



Editorial	2
L'avenir de la mission dans le prisme de l'espérance <i>Marie-Helene Robert, NDA</i>	3
Filipino Migrant Youth in Rome, Italy – A View of their Issues and Concerns – <i>Mrs. Cristina Liamzon Valenzuela</i>	10
La situación del tráfico con Mujeres y jóvenes en la región del Mekong <i>Rebecca Kay Thi</i>	30
Towards an Integrative Approach in Post-Communist Missiological Thinking: A Polish Case Study <i>Wojciech Kowalewski</i>	33
COMING EVENTS	48

Editorial

The longing and search for happiness are at the heart of human hope. In today's globalized world, every religious or lay missionary has to be a person "pregnant with hope", because the future of mission has to be rooted in hope. This hope comes from the salvation which is a gratuitous gift of the unconditional love of God. Sister Marie-Helene ROBERT, NDA, in her article: **"L'avenir de la mission dans le prisme de l'espérance"**, emphasizes that in recent years missiological research has contributed to the renewal and spreading of hope as a principle of life, present and future. She quotes Moltmann who asserts that God is not the God of the past but the God who is acting in the present and in the future; his promise is a rock, which supports the mission of the Church.

The growing numbers of migrant Filipino youth who run away from the bleak economic scene in the Philippines and seek employment in Italy, has motivated Mrs. Cristina LIAMZON, a Filipina lay missionary, co Director of the Family Ministry in 'Sentro Filipino - Chaplaincy' in the diocese of Rome, to undertake this meticulous and detailed sociological investigation on **"Filipino Migrant Youth in Rome, Italy – A View of their Issues and Concerns"**. Migration generates many pressures on both children and parents alike. What is the most important thing that can be done for the migrant youth? Mrs. Cristina LIAMZON has provided the youth with the space and opportunities to express themselves through a survey, which proves to be a valuable instrument to identify their urgent needs. In this way the Community Leaders can draw up a plan of action, which leads both parents and children towards a hope-filled future.

How to instill and cultivate seeds of hope in women and young women victims of human trafficking? All starts with the hope to see the promises of good jobs and good salaries fulfilled; and so to be able to financially support their families. These women and young women are easy prey because they lack an adequate education. Also in the Buddhist society in Thailand, women and girls are considered inferior, and have to sacrifice themselves for their families. Once these women and young women are caught up, locked in their work places and forced into prostitution, how to help them find a way out in a dignified manner? Sister Rebecca KAY THI in her reflection on **"La situación del tráfico con Mujeres y jóvenes en la región del Mekong"** invites all who are involved in the mission of building hope among the victims of human trafficking to adopt the attitudes of Jesus when he engages in a transformative conversation with the Samaritan Woman.

The future of mission is rooted in hope. Christians both Catholic and Protestant of Central and Eastern Europe are still grappling with the crisis of Christian identity in post-communist era; and they seek some new directions in relation to culture today. Theologians recognize that the new context requires the development of a deeper, mature and multi-dimensional theological reflection. The Polish theologian Wojciech KOWALEWSKI advocates for an integrative approach which fits well with a 'story-bound mind-set' and a 'differential approach' which is appealing to the 'rational logical mind-set'. His study on: **"Towards an Integrative Approach in Post-Communist Missiological Thinking: A Polish Case Study"**, focuses on contextual theology among the emerging theologies, which consider the contemporary crisis of the church from a missiological perspective: mission is at the heart of the church and therefore renewal is concerned with the recovery of the church's true identity.

Nzenzili MBOMA, FMM
SEDOS Executive Director

Marie-Hélène Robert

L'avenir de la mission dans le prisme de l'espérance

Membre du comité de rédaction de Spiritus, Marie-Hélène Robert est sœur de Notre Dame des Apôtres. Elle a soutenu son Doctorat en théologie en novembre 2009 et enseigne la missiologie et les lettres à l'Université Catholique de Lyon. Elle est aussi membre de l'AFOM (Association Francophone Œcuménique de Missiologie).

L'espérance chrétienne est appel au salut au sens où elle annonce que la mort n'est pas l'horizon ultime de l'humanité. L'expérience de la détresse du monde, conjointe à l'expérience d'être sauvé, par amour et par grâce, est, je crois, la plus puissante des motivations missionnaires. « Non, je ne mourrai pas, je vivrai, pour annoncer les actions du Seigneur », dit le Psaume 118 (117), 17. C'est l'espérance de leur propre résurrection, et l'attente d'un monde nouveau, d'une création nouvelle, fondées sur la foi en la résurrection du Christ, passé par la mort, qui ont poussé les apôtres à proclamer la bonne nouvelle du salut, proclamation accompagnée par les gestes et les signes du salut que Dieu accomplit par leurs mains (cf. Mc 16, 20).

Or cette réalité de l'Évangile, dans sa simplicité même, en vient à dérouter des missionnaires et des missiologues, qui peuvent être tentés de s'en détourner. Pourquoi? Parce que leur propre expérience du salut n'a pas été assez décisive pour fonder leur espérance et du coup l'annoncer? Parce que les signes du salut manquent d'évidence dans un monde effrayant de souffrance, et qu'il est plus urgent de faire venir la justice sur terre que de proclamer un avenir radieux? Parce que le salut peut s'obtenir par d'autres voies que par le christianisme, et que l'espérance est justement leur nécessaire complémentarité, ici-bas, vu que le Royaume est la récapitulation de toute réalité humaine, précaire, en Dieu? Les recherches missiologiques de ces dernières années ont exploré cette troisième piste. Il semble que l'heure soit au bilan: ces recherches ont-elles contribué à renouveler et à répandre l'espérance, comme principe de vie, présente et future, ou l'ont-elles diluée dans une multitude de possibles? Est-il possible d'aller plus loin, au plan théorique, ou est-il temps d'agir pour laisser toute sa place à l'espérance?

Les contributions du numéro 195 de *Spiritus* (juin 2009) montrent la nécessité, pour une mission fondée dans l'espérance, de comprendre le christianisme dans sa relation aux autres religions. Ainsi Swami Agnivesh: « L'ennemi d'une religion ne peut être une autre religion. Les ennemis des religions sont la pauvreté, l'injustice, l'analphabétisme, l'exploitation, la discrimination et tout ce qui pervertit l'objectif spirituel de plénitude de vie pour tous » (p.179). L'espérance qui fonde et détermine la mission chrétienne prend alors la figure d'un prisme, qui accueille les différentes facettes des réalités humaines pour manifester la lumière qu'elles reflètent et qui les appelle.

Double dimension: théologique et humaine

Les appels à garder ou à confesser l'espérance (cf. He 10, 23) ne manquent pas dans l'Écriture; c'est elle qui fait tendre les croyants vers la plénitude qui leur est promise car elle est fondée sur la résurrection du Christ, vainqueur de la mort. Elle est attente du salut, annoncé par les prophètes, réalisé dans le Christ, et dirigée vers son accomplissement. La mission de l'Eglise est bien de l'annoncer, de la fortifier, de l'orienter vers la plénitude eschatologique. Le temps actuel est celui de l'attente, du gémissement priant, de la non-vision (cf. Rm 8, 25-27)¹, et de l'engagement concret pour le Royaume.

Nous nous glorifions des tribulations, sachant bien que la tribulation produit la constance, la constance une vertu éprouvée, la vertu éprouvée l'espérance. Et l'espérance ne déçoit point, parce que l'amour de Dieu a été répandu dans notre cœur par le Saint-Esprit qui nous fut donné (Rm, 5, 3-5).

L'espérance, don de Dieu, enracinée dans la foi et fortifiant l'amour, est à ce titre une clef de la mission. Non seulement parce que sans l'espérance, la mission cesse — comment et pourquoi engager ses forces et sa vie pour ce qui s'arrête à soi, au visible, à ce qui est détruit, à peine mis en œuvre? — mais aussi parce qu'elle est un pari sur la positivité humaine. Inscrites dans un devenir qui débouche sur la réalisation entière des promesses messianiques, l'humanité et la création sont saisies dans leur dynamisme, impulsé par le créateur et auteur de la vie. Les dimensions humaine et théologique de l'espérance sont à conjoindre. D'un point de vue *théologique*, l'espérance repose sur la grâce et la promesse. Elle ne désespère de personne et détermine une anthropologie qui invite à contempler et à annoncer le créateur dans sa création, à lui rendre hommage et à le servir en servant sa création. D'un point de vue *anthropologique*, aucune vie humaine ne peut tenir sans espérance, synonyme alors d'espoir. Mais est-ce que l'espérance est un principe de vie, un principe vital, ou un contenu lui est-il constitutif? Si oui, le contenu est-il commun à tous ou est-il propre à chaque situation? De quel contenu s'agit-il alors ? La question est importante parce que de sa réponse découlent des types diversifiés de mission, même de missiologie.

L'espérance: principe d'ouverture pour la mission

D'une part, considérer que le contenu de l'espérance est propre à chaque réalité qui la porte (une personne, une culture, une religion) permet de respecter la spécificité de la réalité en question. L'attention missionnaire est ici de travailler à ce que les espérances diverses ne se détruisent pas les unes les autres mais s'évaluent à l'aune de l'espérance de l'autre. Autrement dit, les contenus de l'espérance peuvent être diversifiés, voire opposés, mais ils ne peuvent être vraiment principes d'espérance que s'ils intègrent un principe supérieur d'espérance, orienté vers et par la prise en compte de la dimension plus globale de l'humanité. L'espérance n'est elle-même que si elle implique un mouvement d'ouverture. C'est à ce titre qu'elle est figure et condition d'exercice de la mission.

D'autre part, de l'intérieur du christianisme, le contenu de l'espérance commun à toute personne, connu ou latent, est révélé par l'incarnation, la mort et la résurrection du Christ. Le Christ est le principe d'espérance qui conduit toute vie, qui lui ouvre un avenir, dans la mesure où l'on pose l'acte de foi selon lequel « par lui tout a été fait » et tout en lui sera récapitulé. La mission consiste alors à éveiller chaque vie à la reconnaissance de son principe, divin, et à son orientation fondamentale, la vie en Dieu, normée par la charité². L'espérance peut ici prendre appui sur le fait que tout ce qui est vécu de bon, de beau et de vrai, dans les diverses cultures et religions, participe à ce principe et à cette fin, de manière à manifester combien la création est ordonnée au dynamisme même de Dieu. Tout ce qui s'oppose à ce principe et à cette fin s'oppose à l'espérance : nier la vie, la liberté, le respect de la création, la richesse propre à chaque contexte empêche toute perspective de devenir. De même, l'absolutisation d'un système, qu'il soit politique, culturel ou religieux, est une mise à mort de l'espérance, puisque l'espérance implique une ouverture de principe, une



échappée de tout système, aussi séduisant soit il. L'espérance est ouverture, élan vers l'inconnu et l'infini.

La mission est essentielle pour l'Eglise quand elle lui rappelle qu'elle ne peut jamais se considérer comme un système clos, une idéologie parmi d'autres ou meilleure que d'autres, comme un jardin fermé et bien gardé. La mission est de dire au monde qu'il est tendu vers plus grand que lui-même. Le pire danger, pour la missiologie, serait alors de se figer en idéologie. Elle se dénature et se dissout d'elle-même. Elle ne dit plus rien à l'Eglise ni au monde.

Démasquer les fausses espérances

Or l'espérance elle-même peut être maquillée en idéologie. Une des remises en question importantes de la théologie du XX^e siècle aura été de démasquer les fausses espérances. L'espérance a en effet été confondue avec un certain idéalisme, avec de vaines consolations, avec une sorte d'assurance tout risque. Elle a pris le masque de la lâcheté, de la fuite du réel, de l'individualisme. Les théologies de l'engagement ont rappelé au christianisme le sérieux des combats qu'il a vocation de mener, dès ici-bas, quand une eschatologie mal posée risquait de l'en détourner. Le théologien le plus décisif est ici Jürgen Moltmann qui, marqué par *Le principe Espérance* d'Ernst Bloch, a avancé en 1964 une « théologie de l'espérance », dont s'est notamment inspirée la théologie de la libération.

Pour Moltmann, Dieu n'est pas le Dieu du passé mais il s'engage à agir dans le présent et dans le futur; la promesse de Dieu est un roc, sur lequel s'appuie la mission de l'Eglise. Elle ne dédouane pas de l'engagement dans le monde, mais tout au contraire stimule et oriente l'engagement pour que vienne le Royaume. La résurrection du Christ ouvre un temps nouveau et la dimension collective, voire politique, de ce temps, doit être préférée aux théologies existentielles (Bultmann) et aux positions piétistes, autant qu'aux théologies qui risquent d'éloigner Dieu et l'homme (Barth). L'espérance, d'ordre prophétique, conduit à une transformation de l'histoire. La dimension eschatologique féconde le présent, car elle est au cœur même de la théologie chrétienne.

Le christianisme est tout entier (et pas seulement en appendice) eschatologie. Il est espérance, perspectives et orientation en avant, donc aussi départ et changement du présent. La perspective eschatologique n'est pas un aspect du christianisme, elle est à tous égards le milieu de la foi chrétienne, le ton sur lequel tout, en elle, s'accorde, la couleur de l'aurore d'un jour nouveau attendu dans laquelle tout baigne ici³.

Il s'agit alors de combattre tout ce qui se présente comme un obstacle à la réalisation des promesses messianiques, dans le monde et dans l'Eglise, comme dans l'existence personnelle (mort, souffrance). Prendre au sérieux la souffrance du monde demande de s'engager contre elle, tout en proclamant qu'elle ne s'arrête pas à elle-même, qu'elle a été définitivement vaincue par le Christ.

Des théologiens comme Wolfhart Pannenberg et Jean-Baptiste Metz ont travaillé cette question de l'espérance dans le contexte de la sécularisation. Metz s'est d'abord fait le défenseur de la sécularisation en posant théologiquement le lien entre foi chrétienne et anthropocentrisme moderne. C'est selon lui la foi en l'Incarnation qui, indirectement, a contribué à « introduire l'idée d'un univers purement mondain. Ce n'est qu'à travers cette incarnation et en elle que le monde apparaît "totalement divin et totalement humain" »⁴. Mais ensuite, Metz a pointé les insuffisances et les dangers d'une telle conception de la sécularisation. Sa réflexion sur la théologie politique, sur la « mémoire dangereuse » puis sur la théologie narrative a laissé place à une position tout autre, qui examine la « crise de Dieu », son absence, que cherche à dissimuler une religiosité vide. La théologie doit alors renouer, selon lui, avec un véritable discours sur Dieu et un dialogue avec Dieu.

C'est Dieu qui fait le don de l'espérance, un don qui découle de la foi. L'espérance est alors une expérience, un engagement, un devoir. Elle fait replacer chaque chose face à

l'ultime, contre la tentation d'absolutiser les réalisations humaines, même les plus nobles. Les faux messianismes sont démasqués. L'espérance libère.

Accomplissement et inaccomplissement

Alors, pour le chrétien, les promesses de Dieu sont un roc contre lequel se brisent le vide, présent et futur, et son désespoir, le nihilisme et le scepticisme généralisés. Mais un monde en questionnement sur lui-même, conscient de ses fragilités, appelle à l'espérance. À ce titre la mission gagne à rappeler que l'accomplissement et l'inaccomplissement sont deux faces indissociables du christianisme. La foi chrétienne se fonde sur l'accomplissement, l'espérance chrétienne sur l'inaccomplissement. L'inaccomplissement permet d'intégrer de manière positive les attentes diverses de l'humanité. Non pour les valider comme telles, mais pour célébrer en elles l'élan vital qui les anime et le devenir inscrit en elles, du fait même de leur inaccomplissement, que partage le christianisme. La mission de l'Eglise est du coup appelé à comprendre en termes de complémentarité les diverses manifestations d'espérance qui engagent une responsabilité constructive dans le monde.

Espérance et appel au salut

Cette complémentarité dans l'engagement signe un acte d'espérance posé à la fois sur l'homme et sur Dieu. Une telle position est pourtant parfois récusée. Certes, Dieu seul est objet d'espérance, au sens où lui seul donne le salut et où son Royaume transcende les réalités humaines. Mais limiter son œuvre de salut à une poignée d'élus nierait la charge infinie et universelle d'espérance dont le Royaume est porteur, et qui le caractérise justement comme Royaume de Dieu, et non royaume à notre mesure, même bien intentionnée. Ces débats sont sous-tendus par des divergences sur l'anthropologie. Une vision trop pessimiste de l'humanité, conjointe à une conception réductrice de l'élection, peut limiter l'espérance et du coup faire considérer la mission comme une entreprise en direction des prédestinés au salut, que Dieu connaît.

Mais comment désespérer de la condition humaine en soi, puisque le Christ l'a prise et en a fait un instrument du salut? La déchéance de la condition humaine n'était pas totale, au point d'empêcher l'incarnation du Fils de Dieu; « l'incomparable noblesse »⁵ de la nature humaine qui résulte de l'incarnation ne peut être que porte ouverte par et pour l'espérance. Seulement, une vision trop optimiste de l'homme risque de lui faire croire qu'il peut se sauver lui-même; le salut est comme détaché de l'appel à la conversion. La mission consisterait ici à ratifier les entreprises humaines et à appuyer celles qui travaillent à un monde meilleur, monde qui serait alors son propre horizon. Or « nous avons été sauvés dans l'espérance » (Rm 8, 24), non par nous-mêmes, mais par le Christ.

L'intérêt des recherches actuelles est de prendre conscience qu'une vision trop optimiste ou trop pessimiste de l'homme fausse le projet de Dieu; en revanche, il importe de replacer toute action à la lumière de l'appel au salut, que Dieu veut pour tous. L'appel au salut est bien la tâche de la mission de l'Eglise, et elle lui est fidèle si elle accorde à l'espérance une place de choix, normée par la foi et animée par la charité. Mais encore faudrait-il s'entendre sur cette notion centrale de salut.

Conclusion

La mission fondée sur l'espérance réalise l'alliance entre la patience et l'urgence missionnaires. Patience, parce que Dieu mène toute réalité à son terme, en son temps, et urgence, parce qu'il associe l'humanité à son action contre les forces destructrices de la vie.

De nombreux théologiens catholiques et protestants affirment l'engagement de Dieu dans et pour le monde présent. Le Royaume de Dieu, s'il ne perd rien de sa transcendance, n'est pas pour autant une réalité coupée de l'histoire, mais il est son accomplissement, comme son assumption. Les temps appartiennent à Dieu et la mission de l'Eglise consiste à habiter l'histoire pour la tourner vers sa source et sa fin. C'est une œuvre de patience, qui requiert la foi en la victoire sur le péché et sur la mort, victoire définitivement acquise, mais dans

l'espérance, la non-vision de sa réalisation, et dans l'engagement des forces d'amour, témoignage par excellence.

L'appel au salut, dans son universalité, est un hommage rendu à la grandeur de Dieu: personne n'en est *a priori* exclu, ou indigne; il est conjointement un hommage rendu à la noblesse humaine, créée et sauvée par Dieu, un hommage à sa capacité d'écouter et de répondre librement. La mission ne saurait limiter l'appel au salut, ni occulter l'ouverture à l'espérance qui libère.

Questions & réponses

Question (B. Kabongo, OMI): Combien y a-t-il d'espérances? En mission, nous rencontrons beaucoup de religions, et dans la première conférence le P. Amaladoss nous a encouragés à dialoguer. Or, si chacun a son espérance, où peut-on situer le dialogue ?

Réponse (M-H. Robert): Le dialogue peut d'abord être une prise de conscience de cette diversité des points de vue sur l'espérance, et ensuite un travail pour essayer d'éclaircir ce que chacun entend par espérance. Le premier travail du dialogue est bien de contribuer à une connaissance mutuelle. Un dialogue n'est pas là pour juger les espérances les unes par les autres. Ma position est de dire que nous ne pouvons pas vivre sans espérance: l'espérance est un principe de vie. Ensuite, cette espérance s'exprime dans des cultures et des expériences religieuses différentes. Chaque religion donne, à sa manière, un sens à l'espérance. La particularité de l'espérance chrétienne, laquelle se fonde sur la mort et la résurrection du Christ et la récapitulation de l'univers en Lui, n'est pas celle d'un hindou, d'un bouddhiste ou d'un musulman. Il ne s'agit pas non plus de classer et de hiérarchiser les espérances. Il me faut, en revanche, être attentive à ce que mon espérance n'aille pas détruire l'espérance de l'autre, mais plutôt l'aide à se comprendre et qu'il puisse vivre son espérance en tant que telle. Et réciproquement. Sinon on n'est plus fidèle à ce que j'entends par espérance: cet élan de vie venu de Dieu et allant vers Dieu. Il ne s'agit donc ni de les mettre en *vis-à-vis*, ni de les détruire l'une par l'autre, mais plutôt de les comprendre l'une par l'autre.

Q.: Et où situez-vous la conversion ?

R.: Les situations de conversion sont très complexes et diverses selon les contextes. Je pense ici aux gens qui se convertissent à la religion dominante tout simplement pour une question de mariage ou aux membres d'un groupe minoritaire qui espèrent obtenir des avantages en s'intégrant au groupe dominant. Il s'agit ici de conversions très « pragmatiques ». La conversion dont je parlais tout à l'heure est découverte de Dieu. Si je ne connais pas Dieu et que quelqu'un m'aide à ouvrir les yeux sur qui est Dieu, je peux tout d'un coup ouvrir les yeux à la réalité divine et m'engager dans cette voie. Je ne peux pas juger les raisons de la conversion de quelqu'un. C'est la personne elle-même qui doit se prononcer et qui peut rendre compte des raisons de sa conversion. Mais moi, en tant que catholique, lorsque je présente la joie de vivre en Dieu, je la présente comme contagieuse, bénéfique, merveilleuse et je ne peux la cacher... et tant mieux si quelqu'un se trouve éveillé à cette réalité. Mais Dieu est plus grand que mon expérience et je crois qu'il sait toucher les cœurs et les cultures par nous, mais aussi par d'autres moyens.

Q. (P. Lefebvre, CICM): Je pose une question qui concerne l'au-delà de l'extrême diversité des cultures humaines et de l'idée que chaque homme peut se faire du « salut », car nous serons certainement sauvés *autrement* que ce que nous pouvons imaginer maintenant. Nous sommes invités aujourd'hui à marcher ensemble et à dialoguer... Mais après? On nous dit que ce sera une Fête qui nous rassemblera tous.... Or, nous avons chacun notre façon de faire la fête. Serons-nous alors tous semblables ? Vers quoi allons-nous ? Et si chacun joue de son instrument, comment se fera l'harmonie de cette diversité?

R.: C'est en effet une question importante que celle de se représenter ce que pourra être notre vie réconciliée en Christ, à la fin du monde... J'ai appris à goûter l'amour du mystère, à me laisser habiter par ce mystère, et à apprendre à aimer ce que je ne comprends pas et ne vois pas... et cela rejoint ce que je voulais dire tout à l'heure lorsque je parlais de

l'inaccomplissement. En tant que chrétienne, j'ai un « roc », le Christ, qui est mon accomplissement. Mais il est « roc » aussi parce qu'il a, en lui, un aspect d'inaccomplissement qui est porté par l'espérance : accomplissement pour nous, qui attendons son retour glorieux, et pour lui, qui attend que nous le rejoignons. Il faut vraiment tenir à ces deux aspects : l'inaccomplissement et l'espérance. Si on ne laisse pas une part ouverte à nos représentations, je crois vraiment qu'on achoppera toujours sur ces représentations. Si en revanche on garde cette part ouverte, on est à même d'accueillir justement ce qui fait la spécificité du « roc », spécificité qui ne m'appartient pas et sur laquelle je n'ai certainement pas le droit de mettre la main. Ce que je sais - parce que c'est un don théologal, un don de la foi - c'est que l'humanité est appelée au bonheur en Dieu. Je me rappelle au Tchad le don du sourire extraordinaire de ces personnes que je rencontrais tous les matins en me rendant à la chapelle ou au travail... Leurs sourires faisaient rayonner mes journées. Et à mon départ, ces personnes me disaient à quel point avait été importante pour elles ma présence, le simple fait que je sois là avec elles. « Votre sourire va nous manquer! » Je me demande alors si les visites de Dieu ne sont pas un peu de cet ordre là: il vient, il nous donne son sourire, il nous donne sa Vie, il nous donne de quoi vivre aujourd'hui... en attendant que l'on se retrouve.

Q. (P. Tamatong) : Nous rencontrons tous les jours de nombreux jeunes, certains en quête du sens de leur vie et d'autres qui désespèrent. Comment transmettre notre espérance de salut à ces jeunes, aussi bien à ceux qui sont en quête de sens qu'à ceux qui n'ont plus d'espérance?

R.: C'est une question de fond qui rejoint le mystère de la liberté. Que devons-nous faire lorsque nous sommes en face d'une liberté? Nous témoignons d'abord qu'une force plus forte nous fait vivre. Si on n'a pas fait soi-même l'expérience de sa propre fragilité, comment alors rencontrer une personne qui est en train de faire l'expérience de cette incapacité à vivre et qui ne comprend pas ce qu'elle est en train de traverser? Je ne suis pas sûre que nous soyons capables de dépasser par nous-mêmes cette incapacité de vivre, sans cette force de Dieu qui nous est donnée, pas seulement pour nous, mais aussi pour les autres. Soyons donc des vecteurs toujours prêts à rendre compte de l'espérance qui est en nous, et des vecteurs de cette possibilité que Dieu nous offre de vivre heureux devant Lui. Chaque situation est à prendre au sérieux dans sa singularité. Il nous faut prendre conscience que c'est une *personne* que nous avons en face de nous. Il n'y a pas de programme « tout fait » à appliquer selon telle ou telle situation. On ne peut que se laisser rencontrer par des personnes. C'est pourquoi il y a un vrai danger à vouloir appliquer des programmes missionnaires.

Q. (B. Keradec, OMI) : Entre ces deux positions extrêmes que sont « le pessimisme » et « l'optimisme », il y a un entre-deux qui est souvent un clair-obscur. Comment alors faire le discernement de la fausseté ou de l'adéquation au « projet » de Dieu dans cet entre-deux ? Est-ce que la dimension interreligieuse peut être incluse dans cette entreprise de discernement, afin de vivre ensemble sous la volonté de Dieu ?

R.: Je crois que la question contient sa réponse. Et je crois que dans les groupes de dialogue interreligieux, on ne prend pas souvent le temps d'éclaircir ce qu'est « l'homme » pour les uns et les autres. C'est dommage, car cela permettrait de comprendre un peu mieux pourquoi on véhicule telle idée de Dieu et de la religion. Si on mettait un peu plus au clair cette vision de l'homme que chacun porte, non seulement dans sa religion mais en tant que personne - car ce ne sont pas des religions qui dialoguent, mais des hommes et des femmes avec leurs expériences propres - alors je crois que cela permettrait d'éclaircir les choses. Nous sommes en effet des vivants sous le regard de Dieu. Mais quel type de vivants sommes-nous ? Comment nous laissons-nous influencer par le contexte dans lequel nous sommes ? Et qu'est-ce que nous projetons de nous-mêmes, voire de notre souffrance sur ce contexte ?

Q.: Dans l'espérance humaine, il y a bien sûr cette dimension de bonheur auquel on aspire, mais il y a aussi cette attente de justice afin que soient réparés le mal et la souffrance que nous subissons. N'y a-t-il pas justement, dans le salut apporté par le Christ, cette dimension du mal et de la souffrance représentée par la croix du Christ? Est-elle suffisamment mise en lumière ?

R.: Entre les positions du Moyen-Âge qui mettaient l'accent sur la justice et les positions modernes qui mettent l'accent sur la miséricorde, c'est la question de l'équilibre et de l'articulation entre les deux dimensions qui est posée. Une miséricorde qui serait une bénédiction de l'injustice ne tient pas. À l'inverse, une justice qui serait sans miséricorde n'est plus une justice. Les deux dimensions sont nécessaires et doivent être équilibrées l'une par l'autre. Je reposerais le problème à partir de l'articulation entre la foi, l'espérance et la charité. Il est arrivé que certains discours missionnaires soient exclusivement centrés sur l'annonce de la foi, avec tout l'appareil de doctrines et de convictions qui vont avec (y compris au détriment de l'amour); d'autres ont mis l'accent sur l'espérance au point de négliger l'aujourd'hui et la responsabilité humaine (y compris au détriment de la foi) : « croyez et faites ce que vous voulez ici-bas puisque au ciel nous serons tous sauvés! » L'époque actuelle insiste davantage sur l'amour, comme étant au centre de tout, et justifie cela en s'appuyant sur saint Paul qui dit que « seul l'Amour ne disparaîtra jamais » mais si cela est vrai au plan eschatologique, ici nous avons encore besoin de la foi et de l'espérance. Les trois dimensions sont importantes, et mettre l'accent sur l'une au détriment des deux autres revient à trahir les trois. Ce qui est difficile, c'est de conjoindre avec sérieux et en équilibrant les différentes composantes d'une seule et même réalité - puisque nous sommes dans l'ordre théologal -, mais une réalité qui se décline de manières différentes pour que l'on ne perde pas de vue à quel point l'humain est à la fois un et complexe.

(Synthèse faite par Jean-François Meuriot)

¹ « Car notre salut est objet d'espérance; et voir ce qu'on espère, ce n'est plus l'espérer: ce qu'on voit, comment pourrait-on l'espérer encore? Mais espérer ce que nous ne voyons pas, c'est l'attendre avec constance ».

² « Il est vrai que celui qui ne connaît pas Dieu, tout en pouvant avoir de multiples espérances, est dans le fond sans la grande espérance qui soutient toute l'existence (cf. Ep 2,12) ». « Nous avons besoin des espérances - des plus petites ou des plus grandes - qui, au jour le jour, nous maintiennent en chemin. Mais sans la grande espérance, qui doit dépasser tout le reste, elles ne suffisent pas. Cette grande espérance ne peut être que Dieu seul, qui embrasse l'univers et qui peut nous proposer et nous donner ce que, seuls, nous ne pouvons atteindre. Précisément, le fait d'être gratifié d'un don fait partie de l'espérance. Dieu est le fondement de l'espérance - non pas n'importe quel dieu, mais le Dieu qui possède un visage humain et qui nous a aimés jusqu'au bout - chacun individuellement et l'humanité tout entière » (Benoît XVI, Lettre encyclique *Spesalvidu* 30 novembre 2007, n^{os} 27 et 31).

³ J. Moltmann, *Théologie de l'espérance*. Études sur les fondements et les conséquences d'une eschatologie chrétienne. Collection « Cogitatiofidei », n°50, Paris, le Cerf, 1970, 420 p., introduction. [*Théologie der Hoffnung. Untersuchungen zu Begründung und zu den Konsequenzen einer christlichen Eschatologie*, München, Chr.Kaiser, 1964].

⁴ Cf. Johann Figl, « Sécularisation », (trad. J.-P. Bagot), dans P. Eicher(dir.), *Nouveau dictionnaire de théologie*, Paris, le Cerf, 1996, p. 899-904.

⁵ « Par lui s'accomplit en ce jour l'échange merveilleux où nous sommes régénérés lorsque ton Fils prend la condition de l'homme, la nature humaine en reçoit une incomparable noblesse; il devient tellement l'un de nous que nous devenons éternels » (Troisième Préface de la Nativité).

Mrs Cristina Liamzon Valenzuela

Filipino Migrant Youth in Rome, Italy **— A View of Their Issues and Concerns ⁱ**

Background

It has been a positive move on the part of the Italian Government to allow migrant families to unite. Parents are legally able to bring their spouses and children under 18 years of age to join them (*ricongiungimento familiare*). More Filipino parents are also deciding to give birth and raise children in Italy, to increase the chances that their children will obtain Italian citizenship when they reach 18 years of age. However many parents, whose children are born in Italy, send their babies back to the Philippines to be cared for by their grandparents or other relatives until the children reach school age, thus easing the infant-rearing responsibilities of parents.

While this is a positive development, enabling families to live together on an continuing basis or for parents to reunite with their children after years of separation, the problems and concerns related to migrant youth are also on the rise, since their numbers are also increasing. There are an estimated 30,000-40,000 Filipinos in Rome and around 105,000 in the whole of Italy, with Filipinos present in the five largest migrant communities in the country. Over the past several years, the number of young Filipinos (defined for the purposes of this study to be those from 12 to 30 years old) in Italy has been rising dramatically because of family reunification. There are also many Filipinos below the age of 30 who come to Italy, not primarily to join their parents but to escape from the bleak economic scene in the Philippines and to seek employment mostly as caregivers or domestics. The majority of these young people are armed at least with High School diplomas, while a number even have College degrees.

The study conducted in 2005 through the auspices of PILIPINAS OFSPES and the Sentro Pilipino Chaplaincy in Romeⁱⁱ on the situation of the Filipino youth in Rome — according to many Filipino parents, as well as chaplains, religious and other church leaders interviewed in the course of the study — was thus timely and overdue. Growing numbers of young migrant Filipinos, sometimes termed as 'second generation' migrants, have become much more 'loud' and visible in public places (e.g., at Rome Termini Station and other large squares.). They attract the attention of older Filipinos, who oftentimes view the young people's adoption of Italian ways and behaviour with disapproval as being contradictory to Filipino values and culture.

Psychologist Dr. Ma. Lourdes Carandang (1995) noted that the pressure of economic needs, the deterioration or disappearance of family support structures, with the growing number of single-parent families, marital discord and violence, among others, create more anxieties for Filipino youth. This is further compounded for those youths who migrate to other countries, often not entirely due to their own decision. They are confronted with even more stress, such as the need to adjust to a new culture with its concomitant set of values and norms, a totally unfamiliar language, and — for school — age youth having to enter a new school with a different system and make new friends. It is no surprise, then, that most migrant youth, our Filipino youth included, undergo tremendous, even overwhelming feelings of insecurity and doubt, loneliness, failure, and lack of confidence. At times, this leads to socially undesirable behaviour manifested in such forms as dropping out of school, or even gambling, drinking, drug abuse and teen-age pregnancies.

As the situation of our Filipino youth is clearly inter-linked with that of the Filipino family and parents, this study on the Filipino youth in Rome must necessarily also be a reflection on Filipino parents and Filipino families. As several parents interviewed for this study commented, "the problem really isn't so much with the youth as with their parents".

Objectives and Methodology of the Study

Despite the expanding number of migrant youth, including Filipino migrant youth in Italy, no systematic study has been undertaken on this phenomenon. Thus, the aim of this study is to present a more complete picture of the social, religious, cultural and economic realities of Filipino youth in Rome and the magnitude of their problems and concerns. Next, it sought to provide specific recommendations addressed to various stakeholders to respond to the issues and problems identified and to draw up the elements for a plan of action around which commitment to develop and implement the plan can be generated.

Methodology

This study utilized several data-gathering methods. Two survey instruments were used: one for the youth and the other for the lay leaders, religious nuns, chaplains or ministers of community or church organizations serving youth. The youth survey consisted of a questionnaire with a set of ten questions in the vernacular: Filipino. The survey was meant to give a general picture of how the young people have managed since they arrival in Italy. The insights gained were expected to probe and clarify the situation of the youth, using focus group discussions (FGDs) or more focused interviews.

To obtain more qualitative and in-depth data, several focus group discussions (FGDs) were also organized. Individual interviews were conducted with selected youth leaders and parents who expressed interest in the study as well as lay leaders, religious nuns, chaplains or ministers working closely with the youth on various programmes, some explicitly targeting youth.

All in all, close to 200 people participated in the survey through the questionnaires, the FGDs, or the individual interviews. The study, however, had several limitations. One major limitation was the period in which the data collection was conducted, i.e., during the summer months of June-August, when many Filipinos were away from the city on holiday or had joined their employers on their summer vacations. This made it extremely difficult to invite more people to join and to organize more FGDs as was originally planned.

It must also be noted that those interviewed generally belonged to Church-related organizations. Thus, they may not have been fully representative of the types of issues and problems faced by youth who do not belong to any organization and are not involved in the programmes and activities that such organizations offer. Ideally, more interviews should have been conducted with those facing serious social and psychological problems although to some extent a few parents, chaplains, ministers and other religious did relate the experiences of their own children and others encountering such problems. Finally, youth who do not belong to any social group or who spend most of their time 'hanging out' at Termini Station should have been given more emphasis as interviewees.



Another major shortcoming of the study is the limited gender differentiation in data and analysis. Such differentiation could have given further insights into the differences between young male and female migrant Filipinos.

Categories of Filipino Youth in Rome

This study has categorized Filipino children and youth in Italy into four major groups. The first consists of children who were born in Italy and/or brought here as a young child and raised in the country. Many Filipino mothers give birth to their children in Italy, bringing the average to around 750 Filipino births a year in Rome alone. However, the mothers tend to send their babies back to the Philippines for a few years so that they can continue to work unhampered by costly child care arrangements and the high cost of lost employment. Once the children are of school age, the parents wish to bring them back to Italy to study, particularly when both parents live and work in the country. If only one parent works in Italy, the children normally continue their schooling in the Philippines under the care of the parent or other extended family member there.

The second category of this study takes into account children under 18, who are claimed by their parents to join them in Italy while they are still eligible to do so. The majority of these youths have at least finished a significant period of their elementary or high school education in the Philippines and the object of coming to Italy is to re-unite with their families and to continue their education up to the tertiary level. Many parents whose children are already at college or university by the time they decide to claim them let them finish their studies in the Philippines. They then find the means to bring them to Italy. Those who resume their studies in Italy have to adapt to a very different educational system.

The third category is composed of young people who are at least high school students or even college graduates who come to Italy on their own to seek employment. They do so through direct hiring arrangements, or they enter as 'tourists' or through other non-formal channels and stay on to work.

The last category consists of those with mixed parentage, one parent (usually the mother) being Filipino and the other (usually the father) being Italian. A sub-category of this group of youth with mixed parentage would be children of one Filipino parent and one non-Filipino (not necessarily Italian) parent. With the large number of other migrant groups in Italy, there is a growing number of Filipinas forging long-term relationships with other migrants. The children from such relationships share some similar characteristics with children of Filipino-Italian parentage.

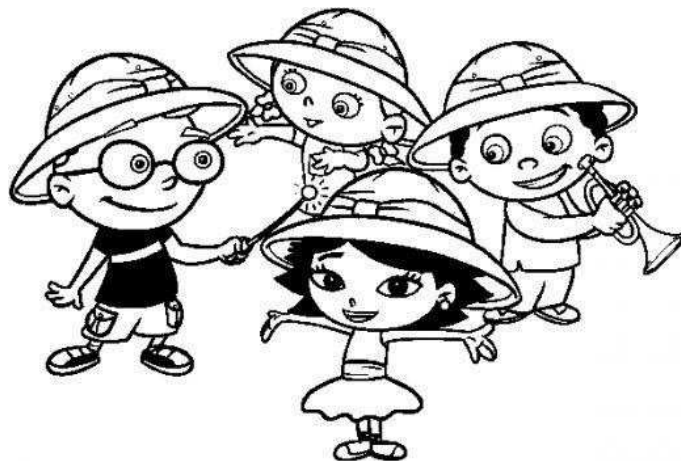


Table 1. Categories of Filipino Youth in Italy and Their General Characteristics

Category	Characteristics	Types of Problems
A. Youth born and/or raised in Italy starting at a young age	<p>■ born in Italy but brought back to the Philippines as a baby and returned to Italy upon reaching school age</p> <p>■ learns Italian starting at a young age and is fluent in it; speaks Italian at home and in school; does not know much Filipino nor English</p> <p>■ parents sometimes may not see the value of teaching the Filipino language and culture to the child</p>	<p>■ has less adjustment problems as started studying in Italy at a young age, facilitating integration</p> <p>■ tends to forget practices of Filipino norms, values and traditions becoming a source of conflict with parents</p> <p>■ tends to take in Italian forms of behavior and values which are deemed counter to Filipino values and traditions</p> <p>■ highly influence-able and impressionable by a liberal society and environment</p>
B. Youth under 18 years of age who are reunited with their overseas parents	<p>■ born in the Philippines and brought to Rome after parents have stabilized their incomes and legalized their stay or residences and are able to claim their children</p> <p>■ migrates to Italy after studying several years in the Philippines at least at elementary level and often finishing elementary or high school level</p> <p>■ tends to be ambivalent about leaving the Philippines as this implies losing friends and having to adjust to a new country but is eager to re-unite with parents</p> <p>■ has imbibed more Filipino traits including fluency with the Filipino language</p> <p>■ may or may not want to continue studies, as going to Italy presents opportunities to work without a college degree and entails adjustment to a different educational system</p>	<p>■ tends to experience high stress in adjusting to living in new country, especially having to learn a new language</p> <p>■ tends to lose self-confidence as a result of inability to cope adequately and can suffer from negative image problems of Filipinos in Italy, i.e., being domestics (low social status)</p> <p>■ suffers loneliness as s/he misses friends in the Philippines more acutely as peer influence is strongest during the youth years</p> <p>■ may have difficulty in relating to/communicating with parents from whom s/he may have been separated for long periods</p> <p>■ may continue previous socially undesirable behaviour in new country, e.g., smoking, drinking, drug use, etc.</p>

<p>C. Youth who come to Italy primarily for employment reasons</p>	<p>■ more females than males as women have a higher chance of finding employment as domestics or caregivers</p> <p>■ come to Italy are older than those in category B and therefore more stable emotionally</p> <p>■ has finished higher educational level by the time s/he arrives in Italy, at least high school graduate or college undergraduate or graduate or may even have some previous work experience</p> <p>■ come to Italy as direct hire or as a 'tourist' who then stays on to work</p> <p>■ more focused on reason and objective for coming to the country – to earn money to assist their families and themselves financially</p> <p>■ tends to mature faster with work and financial responsibility to support parents, siblings, etc.</p>	<p>■ no mental or emotional baggage of previous parental absence in their lives (if no parent lives abroad)</p> <p>■ loneliness is a big source of stress for those without any family, even extended</p> <p>■ de-skilling especially for those with college degrees and past work experience that does not match their present employment, resulting in loss of self-confidence and/or self-esteem</p> <p>■ lacks orientation and training in domestic work</p> <p>■ can make do with minimal Italian language skills especially if working part-time with no incentive to be fluent or to learn new skills to try to seek other employment</p> <p>■ has no permanent security of residence or work as this depends on legal environment and economic opportunities</p>
<p>D. Youth with mixed parentage</p>	<p>■ born in Italy of mixed parentage, mostly of Filipino mothers and Italian fathers; raised in Italy and only occasionally visits the Philippines</p> <p>■ Does not really know much about the Philippines - culture, traditions, values and the Filipino language as not many opportunities to learn it.</p> <p>■ Filipino parent may not see value in teaching Filipino language and culture</p>	<p>■ problems are mostly similar to those of other Italian children although may experience stress arising from mixed parentage, particularly with regard to image compared to peers</p>

Filipino children born and raised in Italy (Categories A and D) — with either pure Filipino parentage or mixed Filipino/Italian (or Filipino/non-Filipino) parentage — tend to have a high levels of Italian language proficiency, high motivation to pursue educational goals having had

early exposure and adaptation to the Italian school system, and relatively low tension levels in their relationship with their parents who have been a continuous presence in their lives. Thus, these young people can be expected to have less of the stress associated with the situation of migrant youth, as suggested by Waldorn and other researchers on the plight of migrant youth in the U.S. The dominant issues among the youth in these categories relate to the conflict that may arise from their lack of knowledge and appreciation of the Filipino language and Filipino culture *vis-à-vis* their Filipino parents.

By contrast, Filipino youth under Categories B and C would be expected to face many more challenges and stress as a result of their poor or minimal facility with the Italian language and limited understanding of Italian culture; weak support systems and mechanisms due to the absence of family members and friends to turn to, especially in the beginning; and low motivation to continue their studies in the country. These in turn can lead to increasing the youth's feelings of insecurity and low self-esteem, particularly for those in Category B. Those who have come to Italy in pursuit of employment (Category C), however, have the advantage of being older and having generally higher levels of emotional maturity due to the need to search for work to support family members back in the Philippines. However, these youth can suffer from feelings of insecurity as contract workers without any permanent security of residence or work, as their stay in Italy depends on their legal situation and existing employment opportunities.

The Youth in Category B are often caught in the stage of not yet knowing what they would like to do with their lives. They have the option, for example, not to search for work immediately upon arrival as they can rely on parental support, especially at the start. Nevertheless, the youth in both Categories B and C — with their higher level of fluency in the Filipino language and understanding of Filipino culture, traditions and norms — have the advantage of re-integrating more easily into the Philippines should they decide or be forced to return there, unlike those born and raised in Italy.

Profile of the Filipino Youth Respondents

Out of a few hundred Questionnaires disseminated, 99 Questionnaires were completed and returned. The following summarizes the demographic data of the respondents. The age distribution of the respondents was as follows: Sixty-seven percent of the respondents were 20 years old and below, indicating the large numbers of youth who are coming into the country to join their parents. One-third of those below 20 were between 18-20 years of age and another 28 percent were in the 15-17 age bracket. Fifteen percent were between 21-23 years of age, while 18 percent were between the ages of 24-30 years. Only six respondents were between 12-14 years old. (See Table 2 for the summary of the major characteristics of the respondents.) Appendix 1 also shows the graphical representations of the responses.

Over 80 percent of all the respondents had been living in Rome for seven years or less, with 50 percent having lived in Rome for three years or less. This shows that the majority of the youth were relative newcomers to Italy, with several having resided in the country for less than a year. Only four percent of the youth had lived in Rome for more than seven years. Those born in Italy represented 13 percent of the respondents. The youth in Category A, who were either born or raised in Italy as a child did not respond to the survey questions regarding adjustment, willingness to come to Rome, etc.

Among those who grew up for the most part in the Philippines, the most often-cited reason for coming to Rome was to join their parents (41 percent of responses); followed by 33 percent who said they came to work; while 15.8 percent also mentioned adventure. Other reasons given included 'to study' (10.1 percent).

For those with parents living and working in Italy, over 90 percent also stated they had good relations with their parents. Only five respondents expressed discontentment with their relationship.

Adjusting to Living in Italy

Acculturation or integration into a receiving country can be a difficult, even painful, experience for any newcomer, especially for young people who did not really choose to come to Italy but whose parents made the decision for them to migrate. In fact, among the youth surveyed, close to 40 percent indicated that they were pressured to go to Italy by their parents, while 61 percent stated that they went voluntarily.

On the question regarding whether they received any orientation on living in Rome prior to their arrival, 31 percent of those who responded said they obtained some form of preparation/orientation, several of them mentioning parents and friends as the source of the orientation. Two-thirds reported, however, that they did not receive any adequate preparation to prepare them to live in a new country thereby constraining their adjustment in Italy. In fact, four-fifths of those who responded to this question found their adjustment either 'somewhat difficult' (61 percent) or 'very difficult'. Only 19 percent stated they had an easy time adjusting.

The most common problem cited by almost half of the respondents was the lack of knowledge, skill and facility in the Italian language; followed by not knowing what to do (16 percent) and having nothing to do (14 percent). Thirteen percent also mentioned that they had no friends, while seven percent said they could not go to an Italian school.

To solve and ease their adjustment problems, 26 percent said they looked for friends and a group to hang out with. The highest number of responses (32 percent) cited joining various groups, including church groups. An equal number of responses (16 percent each) related to setting out to study — either to learn the Italian language or to study at a regular Italian school. Other responses included learning some Italian on their own, being tutored or going around with family and relatives. Around 16 percent started to work as domestic helpers, house caretakers, or hotel staff.

Despite their initial adjustment problems, the majority seemed to enjoy living in Italy. The biggest number of responses on what they liked most about living in the country (37 percent) centred on the ample chances to work and earn an income. The next most common response (30 percent) was re-uniting with their family. Seventeen percent also stated that they liked the variety activities and places to see, indicating an eagerness to explore their host country and the numerous opportunities that it offers visitors. The increased chances to study were cited by only 12 percent of the respondents — indicating the lack of focus or priority placed by the youths surveyed on the educational opportunities that could be obtained in Italy.

On the question of what things can help to improve their living and acculturation in Italy, again, work opportunities appeared the most important with as many as 74 percent of the total responses. This confirms the observation that the migrant youth surveyed view the opportunity to work as critical to their wanting to live and remain in Italy. Eleven percent — close to the 12 percent in the previous question on what they liked about life in Italy — cited having a greater opportunity to study as easing the adjustment process. Eight percent of the respondents also stated that having a group or centre they could approach to ask for help would be beneficial.

Perceptions of Youth on Their Issues and Problems

Data from the FGDs provide more in-depth insights into the nature of the problems confronting the young people, especially those who came to Italy as adolescents. For those who enrolled in the Italian school system, language was a major hurdle to surmount to enable them to manage the academic requirements adequately. Some of the children had no previous knowledge of Italian but went to regular Italian schools almost immediately or soon after arriving. One student stated that, even after a year, he was still not confident in the language even if he understood everything, as he could not express himself adequately. One learned the basics from friends or through self-study. Others were luckier. Some parents got tutors for

their children; while, in one school, the English teacher gave special time and attention to provide extra Italian lessons for the students.

Those who came to the country primarily for work likewise faced language barriers which restricted their possibilities for seeking other employment opportunities. Their lack of language proficiency also prevented them from communicating effectively with their employers. This further confirms a finding from the 2004 Filipino Women's Council study (Basa and de la Rosa) which singled out the critical importance of learning the language in order for Filipino migrants to integrate more fully into Italian society, to do well, or at the very least, to have a higher chance of succeeding in the host society. The same was argued in Waldorn's (2004) and many other studies on migrant children in the U.S (Salerno 1991, Portes 2003), as in other industrialized countries.

Problems that the youth experienced in schools, aside from lack of fluency in the Italian language, related to lack of friends and getting poor grades. Some mentioned discrimination. This discrimination was felt even outside school — with some young people feeling hurt even when the Italians may not have been referring directly to them. Several did note, however, that their schools helped them in their adjustment process.

Once the initial adjustment and integration problems had been hurdled, many of the youth seemed motivated to study better — seeing education as a means for moving up the economic ladder, rather than face the prospect of having to return to the Philippines with minimal employment opportunities. Still others attempted to study but only for several months and then stopped, a key reason being their inability to cope with school requirements.

Despite the 90 percent of respondents whose parents reside in Italy stating that they had positive relations with their parents, several of the youth in the FGD expressed their frustration with what they considered as overly-strict parents. Some girls said that their parents were especially strict with them. This seemed particularly the case of the children who had been previously separated from their parents over a relatively long period. Many of these youth did not necessarily feel close to their parents after such a long separation. Some actually felt shy in relating to them. They had become used to being free from rules in the Philippines and having their own way, unlike in Rome where their parents suddenly imposed their rules. It was difficult for them youth to cope with this new reality, although many just refrained from saying anything or answering back to explain. A few mentioned that, when they attempted either to ask a question or to explain their position to their parents, this was misconstrued as being disrespectful to one's elders.

This was in contrast to the first time they had come to Italy to join their families. Back then, they reported receiving a hundred percent love and attention from their parents who tried to make up for the long separation. There was much more joking around in the family and the reunion was generally considered a happy period. Over time, however, this situation changed and it seemed to the teen-agers that they were very often nagged, yelled at, or even cursed for any perceived misdemeanor. As a consequence, they no longer tried to say or explain anything lest they be subjected to further cursing. Some reported losing respect for their parents.

Several youth nevertheless mentioned that, after the initial problems involved in reuniting with their parents, they were subsequently able to develop a stronger rapport and effective communication with them — with some even seeking their parents' advice. Most expressed feeling closer to their mothers but, when it came to financial needs, they would approach their fathers for money. Reference was made to the family having no unity — with family members not seeing each other for days, as the parents were too busy with the many obligations related to their employment.

Generally, the youth who were raised in both Italy and the Philippines brought up the issue of how the difference between growing up in the two countries creates a lot of conflict between the generations. Parents want their children to follow Filipino traditions and culture and so, just to avoid or lessen the conflict, the kids often follow until they start to feel

rebellious. The youth pointed out that the most common issues their parents seemed to raise, concerned their children's copying Italian manners, and overly-liberated style of dressing, and the seeming lack of respect for their elders. A few youth argued that it is really up to the individual to adopt the positive values of any given culture — whether Italian or Philippine — and it is not really dependent on one's race nor nationality, even if it is generally believed that Filipinos tend to be more religious and exhibit more so-called 'positive' values.

On the issue of Filipino youth being observed as engaging in socially undesirable behaviour, including drug use, several young people interviewed pointed out that many of the young Filipino migrants guilty of such vices were already indulging in these vices even while they were back in the Philippines. This merely confirmed the reality already brought out by the Social Weather Station's 1996 Youth Survey of high incidences of socially undesirable behaviour among young Filipinos. It should not be concluded, then, that coming to Italy necessarily precipitated the development of such behaviour among the migrant youth.

On the subject of sex, which subject is usually a taboo in most Filipino families (unlike in Italian society where the liberal environment is highly tolerant of early sexual activity), a few youth dared to articulate this conflict of values. They argued that, despite the openness of Italian society to premarital sexual relationships, teen-age pregnancies among Italian girls were rare, if not non-existent — in contrast to the numerous cases of Filipina teen-age pregnancies. They attributed this to the inability to discuss such critical matters within Filipino families, or to these young women acting out their rebellion against their parents — some of whom end up disowning their daughters. They further contended that these young Filipinas who gave birth but opted not to get married unless forced to by their parents, often wanted to return to their studies so that they could attempt to carve out a brighter future for themselves and their offspring. They were often, however, constrained by their parents who instead pressured them to work and support themselves. Cases of teen-age pregnancies being aborted were also mentioned.

Some of the youth who came to Italy looking for work expressed their disappointment that, after so many years of studying in the Philippines, the work they could find — mostly domestic or caregiving work — was very different from what they had taken up in college or university. Several expressed the heavy, if not overwhelming, burden they carried having to meet the needs of numerous family members, including siblings they have to send to school, medical needs they have to cover, the debts incurred to come to Italy that have to be repaid, or agency fees they have to answer for so that other family members can also go abroad. It often seemed as if all their relatives were asking for some help, but generally the youth were able to cope. Nevertheless, not having enough money was a persistent problem for many of them. Living in an apartment, often already overcrowded, with many others was also mentioned by a few as creating stress — especially if they could not get along with each other.

Parents' Issues and Dilemmas

In the FGDs and in other interviews, many of the parents tended to agree with the observations of some of the young people regarding the difficulties they encountered in their relationship with their parents. They argued that, for some parents, communication with their children was no longer possible as they had fallen into a regular pattern of scolding and cursing if they perceived their children as misbehaving — including going out frequently with friends and staying out late in the evening. Notices of misdemeanor sent by schools immediately caused parents to reprimand their children, without necessarily examining the cause or root of their behaviour. A few fathers, for example, had resorted to physically beating their sons as a form of punishment. As Carandang (1995) notes, many parents perform acts of violence in the name of discipline, as parents generally view discipline as saying 'no' and as a means of punishment. However, she argues that discipline is also being able to affirm and not only to correct what is wrong, with the ultimate goal being to build and not to destroy. As a consequence of the wrong approach to discipline, the youth shut out their parents and reject what they say. They then seek other means to vent their negative feelings or actually to engage in rebellious and negative behaviour as a conscious or unconscious way of getting back at their parents.

Most Filipino parents in Rome, both fathers and mothers, spend long hours working to earn as much income as they can for their families. They argue that this is the primary reason they came to Italy and that they are making the most of the opportunities for employment. Because of their long hours at work, especially for those with part-time work, some parents admit to being unable to spend sufficient time with their children to provide the needed guidance and supervision. Moreover, parents generally come home from work too tired to really communicate effectively with their children. They may also not really know how to deal with their children, especially the older ones. The result, as mentioned previously, can be disastrous. In fact, a number of children are left to fend for themselves at home while their parents work. Some take advantage of this absence and the unsupervised time to engage in activities which would probably not meet their parents' approval.

The need for parental supervision becomes critical, particularly when the children are new arrivals. Parents need to provide support, love and care to ease the initial adjustment problems that are inevitable and to facilitate their children's integration into Italian society. For older children, this can be a crucial point as they learn to cope and adjust to the new language, environment and culture, especially in school where they spend most of their time. In fact, lack of facility with the Italian language for the new arrivals was a predominant problem raised by many parents, who had experienced a similar situation. Several parents also noted the problems they experienced in helping their children adjust to the school system and the traumas and shocks the children faced initially. However, they did report that many children gradually overcame such traumas with much help and support from both the family and the school.

Unfortunately, a number of parents were not comfortable participating in school-related activities of their children, nor could they find the time to visit their children's schools regularly for the parent-teacher meetings. Thus, they were basically uninformed about what went on at their children's schools and the progress their children were making or the lack of it.

Some fathers related how they, with their wives and children, would leave their homes early each morning the parents to their work and the children to school. The parents had no inkling, until they were subsequently informed by the school that their children had already been absent for several weeks or had in fact dropped out of school. They were shocked when they realized that, all the time they thought their children were at school studying, the kids were both at home watching television, playing with their play stations, or hanging out with other kids — many of whom were also Filipino and who were also playing truant.

One father gave his son an ultimatum upon finding out that he had not been to school for some weeks. He gave his son three choices: to put serious effort into his studies, to go back to the Philippines, or to work as a domestic helper. His son decided to go back to school and to improve his academic performance. This has since paid off as the boy ended up doing very well in his studies. Other parents continued to be very frustrated and at a loss as to what was best to be done for their teen-age offspring who had fallen into bad company and had found themselves out of school; or their older children who had lost the motivation to finish their studies. Some parents had resorted to sending their children back to the Philippines under the care and watchful guidance of extended family members, in the hope that the children would refrain from further negative behaviours and would continue their education without further mishaps.

One mother related how her child, who had recently arrived in Italy, tried to integrate into the school and to feel that he belonged. In so doing, he covered up for the misbehaviour of some classmates to gain their acceptance, and as a result, got into serious trouble with the school administration. Another mother mentioned how her college-level daughter, who had been doing very well as a student while in the Philippines, had a very difficult time adjusting to the Italian school system and began to lose her self-confidence not being able to perform at the level she had been accustomed to. The daughter's problem was compounded by her separation from her mother in Rome because her mother's employer objected to them staying together. The daughter concluded that going back to the Philippines was the only alternative

even if she had only been in Italy for a little over a year and despite her mother's pleas for her to remain.

When questioned about why they did not claim or bring their children to Italy sooner or while they were younger — when doing so would have lessened the pressures on their children during their integration process — parents mentioned issues such as lack of reasonably-priced and accessible day care centres for their young children and the lack of low-cost housing that would allow their children to live with them. Nevertheless, a growing number of parents have begun opting to claim their children, if given the choice — especially if both parents are already in Italy and if the children are still in the lower levels at school.

Several parents also described the poor role models of other parents who indulge in such vices as smoking, gambling and even drug use — thus making it doubly difficult to impose certain norms on their children who see a double standard of behaviour with their parents. Just as numerous parents urged their children to look for employment instead of pursuing their studies, there were youth who insisted on working instead of trying to expand their skills and improve their educational qualifications. Both these types of parents and youth appeared not to perceive any value in continuing education, arguing that getting a degree or pursuing higher education made no difference to the kind of employment that would eventually be available for them. Thus, their only option was that of unskilled labour in the domestic sphere of housework or caregiving — as nannies to Italian children or as companions or *assistenza* for the elderly. Often, once the young people experience financial independence, earning what may seem to be a large amount of money (frequently equivalent to what their parents would be earning), the motivation to study can be permanently lost. Thus the cycle of lack of skills leading to limited job opportunities continues. The more well-rounded exposure that education generally provides and which makes for a richer and fuller life beyond specific skills is also missed.

Some parents further argued that certain groups of parents do not act in solidarity to help each other deal with their kids. One distraught father related how he searched frantically all over for his missing son who had not come home for a week, as the son could not face his father about having dropped out of school. When the father finally located his son at a gangmate's flat, he resented the fact that the father of his son's friend had not even bothered to inform him about his son's whereabouts.

Almost all the parents expressed their deep fears that their children would grow up like Italian kids, unmindful of the traditional Filipino values and customs they cherish, particularly those related to respect for elders. Or even worse, they feared that their children might fall into what they viewed as the vices of Italian youth or other Filipino youth, such as smoking or substance abuse. They lamented the influence of the Italian mass media and Italian norms and culture that negatively affect their children — including modes of dress and demeanour — as was also frequently voiced by the young people interviewed. Several parents with strong Christian values decried the neglect of prayer, not going to church and receiving the sacraments, not only by the youth but even by themselves.

Perceptions of Community Leaders/Other Authoritative Figures on Youth Issues/Problems

As previously mentioned, data were also obtained from coordinators or key members of community groups, advisers, chaplains, ministers, counsellors, etc. Sixty-two percent of the respondents were from community groups while the rest were providing pastoral or advisory support to individuals or communities. There were slightly more male respondents than female, and the median age was between 41-45 years. Close to 75 percent have had up to 10 years of involvement working with their particular group or community, while 84 percent were members of church-related groups. More than one-third of the groups had regular members of 30 or less, while a similar percentage had between 40-60 members. Only 16 percent had over 100 members. Those with youth members averaged from 6-15 members.

Data from the survey among community leaders or religious/ministers assisting the communities on the key problems of their young constituents showed that behavioural problems were the most common, followed by dropping-out of school and related issues of inadequate preparation for school due to lack of fluency in Italian, discrimination at school, and the difficulty of adjusting to a different educational system. Family problems received an equal number of responses as school drop-outs and lack of drive and ambition, followed by financial difficulties and debt. Low self-esteem was also cited by several respondents. Otherwise, many tended to view the general condition of their young members as good.

A few respondents also mentioned drug use and teen-age premarital sex. When asked if they knew of young people who had problems and were engaged in serious socially undesirable behaviour, two answered that they knew of youths who were bumming around, involved in paid sex or prostitution, engaging in teen-age sex, or were homeless.

Working youth faced such issues as not having adequate training for their employment (7 responses). Not actually being able to join the work force (5 responses); 'no motivation to find work' and 'poor treatment by an employer' each received four responses; and 'hard conditions at work' received three responses. A religious nun working closely with the youth observed that many of the young people working full-time often felt tired with their work and tied down with the heavy responsibilities of supporting families back in the Philippines. Many did not have enough energy left to get involved in activities not related to their employment.

Finding a partner and eventually getting married were likewise concerns of many of the young women, who largely outnumbered their male counterparts. The chaplains, ministers, counsellors, and other religious feel that the majority of our Filipino youth do not have ambitions beyond their current employment and income-generation some of them have a poor relationship with their parents.

The specific problems affecting the youths in the various communities came to light primarily because the youth themselves talked about it. The parents too shared with members of their communities the dilemmas they encounter in dealing with their children.

Community leaders, priests, nuns and ministers observed that parents coped or dealt with their children's problems in three major ways: a) disciplining, scolding and talking with them; b) involving them in church activities; and c) sending them to school or getting them a job. Parents needed to share their problems and find some solution or at least an outlet for their worries and concerns by discussing these with other parents. Some of them sought counselling for themselves as parents, just as some also sent their children for counselling. Withholding money from their children and threatening to send them back to the Philippines if they did not change their behaviour were other forms of punishment that parents resorted to. Strict monitoring was a response given, as well as distancing the children and taking a hands-off attitude.

Current and suggested programmes and activities for the youth by communities, Church-related organizations

In the survey of leaders, representatives, women religious nuns, priests or ministers working with community organizations and youth groups, the respondents were asked if their organizations had specific youth programmes or activities. Forty-four percent replied "yes" and the rest said they had none. Of those who specified the type of activities they had for their young members, the most frequently mentioned activity was church-related or religious such as joining choirs or assisting in church services, e.g., Eucharistic Celebrations. Music and dance activities were mentioned by 44 percent; and another 31 percent had various sports, e.g., basketball, volleyball. Social activities, e.g., outings, had 37.5 responses. Only four stated that they provide counselling as an amenity for youth.

The World Youth Day (WYD) has proved successful in mobilizing large numbers of our migrant youth in Italy. From the 2000 WYD held in Rome, to the 2003 event in Canada, and the 2005 WYD in Cologne. Participation in the WYD events involve months of regular meetings and other preparatory activities. The *Sentro Pilipino*, aside from its sports programme for any interested youth, also organizes an annual youth camp for youth from several different church communities, as do lay organizations like the Commission on Filipino Migrant Workers (CFMW). The CFMW's MuntingPaaralan Program involves a summer-long youth camp to orient and familiarize Filipino children born and/or raised in Italy with the Filipino language and customs for a better appreciation of Philippine culture and traditions. The CFMW also organizes month-long exposure programmes to the Philippines for Filipino youth who grew up in Italy.

The scope however, of these different programmes and activities — especially those which are Church-related — is basically limited to the young members of the organizations. It does not involve the Filipino youth at large.

Recommendations for Action Arising from the Surveys and Interviews

A Programmatic Approach

The following recommendations attempt to address the myriad needs of Filipino migrant youth — both general ones cutting across the various categories as well as specific needs depending on the different circumstances that confront them. The recommendations also address the requirements of Filipino migrant families and parents, given the close interlinks with the needs of the children.

A programmatic approach is suggested in order to streamline the many suggestions and recommendations that have emerged from the surveys and interviews. The five key components are:

- values formation for youth and parents,
- career advice and preparation,
- language proficiency and cultural orientation,
- arts and sports development, and
- education on sexuality, health and drug use.

Values formation for parents and youth

Following from the survey made of community leaders, women religious, chaplains and ministers and their views on the special needs of their youth members, 62.5 percent identified promotion of and training in the right values as being a special need of the youth. Imparting Filipino morals and spiritual values (such as respect for their elders) has been strongly suggested to be part of youth formation and as a means to prevent young people from falling into socially undesirable forms of behaviour that can lessen or destroy their future prospects as migrants in the country. Because migration increases pressure on children and parents alike, and on relationships between husbands and wives, there is an even more urgent need for orientations/seminars/forums on parenting skills, and on strengthening marriage and the family. On the question of the most important thing to be done for the migrant youth, the three most frequent recommendations were: the formation of spiritual and moral values, organization of youth, and the provision of the space and opportunities to express themselves and to communicate in order to form friendships. The giving of love, attention, care and respect was also recommended, as was more discipline by parents.

It was likewise recommended that parents, too, be assisted to communicate better and more effectively with their children and to learn general parenting skills that can help build up more caring relationships, based on solid Christian values.

Career advice and preparation

Community leaders and chaplains/religious and ministers viewed the preparation for a career as critical, receiving 62.5 percent of responses. Assistance to youth in their future careers is critical especially for Filipino youth in Category B, as well as for those in Category C, even if the youth in the latter category are already employed. Students, especially as they reach the end of their high school education, should be given career counseling which includes helping them to determine whether to study at university or undertake vocational training, which courses to pursue, and what resources are available to them.

Providing short courses such as those on work ethics and technical skills (e.g., computer skills, etc.) can also equip the young people, particularly school dropouts, with new qualifications for seeking employment. Part of this component could also be the promotion of financial management skills, particularly savings, among the youth.

Language proficiency and cultural orientation

A large majority of respondents highlighted the need for students (especially those in Categories B and C) to learn and increase their proficiency in Italian, as soon as or even before they come to Italy. The same holds true for their parents. Community leaders and authority figures also cited the importance of providing the youth with adequate orientation on and familiarization with Italian life (43.7 percent of responses) prior to even arriving in the country. This would then empower the students to cope with their school and/or work environments.

A strong recommendation likewise emerged that the youth should have the opportunity to learn Filipino (as well as English). This is particularly recommended for those in Categories A and D, as these youth would not have sufficient exposure to Filipino nor to opportunities fostering what is good in Philippine culture among children. This is where Wolf's theory of cultural integration can be facilitated, as linguistic competence can help to ease the integration of the youth into Italian society, while not negating their roots and, in fact, enabling them to appreciate their Filipino culture.

Arts and sports development

To some extent, sports development is already being done by various organizations such as the Friendship Youth Ministry (FYM) under Sentro Pilipino which organizes various sports contests for youth, or by communities such as The Apostles Peter and Paul with their annual basketball league, open to both adults and youth.

Singing is a major talent among our migrant youth, besides dancing or acting. Some young people are members of church choirs; and modern dances are performed by the youth in every Filipino celebration or event. Nevertheless, much more can be done to provide opportunities to hone, improve, or develop the skills of our migrant youth in these subjects, including Philippine folk dancing, and other areas of the arts and sports.

The promotion of literary skills in Filipino, Italian, or English among the youth does not form part of any existing programme or activity of any organization. This could help to foster stronger Philippine traditions and culture among migrant youth.

Education on sexuality, health and drug use

Education and orientation on these subjects should be provided (particularly for those in Categories B and C, who are more prone to seeing drugs or sex as a form of escape from reality or as a way to cope with their problems). Information should be provided for this use on available counselling services or centres, either Italian or Philippine, where they can go for help.

As one youth stated and some parents have concurred with, "Italian kids may be quite liberal in their sexuality but hardly any of the teen-age girls get pregnant, whereas an increasing number of young Filipinas, many of whom are still teen-agers, while supposedly conservative, manage to get themselves pregnant". A key, of course, is acknowledging the need to help ensure that the youth receive sufficient sex education (as with health education), particularly given the liberal sexual context of Italian society, while balancing the moral issues that the churches and many Filipinos deem critical.

Table 6. Summary of Recommended Programme Elements and Priority Target Categories of Children, Youth and Parents

Programme Components	Possible programme elements				
values formation for youth and parents	family enrichment marriage enrichment parenting seminars, counselling				
	spiritual formation				
	work ethics				
career advice and preparation	career orientation and preparation				
	career counselling				
language proficiency and cultural orientation	Filipino language training				
	Italian language training				
	cultural orientation on Italy for youth/parents				
	cultural orientation on the Philippines for youth/parents				

arts and sports development	sports activities and contests				
	music courses, contests singing, dancing (modern, Philippine folk dances, etc.)				
	art courses, contests, art therapy, photography, painting				
	literature, creative writing				
education on sexuality, health and drug use	health, sexuality and substance abuse seminars				
	counselling on health, sexuality and substance abuse				

References

¹ This article is based on a 2005 study entitled "The Phenomenon of Youth in Rome – An Exploratory Study" undertaken by Associazione PILIPINAS OFSPES and the Sentro Pilipino Chaplaincy.

² PILIPINAS OFSPES is an association which aims to assist Filipinos in Italy in their socio-economic and cultural empowerment. The Filipino Chaplaincy in Rome is more popularly known as Sentro Pilipino and brings together 45 Catholic Church communities in Rome into one Chaplaincy.

(Published in: *IN DE OLDE WORLDE: Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe*. Hoegsholm, F.M. (ed). QC: Philippine Social Science Council and Philippine Migration Research Network.)

1. Arellano-Carandang, Ma. Lourdes (1987) *Filipino Children Under Stress – Family Dynamics and Therapy*. Q.C. Ateneo de Manila University Press.

2. Arellano-Carandang, Ma. Lourdes (1995) "The Filipino Family: Changes, Choices and Challenges". Keynote Address at the 31st Annual Convention of the Psychological Association of the Philippines. *Social Science Information*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2. January-June 1995.

3. Basa, Charito and De la Rosa, Rosalud (2004) *Me, Us and Them: Realities and Illusions of Filipina Domestic Workers – A Community Research Project by the Filipino Women's Council*. Rome.

4. Carino, Benjamin V. (ed) (1998) *Filipino Workers on the Move: Trends, Dilemmas and Policy Options*. Q.C. Philippine Migration Research Network (PMRN).

5. CARITAS (2002 and 2003) *Immigrazione Dossier Statistico*, Roma.

6. Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People. *Migration: Situation and Impact, Biblical Inspiration, Pastoral Challenges*.

7. Go, Stella (1995) "The Filipino Family: Contemporary Issues and Research Prospects" in *Social Science Information*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2. January-June 1995.
8. Medina, Belen (1995) "Issues Relating to Filipino Marriage and Family" in *Social Science Information*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2. January-June 1995.
9. Migration Youth Programs (2003) "Perceptions of Why Migrant Students Dropout of School and What Can be Done to Encourage Them to Graduate". Paper prepared for the Office of Migrant Education, State Education Department, Albany, New York.
10. Portes, Alejandro (2003) "Ethnicities: Children of Migrants in America" in *Development*, Vol. 46, No. 3, pp. 42-52, September 2003, UK: Sage Publications.
11. Ruiz, Naomi (1995) "Where to – Our Filipino Family" in *Social Science Information*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2. January-June 1995.
12. Salerno, Anne (1991) "Migrant Students Who Leave School Early: Strategies for Retrieval". *ERIC Digest*, ED335179. May 1991.
13. Sandoval, Gerardo; Mangahas, Mahar; and Guerrero, Linda (1998) "The Situation of Filipino Youth: A National Survey". Paper presented at the 14th World Congress of Sociology at Montreal, Canada on July 26-August 1, 1998.
14. Scalabrini Migration Center (2004) *Hearts Apart: Migration in the Eyes of the Filipino Children*. Manila: SMC.
15. Torres, Amaryllis (1995) "Rethinking the Filipino Family: Tracking Changes Across the Years" in *Social Science Information*, Vol. 23, Nos. 1-2. January-June 1995.
16. Vasta, Ellie (1994) "Youth and Ethnicity – the Second Generation" in *Family Matters*, No. 38, Aug 1994.
17. Waldhorn, Mara (2004) "The Difficulties of Adaptation on Migrant Youth" part of series of papers elated to the Mexican Migration Mosaic Project, Dickinson College.
18. Wolf, Richard (2005) "Dimensions of Integration – Migrant Youth in Germany". Paper presented at the Conference on "Dimensions of Integration: Migrant Youth in Central European Countries", Vienna, 10-11 March 2005.

Appendix 1:

Figure 2: Youth respondents' length of stay in Italy

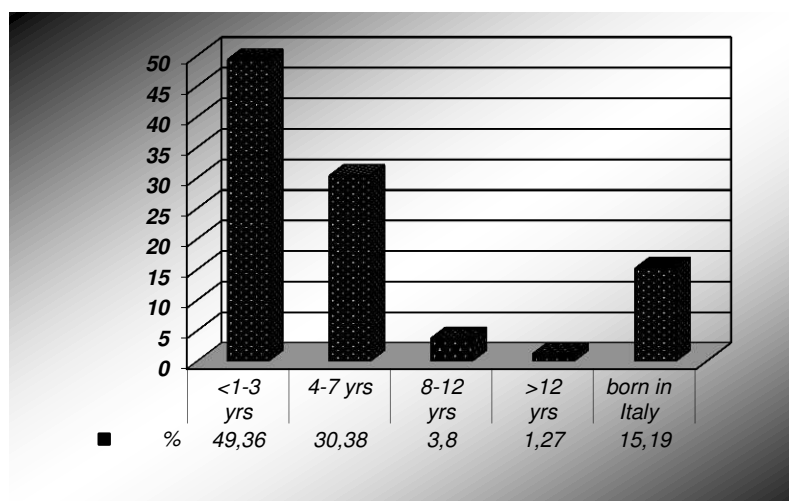


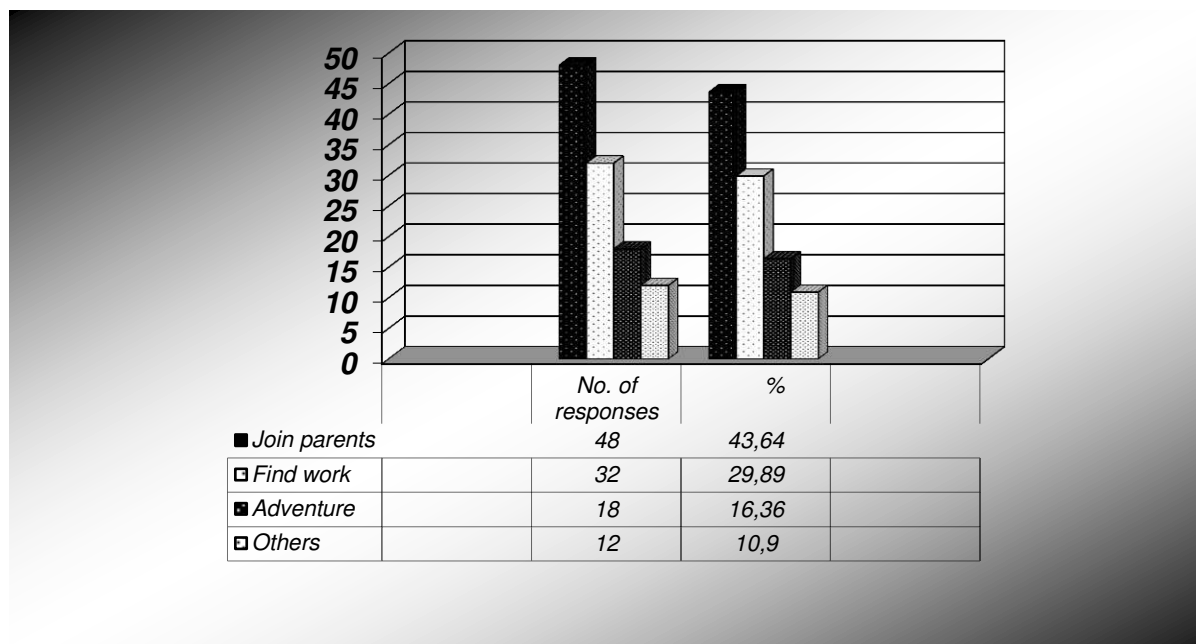
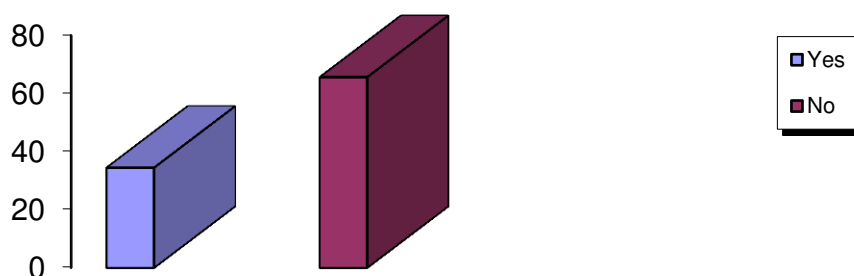
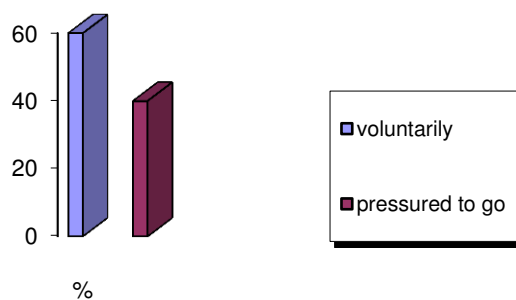
Figure 3. Reasons for coming to Italy**Figure 4. Percentage of respondents who received orientation prior to or upon arriving in Rome****Figure 5. Desire to go to Italy**

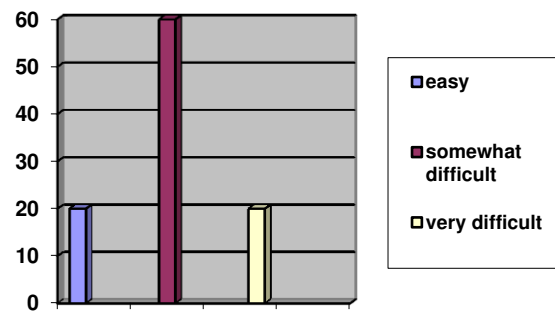
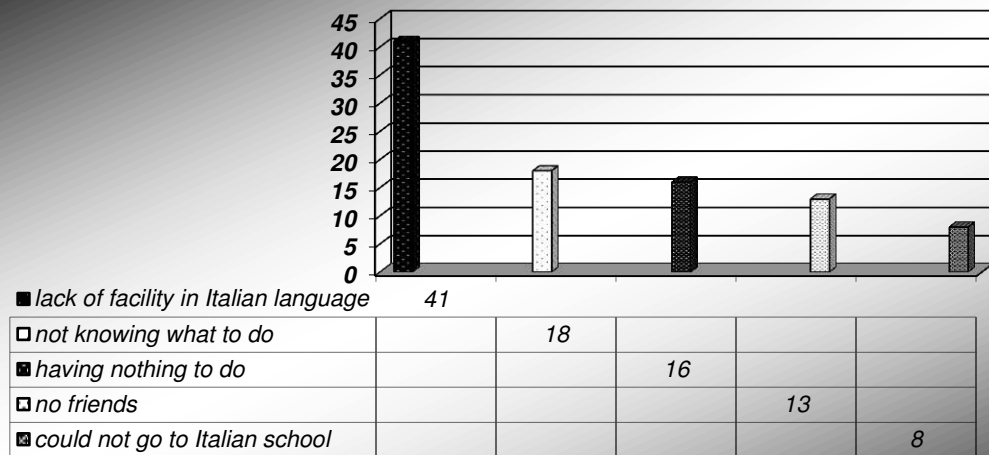
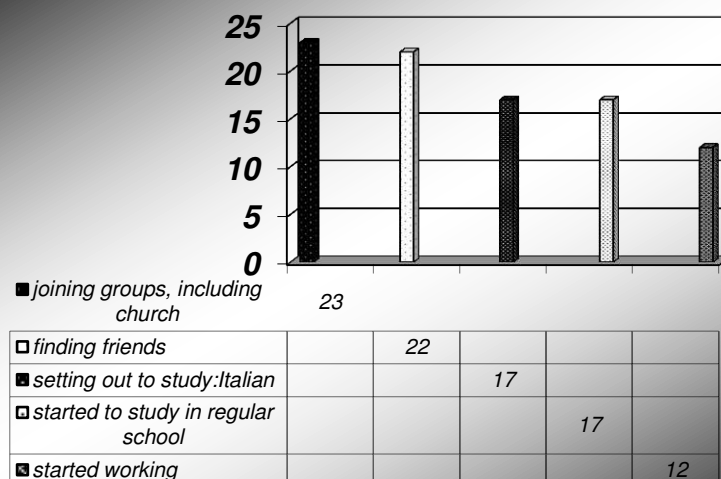
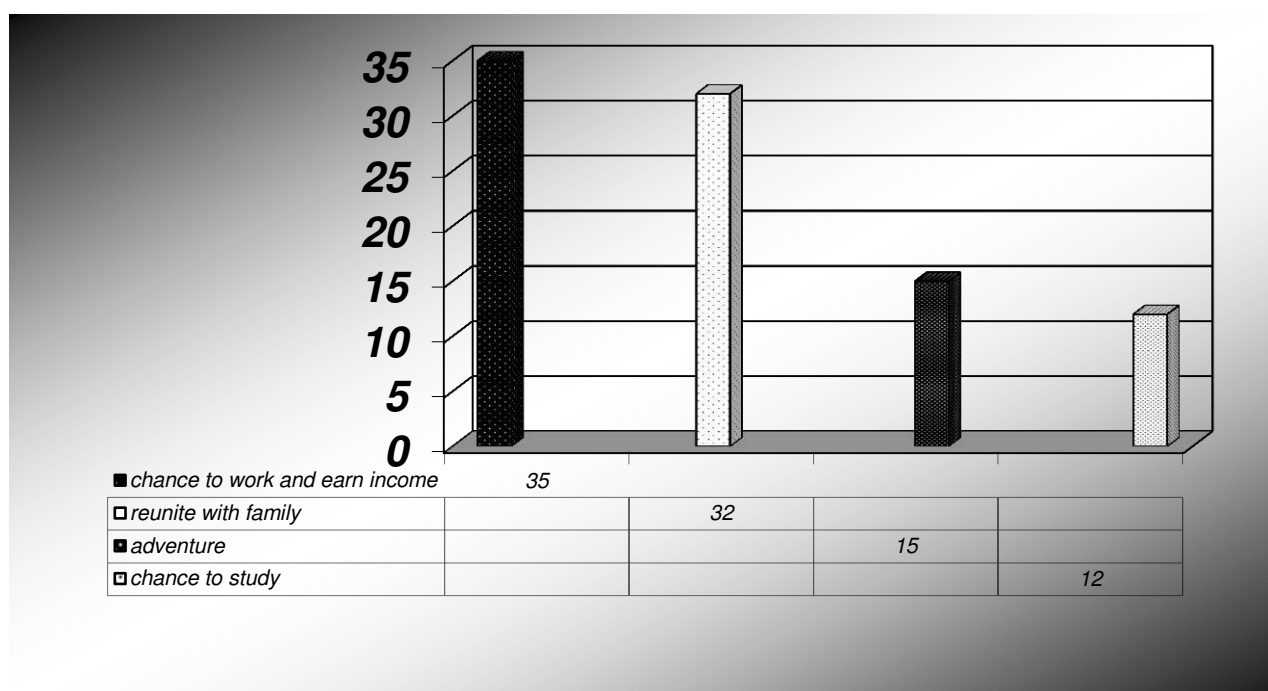
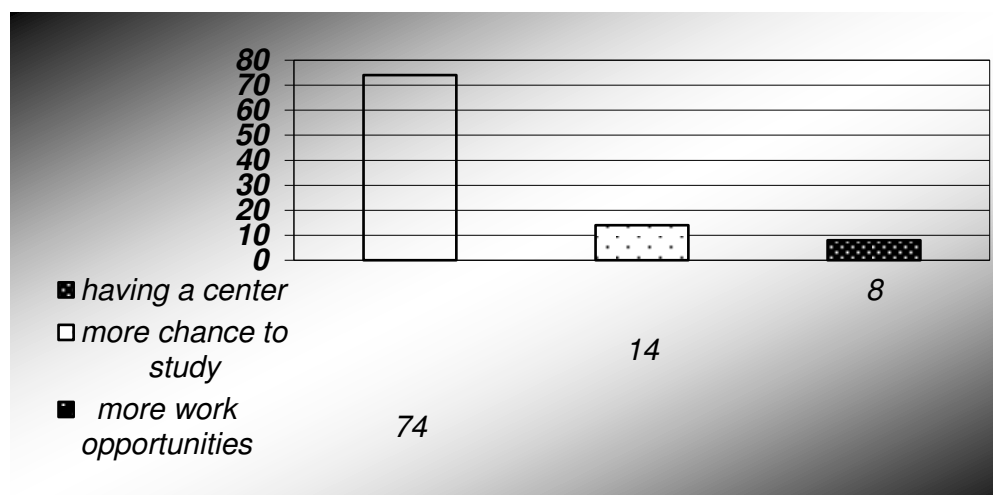
Figure 6. Ease or difficulty in adjusting to life in Italy**Figure 7. Most frequently cited problems in adjusting to life in Italy****Figure 8. Ways the youth solved their adjustment problems**

Figure 9. What the youth liked most about life in Italy**Figure 10. What can the youth improve their life in Italy**

iPILIPINAS OF SPES is an association which aims to assist Filipinos in Italy in their socio-economic and cultural empowerment. The Filipino Chaplaincy in Rome is more popularly known as Sentro Pilipino and brings together 45 Catholic church communities in Rome into one Chaplaincy.

(Published in: *IN DE OLDE WORLDE: Views of Filipino Migrants in Europe*. Hoegsholm, F.M. (ed). QC: Philippine Social Science Council and Philippine Migration Research Network.)

Hna. Rebecca KayThi

La situación del tráfico con Mujeres y jóvenes en la región del Mekong

Para informar sobre la situación quisiera comenzar con la historia de una joven de Tailandia. Esta joven, llamada Nu, procede de una familia pobre del Nordeste de Tailandia. No tuvo la suerte de estudiar cuando era niña, no sabía leer ni escribir. Cuando llegó a la pubertad pensó en buscar un trabajo para ayudar a su indigente familia. A la edad de catorce años fue a Bangkok para buscar un trabajo. Un amigo peluquero en Bangkok le aconsejó que buscara un trabajo bien remunerado en el extranjero que se ocuparía de su comida y acomodación. El amigo la presentó a un agente que le ofreció un trabajo seguro en Japón. Con gran entusiasmo y llena de ilusión pensando en ayudar a su familia, Nu aceptó la oferta. El agente le dijo que debería trabajar como camarera en un bar ganando aproximadamente 200 \$ USA al mes, y que no estaba obligada a salir con sus clientes, pero que podría; honorarios del agente y otros gastos deberían pagarse después de haber recibido la primera paga. Llegada a Japón fue llevada a un bar karaoke en Shinjuku. Antes de aceptarla, el dueño del bar le pidió que se desnudase y examinó su vagina y le pidió que se hiciese un test de sangre para el SIDA. Le dijo que tenía que liquidar una deuda de cerca de un millón de yenes por todos sus gastos y que su comida, alquiler y otros gastos se añadirían a esta suma. Se asustó y se dio cuenta de que el único modo para poder pagar sus deudas era salir con el mayor número de clientes posible. Nu salía con tres o cuatro clientes cada noche como término medio. Muchas Veces era golpeada con bastones, cinturones o cadenas por clientes antes del acto sexual. Tomaba drogas antes de ir a ver a los clientes para no sentir demasiado dolor y trabajaba aún estando enferma o con las reglas. Durante el período de reembolso de la deuda los clientes pagaban al dueño del bar directamente para sacarla afuera. Lo único que ganaba en efectivo eran las propinas de los clientes. Nu sufría una profunda depresión porque no podía ayudar a su familia como lo había planeado. Fue una época de grandes sufrimientos para Nu pero era casi imposible poder salir de tal situación. El dueño del bar le advirtió que si escapaba del bar recibiría grandes castigos y acumularía el doble de la deuda. Algunas de sus amigas en el bar que intentaron escapar fueron detenidas por la policía, multadas, encarceladas, obligadas a ofrecerles favores sexuales antes de ser eventualmente deportadas. Sin documentos legales ni protección por parte del dueño del bar, las jóvenes son emigrantes ilegales y consideradas como criminales por la policía. Nu sufría amargamente de parte del dueño del bar y de los clientes hasta que una ONG tailandesa en Japón le ayudó y envió de vuelta a Tailandia. Nu es una de las miles de víctimas inocentes de la trata en la región del Mekong. Esta región abarca



Myanmar, Tailandia, Camboya, Vietnam, Laos y la Provincia de Yuman de China del sur. Mujeres y jóvenes con pocas oportunidades económicas en la región del Mekong son atraídas por traficantes para viajar al extranjero haciéndoles creer en un buen trabajo en un hotel o restaurante, o en una fábrica. Los agentes adelantarían todos los costes de viaje, comida y alojamiento, y las mujeres pagarán su deuda en el país de destino. Una vez llegadas, los agentes o los dueños del prostíbulo confiscaban sus pasaportes, así que sólo les quedaba la opción de cumplir las peticiones de sus dominadores ya que trabajan y viajan ilegalmente. Al no poder hablar la lengua local, era casi imposible que esas mujeres pudiesen evadirse de tal situación. Una vez atrapadas en un ambiente de emigración ilegal, estas mujeres pueden verse obligadas a vivir en condiciones inhumanas, atrapadas por los lazos de la deuda al dueño de un prostíbulo restaurante que no tiene ningún respeto por los derechos humanos fundamentales de las mujeres ni por su salud. Muchas de ellas son amenazadas con violencia o violadas si no obedecen a las peticiones del dueño del prostíbulo. A algunas no se les permite el derecho de usar el

preservativo y a muchas otras se les impide que usen tratamiento médico para el SIDA u otras enfermedades. En Japón, para evitar que las mujeres huyan del cautiverio, los dueños del prostíbulo les substraen ordinariamente sus pasaportes y las confinan en el establecimiento, permitiéndoles salir afuera sólo en caso de necesidad.

Dentro de la región del Mekong, Tailandia es el eje mayor del tráfico internacional hacia otras partes del mundo. Desde Bangkok se envían mujeres especialmente hacia Japón, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Alemania, Australia y los Estados Unidos. La mayor parte de las víctimas proceden de Myanmar seguido por Yunnan (China) y Laos. En 1999 un número alrededor de 80.000 mujeres y niños de Myanmar fueron trasladados para servir a la industria comercial del sexo a Tailandia, de los cuales el 30% tenían menos de 18 años de edad.¹ La Organización internacional de Emigraciones piensa que alrededor de 300.000 personas, especialmente mujeres y niños, están atrapados en condiciones prácticamente de esclavitud en la región del Mekong.² Se cree que en el 90% del tráfico en la región del Mekong se trata de prostitución forzada, y que el 50% de las mujeres en la industria del sexo proceden del tráfico.³ Las mujeres tailandesas son enviadas frecuentemente a Japón para trabajar en el servicio doméstico y en la industria de las diversiones. El Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos afirmó que 50.000 personas son víctimas anualmente del tráfico hacia Estados Unidos y que el mayor porcentaje de esas mujeres era de Tailandia. A las mujeres se las esconde, y con frecuencia son trasladadas de Estado en Estado. En el año 2001 una ONG llamada FIZ en Alemania dijo que había 80.000 mujeres que vivían oficialmente en Alemania, de las cuales un 25% más o menos de ellas eran ilegales. Dentro de la misma Tailandia la mayor parte del tráfico viene de las tribus de los cerros del norte-noreste de Bangkok, Pattaya, Phuket y concierne en su mayor parte a jóvenes entre 12 y 16 años.

El tráfico de las mujeres y niñas de Myanmar a prostíbulos de Tailandia es también un problema crítico. Las mujeres y las niñas de Myanmar son engatusadas por reclutadores tailandeses con promesas de buenos trabajos y de un adelanto de dinero, pagado normalmente a los padres de las jóvenes. Las jóvenes son obligadas a pagar su deuda, encerradas en su prostíbulo o en su fábrica y generalmente sufren un cierto grado de violación o violencia para mantenerlas sometidas. Las mujeres de Myanmar que trabajan en prostíbulos de calidad inferior deben trabajar de diez a dieciocho horas diarias, veinticinco días al mes y atienden en cualquier parte de cinco a quince clientes al día. En la mayor parte de los prostíbulos en los que hubo una redada, entre el 50% y el 70% de las mujeres dieron el HIV positivo. Las ONG tailandesas estiman que más de 20.000 niñas de Myanmar están en prostíbulos tailandeses, con 10.000 nuevas incorporaciones que entran anualmente en el país.⁴ En abril de 2008 sobre 121 naturales de Myanmar que fueron trasladadas a Tailandia, cincuenta y cuatro murieron sofocadas porque fueron trasladadas en un contenedor sin aire suficiente. Las mujeres y las jóvenes son también trasladadas desde Vietnam, Laos, Camboya y la Provincia de Yunnan del sur de China.

Una multitud de factores contribuye al tráfico: la pobreza, el deseo de una vida mejor, la inferioridad de estado de mujeres y niños, la falta de educación y empleo para las mujeres, la corrupción oficial y la cantidad sustancial de dinero que puede ganarse en la industria. Muchos jóvenes víctimas del tráfico proceden de casas desintegradas y estaban ya buscando un camino de salida, lo cual les convertía automáticamente de por sí en una presa fácil para los reclutadores. Hay que tener en cuenta además la falta de información, de educación o de oportunidades de empleo, y la expectativa cultural de que las hijas tienen que sostener económicamente a la familia, olvidándose de toda diversión. Además, en las ciudades de la región del Mekong hay razones culturales, familiares, económicas e históricas detrás de la decisión de enviar a una joven a trabajar en la industria del sexo. Se supone que las jóvenes aprueban y obedecen a los deseos de los padres y les muestran agradecimiento y respeto cualesquiera que sean las dificultades. Muchas chicas jóvenes que emigran a otros países para trabajar en ocupaciones difíciles, mal pagadas y peligrosas sienten que no debe a regresar a sus casas con las «manos vacías» debido a su tradicional responsabilidad de ocuparse de sus padres. La prostitución es frecuentemente percibida como el cumplimiento del papel tradicional de las hijas que deben ser cuidadoras de la familia y de la comunidad. En el budismo Theravada, se piensa que las mujeres y las chicas son incapaces de progreso. Y así, mientras que los hombres pueden mostrar gratitud y respeto a sus padres siendo monjes y dedicándose

a una vida espiritual, muchas mujeres y chicas deben sacrificarse por sus familias, aldeas y por su propio karma. Es una realidad y un grito de nuestro tiempo que nos reta a todos y cada uno de nosotros, seguidores de Jesús el liberador. Echemos una ojeada a la historia del evangelio sobre el encuentro de Jesús con la mujer samaritana (*Jn4,1-42*). Señalemos el modo en que Jesús habla con la samaritana y cómo este encuentro transforma gradualmente su vida. El relato nos dice que Jesús viene caminando y se sienta en el pozo de Jacob, cansado y sediento, deshidratado por el calor del sol de mediodía. La anónima mujer samaritana llega al mismo pozo para buscar agua al mismo tiempo con un cántaro vacío. Todas, esas expresiones dicen simbólicamente que la mujer es una samaritana marginada de la sociedad, no tiene identidad, fue aislada de la sociedad, su vida está vacía y árida y está ansiando llenarla. Jesús comienza la conversación pidiéndole un poco de agua. Era una simple petición, pero superaba las barreras culturales del estado de segunda clase en que se encontraban las mujeres en una cultura patriarcal y étnico-racial de los judíos contra los samaritanos. Pero Jesús trasciende las barreras culturales para ponerse a la altura de la anónima mujer samaritana. Le intriga que Jesús, judío y hombre, hablase con ella, samaritana y mujer. Jesús entra en una profunda conversación con ella y se revela y se le revela como agua viva. El que pide agua lleva a la mujer que viene a por agua a reconocer su sed y a pedir agua viva. La mujer pide a Jesús qué le dé esa agua para no tener ya más sed ni tener que venir ya más al pozo a sacar más agua. Quizá su primer pensamiento se refería sólo a no tener que venir más a sacar agua. Mujeres como ella están marginadas en una sociedad patriarcal. Mujeres como ella no dieron marcha atrás en la tarea de sacar agua para sus familias y animales. Eran responsables de la dura tarea doméstica. En cierto modo, la petición de la mujer de agua viva puede interpretarse también simbólicamente como expresión de su sed, aridez y vacío que suspiraban por ser llenados. En su conversación con Jesús la mujer llega a darse cuenta gradualmente de que el agua es el agua viva y que Jesús es el que da esa agua viva y que es además su fuente. Jesús respondió a su pregunta refiriéndose a la experiencia de su vida. Le pregunta a cerca de su cinco maridos. Tener cinco maridos puede también ser simbólico para indicar el ínfimo puesto de la mujer en la sociedad, un escandaloso modo de vida que corrobora la baja opinión de Jesús acerca de los samaritanos. La profunda conversación con Jesús transforma totalmente la vida de la mujer. Al final, deja su cántaro vacío, aridez, sed- y se marcha hacia la gente de la que se escondía. Comparte con ellos su encuentro liberador con Jesús el Mesías. Como mujer marginalizada y quizá excluida, tiene sed de que se la admita y se la acepte. Fue la amorosa aceptación por Jesús de su verdadera identidad la que tocó lo más profundo de sí misma. Encontró en Jesús su verdadero significado y la dignidad que había buscado durante toda su vida.

En la actualidad, hay muchas «mujeres samaritanas» de varias formas, que suspiran por ser liberadas del peso de la vida. Tienen sed de que se comprenda y acepte lo que son en la sociedad. Las víctimas del tráfico, especialmente mujeres ó jóvenes, necesitan a gente como Jesús que hablen por ellas y las discriminalicen Muchos las miran como criminales, descartadas socialmente, marginadas porque son emigraran ilegales en busca de los buenos trabajos en el extranjero, para ayudar a sus familias pobres. Debemos reflexionar muy en serio sobre la terrible situación de sus casas que las empuja a emigrar. Tenemos que reconocer el sacrificio que están haciendo por sus seres queridos. Tenemos que dar a conocer a la gente que no son criminales. Tenemos que ayudarles reclamando la dignidad que Dios les dio. Es nuestra tarea tomar acciones concretas tales como informarles acerca de la situación real de los trabajadores emigrantes, crear oportunidades de trabajo en sus países que les ayuden a detener la emigración y a ganar su vida pacíficamente en su propio país.

NOTAS

¹ ORGANIZACIÓN INTERNACIONAL DEL TRABAJO, « Getting at the Roots; Stopping Exploration of Migrant Workers by Organized Crime», Torino, Italia, 22-23 febrero 2002, p.10.

² UNICEF, « Every last Child Fulfilling the Rights of Women and Children en East Asia and the Pacific», p. 31.

³ DORMAN L., «Trafficking Women and Girls in Asia», Together, abril-junio 2000, p. 7.

⁴ <http://hrw.org/press/1994/01/thaiburma.htm>

Wojciech Kowalewski
***Towards an Integrative Approach in
 Post-Communist Missiological Thinking:
 A Polish Case Study***

The Problem of Post-Communist Theological Identity

While it was hoped that the Church would play a crucial role in post-communist transformation in Poland, after almost two decades there is a sense of disappointment among some theologians, who are critical of the situation in which the Church is more of an observer than an agent of change in society. Some of the norms and values promoted by the national Church that once enabled people to stand together as one against the totalitarian regime, are now sometimes referred to as 'conservative', or as characteristic of State religion, but not very useful or even 'hostile' toward democracy.⁹⁵ There are at least three fundamental problems related to the legacy of the communist regime in the post-communist countries: the first is "structural and political", and the second is "anthropological and cultural," and the third is "ethical and moral".⁹⁶ Theological reactions to these fundamental transformations differ, but as a broad generalisation they could be divided into those that are more conservative, tradition-minded or fundamentalist, and those that are more open and seeking creative engagement with contemporary culture, who are often branded by the first group as 'liberal'. Some theologians even look back at the 'communist era with a certain nostalgia like Fr Stanislaw Musial, a Jesuit, who says that, "maybe it was easier for the Church under Communism ... at least things were considerably clearer: the line between Good and Evil was sharp. Now it is more difficult for the Church which, moreover, runs the danger of seeming to block people's maturity."⁹⁷ In a way, this view emphasises one of the main theological issues most often discussed, namely the crisis of Christian identity in the post-communist era. One of the sociological studies on Roman Catholicism in Poland is entitled *Miedzytriumfalizmem a poczuciemzagrozenia* [Between Triumphalism and a Sense of Endangerment] which expresses the poles of discussion on Catholic self-identity within post-communist society.⁹⁸ The Church has had to face a plethora of difficult issues since the fall of the old system that required theological expertise. Issues as broad as abortion, unemployment, liberties of democracy, consumerism, liberalism, and postmodernism, among many others, appeared on the theological agenda. The important issue at stake was, and still is, what kind of competence does the Church have in the development of a post-communist culture? This question is directed not only to the national Church, but also to other Christian communities in Poland. Thus, many theologians recognise today that the new context requires the development of a deeper, more reflective theology based on openness to dialogue and change. Catholic Archbishop Henryk Muszynski, who is also a renowned professor of biblical studies, reflecting on the future of 'mass church' in Poland, lists three aspects he considers necessary for future theological development: correction of 'one sidedness' and focus on a 'simple' and 'living faith' in broad society; deepening theological content of faith in the spirit of the Gospel expressed in local churches; and the development of new religious 'self-consciousness', especially among the young people, with a renewed commitment to 'true religiousness' and 'biblical godliness' that gives priority to Christian witness in life before all outward religious practices.⁹⁹ What is very interesting is that Muszynski argues for a significant shift of theological emphasis in the understanding of the Church's public role, namely, whereas in the communist era the Church focused on the defense of faith, it should move to witnessing a living faith today. In other words, the more the Church identifies with, and is involved in, the proclamation of the essence of its mission, the more prepared it is to come down from 'a position of power' to assume 'a servant's role' in seeking to fulfil its missional call.¹⁰⁰ These are high ideals that attempt to reflect on Christian identity as an 'open' rather than a 'closed' identity which, while rooted in the normative heritage of the past, also implies an ongoing openness for change.¹⁰¹ Therefore, contemporary theology in the post-communist era is faced with some new challenges that, while taking into consideration the specific ethical-religious background, will also require a deeper understanding and creative theological critique of the new context. This new context,

as Prof. Juros of the Catholic Theological Academy in Warsaw argues, requires mature and multi-dimensional theological reflection *ad intra* that would focus on an internal analysis of the contemporary Church's life and *ad extra* that would seek a clearer understanding of the Church's mission in society.¹⁰² This is not an easy process, for it implies rejecting a 'romantic' view of Church and culture, as well as a strong emphasis on the theological demythologising of the Church's reality in contemporary society, while taking into account the new social, economic, political and moral factors shaping life in post-communist Poland.¹⁰³ In other words, theology's task is to identify what is good and worthy of the Church's support and what needs to be changed or challenged. Understood in this way, the main task of contemporary theology is to give direction to the Church in understanding the crucial relations between the Christian community and the wider society, *sacrum* and *ethos*, freedom and morality, faith and life in such a way that it would help a responsible 'entrance into the world' with a renewed Christian self awareness. The three critical tasks of theology, as set up in the Conference of Catholic Bishops with the theme *ZycEwangelia w wolnosci i solidarnosci* [Living by the Gospel in Freedom and Solidarity], include: tasks concerned with building freedom; tasks concerned with shaping social life; and tasks concerned with giving meaning and values to life.¹⁰⁴ Various Catholic theologians have engaged with those tasks on different levels. Some remarkable examples include Jozef Tischner's theology of freedom, Wacław Hryniewicz's theology of open Christian identity, Tomasz Weclawski's theology of imagination, Juros' ethical theology and Bartnik's theology of the nation, all of which reflect on the Polish situation by seeking theological understanding.

Protestant Struggles with Theological Identity

The critical question to be asked at this point is how does Polish Protestant theology fit into this picture? What are the distinctive Protestant theological features and in what ways can they contribute to the understanding of the Christian identity in contemporary culture? Although the historical roots undoubtedly point to the Roman Catholic Church as the major influence on the national identity of Poland, Protestantism cannot be discounted. Indeed, some elements of the Protestant teaching have had a significant impact on the nation and contributed to the support of national culture. Reflecting on the historical and theological identity of Polish Protestantism, Tadeusz J. Zielinski asks a significant question in the title of his article *Jedenczydwapolskieprotestantyzmy?* [One or Two Polish Protestantisms?], which points to certain historically assumed stereotypical divisions within Polish Protestantism.¹⁰⁵ Then the question is: who is who in Polish Protestantism? Whilst all Protestants identify themselves with the theological principles of Reformation tradition, there are various groups within this movement that can be broadly divided into two groups: 'historical Protestantism' (including Lutherans and the Reformed Churches) which came to Poland as early as the 16th century; and 'Free Church Protestantism' (including Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Free Christians, Evangelical Christians) which developed in Poland since the beginning of 19th century till today.¹⁰⁶ The terminology constitutes an additional problem, since unlike in Anglo-Saxon theological circles, there is no single term in the Polish language for 'Evangelicalism'. Therefore different terms are in popular and technical use *Ukeewangeliczniewierzacychrzescijanie* [evangelically believing Christians], *teologiaewangelicka* [evangelical theology] or *teologiaewangeliczna* [evangel theology], which is further complicated by the terminological associations with official names of particular religious denominations in Poland like in the case of *KosciolEwangelicko-Augsburski* [Evangelical Church of Augsburg Confession], *KosciolEwangelicko-Reformowany* [Evangelical Reformed Church], *KosciolEwangelicko-Methodystyczny* [Evangelical Methodist Church] or *EwangeliczniChrzescijanie* [Evangelical Christians]. Seeking to resolve this terminological problem and avoid denominational connotations, a new term started to be used, namely '*ewangelikalizm*' which is a Polish version of 'evangelicalism' that was first used and popularised by Rev. Dr Zygmunt Karel, the Rector of the Biblical Theological Seminary (now Evangelical School of Theology) in Wrocław. The proof that this term is gaining broader acceptance in some theological circles is clearly expressed in the latest translation of Roger Olson's *HistoriaTeologiiChrzescijanskiej. DwadzieściaWiekowTradycji i Reform* [Story of Christian Theology. Twenty Centuries of Tradition and Reform] where in the section on 'Evangelical theology', the Polish translator, the renowned Baptist theologian Konstanty Wiazowski, chose to use term '*teologiaewangelikalna*' explaining in the footnote that the often used term '*ewangeliczny*' is usually associated with the content of the Gospel [*ewangelia* in Polish] and as such does not fully express the broader

theological scope and meaning of the term '*ewangelikalizm*'.¹⁰⁷ Still, Tadeusz J. Zielinski points to the common theological heritage of all Protestant churches and therefore argues that instead of using another new and for some very confusing term, all the Protestant churches should be referred to as '*kosciolyewangelickie*' [evangelical churches], and not only those that historically inherited such a name, as for example the Evangelical Reformed Church.¹⁰⁸

These reflections point to some ongoing tensions within the Protestant movement in Poland. Both the 'historical' and 'free church' traditions, to this day, remain in some ways antagonistic to each other. The 'historical Protestants' are often branded with the 19th century's theological liberalism and moral indifference to the spiritual needs of the people, while they in turn accuse the 'free Churches' of proselytism or so-called 'fishing in the neighbour's pond'.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the 'free churches' wing of Protestantism has historically been charged with their 'fundamentalist' and 'separatist' attitudes expressed both theologically and socially. Thus, the widely respected Lutheran scholar Prof. Karski in his article *Protestanckiewspolnotywnokoscielne* [Protestant Free-Church Communities] refers to some historical roots as '*wpolnotytypubaptystycznego*' [baptist-type communities] among which he classifies Baptists, Church of Christ, Free Christians [historically connected with the Plymouth Brethren], Evangelical Christians, Quakers, Methodists, Adventists, Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses.¹¹⁰ Karski asserts that all of these communities share two characteristics: historically they came to Poland in the late 19th century and the 20th century, and that they all seem to emphasise the significance of religious freedom and tolerance. In response to this article Tadeusz J. Zielinski raises some points of theological critique that clearly illustrate some ambiguities within Polish Protestantism. Firstly, he critiques Karski's use of 'historical' and 'non-historical' categories in reference to Protestant communities and clearly disassociates the Protestant 'free church' tradition from that of Jehovah's Witnesses and the Quakers.¹¹¹ As already mentioned, he draws attention to the importance of the Protestant Churches' shared theological inheritance all of which embrace basic Reformation dictums. On this basis Zielinski suggests that the focus should not be on the chronological historical divisions, which according to him are artificial and harmful to the presence of the Protestant movement in Poland, but on the two possible classifications of Evangelical churches in Poland. The first criterion of classification is based on the way one becomes a member of a particular church or denominational group, and there are two options here: either 'traditionalist' or 'volunteer'.¹¹² In the traditionalist option one inherits membership in the church on the basis of infant baptism, where the decision to get baptized is made by parents or family. On the other hand, in the 'volunteer' option, one becomes a member of a Church by a conscious decision. This particular issue of Baptism has always been a dividing line between 'traditionalist' and 'volunteer' churches. The second criteria is based more on the approach to Christian doctrine, which Zielinski classifies as either 'conservative' or 'liberal/modernist', that is not just limited to Polish theological circles. However, this classification is not as easy to identify when reflecting on the Protestant church in Poland, since it is not always clear what is meant by terms like 'conservative' or 'liberal', and they are used in many different ways.¹¹³ However, as a broad generalization, the term 'conservative' is usually referred to faithfulness to a certain doctrinal heritage and forms of piety in the light of Scripture, while 'liberal' is associated with those questioning traditional approaches to Scripture and seeking new theological expressions in dialogue with culture. Therefore, whereas for many Roman Catholics in Poland the dividing line between conservative and liberal lies in their approach to the Second Vatican Council, for many Protestants the most frequently mentioned category for such classification is that of faithfulness to Scripture, the reading of which is deeply influenced by one's theological background. Although the relations between Protestants of various traditions improved greatly over the last five decades due to the work of the Ecumenical Council and the Christian Theological Academy, some differences and tensions between the so-called 'historical churches' and 'free churches' still affect their relations.

As already mentioned, all Protestant communities in Poland share common theological convictions rooted in the Reformation. *Sola Scriptura* points to the emphasis on the Bible as the ultimate authority in theological and moral issues; *solusChristus* expresses both the devotional and theological conviction that it is only through Christ that one can enter into conscious relationship with God which in turn implies *sola gratia* and *sola fide* which both emphasise that justification is only by 'grace' and through 'faith'.¹¹⁴ These are some common theological convictions that form the basis of Protestant communities that all seem to include a clear Christological emphasis and are very much redemption-oriented in their theological

approach. However, these shared theological foundations do not imply Protestant uniformism and we find diverse expressions as various Protestant groups seem to differ in their particular emphases especially in terms of their organization of ecclesial life and understanding of piety. Therefore, whereas some emphasise the importance of the calling to the ministry in the world in theological terms as *cooperatores Dei* (co-worker of God in the world) like Lutherans, others seem to point more in the direction of separating from the world, understood as separation from everything that is sinful (e.g. Pentecostals). In this way, some are seen as more 'liberal' in their interpretation of the 'world', while others are more fundamentalist or conservative. Similarly, while some put more emphasis on 'predestination' in their approach to salvation (e.g. Evangelical Reformed Church) others emphasise that every person can experience regeneration when he/she realizes his /her sinfulness and need of a saviour (e.g. Baptists). Despite some of these differences and while recognizing the complexity of the issues under discussion, it is nevertheless crucial to attempt some theological integration of the main features that are characteristic of Polish Evangelicalism.

Characteristic Features of Polish Evangelicalism

Firstly, it is crucial to recognize that 'activism' is a traditionally strong feature of evangelical Christians in Poland. Virtually all evangelical communities emphasise the importance of the practical application of *sola scriptura* to life which in principle implies close integration of Word and life. Thus Baptist theologian Konstanty Wiazowski devotes two chapters of *Podstawy naszej wiary* [Foundations of our Faith] to the Word of God as the source of God's revelation that needs to find its practical expression in Christian life.¹¹⁵ He asserts that it is the responsibility of every believer to study God's Word and points to various critical approaches to exegesis of the text that should also become the foundation of the whole church.¹¹⁶ As already noted, this is not just a Baptist emphasis, but a generally shared conviction that evangelical religious experience is closely associated with a conscious intention to interpret the Scriptures in a dynamic way in relation to existing and changing reality. Thus, identification of Scripture as the central authority among evangelicals finds practical expression in a certain approach to the matters of spirituality, doctrine and ethics. This is clearly expressed in a very influential study by a Methodist theologian Prof. Witold Benedyktowicz of the Christian Theological Academy, who in the introduction to *Co powinnismy czynić? Zarys ewangelickiej etyki teologicznej* [What Shall We Do? An Outline of Evangelical Theological Ethics] clearly emphasises that his main concern is not philosophical, but rather practical in the light of the principle *sola fide*.¹¹⁷ Thus after a critical historical outline of the relations between ethics, religion and theology in the first part of the book, he moves on to a deep study of such practical aspects of life as the understanding of relations between 'world', 'environment' and 'life', 'family issues', 'work and leisure', 'culture', 'patriotism' and 'attitude to authorities', to name but a few, all in the light of evangelical theological ethics.¹¹⁸ It is interesting to note that these reflections are very much praxis-minded and grow out of the particular experiences of Polish Evangelicalism.

This activist approach to spirituality clearly points to the strong influences of pietistic discipline which puts great emphasis on personal faith and 'holy living'. There are three substantive elements that are historically associated with evangelical piety: 'conviction of sin', 'conversion' and 'testimony'.¹¹⁹ All of these elements are seen as important components of evangelical identity, with special emphasis on the importance of personal transformation through faith in Jesus (*sola fide*). In fact, it is this 'experiential' element of faith that is often emphasised more than theory. Therefore, this 'spiritual' emphasis on a personal reading of the Scripture has had a deep impact on the perception of the relationship between 'piety' and 'theology'. The problem is that emphasis on activism was not always paired with a deeper theological reflection (like that expressed in Benedyktowicz' theological ethics). In other words, the great emphasis on 'spiritual' activism was often associated with "a lower view of scholarship among church members".¹²⁰ Wiazowski, reflecting on the tasks of theology, expresses and comments on some of the objections often mentioned by some evangelicals when discussing 'theology'.¹²¹ The main concern is that too much theology can result in the loss of 'simple evangelical faith', which was often put forward in such a way: — Faith 'yes' — but what do we need theology for?. However, as Wiazowski, an experienced pastor and for many years President of the Polish Baptist Union, argues, Christian living should be informed by theology in at least three practical areas: 'in defence against any false teaching', 'in clarifying the teaching of the church' and in 'biblical exegesis'.¹²² Furthermore, in response to the concern raised above, according

to him the sole purpose of any theological reflection is to strengthen and not weaken the Christian faith, and when faith is excluded from theological reflection then it becomes nothing more than empty dogmatism.¹²³ In a similar way, Prof. Wiktor Niemczyk of the Christian Theological Academy, in his *Prolegomena do dogmatyki* [Introduction to Dogmatics], a classic among Polish Protestants, asserts that theology is based on two motives: (1) the practical religious need of the church to understand the Gospel in its broader terms and church life within the framework of its historical revelation and the normativity it brings for all the church's activities; and (2) the scientific approach which points to the need for a broader integration of Christianity with other scientific elements.¹²⁴ Understood in this way, Christian theology seeks to be involved in cultural-intellectual development while at the same time enhancing religious life, or to put it in Niemczyk's words: the "development of theology is rooted in the covenant between living Christian piety and living science".¹²⁵ Therefore, while pointing to various philosophical approaches to faith, Niemczyk maintains that the study of dogmatics in its various forms enhances understanding of Christian identity and also helps in defining the uniqueness of the Christian experience of faith.¹²⁶

Nevertheless, a strong emphasis on personal piety and experience of faith in some cases resulted in a very limited theological understanding of the Christian understanding of the 'world', causing a spirituality based on a division between the 'spiritual' and the 'secular' world. This was further strengthened by a particular socio-political location of evangelical churches which in Poland consist mainly of small communities. The minority complex, therefore, strengthened the tendency towards a certain type of uniformity, whereby a strong group loyalty and isolation from the outside world were encouraged.¹²⁷ There is no clearer picture of isolationist and fundamentalist tendencies of some evangelical communities than that expressed in the perception of the theological church-world relation. When taken to extremes, a sharp division between the church and the 'world' made a deep impact on ecclesial life and resulted in certain forms of individualised piety, or even in some cases led to creating a religious area of life, that was to have absolute priority over the other spheres of life. Marsh Moyle, director of SEN, in Slovakia, in *Shadows of the Past: The Lingering Effects of the Communist Mindset in the Church and Society*, after pointing to the problem of lack of responsibility and broken trust, identifies — public/private schism — as a significant root of Central and Eastern European evangelicalism. According to this schism or "distorted legacy of pietism" based on the division between the 'spiritual' and the 'worldly' life, Christians are to concentrate their energies on the pursuit of 'spiritual matters'.¹²⁸ This obvious theological reductionism significantly limited the scope of Christian witness and seemed to be content with "limited acts of personal behaviour, family and church relationships, politeness, plus, of course, Bible reading, prayer, regular attendance at church services, and when possible, testimony to a non-believer".¹²⁹

These points to a broader issue of the relation between religion and culture in Polish evangelical theology. Prof. Boguslaw Milerski of the Christian Theological Academy points in *Religia a kultura* [Religion and Culture] to three typological views when it comes to discussion of this issue: the first view emphasises that the study of religion is independent in relation to nature and culture; the second view sees religion as part of culture, or in co-operation with culture; and the third view completely identifies religion with culture.¹³⁰ Milerski asserts that the second view in its various forms is most widely represented and sees it as correct insofar as religion is simultaneously part of culture and transcending it.¹³¹ This, however, often implies some conflict between religion and culture in terms of a lack of convergence between religious and secular symbols and values. Milerski argues that religion as a multidimensional phenomenon in its 'horizontal' expression is very much culturally conditioned (i.e. culturally conditioned symbolic religious forms), but notes that this cultural dimension does not exhaust the subject. From a theological perspective one must also explore a 'vertical dimension' of religion and religious experience which points to a deeper level of discovering the purpose and meaning of one's being.¹³² These relations between the 'horizontal' and 'vertical' dimensions of religion in relation to culture are not always clearly identifiable and demand a deeper study of the relationship between Christian identity, that is always deeply rooted in God's truth, and the shape and form of religiousness that is in many ways culturally conditioned. It also points towards the significance of one's self-perception for Christian witness in a given culture.

Polish evangelicals during the communist era were challenged in two ways: on the one hand they had to remain committed to their biblical faith, but on the other they felt obliged to be loyal to the ruling Government. It seems that many Polish evangelicals embraced the option of

withdrawal. Understandably, evangelical believers were deeply criticised for their cultural 'indifferentism' or even branded with a 'theology of survival'. Karl Heinz Walter, General Secretary of the European Baptist Federation when asked about theology in Central and Eastern Europe stated: "If there has ever been theology in the Second World, it is the theology of survival. East European Baptists have clung to doctrines of salvation, the deity of Christ, and the uniqueness of Scripture firmly against 'the world', especially in the Communist years. Their churches have been more places of refuge than bases of social action".¹³³ While in some ways correct, this comment does not take into consideration the root causes of such an approach, nor does it take into account the experiential aspects of theology developed by those under the communist regime. Many evangelicals had to suffer because of their faith. Particular images of a theology of sacrifice, the theology of the Cross or theology of suffering have not even been considered in Heinz Walter's statement. In this context it is worth quoting at some length from Peter Kuzmic's article *The Communist Impact on the Church* where, commenting on evangelical Christians, he states: "Their Christian life had a depth of commitment and a spirit of sacrifice going far beyond anything known as a superficial and self-centred response to the 'cheap grace' and its pseudo-Pentecostal variables such as 'health and wealth,' 'name it and claim it' or the 'prosperity gospel' all popular in some segments of Western culture-dominated Christianity. Their faith and suffering have taught them that external pressures, legal restrictions, social discrimination and even physical persecution serve the noble purpose of purifying and strengthening the church".¹³⁴

This is by no means an accusation of Western Christianity, which has enjoyed religious freedom for much longer than the countries of Eastern Europe, nor is it a claim against the Catholic majority in Poland (which also has many great testimonies of brave obedience to Christ in the fight against communism), but rather it points to the specificity of Polish (and Eastern European in general) evangelicalism, and the reasons behind its theological fundamentalism and conservatism. Furthermore, there are clear indications of the awareness of social problems in Polish theological literature, which have already been mentioned like Benedyktowicz's 'theological ethics', Niemczyk's 'dynamic dogmatics' or Wiazowski's critical study of 'social sin' which all, in different ways, represent the theological discourse strongly rooted in the Polish milieu. While much of the theological work is marked by conservatism and traditionalism, and therefore many theologians in the West criticise it for representing views that they perceive as fundamentalist, it is hard to judge how far such opinions are rooted in reality.

New Perspectives in Protestant Theology in the Post-Communist Era

It is clear that the fall of communism has opened new possibilities and challenges for the development of the Protestant theological discourse. Reflecting on the situation of the Protestant church in post-communist Poland, Krzysztof Brzechczyn asks a significant question: *Czy w Polsce istnieje inteligencja ewangelicka?* [Does an Evangelical Intelligentsia Exist in Poland?].¹³⁵ The author starts by giving two definitions of intelligentsia: the first is more general and sees the intelligentsia as a social group consisting of the people with higher education, working intellectually and usually aspiring to, or assuming, roles of ideological leadership in society; the second definition is more specific and points to the intelligentsia as a social group that is responsible for shaping the values of national culture.¹³⁶ Understood in this way, and further qualified by available printed material and representative professional associations, Brzechczyn asserts that apart from Lutheran circles in the south of Poland, there are no integrated or organised Protestant intellectual circles that could meet the standards of the above mentioned definitions. The author, nevertheless, stresses that Protestant intellectuals present in the various Protestant churches have an important role to play in 'the Body of Christ'.¹³⁷ Their main role is associated with developing links with 'culture' by actively representing Protestant circles and values within the broader 'culture'. However, such participation, according to Brzechczyn is worthwhile only insofar as it coupled with active participation in the local congregation as the starting point for the evangelisation of Polish society.¹³⁸ On the other hand, Prof. Tadeusz J. Zielinski notes that while in the 1990s interest in religious life in society generally weakened, this phenomenon does not appear to have affected the Protestant intelligentsia and, in fact, he predicts a growing interest in Protestantism on the basis of its particular expression of faith and piety.¹³⁹ While not all share the same optimism, there is a sense of the revitalisation of Protestant theology in the light of a general rethinking of the Christian identity within post-communist society. This is clearly visible

in a growing number of articles, publications, conferences and theses on this subject. While some theologians maintain a traditional conservative approach to culture, new critical and creative discourses are increasing.

Prof. Boguslaw Milerski, of the Christian Theological Academy, used the theological category of '*diaspora*' to describe the identity of Polish Protestantism in terms of its weaknesses and strengths. He indicates the potential cultural influence of Protestantism,¹⁴⁰ and points to three dangers in this context: the danger of losing one's identity, the danger of isolation and forming a religious ghetto mentality and the danger of conformity, uncritical acceptance of values, symbols and views.¹⁴¹ However, the Protestant identity has the potential to provide an alternative identity distinct from the predominant Catholic presence, which on this basis can attract some people who are not satisfied with their religious experience.¹⁴² Protestantism is seen as a '*diaspora*' community, being shaped by various traditions, which could also serve as an agent of reconciliation between various marginalised groups within the broader framework of the whole of society.¹⁴³ In this way Milerski emphasises that Protestantism is not only a religious movement, but also a cultural movement clearly associated with some of the values expressed by the Reformation, such as 'individual freedom', 'responsibility and solidarity', 'education', and the 'democratisation of social roles', which can all creatively contribute to contemporary culture.¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Baptist theologian and politician Prof. Tadeusz J. Zielinski, building on the theological inheritance of the Reformation and 'free church' tradition in his various works, very often points to the Protestant alternative, both in terms of its experiential expression of faith as well as its social offer, with its emphasis on 'individualism', 'creativity', 'family-orientation', appreciation of 'democratic principles' and 'de-sacralisation of culture'.¹⁴⁵ A reappraisal of the Baptist monthly *SlowoPrawdy* shows that this publication, which, due to official constraints, used to be very hermetic and only published articles on religious and historic themes in the communist era, since the fall of the old system has seen a flood of publications concerned with social ethics, politics and culture in general that stimulate discussion. Włodzimierz Tasak, the editor of *SlowoPrawdy*, has written many stimulating articles on the complexity of the Polish Protestant identity, and in one of them he sadly concluded that many evangelicals have simply 'got used to' their minority status, do not expect many changes, and are even tired of their own 'radicalism'.¹⁴⁶ However, one of the major contributions by Prof. Mirosław Patalon points to a more radical rethinking of the theological understanding of the relation between Church and culture. He argues for a rediscovery of the Church as a learning community and for a critical evaluation of the possibility of the inculturation of the Gospel in the light of postmodern pedagogy.¹⁴⁷ All of these developments clearly point to some potential directions in the theological search for a renewed reflection on the Christian identity in contemporary society. In this way, it is clear that both Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies are seeking some new directions in relation to culture today.

Towards an Integrative Approach in Post-Communist Missiological Thinking

Discussing different approaches to theology, Bulgarian theologian Parush Parushev, Head of the department of 'Applied Theology' of International Baptist Theological Seminary, Prague, analysed two different approaches to a critical evaluation of one's method of discourse: an 'integrative approach' which fits well with a 'story-bound mind-set' and a 'differential approach' which is appealing to the 'rational logical mind-set'.¹⁴⁸ On the basis of his research and an extensive experience of working with students both in Western and Eastern European settings, Parushev asserts that Eastern European culture is still predominantly a narrative one. This implies that the integrative approach, seeking to discern the driving forces behind the narrative, is much more appealing than that of the differential approach, seeking to get a grip on the logical nature of discourse, which is very common in the West.¹⁴⁹ To be sure, Parushev strongly believes that both of these approaches have their place in theological education and in fact considers them as complementary. But he also emphasises that without appreciation of the different traditions and mental languages of East and West, there will always be a domination of "supposedly one right way of theological thinking".¹⁵⁰

When understood from the perspective of an integrative approach, 'emotional' or 'experiential' elements in Polish theology do not surprise anyone and are seen as a valid contribution to a theological discourse. What is important in this context, however, is that these elements are gradually formed by a shared life and expressed in an exchange both with the community of the 'like us' and the 'not like us', which points to the great significance of community discourse in Eastern thinking.¹⁵¹ Features strongly present in Polish theologising, such as an emphasis on

person [*personalizm*], sociality and community in relation to religious experience, seem to confirm this tendency. In this way, the narrative, tradition, customs and habits of the community to which one belongs become formative in terms of embracing particular convictions and values. It is important to emphasise that in this framework of tradition and community, personal stories express convictions, and it is through these stories that successful communication takes place. It has some deep implications for theological formation in general and missiological thinking in particular as it implies that "in a theological community we bring our convictions to the shared community experience and we also seek to understand the convictions of those to whom we listen or whose writings we read".¹⁵² In this way, a story and not only a logical set of theological propositions are shared and become meaningful. Thus, Cosden and Fairbairn, reflecting on contextual theological education among post-soviet Protestants, point to some problems of interaction between different groups of Christians that are particularly evident in the relations between Western conservative Protestants and Protestants in post-communist lands.¹⁵³ Although they profess a firm commitment to Scripture and the importance of proclaiming the Gospel, both groups often tend to perceive their own theology as 'absolute' and 'universal' in a greater sense than it actually is, without considering the importance of the context in the shaping of their theology.¹⁵⁴ To illustrate this problem Cosden and Fairbairn quote a prominent Ukrainian Christian leader who commented on the difference between Western conservative Protestantism and Slavic Protestantism by saying: "The problem is that our pastors write poetry; theirs write systematic theologies".¹⁵⁵ This again points to a different emphasis in the way of thinking. It seems that for a Western conservative Protestant theologian, Scripture is often seen as a book of universal propositions which must be uncovered (through scientifically devised principles of exegesis) and who sees the task of theology as uncovering these propositions and arranging them in an orderly logical form. Such a method finds its roots in a post-Reformation Protestant scholasticism further strengthened by the fundamentalist-modernist controversy in North America which led many conservative Protestants to embrace a theology that was extremely 'cognitive in orientation' and focused on the defence of what they considered 'objective universals'.¹⁵⁶ On the other hand, when the Ukrainian Christian leader quoted above said that Slavic pastors write poetry, he was referring to a substantially different way of thinking, more in line with the already mentioned 'integrative approach'. Therefore, Cosden and Fairbairn assert that for Slavs, "thinking and knowing involve much more than logic" and that they "understand reality in a way which is more complex than straight-forward propositional terms can indicate".¹⁵⁷

Given this pattern of thinking, theology of mission is effective insofar as it is able to connect the narratives with a deeper understanding of the Christian experience of faith. Poetry, testimony, sermon or song can be great expressions of theological depth that are close to the Slavic soul, but do not always require straightforward reasoning and a clear-cut propositional approach. However, it is also important to emphasise here that the rational logical mind-set is not to be ignored, since it is especially valuable in developing skills for evaluating and critiquing various influences on one's thought, skills that are essential for the development of contextual theologies. Tadeusz J. Zielinski, reflects critically on the separatist attitude of Polish Protestants in the 'free church' tradition, linking them to the uncritical adoption of particular theological and pietist inclinations shaped by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, with their fundamentalist theological views, and to a lesser extent by American evangelicalism.¹⁵⁸ Zielinski asserts that these views deeply affect the relations between the so-called 'historical churches' and the 'free churches', since the latter often do not take into consideration that contemporary historical Protestantism represents a doctrine and piety that is in many ways different from the liberal theology and spirituality encountered by 'free church' missionaries in the 19th century. He further elaborates that the changes brought by neo-orthodoxy, the developments in post-war biblical studies, renewed interest in Reformed theology and also the influence of the Second Vatican Council, had all pointed to change that in many ways affected the Polish theology of the 'historical churches'.¹⁵⁹ These are some important issues that have made a deep impact on understanding the theological ambiguities existing within the Polish Protestant movement. Also, one should take into consideration that Poland always stood between the Eastern and Western civilisations, with the result that various influences affected Polish theological thinking and the national culture in general.

Therefore, the critical issue facing the church in the post-communist era is closely associated with the search for a relevant mission theology in the light of the multidimensional transformations that have taken place within post-communist society. Surely, doing theology

cannot mean the simple transfer of theological ideas and systems from elsewhere as they may not be suited to a particular context. In other words, what is important for theology is to move from a theology that is influenced by its context to being a genuinely contextual theology which is able to self-consciously reflect on the historical and cultural factors that have influenced its particular expression of faith and to discern the deepest thoughts behind the narratives, customs and traditions that are characteristic of those communities of faith. The purpose of it is not to affirm a withdrawal syndrome forging further development of a 'ghetto mentality' or to escape into romantic views of history and ethos, but rather to rediscover its true identity. Furthermore, such an approach will necessarily include and explore elements of that identity that need to be critically evaluated in the light of the transformations taking place within the broader culture. Contextual theology by definition seeks contextual relevance and as such it does not claim to be universal, rather it attempts to express the truth of Christianity in a way suited to the thought patterns and cultural inheritance of a particular context. The clash between some inherited theological formulations imported by Anglo-Saxon missionaries, coupled with a desire to be like the West, and the traditional Polish 'in-between' way of thinking help one to understand the current crisis in the Protestant post-communist soul. When taken to an extreme it may result either in raising one's identity above others, that is also characterised by a reactionary life-style, or the temptation to withdraw from the broader culture, focusing instead on creating a "pietistic subculture with its own pattern of behaviour, language, dress, etc."¹⁶⁰ Both of these attitudes express a separatist and fundamentalist orientation. While some Protestants today still subscribe to this worldview, many others today seek new ways of approaching the Christian identity and presence in contemporary culture. The already mentioned theological notions of 'diaspora community' (Milerski), 'alternative community' (Zielinski) or 'learning community' (Patalon), all seem to point towards a new broader interpretation of the Christian Protestant identity within Polish culture.

The main concern, in addition to the development of emerging theologies, is to approach the theme of the contemporary crisis of the church from a missiological perspective. This approach takes as its premise that the Christian church has been constituted for mission and therefore renewal is concerned with the recovery of the church's true identity.¹⁶¹ In other words, it is argued here that in order to see the church grow in the post-communist context, mission needs to become an integrative motif, central to the development of a new approach to theological education that is holistic, contextual and transforming.¹⁶² Authentic renewal of the church is impossible if separated from its mission. Such a renewal requires an integrative approach that would seriously take into consideration the specificity of the Polish religious-ethical context and way of thinking, and therefore does not simply imply a return to the past but requires a much broader view of mission for today's changing culture. In a way, it is about seeking to understand of the Christian missionary identity in a context of tension caused by continuity and change in relation to contemporary culture. It is important to emphasise at this stage that part of the missionary calling consists in 'understanding the times' (especially in times of breakthrough) in order to assist a Christian community to live as God's people in the wider socio-cultural context. Therefore, the genuine engagement of the church as the missional community of Christ within the wider community calls for the recognition, or rediscovery of *the holistic content of the Gospel*, or a theology of the whole Gospel, which to be relevant to all spheres of life cannot be limited just to the 'spiritual'. The critical issue facing evangelical Christians in a post-Communist context is to re-evaluate the relationship between the proclamation of the Gospel and loving service rooted in solidarity with the wounded world. All too often the focus on the number of new converts and strategies for increasing these numbers overshadows the Kingdom dimension of the Gospel in the contemporary practice of evangelism. The reality of the Kingdom then calls for a radical rediscovery of the Gospel story and its relevance for every aspect of life. A pastor from one of the former communist countries once said: "we as believers all know that Jesus is the answer, but the problem is we don't always know what the questions are".¹⁶³ If we take this comment as representative, it becomes clear that there is a great need to re-emphasize that, in order for a Christian community to live as God's people in the world, a greater understanding of the times is required.

Such renewal requires a critical evaluation and the ongoing integration of the new elements arising in the process of transformation, which at the same time helps one to assess one's identity appropriately within the broader culture. It also implies that a faith community, in order to share the Gospel in a relevant way, is expected to engage in the 'language' of the culture through exploring the 'cognitive tools', 'concepts', 'images', 'symbols', and 'thought

forms' by means of which people today discover meaning and form personal identities.¹⁶⁴ An integrative approach takes this engagement with culture seriously, and therefore explores various contextual factors shaping the general discourse and seeks an appropriate theological response. The 'language' of the Polish culture has been significantly transformed along with a new set of values and lifestyles that the post-communist era has brought. When understood in this way, the issues of the crisis of freedom, crisis of identity and crisis of hope, to name but a few, gain theological significance to be further explored by the Christian community. Therefore, from the perspective of an integrative approach, creating a 'space for freedom' is a very significant aspect of mission today. These points to the recognition of at least four aspects of change, if the renewal is to take place: the *evaluation of attitudes toward culture*; *appreciation of individuality*; *rediscovering the value of creativity* and *a renewed community* (responsibility towards others). These aspects form a concrete missional agenda to work on in the years to come. Miklos Tomka, in analysing the changing social role of religion in Eastern and Central Europe after the fall of communism says: "The Church can only mobilize the energies at its disposal if: it takes into account the differences of opinion among its members; uses this variety as the driving force of its own development and draws its followers living in the secular world into its own life in order for the Church to understand questions arising in the wider society and to have people who can mediate between the Church and society". The effectiveness of this 'mediating' depends a lot on the church's use of freedom and its potential for today's society. The appreciation of and openness to 'the differences of opinion' or 'individuality' is also deeply significant and when applied to mission can indeed contribute to bridging the gap between the church and society.

The community of love which seeks to create a 'space' for freedom is inconceivable without a deep understanding, appreciation and experience of *reconciliation*, both on an individual and a communal level. On deeper reflection, reconciliation, when seen in the broader perspective of a post-communist transformation on coming to terms with rising forms of diversity, calls for 'openness to the other'. This is a big issue in all post-totalitarian countries. Christoph Klein, the Romanian Bishop of the Evangelical Church, observes that national reconciliation in the various Central and Eastern European countries is "one of the most important tasks, one of the decisive mission assignments for the church of Jesus Christ. The church which forgets this mission and puts national, political and egoistic interests of self-preservation before this task of reconciliation, incurs guilt and remains outside God's blessing".¹⁶⁷ Prof. Wacław Hryniewicz, Head of the Ecumenical Institute of the Catholic University of Lublin, points to some problematic issues within the Polish religious ethos: the 'pessimistic worldview' which creates "a mentality marked by being constantly on the look-out for outside enemies", "the fear of freedom and otherness" and "the tendency towards exclusiveness in understanding truth and salvation".¹⁶⁸ The historical divisions between 'us' and 'them', the conflict of identities between Protestants and Catholics, and for that matter that between various Protestant groups (e.g. division between 'historical' and 'free churches') is being furthered even more by an influx of New Religious Movements. Since some of the saddest characteristics of the churches in the region include historically shaped divisiveness, mutual distrust towards the other in wider missionary projects, apart from those organised by one's own community, the notions of *openness*, *inclusiveness* and *reconciliation* become important when considering an integrative missional theology. Fortunately, more and more positive examples of such an approach are becoming evident, especially in terms of Christian co-operation in various initiatives, but it still remains one of the major challenges in the post-communist world.

In taking mission as an integrative theme for the renewal of the church, it is clear that it never takes place in a vacuum, but rather happens at a certain time and place and thus is, in some important ways, conditioned by them. Contextual analysis, which is also rooted in biblical and theological reflection, calls the community of believers to listen to the people around them, to understand their stories, and to get actively involved in seeking to respond appropriately to the real needs and hopes of the people who are an integral part of that context. A particularly significant aspect of Eastern European missional challenge is that of *hearing* and *understanding the stories* of contemporary people. More important still, it is not just about 'hearing' and 'understanding' but also about seeking new ways of missional interaction with these stories within broadly understood Christian community life. Therefore, various voices (Catholic and Protestant) are coming out of the experience of the Polish post-communist ethos calling for a deeper renewal of community. But how is such a renewal to take place when the culture is becoming more and more individualistic and religion privatised? Ecumenically-minded Catholic

activist Wilkanowicz observes that in Poland, "smaller communities are needed in order to do evangelistic work in places where people live and work, to convey the Good News and to build a network of solidarity into everyday life".¹⁶⁹ Such a mission agenda is also very close to the Protestant vision. Again, it points to the importance of *community, relationships and personal interaction with others*, which is a formative base for a broader interaction with culture. Given the circumstances in which the collective consciousness of Poles is largely dominated by feelings of frustration, of impotence, of passivity, of hopelessness and privatisation of life, pastoral and missionary activity must link up more than ever with people's real situation. The concept of an integrative approach expressed in concrete communities provides a good framework for meeting such needs. Furthermore, Malcolm Clegg of the Evangelical School of Theology, Wroclaw, Poland, critically noted that many of the evangelical approaches to mission today are still marked by a 'hit-and-run' attitude. This is a form of evangelicalism that is based on individual as opposed to communal confrontation and consequently puts great emphasis on "the saving of individual souls rather than a broader healing of the land or consideration of the social implications of obedience to the Gospel".¹⁷⁰ An integrative approach seeks to confront such reductionist views of mission by attempting to link mission with a broader cultural testimony. Thus the main thrust of an integrative approach, when applied to mission, is that it seeks to connect the person's identity with a broader framework of interaction with others. It is interesting that the perception of the situation often begins in the Eastern European mind by identifying 'the threat' and only then does it move to evaluate 'the authority in community' and the presumably needed 'social change in the community'.¹⁷¹ Nonetheless, it is necessary to move beyond the fear of threat and this is a missiological call for openness. In this way, it is crucial to understand that a new quality of Christian community is required today.

Given this situation, there is a growing awareness of *social responsibility* issues among Polish evangelicals. Questions about Christian social and political involvement come to the forefront of many discussions today. This seems to point to a new openness and the development of some distinctive elements in social theology. While Protestant social thought at first glance does not seem to be as systematic as the Roman Catholic doctrine of social science, it nevertheless provides many significant insights for contemporary discussions. As Tomasz Debowski so ably argues in *ZarysmyslispolecznejKosciolowprotestanckich w Polsce w latach 1945-1995* [An Outline of Social Thought in Polish Protestant Churches between 1945 and 1995], many aspects of Protestant social doctrine are deeply rooted in moral values that are relevant to some of the struggles the Polish nation is facing today.¹⁷² Respect for the law, and an understanding of work, politics, freedom and tolerance are some examples where Protestant ethics can potentially contribute to the broader socio-political ethos.¹⁷³ Concrete issues that constitute new pastoral concerns, such as the relationship between a consumerist and a spiritual understanding of freedom, and the rise of pragmatism and new individualised ethics, demand a Christian response through a deep rethinking of what it means to be a Christian. Thus, coming to terms with the functions of liberal democracy and making a positive contribution to civil society, most of all through the creation of genuine and caring communities concerned with holistic/development ministries, are some important issues that cannot be ignored when considering mission in the post-communist context.¹⁷⁴ While some evangelicals in Poland are still reluctant and suspicious of any notion of the social aspect of mission, there are a growing number of Christian initiatives including foundations, associations and networks devoted to promoting Christian ethical principles within their professions. A very successful example of this is *Projekt Mala Firma* (Small Firm Project) which is a small-group Christian ministry for business people that helps participants on the basis of personal interaction with others to build their businesses on strong foundations. Other types of ministries are on the local church level, when whole churches become transformed by this broader vision. 'Daily Bread Foundation', can serve as a good example of community ministry that is run by an evangelical church in a small town in Poland. For years they had tried different forms of evangelism, including street evangelism and distributing the 'Jesus' film. However, it became obvious that the local community was quite hostile to such activities. So the members then learned the lesson being put forward by holistic mission theology. They changed their approach completely and after recognising the need within their community, they decided to take bread as well as other things to the poor within that community. Such a transition was motivated by a desire to go where the people are, instead of the previous ecclesiocentric idea of waiting for the people to come to the church. Their efforts have been welcomed and deeply appreciated, which resulted in gaining the respect of the local

community and also developing good relations with the local Catholic priest, proving that community transformation provides a good framework for building healthy ecumenical relations, or even partnerships, that seem otherwise impossible. There is no doubt that the needs within society are great and the Christian church wishing to remain faithful to its mission cannot be indifferent to these issues. Mission as transformation, which seeks to integrate proclamation with social action, provides a good framework for engaging with the troublesome post-communist reality.

Finally, an integrative approach recognises that the Christian community bears witness not only by 'doing' and 'proclaiming' but also by its core '*being*'. In fact, in the light of a strong tendency to the spiritual activism, without the renewal of the 'being', which precedes both 'doing' and 'proclaiming', the effectiveness and credibility of Christian mission can be in danger of stagnation in the years to come. Thus, the renewed identity of the 'missional community' as grounded in the integrative principle will seek to break with dualistic, exclusivist and triumphalistic tendencies that reduce the Gospel to one aspect of mission against the other. The focus is rather on a recovery of the whole Gospel for the whole person in integrity with Scripture and the contextual needs, and commitment to a praxis of love in the midst of the concrete social and cultural realities facing people today. Thus the role of the church is to be a new community which witnesses to the coming of the Kingdom of God in concrete forms of transformation, both on the personal and communal level.

Endnotes

⁹⁵ See J. Marianski, "Pastoral Work and the Shock of Modernization", in Tomka and Zulehner (eds.), *Concilium: Religion During and After Communism*, No. 3, London: SCM Press, 2000, pp. 52-61.

⁹⁶ A. Mate-Toth, "A Theology of the Second World?", in Tomka and Zulehner (eds.), *Concilium: Religion During and After Communism*, No. 3, London: SCM Press, 2000, pp. 27-35.

⁹⁷ In D. O'Grady, *The Turned Card: Christianity Before and After the Wall*. Gracewing: Leominster, 1995, p. 117.

⁹⁸ P. Zalecki, *Miedzytryumfalizmem a poczuciemzagrozenia. Kosciól rzymskokatolicki w Polsce w spólszczej w oczach swych przedstawicieli* [Between Triumphalism and Fear: The Roman Catholic Church in the View of Its Members] Krakow: Nomos, 2001.

⁹⁹ H. Muszynski, "Przyszlosc Kosciola masowego w Polsce", [The future of mass Church in Poland]. *Wież*, December, 1998, pp. 13-26.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰¹ See W. Hryniewicz, "Tozsamosc chrzescijanskadzisiaj. Od konfesjonalizmu do tozsamosci otwartej" [Christian identity today. From confessionalism to open identity], *Znak*, No. 5, 1994, pp. 4-14.

¹⁰² H. Juros, "Probateologicznej i etycznej rektury w spólszczych przemianach kulturowych", [An Attempt at Theological and Ethical Interpretation of Contemporary Cultural Transformation] in H. Juros (ed.), *Europa i Kosciól* [Europe and the Church] Warszawa: ATK, 1997, pp. 39-61.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 52f.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁰⁵ T.J. Zielinski, "Jedenczy dwapolskie protestantyzmy? Pytanie o mozliwosc wspólnego swiadcstwa" [One or Two Polish Protestantisms? Question of the Joint Witness], *Mysl Protestantcka*, n. 1, 1999, pp. 8-19.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9f.

¹⁰⁷ In R. Olson, *Historia teologii chrzescijanskiej*. [The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform], ChIB: Warszawa, 2003, p. 637, footnote 2.

¹⁰⁸ T.J. Zielinski, "Jak klasyfikowac Koscioly protestanckie?" [How to Classify Protestant Churches?], *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, n. 2, 1996, p. 64.

¹⁰⁹ For more on this see M. Volf, "Fishing in the Neighbour's Pond: Mission and Proselytism in Eastern Europe", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, Vol. 20, n. 1, 1996, pp. 26-31.

¹¹⁰ K. Karski, "Protestanckie wspólnoty wolnokoscielne" [Protestant Free Church Communities], *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, No. 1, 1995, pp. 37-53.

¹¹¹ T.J. Zielinski, "Jak klasyfikowac Koscioly protestanckie?" [How to Classify Protestant Churches?], *Studia i Dokumenty Ekumeniczne*, n. 2, 1996, p. 62.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 65.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 65f.

¹¹⁴ T. Debowski, *Zarys myslispolecznej Kosciolow protestanckich w Polsce w latach 1945-1995* [An Outline of Social Thought of Protestant Churches in Poland between 1945 and 1995], Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Arboretum, 2002, p. 49ff.

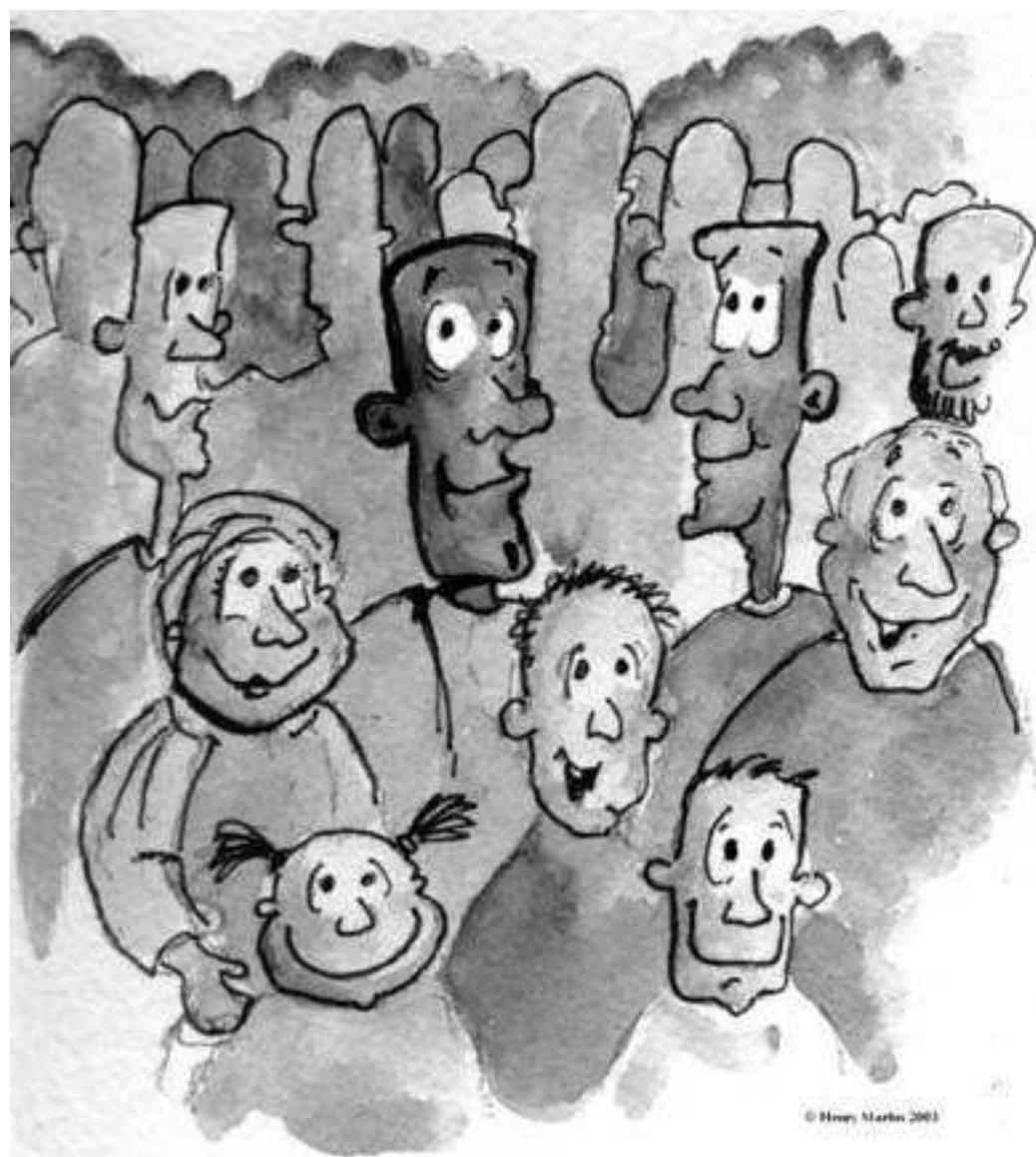
¹¹⁵ K. Wiazowski, *Podstawy naszej wiary* [The Basis of Our Faith] Warszawa: Slovo Prawdy, 1987, p. 24ff.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33ff.

- 117 W. Benedyktowicz, *Co powinniśmy czynić. Zarys ewangelickiej etyki teologicznej* [What Shall We Do? An Outline of Evangelical Theological Ethics], Warszawa: ChAT, 1993, p. 5f.
- 118 *Ibid.*
- 119 D. Willard, "Christ-Centred Piety" in M.A. Noll and R.F. Thiemann (eds.), *Where Shall My Wond'ring Soul Begin? The Landscape of Evangelical Piety and Thought*. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge U.K.: Eerdmans, 2000, pp. 29-35.
- 120 D. Jaura, and J. Kusnierik, *Taboos in the Central and Eastern European Church* [Unpublished SEN Study Paper, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1999], p. 9.
- 121 K. Wiazowski, *Podstawy naszej wiary* [The Basis of our Faith] Warszawa: Slowo Prawdy, 1987, p. 7f.
- 122 K. Wiazowski, *Podstawowe zasady wiary chrześcijańskiej* [Basic Principles of Christian Faith] Warszawa: WBST, 2000, p. 11f.
- 123 *Ibid.*, p. 12.
- 124 W. Niemczyk, *Prolegomena do dogmatyki* [Introduction to Dogmatics], Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Literatury Religijnej, 1960, p. 2f.
- 125 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 126 *Ibid.*, p. 19ff.
- 127 D. Jaura and J. Kusnierik, *Taboos in the Central and Eastern European Church* [Unpublished SEN Study Paper, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1999], p. 13.
- 128 M. Moyle, "Shadows of the Past: The Lingering Effects of the Communist Mindset in the Church and Society", *Transformation*, Vol. 16, n. 1, 1999, p. 18.
- 129 J. Kusnierik, *Evangelicals in Central Europe*, [Unpublished SEN Research Paper, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1999], p. 22.
- 130 B. Milerski, "Religia a kultura" [Religion and Culture], *Rocznik Teologiczny*, n. 1, 1992, pp. 175-91.
- 131 *Ibid.*, p. 179
- 132 *Ibid.*, p. 187f.
- 133 In M. Bochenski, *Theology From Three Worlds: Liberation and Evangelization for the New Europe*, Oxford: Smith & Helwys, 1997, p. xi.
- 134 P. Kuzmic, "The Communist Impact on the Church in Eastern Europe", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 20, n. 1, 1996, p. 70.
- 135 K. Brzechczyn, 1999. "Czy w Polsce istnieje inteligencja ewangelicka?" [Does an Evangelical Intelligentsia Exist in Poland?] in *Mysl Protestantka*, n. 4, pp. 49-52.
- 136 *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- 137 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 138 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 139 T.J. Zielinski, "Ewangelicyzm religia stoi. O religijnej zaangażowaniu polskiej inteligencji protestanckiej" [Evangelicalism and religion: About the Religious Involvement of the Polish Protestant Intelligentsia] in *Mysl Protestantka*, No. 3, 1998, pp. 3-9.
- 140 B. Milerski, "Życie w diasporze. Zagrożenia i szanse w kontekście polskiego protestantyzmu", [Living in diaspora. Dangers and Opportunities of Polish Protestantism]. *Mysl Protestantka*, No. 1, 2002, pp. 3-10.
- 141 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 142 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 143 *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- 144 See B. Milerski, 1998. "Protestantyzm kulturowy a sprawy polski", [Cultural Protestantism and Polish Issues] in *Mysl Protestantka*, No. 2, pp. 3-7.
- 145 T.J. Zielinski, "Hamulce i podniety rozwój ewangelikalizmu polskiego u progu XXI stulecia. Studium o profilu teologiczno-systematycznym" [Checks and Incentives in the Development of Polish Evangelicalism at the Threshold of 21st Century: A Study in a Prism of Systematic Theology], in T.J. Zielinski, ed. *Ewangelikalny protestantyzm w Polsce u progu XX stulecia* [Evangelical Protestantism in Poland on the Threshold of the 21st Century], Warszawa, WBST, 2004, pp. 127-147.
- 146 W. Tasak, "Kompleks polskiego chrześcijanina" [Complexes of a Polish Christian] in *Slowo Prawdy* n.3, 2002, pp. 5-7.
- 147 See M. Patalon, "Postmodernizm - zagrożenie czy wyzwanie?" [Postmodernism – a Danger or a Challenge?], *Mysl Protestantka*, n. 4, 1998, pp. 11-19; M. Patalon, "Postmodern Trends in Communicating Christianity", *Journal of European Baptist Studies*, Vol. 2, n. 1, 2001, pp. 20-32.
- 148 P. Parushev, "East and West: A Theological Conversation", *International Journal of Baptist Studies*, Vol. 1, n. 1, 2000, pp. 31-44.
- 149 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
- 150 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 151 *Ibid.*, p. 34.
- 152 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 153 D. Cosden and D. Fairbairn, "Contextual Theological Education Among Post-Soviet Protestants", *Transformation*, Vol. 18, n. 2, 2001, pp. 125-28.
- 154 *Ibid.*, p. 125.
- 155 *Ibid.*, pp. 125-26.
- 156 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 157 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

- ¹⁵⁸ T.J. Zielinski, "Jedenczydwapolskieprotestantyzmy?Pytanie o mozliwoscwspolnegoswiadectwa" [One or two Polish Protestantisms?Question of the Joint Witness], *MyslProtestancka*, n. 1, 1999, pp. 13f.
- ¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- ¹⁶⁰ P. Kuzmic, "The Communist Impact on the Church in Eastern Europe", *Evangelical Review of Theology*, Vol. 20, n. 1, 1996, p. 66.
- ¹⁶¹ See D.L. Guder, *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2000; C. Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000.
- ¹⁶² I developed this theme further in: W. Kowalewski, "Missiological Challenges in Polish Evangelical Theological Education". In: Peter F. Penner (ed.) *Theological Education as Mission*, Schwarzenfeld: NeufeltVerlag, 2005, pp. 331-43.
- ¹⁶³ W. Kowalewski, "Telling the Story through Word and Deed.From an Eastern Perspective". In: T. Cupit (ed.) *Telling the Story... of Christ the Living Water*, Virginia, 2006.
- ¹⁶⁴ See S.J. Grenz and J.R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Post-Modern Context*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, p. 158f.
- ¹⁶⁵ M. Tomka, 1995. "The Changing Social Role of Religion in Eastern and Central Europe: Religion's Revival and its Contradictions", *Social Compass*, Vol. 42, n. 1, p. 24.
- ¹⁶⁶ It is important to note that an appreciation of 'individuality' does not necessarily entail 'individualism'. Kraus notes that from the theological perspective, while the former focuses on the individual as "a responsible person in community", affirmed in the form and content of covenant, the latter puts great emphasis on "the independence of individuals and their private rights", often grounded in alienation and pride. See N.C. Kraus, *The Community of the Spirit Revised Edition*. Scottsdale: Herald Press, 1993, p. 43.
- ¹⁶⁷ See Ch. Klein, "Turning to God for Renewal in Mission in Central and Eastern Europe", *International Review of Mission* 87, n. 347, 2006, pp. 473-84.
- ¹⁶⁸ W. Hryniewicz, "The Challenge of Our Hope - History and Eschatology: An East European View", *RocznikiTeologiczne*, Vol. XLVII, n. 7, 2000, pp. 93-110.
- ¹⁶⁹ S. Wilkanowicz, "The Problems and Tasks Confronting the Church in Central and Eastern Europe Today", *Religion in Communist Lands*, Vol. 19, nn. 1-2, 1991, p. 36.
- ¹⁷⁰ M. Clegg, *Understanding the times - research into the impact and direction of Christian mission in Post-Communist Central and Eastern Europe at the Turn of the Century* [Unpublished MA in Evangelism Studies Dissertation, University of Sheffield, Cliff College], p. 16.
- ¹⁷¹ P. Parushev, "East and West: A Theological Conversation", *International Journal of Baptist Studies*, Vol. 1, n. 1, 2000, p. 38.
- ¹⁷² T. Debowski, *ZarysmyslipolecznejKosciolowprotestanckich w Polsce w latach 1945-1995* [An Outline of the Social Thought of Polish Protestant Churches between 1945 and 1995], Wroclaw, Wydawnictwo Arboretum, 2002.
- ¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 67ff.
- ¹⁷⁴ For more on this see W. Kowalewski, "Evangelicals and Socio-Political Involvement in Post-Communist Poland" in: P. Prochazka and A. Masarik (eds.), *Increasing Effectiveness of the Evangelical Churches in Slovakia and Poland by Making the Best of Critical Theology*, BanskaBystrica, 2007.

Ref.: *Acta Missiologiae*, Vol.1, 2008 pp.67-89.



SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR 2011

THE ASIAN AMONG US



**Obstacles
and Openings
for Mission
Inter Gentes**

17-21 May 2011

'Casa Divin Maestro' — Ariccia (Rome)