training missionary students' hearts and core beings. On one hand, missionary trainers help the students to understand the "natural person-formation" of their own past. Natural person-formation in one's past is the natural formation of how a person is shaped by one's culture to be who he/she is culturally, socially, psychologically and spiritually. This kind of understanding should also account for the dynamics of one's own family and individual personality. On the other hand, missionary trainers help the students to correct any negative impact from either one's own culture, family or life happenings. This involves inner healing and also equipping them to lead a healthy cross-cultural life emotionally, socially and spiritually.

In other words, person-formation includes illuminating the students' psychological self-understanding and helps the students be restored to psychological, social and spiritual wholeness. It enhances the student's social skills and cultural awareness as related to one's national character and that of those encountered. It facilitates the students developing intimacy with God.

I have adopted the term "damaged emotion" from a book of David A. Seamands's series entitled *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. "Damaged emotions" refer to emotions which "directly and deeply affect our concepts, our feelings, and our relationships (in a damaging way). They affect the way we look at life and God, at others and ourselves" (Seamands 1981:11). These emotions are damaged as a result of some life experience in the past. And as for "emotional bruise", as defined previously, it refers to the hurts or impact caused by traumas or any unmet developmental psychological need.

"Inner-healing" refers to the healing work of the Holy Spirit of a person from any emotional bruise and setting the person free from any damaged emotions, sins, spiritual sickness or oppression. This healing usually is facilitated by Christians who minister some degree of counseling and a lot of prayer. They rely on the revelation of the Holy Spirit to surface the roots of the damaged emotions or spiritual problems, guidance to know how to administer healing and restoration, and ultimately the transforming work of the Holy Spirit on the person being prayed for.

Although in inner-healing ministry we may encounter people who have psychiatric problems or people who have problems in their sexuality, I will not address these issues in this article. The goal of this article is to seek a general understanding of emotional problems and then build an applicable inner-healing model for training missionary students. Nevertheless, students who have psychiatric or sexual problems should seek professional help from psychologists and from ministers who specialize in inner-healing.

Common Damaged Emotions

There are four kinds of damaged emotions depicted by Seamands in his *Healing for Damaged Emotions*. The damaged emotions are a sense of unworthiness, the perfectionist complex, supersensitivity and depression. According to Seamands, the parent-child relationship, conditional parental love, a cultural overemphasis on being "strong", sexual abuse; and faulty Christian concepts are common causes for emotional problems.

Sense of Unworthiness

This sense of unworthiness is "a continuous (deep) feeling of anxiety, inadequacy and inferiority" (*ibid.*: 14). Persons with such a sense of unworthiness do not be-

lieve that they are worthy as a person. Moreover, they do not think that they are worthy of anyone else's care for them either. This sense of unworthiness not only affects their own self-esteem and social relationships, but it also penetrates into their relationship with and faith in God. They have a hard time personally receiving God's love and forgiveness for them.

Perfectionist Complex

The perfectionist complex is the inner feeling that says, "I can never quite achieve. I never do anything well enough. I can't please myself, others, or God". This kind of a person is always groping, striving, usually feeling guilty, driven by inner oughts and shoulds. "I ought to be able to do this. I should be able to do that. I must be a little bit better". He's ever climbing, but never reaching (*ibid.*:15).

Seamands has expanded this complex in his book called *Healing Grace* (1988). He explains that people who have developed a false super self will always have to perform in order to fulfill themselves. However, they have a hard time relating to God, to people and of course, even to themselves. The person himself/herself will not be satisfied by their own achievements. Moreover, the person is constantly struggling for approval and trying to prove herself or himself. His or her heart does not know grace.

At this point, I would like to add another dimension to perfectionism. Perfectionism drives a person to work so hard that the person is willing to pay even the cost of extinguishing him/herself. This inner drive also works to run the lives of those the person is working with. When that person is confronted with such an issue, he/she feels threatened because his/her own self-image is disturbed by the realization that he/she is not perfect. Therefore, perfectionism has the power to drive people with "workaholism", to blind people to the reality which threatens their self-image, and to cause them to sacrifice social relationships for tasks.

Supersensitivity

Supersensitive people usually have the experience of having been deeply hurt emotionally when they reached out for affection. They "need a lot of approval" (Seamands 1981:17). Their need for approval is so intense that they may "read" disapproval and negligence from others out of nothing and take on the matter personally. Nevertheless, some supersensitive people cover their sensitivity by "being hard, tough ... pushing people around, hurting and dominating them" (*ibid.*:17).

Depression

Another very common emotional problem among adults is depression. Seamands identifies biological

deposition, learned feeling concepts, and the temperament of a person as the factors of depression. Depression is related to personality structure, physical makeup, body chemistry, glandular functions, emotional patterns, and learned feeling concepts (*ibid.*:129).

By nature and temperament, some people are nervous, apprehensive, or easily frightened. They are supersensitive and their feelings are easily touched and changed.... People who are extremely introspective and sensitive often have the worst problems with depression (*ibid.*:130).

Seamands has also made two interesting and important points about depression. They are acceptance of the prone-to depression self, and the relation between depression and spiritual warfare. Rejection of one's own temperament and not accepting oneself aggravates depression in a person even more. Satan will also try "to turn temperamental depression into spiritual depression ... emotional depression into spiritual defeat ... burned-out emotion ... into a burned-out trust" (Seamands 1982:131).

Common Causes of Damaged Emotions

According to Seamands, the parent-child relationship, conditional parental love, a cultural overemphasis on being "strong", sexual abuse, and faulty Christian concepts are common causes for emotional problems.

The Parent-Child Relationship

The parent-child relationship is very much a key factor in conditioning the emotional responses deposited in an adult. Somewhere, sometime, you were a child. Although you don't remember all the details of your childhood, the child and teenager you once were is still important to you today because it continues to exist within you. The hidden child of your past is very much alive and affects everything you do, for good or for ill. Many of the most important threads in the complex design of who you are were introduced in your childhood, especially in the parent-child relationships (*ibid.*:9).

In his book *Deep Wounds, Deep Healing*, Charles Kraft describes the symptoms people suffer from when they are raised by certain parents. One may have the issue of abandonment if the parent(s) were unavailable or absent. One with the issue of rejection could have had parents who were too quick or too frequent in correction. Or the parents might not have wanted the child. A person may suffer from fear or a sense of insecurity if he/she has family members who were unpredictable and erupted in anger. Or, if the person was pressured by parents to conform, he or she could become rebellious (Kraft 1993:184-187).

Conditional Parental Love

If a child is raised in a family with parents who interact with conditional love and conditional relationships, the child will try very hard to gain acceptance and love. The child may then develop a motto of “Measure up!” (perfectionism) (Seamands 1982:32). This inner-child in adults can be emotionally destructive in that they may “feel shame or guilt about nearly everything they do and even for who they are” (Kraft 1993:185).

Cultural Overemphasis on Being “Strong”

Another motto is “be strong and silent!”. The effect of this childish motto is that the person will not be able to express his/her feelings (Seamands 1982:42). Even if feelings do surface, the adult will not know how to handle them. Consequently, the adult will not be able to express or handle sorrow, grief, anger, compassion, loneliness, anguish, depression, or a complex combination of several emotions.

Sexual Abuse

Although I have stated above that I will not address how to minister to people with sexual difficulty, it is still important to emphasize that this emotional bruise is serious and very deep. The abusive incidents “leave them feeling soiled, dirty, and ashamed” (*ibid.*:142). Williams has compiled a list of characteristics of victims of incest and rape (with ideas from Gardner 1982). They include: 1) intense rage, 2) irrational fears and/or anxiety, 3) a deep, pervading sense of guilt, 4) feelings of being different from others, 5) extremely low self-esteem, 6) waves of overwhelming loneliness, 7) great difficulty in trusting others, 8) intermittent depression, and 9) difficulty relating to spouse and sexual dysfunction (Williams 1993). Therefore, I cannot emphasize enough that we must pay attention to refer the person to well-trained counsellors to heal such bruises.

Faulty Christian Concepts

Seamands warns Christians that zeal for the Lord does not mean self-extinction. This false humility only “leaves the person self-sufficient, self-righteous, self-willed, seeking his own glory” (Seamands 1982:117). Such people do not have adequate and true self-esteem and self-love. They are not able to love other people with God’s agape love. Their dilemma is that they need to understand God’s love in order to have adequate and true self-esteem and self-love. However, they are not able to correctly perceive the character of God, without any distortion.

Although people with damaged emotions, are not,

for the most part, responsible for causing their own damaged emotions, they are responsible if they allow “the inner child of [their] past to dominate [their] life” (*ibid.*: 10). Adults cannot blame their parents or abusers for how they are handling their emotions as adults and as children of God. This is where inner-healing ministry comes in to heal the bruises and to transform the bruised person.

Inner-Healing and Missionary Training

We live in a time in which families are often sick and broken. A higher percentage of missionary students come from such broken families than ever before. Christian missionary works, regardless of the form (for example, Bible translation, medicine, community relief or church planting), are a spiritual ministry, and such ministry intrinsically involves spiritual struggle. We cannot afford to subject God’s precious and beloved children to a struggle in which they will only be “injured” socially, emotionally, spiritually, and even physically!

How do we eliminate “injuries”? Today, many mission agencies give psychological tests to the missionary candidates during their selection process, and they do not send out people found to have excessive emotional bruises. Or, if injuries happen on the mission field, they may even provide measures of missionary care to treat the wounds. Although these measures are necessary, they are sometimes administered too late.

I believe that preventive measures should be made at the very early stages of missionary training in theological education. We should offer a period of time to students in missionary training to recognize their own emotional, social and spiritual conditions. And I believe that inner beings with bruises can be restored to sound emotional, social and spiritual wholeness through inner-healing and counselling. In other words, we should actively look to see if there are any bruises and then actively heal those bruises. Then we can actively “create” and send out healthy workers into the Lord’s vineyard.

The Ministry of Inner-Healing

Let me summarize Mike Flynn’s description of what inner healing is and is not from his chapter on “What is the Ministry of Inner Healing?” (Flynn 1993:15-22). These points certainly help both the missionary trainers ministering inner-healing and the students receiving the ministry to know what to expect, what not to expect, and how to proceed.

What Inner-Healing Is

Inner-healing is a set of biblically-based dynamics and procedures taught by the Holy Spirit which must

be respected in the ministry. It is a means of grace to let God address the emotional bruise and also a process with a sequence from “getting in touch with the pain” (*ibid.*: 19) to actual healing. It:

1. releases the immobilizing aspects of damaged emotions;
2. corrects the responses to emotional bruises, especially with unforgiveness;
3. reframes a past event to gain perspective of the event or person(s) involved;
4. exchanges the negative effects of the emotional bruise with positive blessings from Jesus;
5. heals memories from the continuing negative effects;
- and
6. applies forgiveness to the person in order to heal the self-inflicted damage to one’s self-image.

What Inner Healing is Not

Inner-healing is not:

1. “psychiatry” seeking to analyze a person’s personality;
2. a “positive thinking” method;
3. an act of “meditation” but rather Jesus’ very own presence;
4. “escapism” from emotional bruises but rather penetration into and healing from bruises;
5. “group therapy”, but rather an encounter with Jesus for the person needing healing;
6. “grief work”, but appropriation of insights and emotions to Jesus;
7. a “recovery programme”, but the person’s faith in the power of God;
8. application of “salvation” to a person’s eternal destiny;
9. a “New Age” technique which taps an individual’s inner resources to reach for wholeness, or
10. a “panacea” which replaces the disciplines of sanctification and Jesus himself.

General Checklist

Here is an emotional and spiritual problems checklist I have combined from six authors on inner-healing. They are from Mike Flynn and Doug Gregg (1993: 25), Charles Kraft (1993: 73), John and Paula Sandford (1985: 107-8, 165, 214, 226, 246, 256, and vii) and David Seamands (1981: 52, 86-90 and 126; 1985: 79-93). This checklist is composed of five areas: 1) traumatic and damaging life experiences, 2) damaged emotions, 3) reactions to emotional bruises, 4) spiritual sicknesses and sins, and 5) things which impinge and wound our spirits. Some of the items in each area cannot be categorized in a clear cut way. They are then categorized

in the category that is most applicable, and they may even be repeated under another category.

Traumatic and Damaging Life Experiences

1. Any recurring disturbing mental pictures, scenes, or dreams are a good indication of having had such an experience.
2. Hurt: rejection, abandonment, and not being wanted.
3. Memories of specific humiliation, embarrassment, and shame, and the overall atmosphere of the growing years.
4. Frightening experiences, unhealthy teachings and poor relationships in the past which lead to various kinds of fear.
5. Abuses: physical, emotional, verbal, and sexual abuse.
6. Unfulfilled Emotional Needs: lack of love, acceptance, affirmation, and intimacy.
7. Parental Inversion: Instead of being taken care of as a child by the parent(s), the child is put in a situation that she or he has to take care of the parent(s).
8. Utero Encounters: damaged emotions resulting from any persistent strong negative feelings from or through the mother by what she was going through.

Damaged Emotions

1. Performance orientation: need to please others.
2. Perfectionism: constant feeling of never doing well enough, continuous sense of self-deprecation, anxiety, legalism, anger and resentment against the oughts, oneself, people and even God, and denial of the anger.
3. Low self-esteem: feelings of inferiority, inadequacy, and low self-worth.
4. Depression: prolonged times of feeling downcast, sorrowful, tearful and even despairing of life.
5. Various kinds of fear: rejection, the dark, heights, being alone, being in crowds, disease, death, intimacy.
6. Guilt: regret, confusion, sense of shame and disappointment.
7. Compulsions: need to control, possessiveness, intellectualism and rationalization, and any addictive drug habit and/or behaviour.
8. Lust: sexual fantasizing and pornography, obsessive masturbation, and sexual immorality.

Reactions to Emotional Bruises

1. Unforgiveness: anger at others, bitterness, and resentment.
2. Hatred: a desire for revenge.
3. Self-rejection: anger at self, feelings of inadequacy and unworthiness, critical spirit against oneself, feelings of rejection by others, and hypersensitivity.

4. Guilt: shame and embarrassment.
5. Critical Spirit: faultfinding, judgmentalism, intolerance, and condemnation.
6. Discouragement: disappointment, anger at God or fate or life in general.
7. Rebellion: stubbornness.

Spiritual Sicknesses and Sins

1. Strictly speaking, all the items in damaged emotions and reactions to emotional bruises involve certain degrees in some factors of spiritual sickness; some can even be identified as sins, if not sickness.
2. Slumbering Spirit: a spirit that is never nurtured and drawn forth to life in early infancy, or a hardened Spirit which is incapable to commune with the Holy Spirit, but only relates to people and God mentally.
3. Depression: a spirit which is incapable of sustaining the person emotionally or physically and despairs of hope for recovery.
4. Defilement: a spirit that, because of having committed a certain sin(s), sets out to seduce/ manipulate others to cooperate, or being defiled by such a spirit.
5. Death Wish: a person's spirit not sustaining the body normally as a result of a traumatic experience in the mother's womb.
6. False identifications of love: unregenerated love which only demands and wants.
7. Shrikism: a need to establish personal righteousness at the expense of others.
8. Involvement in occult, spiritualism, spiritual adultery and idolatry.

Things Impinging and Wounding Our Spirits

1. Inner vows: unbiblical vows made in our past consciously or unconsciously.
2. Generational curse(s): curses resulting from our ancestors' sins
3. Demonization: affliction by demons who have gained footholds in people's lives.

A Brief Introduction to Three Inner-healing Approaches

While Kraft and the Sandfords are renowned authorities in inner-healing ministry, Dave and Linda Olson also contribute to a unique approach to inner-healing. Kraft names inner-healing as "deep-level healing". Deep-level healing releases people from deep-level spiritual and emotional problems and restores them to a correct self-image and intimacy with God. Kraft's approach emphasizes using our spiritual authority to wage a war against the kingdom of Satan so that we can liberate the captives. Therefore, he ac-

tively employs techniques like memory retrieval, faith-picturing, interrogation of demons and casting them out. Then, he gives follow-up counselling for growth in emotional and spiritual health.

To the Sandfords, inner-healing should be called "prayer and counsel for sanctification and transformation" (Sanford, John and Mark 1992:18). Their approach is to confront the counselees with truth and to help the "unbelieving part of the heart" to die on the cross in order to be transformed. They do not try to cover extensively everything in the counselees' lives. They concentrate on helping the counselees to repent of their bitter root judgments toward their parents and others.

Although the Olsons were trained by the Sandfords, they have developed an approach called "listening prayer counselling". This approach helps the counselees to dialogue with God directly and to obtain insights, healing and comfort directly from God. Nevertheless, their philosophic emphasis for inner-healing is similar to the Sandfords that is repentance of bitter root judgments. In addition, they see "sins" as human efforts to meet unfulfilled but legitimate needs, which could be met by God only. Therefore, they help the counselees to get healing from God for their unfulfilled needs.

Directness of Guidance in Inner-Healing

The Sandfords' model includes much direct confrontation with biblical truths from the counsellor to the counsellee. Then, much repentance is emphasized. The Olsons' model defers all the counselling and comforting to Jesus. Although they are indeed guiding the counselling process, they turn every thought into a question directed towards Jesus. Meanwhile, Kraft's model falls in the middle of the spectrum. Kraft gently reminds the counselees of the biblical truth and gently guides the counselees to receive forgiveness from God. Much of his practice employs guided imagination and deliverance.

Although I like very much the Olsons' philosophy of having people get counselling directly from "listening" to God — listening referring not only to audible sounds but to visual images and to the imagination as well — I still believe that we need to speak forth biblical truth directly to the counselees. Sometimes, people are so spiritually and emotionally sick that they are not able to believe that God will speak to them. Or, they do not think that they can actually hear God speaking to them.

In order to enable them to hear from God directly, we have to remove their "listening blockages" by speaking forth truth directly to them. As to whether we "confront" the counselees with the biblical truth or just "remind" them, depends on the spiritual condition of the counselees. Sometimes it takes a slap on the face to get an unconscious person to wake up; other times just calling their name will wake them. Sometimes, when the

counselee is “stubbornly deaf” to God, we need to confront him/her directly and forcefully. But if the counselee is ready to “wake up and listen”, all it takes is a gentle reminder of the truth so that we can remove the “listening blockage”.

As soon as we get the counselee ready to hear from God directly, I would favour the Olsons’ practice of deferring the counselling to Jesus. I believe that just as the Lord can guide and speak to the counselors, He will also speak to the counselees. It is simply a matter of practice whether we encourage the students to listen to the Lord directly or not. I would recommend refraining from the practice of retrieving memories and guiding their imagination. I would leave that to the initiation of the Holy Spirit in retrieving any memories and in giving any visions directly to the counselees during the “listening prayer” sessions. I would recommend, however, the use of sacraments such as the Lord’s communion, the cross and oil to facilitate reminding the counselees of the healing and transforming power of the cross and the presence of the Holy Spirit. And if the Lord shows that there is demonization of the counselees, I would recommend asking the Lord to show both the counsellors and the students what to do in order to cast the demon(s) out. Then they respond accordingly.

In my opinion, there is no more powerful or joyous substitute for hearing directly from the Lord. It is my hope that we can equip the students with adequate biblical truth so that they are “healthy” enough to be able to listen to God and receive healing and transformation directly. Moreover, when the students become missionaries on the mission field, they may not have the “luxury” of having counsellors there. They need to be trained to listen to God and receive healing from God directly. They will also be able to utilize listening prayer as they disciple their converts and relate to their teammates.

An Inner-Healing Model for Person Formation

My philosophy of inner-healing is that it is both healing and transformation. The goal of inner-healing ministry among missionary students is to heal the students’ emotional and spiritual wounds through the use of the Word of God and by the work of the Holy Spirit and to transform them into mighty instruments of God. Then they can be instruments of transformation to wholeness in Christ for others.

We need the Lord to reveal what in the students’ lives is in need of healing. In a healing process, we need the authority of the Holy Spirit to set the students free from any bondage of the enemy as well as the Lord’s own comfort for their hurts. We also need the power of the Holy Spirit to establish and to restore them back to an abundant life in Christ. We also need his power to stabilize and to instill strength in the students so that they can have *shalom* (wholeness) to be healthy soldiers on the mis-

sion field and to be resilient as wounded healers.

Intimacy with God

I agree with Kraft that intimacy is the most crucial dynamic in inner-healing. Without the intimacy with God in one’s own private spiritual life, no one is able to conduct/receive inner-healing with sensitivity to the Holy Spirit, to exercise the necessary spiritual authority, or to love and to be loved. Therefore, both the trainers and the students must maintain their personal intimacy with God and not rely on the techniques or models of inner-healing already developed.

The Vitality of Using the Word of God

In order to achieve the desired healing and transformation in the healing process, we need to apply the Word of God effectively throughout the whole process. In other words, both the trainers and the students need the truth of the Bible to reveal what is wrong in the students’ lives. We need to equip the students with the truth so that their lives will be transformed. Besides, both the trainers and the students need biblical principles to discern whether or not what is happening in the inner-healing ministry (eg. words of knowledge, prophesy, and visions) is compatible with God’s own heart for us.

The Key for Inner-Healing: The Cross

The trainers ministering inner-healing to the students should emphasize that the cross is the key place for inner-healing. Leanne Payne, another renowned writer on inner-healing, contends that we should appropriate the cross to get a person into the presence of God; then one can be healed by identifying one’s life with Jesus’ death and resurrection. There is no other transformation more powerful than to put a sinful heart to death and live a holy life before God. Just as Flynn writes about the “dynamic of exchange”, there is no other comfort more healing than to know that Jesus took our pain so that we can “release hurt to him [Jesus as] he releases healing to us” (Flynn and Greg 1993:97).

Inner-healing as a Training Programme

Since person-formation is a preventive measure to injury or fatality on the mission field, we actively seek to help the students to identify their vulnerable areas and to be healed from their bruises and damaged emotions. Although in the Sandfords’ approach the counsellors do not try to cover extensively everything in the counselees’ lives, we cannot afford to neglect even one area in person-formation.

I would propose that missionary students should study the basic knowledge of common emotional

bruises and damaged emotions, and the common causes of these matters. Alongside this study, I would have the students trace their own life. In addition, the students should ask any family members about the lives of their ancestors and parents. They should trace how life was for their parents when they were in their mothers' wombs as well as how life was for themselves during their childhood and up to the present. In doing so, they would come up with a checklist of what possible vulnerable areas they should address.

Moreover, the students should go overseas and do at least three months of missionary work. This is to provide the students a chance to experience what their vulnerable spots might be and what inner-healing they might need. If the Holy Spirit does reveal that a certain student needs inner-healing, individual inner-healing ministry to the students by missionary trainers will be provided for them. It would also be advisable that the students receive professional counselling therapy alongside their inner-healing ministry.

This approach is different from the common practice in which people come for inner-healing when they are already in an actual situation that demands intervention. This process, however, is not to encourage the students to be introspective, or to be manipulated in any suggestive way to imagine matters that do not exist. Instead, both the students and the trainer are to be very prayerful to ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what should be dealt with, if anything.

I agree with the Sandfords in that we should only focus on the issue which the Holy Spirit is working on. The counsellors should not hurry the counselees. We have to trust the Lord's wisdom and timing. Therefore, it is best to put the study on basic knowledge of emotional bruises and damaged emotions and the assignment of tracing their lives at the beginning of their entire study programme; the overseas experience should be in the middle of their programme. If at any time the Lord prompts the students to work on issues during the span of their enrollment in their training, there will still be ample time to deal with the issues with the help of the trainers.

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in Chicago

President of the *American Society of Missiology* and
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Enrique Marroquín, C.M.F.

Sociologist

Promotor of *Justice and Peace* for the Claretian Fathers.

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Working Groups

Friday, 12 April **Debt Group** 9:30 hrs at **SEDOS**

Wednesday, 17 April **China Group** 15:00 hrs at **SEDOS**

Tuesday, 7 May **Bible and Mission** 15:30 hrs at **SEDOS**