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**BORGO S. SPIRITO, 4 - C.P. 6139 - 00195 ROMA
39-6-687-9283 (fax)**

INTRODUCTION

My first and very happy task, in the name of all Promotio Justitiae readers, is to thank Fr. **Henry Volken** for his tireless contribution to the service of faith and the promotion of justice, during nearly eight years at the Social Secretariat and as editor of PJ. Our Father General Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J., highlighted the "generous service" Henry has given "not only to Jesuits but to many other men and women of the Church through his visits, his speaking and writing," above all through his infectious enthusiasm and hearty encouragement.

Thirty-six years of experience in India before coming to Rome gave Henry "a solid basis for the work he did in and from Rome, serving on the Peace and Justice committee of the Union of Superiors General and as a consultant to the Pontifical Council Cor Unum. At the same time Henry animated regional and provincial efforts at broadening the collaboration among Jesuits and their colleagues working in the field of social justice, and with people from other apostolic sectors."

At the beginning of February, Fr. Volken made a return pilgrimage to India before settling in Switzerland, where his new ministry is directed towards persons working at the United Nations and in various international Non-Governmental Organizations in Geneva. The idea is to create a platform of encounter among friends interested in reflecting on their work and on burning international issues from a perspective of justice spirituality. It will hopefully evolve into a Centre for Faith-Justice, Dialogue and Solidarity. Henry may also work part-time with the Jesuit team in Strasbourg on issues of the European Community. His new address: 14, av. du Mail; CH-1205 Genève, Switzerland.

My second and sad task is to render posthumous homage to Fr. **César Jerez**, a leading social thinker and actor in Central America, Provincial during the most difficult years of 1976-1982 and then Rector of the Central American University in Managua. César was preparing an important international Jesuit seminar on the socio-economic problems facing Latin America in this decade of the fifth centenary, when completely unexpectedly he was struck down by a cerebral haemorrhage and without regaining consciousness died on November 22nd. César's article on the Church's social teaching expresses well his intelligent and passionate commitment to the great poor majority of Latin America.

The third task is to introduce myself, the successor to Frs. Francisco Ivern, Michael Campbell-Johnston and Henry Volken as fourth Secretary for Social Justice at the Jesuit Curia in Rome. A member of the Upper Canada Province, I studied at the University of Chicago and then served for ten years as director of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice in Toronto, and for two years as director of the Human Rights

Institute (IDHUCA) at the University of Central America in El Salvador.

All four articles in this issue of PJ seek to provoke questions about the very changing world in which we are called to proclaim our faith and give an account of our hope. The article of César Jerez makes a critical comparison of two styles of Christian social teaching. An address to the 1991 meeting of the Jesuit *Mission Ouvrière* in France lays out the dramatically-changed conditions of life--and therefore of faith--in industrialized societies. A report from the conference "Taking Sides with the Oppressed" in India raises sticky issues of groups and classes, minority and majority, options and commitments. And finally a letter from Canada underlines the lack of alternatives in economic thinking and confidently asks if the Society could be of help. These are four difficult, even controversial, articles published not for easy assent, but for discussion and disagreement.

In closing, here are some readers' comments on the challenges of this moment in history:

* "As so many of the world's problems are now obviously global, greater collaboration within our global network of social centres is all the more clearly essential."

* "In this day and age, when the Third World is getting less and less attention or respect from the so-called First World, it is important that the Society of Jesus keep the conscience of the First World open to the needs and concerns of the Third World." It is also important "to support the Society of Jesus in its difficult work in the commitment to a faith that does justice."

* "Another worry we have is the problematic around national and international NGOs. They are promoting directions, themes and financing which do not always meet the interests of the poor majority of Brazil. In our activity our chosen priority is contact with the marginalized sectors (the great majority of Brazilians), growing because of the current capitalist policy. From this point of view it is not easy to think up initiatives at the international level. The problem of the foreign debt (and of the continued dependence of Third World countries) continues to be fundamental. It seems to me that in the First World (and also in the Church) there still does not exist an accurate view of this problem. The Society could do more."

As these comments suggest, the writers and readers of Promotio Justitiae are partners in the discernment of God's call to his people, calling each one and each community to contribute to today's history of salvation, of liberation. I very much hope that PJ will become ever more a place (topos) of questioning, exchange and reflection. A practical invitation to dialogue is the addition of PJ's fax number to

the address on the cover. Please write your comment or response and send it, by fax or mail, for inclusion in the next issue.

This article is published posthumously to honour and remember **César Jerez**, S.J. Not necessarily an example of his best thinking, it is a vigorous *cri de coeur* that also serves as a kind of testament. César learned from his great mentor and confidant, Archbishop Romero, that the Christian mission is to accompany the poor and help give voice to the voiceless. In this article he pleads with the whole Church: Look! Listen! not just in one's immediate environment, but also especially there where the vast majorities -- in the Church and in the world -- suffer in silence. When he died César was planning an international seminar (which now bears his name) to study how the current political and economic changes everywhere affect the Society's mission of serving faith and justice throughout Latin America. This article serves to open the discussion at which he will be present in spirit.

**PERSPECTIVES OF
THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHING AND LIBERATION THEOLOGIES
CONCERNING
THE COMMUNION OF GOODS, SOCIALIZATION AND PRIVATE PROPERTY**

César Jerez, S.J.

The following article, *Perspectives of the Church's Social Teaching and of Liberation Theologies concerning the Communion of Goods, Socialization and Private Property*,¹ compares the social teaching of the Church and of liberation theologies. It analyzes the historico-political horizons which condition the propositions of each doctrine, taking three examples. The analysis makes a very general comparison of what the two doctrines contain regarding the sharing of goods, socialization, and private property.

1. Preliminary remarks

1.1. Two possible motivations and two key questions

It would be useful, as an introductory exercise, to try to make explicit the reasons that moved the Center of Concern in Washington and the John XXIII Center in Rio de Janeiro to study the relationship between the social doctrine of the Church and theologies of liberation.

It would not seem a healthy sign if the main motivation were the conviction -- hidden rather than explicit -- that the events of the

¹ DIAKONIA 60 (December 1991), Managua.

last two years on the international scene (especially the collapse of "real socialism" in Eastern Europe and the proclamation of a "new world order" after the swift crushing of the Iraqi challenge) provide proof that the political option of the Church's social doctrine (the condemnation of socialism in itself but in capitalism only the abuses) is more realistic and corresponds better to the aspirations of the poor majorities than the political option shared by liberation theologies (sympathy for the socialist utopia and condemnation of capitalism which historically has been imperialist). This conviction would be no more than a variation on the general argument according to which marxism is obviously useless as a tool for social analysis and as a blueprint for more just societies, and by which same token liberation theologies, having made partial use of this tool for their theological reflection, stand disqualified.

I say this motivation would not be healthy because it takes as solved two problems that really have not been solved. The first consists in the relationship between marxism and liberation theologies. The second, in the relationship between the latter and the processes of liberation from the conditions of misery and death suffered by the poor majorities in the marginalized countries.

It would be healthier and more constructive to base the motivation on the Center of Concern's claim that the social doctrine of the Church is the "hidden treasure" or "buried talent" Peter Henriot spoke about. A treasure for the one who, at odds with the current social order, discovers in that doctrine the programme and creative force for a new social order of human life, supposing that Christian life has recovered the link between faith and life, belief and practice. In this context, the question about the relationship between the Church's social doctrine and liberation theologies would come down to the question, whether the social doctrine of the Church can become a treasure for the followers of Christ who live in the impoverished and exploited South and not only in the wealthy and exploiting North, once the layers of ignorance and neglect accumulated by Christians and non-Christians in both North and South have been successfully removed. That is to say, supposing that liberation theologies have in fact been the treasure discovered by Christians in the South, would not the basic contents of these two bodies of doctrine so tend to coincide that they should not need two different names?

Let us take this second motivation as valid and ask two key questions: 1) How far has the Church's social doctrine, presented as a universally valid perspective for the social order, been irreparably influenced by a eurocentric culture? 2) To what extent are liberation theologies, compared with the Church's culturally conditioned social doctrine, exactly what the latter claims to be, namely: the effort to make Christian hope reasonable and effective for this part of humanity -- in fact the absolute majority -- living and dying, hoping and crying from the

edges of so-called "universal history", the history of Europe and North America?

1.2. Centesimus Annus and eurocentrism

The latest social encyclical may provide a privileged spot from which to analyse the two previous questions. It is clear that Centesimus Annus speaks from and for eurocentric culture. The encyclical, when it is celebrating the centenary of Rerum Novarum and the "new things" of today, seems to consider the real novelties in the world to be the fall of the real socialisms that used to exist in Eastern Europe. These events seem of greater importance than the defeat of the Iraqi challenge and the emergence of a "new world order" with nothing to counterbalance the economic, political and military domination of Europe and North America over the Asiatic, African and Latin-American majorities, impoverished after hundreds of years of pillage and margination.

Eurocentrism, as the dominant ideology and culture of world capitalism, proclaims the following as its values: roots in Christianity; openness, from its earliest Greek origins, to reason, science and technology; attachment to law, from its classical Roman roots, gradually leading to equality of all before the law and to democracy as the political expression of the majority.

It is in this cultural niche that the Catholic Church, as an institution, wants the hidden Christian roots of eurocentrism to become a visible expression in the hierarchy of values of the "new world". This is why Centesimus Annus states many times that the collapse of real socialism is due to the Church's influence. One wonders, however, what influence the Church might have had on Gorbachev, perestroika, glasnost and the new international thinking, and whether it was not the latter that provoked the 1989 crisis of Eastern Europe, with the possible exception of Poland and its Solidarnosc movement.

What is important is not whether the Church is right or not when she states what she states in Centesimus Annus. What is important is that she wants to be right, that she is so influenced by the dominant ideology of world capitalism that she cannot see herself except in the role of a major influential factor in world capitalist society, in a newly sacralized culture.

Liberation theologies for their part might have considered as "new things" the rapid and brutal suppression of the Iraqi challenge, that is, the recourse to war and the manipulation of divisions among Arabs and Moslems, as the most important events in the centenary of Rerum Novarum. They would have unmasked the fallacies of the U.N. "Security Council" when it legitimised that war through the decisive vote of five national powers out of 160. They would have exposed the double standards and unequal manner of putting an end to intervention in the

case of Israel and that of Iraq. They would have denounced the brutal "final solution", during the 1980's, of the "cases" of Grenada, Nicaragua, Panama and El Salvador. They would have tried to interpret present history from the perspective of the three or four billion impoverished and marginalised people in the world. They would, above all, have spoken of one persistent fact: the terrible impoverishment of marginalised peoples during the last ten years and the criminal assault on life that this represents.

I do not think that liberation theologies would have disqualified marxism and socialist utopia so quickly along with real socialism. That is because liberation theologies are more conscious, than is the Church's social doctrine, of the need of analytical mediation and the risk of doctrinaire pragmatism when all such mediations are denied, the liberal as well as the marxist, on account of their inherent deficiencies. Also because they are more conscious of the responsibility entailed in depriving large masses of humanity of any social utopia to sustain their flagging hope. Liberation theologies would have emphasised how important it is that Christian faith become, ever more vigorously, among movements and cultures, the Gospel leaven and lamp, rather than the self-proclaimed standard-bearer of universal culture.

I think that the problem of the relationship between the Church's social doctrine and liberation theologies will be solved as and when the former assimilates and integrates in its doctrinal corpus three well-established conclusions: that the social doctrine of the Church is not a third way between capitalism and socialism (Sollicitudo rei socialis); that the concrete commitments of Christians in history should be left to Christian communities themselves, in communion with their pastors, rather than be set out universally (Octogesima adveniens); that faith has the duty and need to inculturate itself, seeing to it that the Church take flesh and bone in the major social contradictions.

Until this be done, it will not become clear how the social doctrine of the Church can be a "treasure" for a culture that does not absolutely question capitalism but is tainted by its consumerist way of life. Then perhaps, when converging with liberation theologies, it may become fit for transforming social realities into a new civilization of labour and not of capital, of shared austerity and not of unbridled consumerism, offering this same evangelical treasure to the marginalised people as a road towards a future that is different from a past which made, and a present which makes, so many assaults against life.

In short, I submit that the Church's social doctrine expresses the social implications of the Christian faith from a perspective of orthodoxy conditioned by a eurocentric inculturation and assigns to faith a function of cultural hegemony. For their part liberation theologies try to provide a basis for the hope of the poor from the perspective of the orthopraxis and heteropraxis of the Christian communities that journey

on together with the marginalised peoples who hope for the hegemony of the Kingdom of God over the kingdom of this new world order.

2. Communion of goods, socialization and private property

2.1. Communion of goods

As far as I know, the social doctrine of the Church does not treat the communion of goods as such but proposes the universal purpose or destiny of the goods of the earth. It is a generic and abstract approach, lacking the clarity and force of the concrete formulations of the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

The biblical roots of the doctrine of the universal destiny of goods are to be found in the order given by the Creator to the human couple, to subdue the earth and put it at the service of life. The foundation of the communion of goods may be found in the dynamics of the Kingdom promoted by the Spirit of a man, Jesus, who came into history "that we may have life, life in abundance".² This Spirit urges and teaches us to live without anxiously hoarding for the morrow, placing our trust in a God who wants us to live, while our daily task is to work, seeking the justice of the Kingdom above all else. This Spirit gathers the community for communion, celebrating the Eucharist in remembrance of Jesus, who broke bread with his followers, in anticipation of giving over his life.

Three attitudes in the following of Jesus:

- * the identification between Jesus and Life, that is, the absolute priority of life;
 - * the call to work for life, without worrying about hoarding and with trust in the Father's provident love;
 - * the gift of one's own life for others and the breaking of bread as the roots of the human community;
- these are three attitudes in the following of Jesus yet to be embodied in the formulations of the social doctrine of the Church.

The communion of goods is, first of all, a Christian ideal: what the following of Jesus points towards as the way to handle riches. It is also a radical value: only by sharing goods can we live humanly our relationship with goods, that is with riches. It is a criterion (the Christian criterion) of true religion: there can be no religion where there is no care to express love through sharing of goods. Lastly, it is a way of reaching equality through solidarity, as Paul puts it to the Corinthians when he exhorts them to help maintain the impoverished Jerusalem community out of their materially privileged position. In this sense, the communion of goods comes up in the Acts of the Apostles, not as a passing practice of most early Christian commu-

² John 10:10.

nities, but as an historic anticipation of the Kingdom, the realization of an ideal that gave the measure of their following of Jesus. But there are specialists on the social doctrine of the Church who think that this ideal is not normative and that it failed because it was too utopian.

2.2. Socialization

The first time the word "socialization" comes up in official Church documents is in John XXIII's encyclical Mater et Magistra. It refers clearly to the increase of social relationships among persons and the growth of their social affiliations (trade unions, leagues, ethnic movements, women's groups, human rights organizations, etc.). It is significant that the Pope had to declare this development as fundamentally good. It means that, in the framework of the social doctrine of the Church, the individual person is the subject: it is the possession of individual personhood which assures the self-sufficient security not to have to worry too much about social interdependences with many other individuals. Yet the social doctrine of the Church had already spoken (Pius XI, Quadragesimo anno) of "intermediate bodies" in society and of the Christian need for them. Since these "intermediate bodies" are a replica of the guilds, of corporative organizations, it becomes evident that the social doctrine of the Church has difficulty not only in transcending its eurocentric conditioning, but even in leaving behind medieval (guild) Christianity as the prototype of a society shaped upon the Gospel.

According to our liberation theologies, any talk about socialization must be based on an analysis of social relationships from the point of view of the poor. This in turn leads at once to the study of popular organizations with their increasing tendency to overcome avantgardism and bureaucratism in favour of real participative democracy at the grassroots level. For these theologies, the increase in social relationships entails a transformation of power relationships so that power is not exercised as the privilege of élites but as the responsibility of service of a new historical subject, increasingly identified with what we have come to call "the people".

2.3. Private property

In the social doctrine of the Church, precisely on account of its eurocentric conditioning, private property appears, by and large, as the only element that ensures the autonomy of the human person and guarantees the liberty exercised in the economy of the market. Only the encyclical Laborem exercens escapes from this framework when it values economy's final dimension, i.e. the superiority of life and the building up of life in solidarity, as being above the institution of the economy and its intrinsic logic. This encyclical avoids the blind alley of the opposition between capital and labour by assuming that this opposition is neutralized in the service that both capital and

labour are called to render to human beings, who are the only masters of history. It also overcomes the opposition between market and planning, orienting both to serve production for the life of human beings. Accordingly, in this encyclical as well, loyalty to the principles issued by Church authority ceases to be the criterion of Christian certainty in social action. The criterion is that room must be made for the life of the impoverished and marginalised majorities. Which is also why the encyclical states that the Church is verified as Christ's own, only when it is the Church of the poor.³

So, then, from our historical position of marginality, the theologies of liberation hold that private property must descend from the sacred pedestal on which it was placed by a Church doctrine that was inculturated exclusively in capitalism. As Ignacio Ellacuría would have said, we must analyse what the idea of private property has provided historically, in our context. It has certainly not ensured people's liberty in a market economy, but only the liberty of a minority and the oppression of the majority. Does this mean that private property must be banned from the design of a better society? Not necessarily. But new social, economic, cultural and power structures must be sought so that the goods needed by millions for their sustenance may be distributed with more solidarity and appropriated more equitably. And just as the social appropriation of power does not mean the dictatorship of the majority but a deeper grassroot democracy, so too social appropriation of goods does not mean state ownership or forced collectivization but a broader idea of property; a relativizing of the market; experimental forms of property, coexisting and complementing one another; and always the exercise of freedom and solidarity in the human shaping of economy.

Property, as the attribute of a free agent whose capacity to establish democratic relationships of social solidarity has increased in our times, may stimulate productivity in a new culture of labour that once again links the laborious and creative production of life at its roots: service to the life of human beings. This ethico-political redefinition might give back to consumer societies not only the austerity needed to avoid the hoarding of luxury goods, but, more pertinently, the joy of using their goods to celebrate the service of life and the joy of being

³ *Laborem Exercens* N° 8: In order to achieve social justice in the various parts of the world, in the various countries, and in the relationships between them, there is a need for ever new *movements of solidarity of the workers and with the workers*. This solidarity must be present whenever it is called for by the social degrading of the subject of work, by exploitation of the workers, and by the growing areas of poverty and even hunger. The Church is firmly committed to this cause, for she considers it her mission, her service, a proof of her fidelity to Christ, so that she can truly be the "Church of the poor".

free from the vicious circle of artificial needs. For an optimistic realism, would this be asking too much?

On the contrary, Centesimus annus speaks as though the poor were again an appendix, when the encyclical draws a distinction between savage and civilized capitalism. It remarks that the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe should not make the West triumphalistic; but this hardly seems feasible if the vision of history continues to be centred in the heart of Europe, where a minority of humanity lives. Little wonder that market economy, the latest expression of private property, is once again praised, in some nuanced way it is true, but without suggesting the necessary exercise of planning to counterbalance the radically selfish bias of the market with the needs of the majority.

I fear that Centesimus annus does not reflect the Gospel emphasis on service to humankind and human life, especially to those marginalised by the world economy and by their national economies. Liberation theologies for their part conclude that it is necessary to keep saying No to the powerful and resist their arrogant power, and that it is necessary to keep throwing in our lot, now more than ever, with the lot of the life of the poor.

TO HUMANIZE AND TO EVANGELIZE⁴

Jean Désigaux, S.J.

The choice of the topic of our meeting, *Humanization and Evangelization*, is linked with three questions that have been put to us. They are, chronologically:

* When we held our last European meeting, Philippe Leroy, the delegate of the Secretariat for *Mission Ouvrière*, pointed out that we spoke of humanization rather than evangelization; that we did not succeed in articulating the hope and anticipation (*espoir et espérance*) which the proclamation of the Good News calls for; that we felt no need for members other than those belonging to the social sector; in short, the question of our openness towards movements in the Church.⁵

⁴ Introduction to the national meeting of the Jesuit *Mission Ouvrière* (MOSJ) at Aix-en-Provence, August 22, 1991.

⁵ *Lettre des Jésuites en Mission ouvrière*, N° 142, pp. 37-39.

* The evaluation we made last year pointed out certain gaps in our links with local churches and church movements,⁶ and the Provincial wanted us to study this topic among others.⁷

* Our reflection during this year of the Ignatian anniversaries seemed to foster a mood for evangelical reflection.

We have asked Michel Rondet to help us reflect starting from our own experience, bringing us the trained view of a theologian strongly committed to religious life and in touch with the dioceses.

The programme of the session shows the progression well: we start from the sociological data of our situation and, at a second stage, try to grasp the evangelical and ecclesiological aspects that emerge. It is at this point that Michel Rondet will help us on the one hand to go beyond our particular experience to place it in the Church, and on the other to confront us with a few challenges so that we may better meet the needs of the Church of today.

We often experience difficulties, to put it briefly, in moving from the narrative level to that of the expression of the faith, or from sociological analysis to theological reflection. I think that at Sète et Soisy⁸ this passage was made easier since the first stage -- that of the narrative -- took the form of a meditation on the Incarnation. In what follows, I shall place myself in this perspective: I shall not do the work of the session, but just take stock of the situation: the evolution of society according to the slightly artificial differences (work, daily life, civil and religious commitments) we have observed for more than ten years. Taking off from a concrete fact, I shall try -- in each case -- to arrive at the new type of human being which seems to emerge and to suggest the consequences that follow on the religious plane.

1. Work

The pattern of work has experienced vast transformations during the century that is ending. The most noteworthy point is certainly the reduced place of the human -- in time -- in work processes, with the consequence of exclusion as a result. We have often paid attention to this aspect;⁹ I would therefore like to insist on a point that I

⁶ N° 145, p. 7.

⁷ N° 146, p. 2.

⁸ N° 147, p. 27; N° 148, pp. 9-10.

⁹ Various issues of *Lettre des Jésuites en Mission ouvrière* touch on this.

consider important for the topic we are tackling and which has been given scant attention, namely, the consequences of the rapidity of these transformations in relation to the transmission of knowledge.

1a) One example:

In the span of eight years (1984 to 1991), a spring manufacturing company leapt from a home industry with six employees to an industrial undertaking of international dimensions with 25 employees, computerized in its dealings with its clients (through third parties). The technology has totally changed in less than one generation. The artisan has had to learn from his own children how to get ahead.

Those in their eighties or older have seen the advent of running water, gas, electricity, automobiles; they have watched the arrival of telephones, television, airplanes, rockets, computers; they see genetic engineering developing; they learn -- and their children will learn -- from the following generations how things work.

1b) This has transformed man. The transmission of knowledge no longer passes from parent to child, as happened until now; consequently both parents and children have lost their moorings. I believe in the impact of the use of technology on the way we think, and so I should like to point out what changes I perceive as having taken place during the last hundred years:

At the beginning of the century, the growth of various networks ushered in a period of close interdependence: through the means of transportation (railways, roads, highways), lines and pipes for the transmission of energy (water, gas, electricity) and communication (telephone, radio, television, etc.), but also for the disposal of refuse (dumps). This interdependence goes hand in hand with democracy and socialism. (My purpose is not to give a lesson in philosophy or to promote one or other dialectic; I am sticking to well-established facts.)

What characterizes the end of the century seems to be linked with the real widespread use of computerization and what this allows (the thyristor, the binary calculation, in short the "all or nothing"). These techniques allow no room for the lack of knowledge: either something has been foreseen, or it has not; a dualism follows. Groups can certainly be handled, but as the sum of individuals. In principle they are dealt with as individuals in terms of duality. The one who holds the key knows everything, since all the cases have been foreseen; the one who lacks it becomes an idiot.

I seem to discover these same characteristics in the functioning of society: individualism, dualism, manichaeism; a return to absolutism as far as power (both political and economic) is concerned, the dictatorship of those who possess the words to name things.

It seems to me that we can escape neither this dualisation linked with computer technology nor the socialization connected with the concrete networks of interdependence, and we shall have to learn to live with it, that is to say, take into account both the interdependence and the dualisation.

1c) On the religious level, these three points -- change in the transmission of knowledge, interdependence and dualism -- have their consequences on various levels:

* First of all, hearing the word cannot be envisaged without taking into account the change in the transmission of knowledge.

* On another level, the interdependence that has found expression in the Society in GC 32's *Faith and Justice* seems to me a rather inescapable path, happily so, but one in which we have to put all our forces because a struggle is beginning to be waged with another path, equally inescapable and equally subject to dualism, the one whose religious expression is the *Preferential Option for the Poor*. I think it is important that we be aware of how deeply rooted these tendencies are in our society so that we do not back down when confronted with the difficulties entailed in the promotion of justice, which concerns also the justice of God.

2. Daily life

The important changes in daily life are, it seems to me, connected with the structuring of the space afforded by the means of communication and by urbanisation (diversification of places of work, of residence, of shopping, of leisure), as well as with the structuring of time through education, holidays and retirement. A different type of human being has emerged, again with consequences at the religious level.

2a) The other end of the world is physically present in populations of foreign origin, especially in popular neighbourhoods (immigrants, refugees from various continents); there are frequent exchanges (school tours to North Africa and the Middle East), and even lower middle-class children spend their holidays on other continents.

A sample of world events is instantly seen on the television screen in every family's living room. Our planet has become a village. But despite -- or precisely because of -- so many images, being informed is not structured as knowledge.

The diversification of places carries with it the separation of different populations who meet but little, and an increase of the time spent in travelling and of general fatigue.

The separation into age groups is well known to merchants, who organize their sales around the young and the third age. Even if the family does well, this separation is inescapable, I think, for the reasons I have mentioned.

The young go to school longer and longer; work previously done by illiterate, then by poorly qualified personnel, will in the future be done by graduates. This radically transforms the relationship to one's work, but it also poses the future problem of those who fail and find no place in society. The lack of moorings, the stress and the loneliness lead a non-negligible part of the population to commit suicide.

2b) The separation and mixture of populations create new groupings. The adaptation of foreign populations to European culture is an established fact I need not discuss. But the behavioural pattern of the poorer classes, those with limited resources, has a tendency to follow the cultures of non-industrialized countries, simply in order to survive: low outlay in daily life, occasional extraordinary expenditures. On the positive side, there is a life style which we in our industrialized countries can accept from our non-industrialized partners, this could be in reciprocity for what the West contributes!

The visibility of the media creates a gap between those who "make" the news and those who watch it. The numerous attempts at getting the man in the street to participate in the programmes do not alter this separation; rather they underline it by the ridiculous character of the games to which he is "admitted".

The isolation of the young from their families, other generations and the world of labour, is as strong in my opinion as the winning love of the family, a place of security in the absence of other moorings. The young will find their own moorings, but they need the witness of persons whose social role is not to solve the problems of youth, a witness that leaves room for their own adaptation; else they remain prey to a host of forces, religious ones included.

2c) The felt need of presence, proximity and closeness has direct consequences in the concept of the proclamation of the Good News: no longer to convey something received in advance and from afar, but to recognise it where it is found, and to proclaim it. This, I think, is far more in conformity with the announcement of a living God today. There is a corollary in the recognition of other cultures: recognising what is good in other religions (atheisms included), just as Jesus recognised the faith of the Samaritan woman, the Syrophenician and many others.

In the gap between those who make the news and those who consume it, two risks become apparent: on the one hand the adulation of the news-makers, and on the other the insignificance of the media

superstructure, which may be ideological. We should take this into account when we use the media for evangelization. For Christianity to make sense, there must be a social fabric at the grassroots level which testifies to the truth in daily life of what distant voices proclaim. This requires a certain living-with.

3. Civil and religious commitments

3a) A phenomenon we notice in several sectors of society (trade unions, electoral preferences) is the unwillingness to commit oneself for long. Mobilization takes place in the image of the media which look for events which just happen (Telethon, Armenia, a pilgrimage to Czestochova). I think that avoiding long-term commitments has to do with the absence of moorings. The lack of long-term commitments also favours the holding onto power (not always enlightened) on the part of those in authority, without care for interests other than their own.

There is also a diversity in the places of commitment: work (trade unions), home (tenants or neighbourhood or consumers associations), environment (ecology), international problems (Third World).

3b) Society cannot function without the formation of currents of ideas, translated into structural facts. It is important to move on the level of structures and not only existing ones, but also to contribute to the creation of adequate structures. My own experience prompts me to mention two places that respond to problems previously mentioned and to which a structured response begins to be given. They are:

i. Learning through work (apprenticeship); whether for people who have long had difficulty entering the workforce because of the bias of companies, or for the young trained in work-study programmes, or the development of on-the-job training.

ii. School or university follow-up that does not duplicate the work of the school or the faculty, but orients the child and opens him up to the world, terms which the family today cannot face in most cases -- and not just poorer families. This requires something more than school; certain social actors are beginning to understand this point.

3c) On the religious level, people can ill bear the difficulty of a long-term commitment and/or the absence of moorings. In order not to bear these burdens there may be the tendency to return to the religion of one's childhood, or to accept the proposals of various sects. Going in this direction does not take the problems we have touched upon into account. I think it is important to overcome this tendency to withdraw, because there is meaning only in building up: we have to disavow idols that are our representations of God, even if they are modelled on the man Jesus Christ. The One we have to proclaim is the living Christ, whose sufferings and wounds today are those of our society, of our world.

In conclusion

Meditation on what happened in the 16th century when Ignatius of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus leads me to interpret my own experience as follows: in that period of deep transformations, of moving from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance, Ignatius had insights based on his spiritual experience, which proved so relevant that civic and religious authorities gave him the means to put them into practice. Not without difficulties.

Ours, too, is a fascinating period of history. In some respects we want to respond to the questions that are being put to us. Let us not squander the insights that led to the foundation of the Jesuit *Mission Ouvrière*, but -- strengthened by our spiritual experience -- let us learn how to grapple realistically with the difficulties of our time.

TAKING SIDES WITH THE OPPRESSED

Vincent Mookan, S.J.

The twelfth Convention of Jesuits in Social Action in South Asia (JESA) was held in August 1991 at Bangalore on the theme "Taking Sides with the Oppressed". Each of eighteen Provinces or Regions of the Assistancy nominated four Jesuits: two Social Activists and two from other ministries such as Pastoral Ministry, Formation, Education, Communication. The presence of non-Jesuit, non-Christian activists and resource persons was a new feature of this Convention, and a few Jesuits as special invitees also enriched the deliberation.

Dr. Sebastian Kappan, S.J., the well known Indian liberation theologian, lighted the lamp. In his inaugural address he placed before the gathering some of the crucial issues currently agitating his mind. He invited the group to a radical self-criticism, a criticism of our own theories and practice lest we devote our whole life to a wrong cause.

He referred to ecological disasters, our commitment to gender equality versus a highly patriarchal theology, and the phenomenon of religious fundamentalism. Dr. Kappan described the emergence of sub-nationalism in Assam, Kashmir, Punjab and the Jarkhand as inadequate responses to internal imperialism. He called for a re-thinking of the colonial concept of development in order to make it indigenous to India. He concluded by questioning the dialectic materialism of Marx and the practice of international communism.

Fr. Tom Kocheri, Convenor, National Fishermen's Forum, delivered the key-note address on "The Challenges of Taking Sides with the Oppressed". He reminded the audience that aggression and violence were built into an inequitable system and legitimized by vested interests. Fighting the oppressive structures was a long drawn-out battle between unequals.

Sr. Alice Lukos, activist engaged in the fishermen's struggle, outlined the problems of fisherfolk in the country, the strategy they followed in their struggles, and her personal experiences in it. She said that the fisherfolk used "people's struggles as a methodology of liberative action" which in turn increased their self-respect and self-confidence. She said it was a revelation to her that "organized religion could not be counted upon to take sides unambiguously with the oppressed."

Dr. Jose Kananaikal, S.J., Dalit Leader and Director of Programmes for Scheduled Castes at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, highlighted the awakening of the dalit masses and the consequent atrocities committed upon them by the upper castes. ("Dalit" means "oppressed," is used synonymously for the scheduled castes.) He called for dalit unity cutting across sub-castes and religious affiliations. He invited the Church bodies to openly support the dalit cause.

Dr. Antony Raj, S.J., Convenor, Dalit Christian Liberation Movement, stated that 70 percent of the Catholic population in Tamil Nadu is dalit, but is ruled by a minority non-dalit hierarchy. This is against any democratic norm, and he called for a protracted struggle to secure a proportionate share in the power and resources of the Church. He said that their fight was for human dignity which was denied them even in the Church today.

Josna and Meghraj, activists from Bihar representing the tribal interests, highlighted the plight of the tribals who are increasingly being dispossessed in the name of development and ecology, and called for unity and organization to safeguard their traditional means of livelihood.

The small groups reflected on their experience in "Taking Sides with the Oppressed" and came back to the assembly with a request for greater clarification of the concepts involved in taking sides; they made reference to the type of obstacles encountered. Need was felt for more discussion on strategies to be followed while taking sides with the oppressed.

At this stage came the panel of three resource persons: first, Dr. Ghanshyam Shah, a sociologist, clarified the concept of development. It should be people-oriented and empower them. They should be involved at all levels of decision making, and this is "power to the people".

Making a distinction between social work and social action, Dr. Shah observed that the former tries to ameliorate people's sufferings. It aims at providing what is lacking. By contrast, struggle is the essence of social action, which disrupts, disturbs the peace and the status quo. He then referred to two types of social action.

The first is social action on certain issues, for example, shortage of water. People struggle for it and obtain more water. Once the aim is achieved, the struggle is called off.

The other type of social action uses an issue to conscientize people by exploring the deeper structural relationships behind the problem, relating it to larger issues such as production relationships, the decision-making processes, the nature of the state, etc. When social action is practised at this level, it becomes political.

Dr. Abraham Arookuzhil, a dalit theologian, discussing the role of religion in people's movements, felt that it could at times be a help when it promotes counter-culture, at times a hindrance when it promotes dominant culture. Religion as a social entity has structures and a value system, both of which, he stated, are ambivalent. Church structures, he felt, are controlled by the dominant group, like in any other organization.

While outlining a strategy of action for the Jesuits in taking sides with the oppressed, Shri Pradeep Prabhu, a political analyst, was of the opinion that the Jesuit organization belongs to the propertied class. It has power and access to power. The material conditions of Jesuits' existence determine their position. Therefore, the scope and extent of their taking sides with the non-propertied class is severely curtailed. He felt that relief and reconstruction, development and charity, were perfectly compatible with the position of the bourgeois class.

However, Shri Prabhu said, there is something called bourgeois liberalism; people use revolutionary language and radical talk. He felt that G.C. 32 and its 4th Decree were one such exercise. While using radical rhetoric, certain allowance has to be made for individuals who take this language seriously, and the organization has to tolerate them. If the leadership is liberal, those creating disturbances will be tolerated, but to a safe degree. This is how, in his opinion, the Jesuit institution functions.

On the basis of their insights the participants were asked to draw up action-orientations in terms of dalit/tribal options:

- (1) Empowering the oppressed as the main aim of all our involvements.
- (2) Through self-awareness, promoting self dignity and self-respect.

- (3) Organizing the oppressed to fight injustice and domination.
- (4) Collaborating with other oppressed groups, cutting across caste and religion.
- (5) Efforts at greater identification with the oppressed.
- (6) Much more serious study to be done on the history, culture, socio-economic and political situation of oppressed groups.
- (7) The Jesuits should make 'taking sides with the oppressed' their first priority in policy, decisions, formation and allocation of personnel and resources.

The Convention came to a close summing up unanimously the sentiments of the Jesuit participants in the following words:

"Faced with the brokenness of humanity around us, we the 84 Jesuits representing all the ministries gathered at the JESA convention feel the urgency to take sides with the oppressed, specifically women, dalits, tribals and victims of various ethnic conflicts in our Assisnancy.

"For us, taking sides means to be one with the oppressed in their struggles and to make their cause ours. This, we realise, calls for understanding reality from their perspective, sharing our resources and initiating necessary changes in our standard of life and our works.

"In this corporate effort which has a political dimension, we follow Jesus, the liberator, who took the side of the oppressed, risking his life. As we enter into the 'decade of dalits', we too are challenged to risk our lives in the struggles of our people."

WHAT ABOUT ALTERNATIVES?

A Letter

A professor of political science, a specialist in issues of social change in Latin America, wrote the Editor a long, thoughtful letter which raises important questions about what direction Jesuit thinking and action ought to take. The following excerpt maintains the personal writing style of the original letter:

Toronto, January, 1992

... The state of the world, as you know, is very worrisome--deepening global "recession", a possible nuclear Islamic federation in the works, wars in what used to be the Soviet bloc, just to name a few of the worries. Here in Canada too, the trends are very disquieting, with the increasing numbers of layoffs, closures of plants, and cutbacks on social services. I really fear that Canada will become more and more "Americanized"; I am referring to the worst of both the United States and our neighbours further south. Having recently visited New York, Philadelphia and Washington, I was shocked with the urban decay of that great neighbour...although I know about it in the abstract, experiencing it was fearsome.

In addition to my personal concerns, this all relates to the invitation that I received from Ted Hyland¹⁰ to participate in some sessions concerning the future work of the Jesuits, and I would like to relay some preoccupations and ideas in that regard to you also.

I am increasingly impressed by the fact that, although we (meaning the Church, NGO's, human rights sector) do excellent work on social justice issues (and I do think that we do well and have impact in that area), we have very little to say about feasible economic alternatives. We are in perplexing situations: a government like Bob Rae's¹¹ both alienates much of the private sector and yet carries out much of the structural adjustment package that the corporate sector in particular demands and that we criticize. Of course, he does not have many alternatives since, after all, economic policy is set by the Federal government. But here we are, with the question of ALTERNATIVES!

I was faced with that question again, explicitly, as posed by a representative of the corporate sector after I had given a lecture to a group of International Business Students¹² on his invitation. He describes himself as a man who is right of centre; he is in his sixties, of Scandinavian origin, and has been a manager of Latin American operations with two Canadian multinationals. Whatever his politics, he is also intelligent, cultured (even reads novels by the likes of García Márquez), and open-minded. I find conversation with him easy despite the fact that we disagree, let us say, quite often. And he is no fool, commenting, among other things, on the madness of the Polish government which is trying to privatize thousands of enterprises in two years when Margaret Thatcher privatized twelve in ten years.

¹⁰ Director of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice, Toronto.

¹¹ The social democrat government of the Province of Ontario.

¹² A specialization in the Faculty of Business Administration.

Most importantly, my businessman/professor colleague shares a concern for social conditions and maintaining employment, and he thinks that that is where the structural adjustment package will lead, although he seems to have some doubts about it and certainly always asks me about what is the alternative policy package that my kind have in mind. And he does ask sincerely: he wants to discuss ALTERNATIVES that can satisfy the private sector and maintain or improve social conditions.

Recently we had a conference on critical perspectives on North American Free trade, with the participation of people from the union movement, both critical and establishment types, and various positions from Mexico and the United States. The papers will be published by St. Martin's Press later this year and, hopefully, will provoke much debate and also thought about alternatives (there is the word again).

Over the past two years, I have been making a pest of myself talking about our need for economic literacy so that we don't get laughed out of court. I have been reading as much as I can on economic development in the third world (Canada may soon join it), foreign trade, open and closed economies, Alec Nove's The Economics of a Feasible Socialism, on Mondragon.... And it occurs to me that someone should bring together a group of progressive and experienced economists to work on cogent alternatives that allow us to address the concerns of both labour and business.

I know that this may appear hair-brained (different countries have different problems, and the ultimate problems are political, etcetera). But there are common issues in this global economy, and I feel that something has to be done in this regard. The economic thinkers who could do it should be: recognized in the profession as top notch, but not necessarily conventional; in addition, socially concerned; and experienced in grappling with concrete policy in different countries.

Could not some kind of an alternative manifesto (well-grounded in experience and technical knowledge) be worked out and popularized to counteract the Milton Friedmans and the Jeffrey Sachs? Business won't do it; labour won't do it either, because it is too caught up in the old system and its defense; the governments we have around us won't listen to the economists I've described, although some U.N. agencies seek them out. Could we not sponsor an alternative of the Christian churches and

civic organizations, based on the work and thinking of such economists? -- in fact, prepared by them in consultation with people like you? Could you give it some thought? How might something like the above be done? If the Jesuits are thinking of new lines of action, might not this be one? And a critical one at that.

NEWS

1) Audiprol's new video, "Contemplativos en la acción," is based on work for faith and justice. It's available in various systems (VHS, BETA, PAL, SECAM, NTSC) for Pta. 4,000. To order it, or to obtain more information, contact Vicente Pascual, S.J., at Audiprol; Maldonado, 1-A; 28006 Madrid, Spain.

2) The Von Nell-Breuning Summer School on Social Ethics and Social Justice, will be held at Berlin-Biesdorf, Germany, July 22 - August 6, 1992. The seminar, on the recent important changes in industrialized societies, is being offered for twenty-five students from East and West Europe. For more information, contact the organizer, Eduard Kimman, S.J., at Amaliastraat 13, 2514 JC's-Gravenhage, The Netherlands (telephone 070-363-6932, fax 070-356-2645).

3) An interdisciplinary seminar will be held to study the effects of the liberal market economic model: how do the new world situation and the socio-economic prospects for Latin America point towards new tasks of justice? The seminar, named in honour of César Jerez, is to be held in Bogotá July 6-11, 1992. For more information contact Francisco de Roux, S.J., at CINEP; Apartado 25 916; Bogotá 1, D.E., Colombia.

4) The prospects for developing countries changed fundamentally during the 1980s, according to a new policy document issued by the Netherlands government. A World of Difference analyzes the major changes under three headings:

- changing ideological frontiers in a post-Cold War world, which could give rise to new confrontations between North and South;
- greater risks, because of the increased vulnerability of the environment and the global scale of ecological problems; and
- narrower margins for national policy because of the increasing interdependence of countries in economic, social and ecological terms.

(The 340-page document itself, or information on how to obtain it in English or French, is available at the Netherlands Embassy or Consulate).

5) Please do not hesitate to mail or fax your comments, questions and suggestions to Promotio Justitiae for inclusion in the next issue.

EDITOR: Michael Czerny, S.J.