PROMOTIO JUSTITIAE

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IN THIS ISSUE

INTRODUCTION

Post-modernity claims that the big picture cannot be grasped, much less acted upon. Somewhat in defiance, the first tabloid's *Composition of Place* does try

> to shed light on the local situation **and** to situate the local circumstances in their global context. It glances at recent history, current situation, probable trends in a very summary way. It takes economic and political factors into account, and also social, cultural and religious ones ... both creative and destructive forces ... in order to characterize the world and Church within which the Society responds to the call of Christ.[1]

The *Composition* is a prelude; it neither judges which problems are most important, nor establishes any apostolic priorities. It means to situate us vis-à-vis what is going on and what God is doing in our world, so that freer and better-informed discernment might take place. Non-Jesuits have found the *Composition* helpful, too, for example, the general chapter of the Little Sisters of Jesus, or a day-long workshop on social analysis and human development in Malta. At the Study Days on Human Development in Manila (May, 1993), Jesuits of the South-East Asian Assistancy focused the *Composition* on their area, as the first article reports.

In *PJ* n° 54, Gabino Uríbarri, S.J. (TOL), raises vigorous questions about our **mysticism**, which Fr. Segundo Galilea, a Chilean theologian of the Santiago archdiocese, complements in looking back over a quarter-century since Vatican II and urging, "Let God be God." Amen! The commentary of Martin Royackers, S.J. (CSU), suggests another interesting approach to the Uríbarri thesis.

In August 1992 the Jesuit *Mission Ouvrière* (MO) or worker priests held their fourth European meeting at Heverlee, Belgium, entitled "A Vision for the Near Future". Josep Miralles, S.J. (TAR), was given the major question, "What social movement is taking shape in Europe?" He answered with much analytic and pastoral insight in describing the truly difficult conditions the MO confronts in carrying out integral evangelization — re-evangelization, some say — in Europe.[2] Miralles' excellent analysis is a model introduction to apostolic discernment and planning for our mission in industrially-developed societies. The fact that one or two points of an August 1992 talk already seem out of date only verifies our impression that the rapidity of change is itself a bewildering new factor to deal with.

The problematic unpacked by Miralles reminds us of similar questions — what economic movement is taking shape in Latin America, and with what social effects? — asked in a different

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[1] First tabloid, p. 1; Essay 1, n° 1.2.2.

[2] The *Mission Ouvrière* was also treated by Pierre Martinot-Lagarde, S.J., "The Promotion of Justice" (*PJ* n° 53), especially § 3 and § 4; by Noël Barré, S.J., "Re-Reading Catholic Social Teaching" (*PJ* n° 51), and by Jean Désigaux, S.J., "To Humanize and to Evangelize" (*PJ* n° 49). The past experiences of the MO and questions raised in these articles shed much light on current issues of faith and culture, justice and dialogue, essential for our apostolic renewal.

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context at the International Seminar César Jerez (Colombia, July 1992).[3] But it is probably still too early to expect synthetic and systematic answers. We're back to our *composition of place* in point form!

Chris Moss, S.J. (BRI), reports the recent *Jesuits in Science* discussion of the vocation of the scientist (as such, plus Jesuit), and adds his own concern about the hegemony of a reductionist scientific view, connected with an exploitative economic order. To be read in connection with Miralles (§§ 2.1 and 2.2) on science as "photograph of reality", isn't it?

If you are struck by the ideas in an article, letter or commentary, or if you have something to contribute to the themes in **Challenges of Mission today to our** *Minima Societas* **and The Society Facing Challenges of Mission today,**[4] your brief response is very welcome. To send a letter to *PJ* for inclusion in a future issue, please use the address or fax number on the cover, or send it by electronic mail[5] to czerny@geo2.geonet.de

The Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) publishes *Promotio Justitiae* in English, French and Spanish. If you are interested in receiving *PJ*, you need only make your request to Father Socius of your Province, while non-Jesuits please send your mailing-address (indicating the language of your choice) to the Editor.

Let the joy of Easter make our prayer more fervent, more urgent, more missionary:

> Lord Jesus,
> have us be faithful to the mind of Ignatius
> and magnanimous as with eyes of faith
> we regard the world,
> its new needs and new aspirations.
> Make us prompt and diligent
> in fulfilling the mission
> on which you send us today:
> to preach you, the Crucified and Risen One,
> for the glory of our Father
> "and the good of the universal Church."

Editor: Michael Czerny, S.J.

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[3] A synthesis of the proceedings along with the papers presented at the seminar have been published as *Neoliberales y Pobres: El debate continental por la justicia*, Santafé de Bogotá: CINEP, 1993, pp. 600. For more information write to CINEP, Carrera 5ª nº 33A-08, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia.

[4] The preparatory essays are published by the Secretariat for Ignatian Spirituality (Rome) as "The Jesuits: Towards GC 34," *CIS* 25:1 (1994).

[5] Re the nascent Jesuit e-mail network, see *SJ News & Features* 21:6 (Nov-Dec 1993).

COMPOSITION of PLACE:
EAST ASIAN ASSISTANCY

At the Study Days on Human Development in Manila (May 10-14, 1993), twenty-five Jesuits from ten countries of East Asia used the first Tabloid in the following way.

(i) Each participant prayerfully considered the following four sections of the first Tabloid: *Composition of Place, World in Shadows, World of Light,* and *Utopia,* and identified three items which to him seemed truest, most relevant or significant in his own area or region.

(ii) The Jesuits got together according to their Province and pooled their choices, agreeing on the three factors or items most true and relevant in their Province. They were free to add something if it seemed missing from the tabloid.

(iii) On returning to the plenary session, each Province briefly presented the items chosen and explained why. This gave a magnificent overview of the **variety** of situations within the Assistancy.

(iv) A group of three then "distilled" all the items into the following broader regional trends:

SHADOWS

1. The present regional economic boom gives rise to the exploitation of labour and the environment. The difficulties of becoming more urban societies are compounded by the unequal distribution of benefits. Monopolies, international banking and the formation of a regional trading block are further concerns.

2. Population-land pressure is not humanly and adequately responded to and involves the marginalization of tribal people and the wasting of resources.

3. The long periods of war in the region call for much reconciliation and reconstruction in countries that have neither material infrastructure nor civil society. In other countries the ratio of military to social spending is of concern, and the on-going relations between the military and democracy are not yet determined. Then there are fears as to the geo-security of the region.

4. Youth as the majority in regional society is inadequately provided for in terms of education, employment and the other concerns mentioned above.

5. Religious fundamentalism appears throughout the region, while the Church in some places closes in on itself.

LIGHTS

1. People's individual and cultural capacities for endurance and resilience in riding out the difficulties, leave room for the eventual resolution of problems. Ground-level awareness is helping communities to hold out against hard times and be heard.

2. There is an increasing call for accountability at all levels of society.

3. Societies have gone beyond colonialism and seek to be dealt with on an equal basis. ASEAN[1] and other political groupings are concerned with more than defense and seek greater exchange.

4. Modern communications moves information faster, feeding interest groups and networks not before possible.

5. In some areas religious diversity and the social awareness of the Church are the sources of a more genuine response to the total needs of the people.

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[1] ASEAN is the Association of South-East Asian Nations.

Let GOD be GOD

Fr. Segundo Galilea[1]

I think the gist of the crisis after Vatican II was the encounter between "the Church" and "the World". In its official doctrine and in attitude, the church came to value the world (the human condition, human factors, the economy, politics, culture, etc.) much more than before. This was the source of a sort of secularization in the church, for better or worse. Any time you discover the world, you get into an ambiguous situation because the world is itself ambiguous, by definition. Therefore you must rediscover as well the roots of Christian identity and spirituality.

The temptation here has to do with our Catholic identity; the world and human commitment by themselves are not a source of Christian identity. You can be committed to peace and justice, but so are many people who are not believers. So this experience, enriching in many senses, is not enough to convey a genuine Christian identity.

In this context, spirituality was not forgotten. Committed Christians always have a spirituality, but we tended to have a very pragmatic spirituality; it was said that we needed a spirituality "for liberation", for commitment. It was, in this sense, a somewhat manipulated spirituality. You had to have spirituality in order to be more productive in your commitments. And that is a disturbing factor in any Christian spirituality. Spirituality was too much perceived as a condition for action. The emphasis was on action, and spirituality was a sort of necessary fuel.

As we look back at the 80's and forward into the 90's, what are the changes in our Christian experience? We are still concerned with the values and development of pastoral renewal, and the challenges of liberation theology; etc. Perhaps we have reached a more global perspective on liberation. In the past we were too much concerned with the political and economic order. This is still a concern, but much more relativized and joined with deeper issues.

I would say that global pastoral concerns and the quest for a synthesis in Christian commitments have re-emphasized the value of what can be called "interior liberation" and Christian identity.

The Christian experience, which comes from God, is first of all an experience of God. It's good to be reminded once in a while that the source of Christian spirituality is first of all God, the Trinity. Of course, to say it like that sounds obvious. Who would deny it? But at a moment when we're looking for a more adapted spirituality — a third-world spirituality, a spirituality that is attuned to commitment, a spirituality that can take into account culture, social issues, pastoral challenges and so on — it's important to remember that God is the first source of spirituality. There is no spirituality without a relationship with God, the experience of God. There's no way we can build any kind of spirituality (a new school of spirituality, liberation spirituality or

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whatever) that is not based first of all in God and this experience of the Trinity. Commitment, challenges, cultures, and so forth — of course they influence spirituality, they give us a new motivation, they help us to channel our charity and experience into the right places and right ways of action. But they can never substitute for the experience of God.

Regarding our contemporary quests for justice, liberation, and so on, I think we have often somehow downgraded the value of religion. For many Christians, it seemed that social structures, politics and such like, were more relevant to human liberation and the liberation of the poor than religion. Not that religion was denied, but it was downgraded, very much in some instances. It was put in second place, as a non-urgent matter. So religion was to be cultivated, but it wasn't in the centre of liberating the poor or promoting a better society, better culture, better human relationships and so on.

Sometimes in Catholic liturgy we experience this unwitting and subtle tendency to manipulate God. Perhaps the liturgy is the test of the extent to which we consider God an absolute, and can see the experience of God as a value in itself. In many instances liturgy has been used in view of something else. You can notice this especially at two points. First in the songs: the songs sung in the Mass are very significant regarding the kind of spirituality, concerns, and synthesis people have. When you go to a church in Nicaragua (or in Texas for that matter), and all the songs are militant songs, social liberation songs, something is wrong. One song related to liberation of the poor is fine. But liturgy is supposed to be the celebration of God. Yet sometimes we use liturgy only to "conscientize" people, only to move people into certain action afterward. Of course, liturgy should also produce more awareness, more inspiration for action. But that doesn't exhaust the purpose or quality of liturgy, which is at the core of Christian spirituality.

Another point in the liturgy when you notice the problem is in the prayer of the faithful: the things people pray for reveal the status of a certain spirituality and their concerns. The prayers of the faithful are sometimes all the same, the repetition of the same thing in different words. Here again we see a sort of unconscious manipulation of religion. Liturgy and the climate of religious experience have a value in themselves. They must not be evaluated solely with regard to products or results.

I would say that the experience of God, being a value in itself, being freeing in itself, does not need to be endorsed by any particular form of action, commitment, or other experience. Of course, if the experience of God is truly Christian, not an aberration, it will lead to commitment in all the forms we know are pertinent to Christian spirituality. The kind of spirituality in which religion is treated simply as a springboard for better commitment, for changing society, for liberation, for influencing and humanizing culture, for justice and peace, finds its corrective in the absoluteness of God Who the mystics help us encounter: to let God be God.

To let God be God in one's personal life, interpersonal relations, family or community life, in one's profession or workplace and in times of recreation and solitude — this has been the task of holiness since the beginning, and we have centuries of mystical wisdom to help us. Segundo Galilea's reminder is well-timed and salutary. There is still, however, something new to do. In those realms upon which the great masters of suspicion, Freud, Nietzsche and Marx, trained their sharply critical light — the realms of deep desire, of public culture, and of economic structures — **there** to let God be God, and not just in the personal which inexorably becomes the private, this has been the nearly devastating challenge to the Church of the 20th century and will hopefully represent the great Catholic achievement of the 21st.

Editor

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What SOCIAL MOVEMENT is TAKING SHAPE in our EUROPE?

Josep Miralles, S.J.

1. INITIAL QUESTIONS ... WE MUST NOT FORGET

What am I to say in reply to the question, "What social movement is taking shape in Europe?" If there were a major movement aspiring to transform society, you members of the *Mission Ouvrière* (MO) would know it better than I, for you would be in it. But as I intend to show, at the moment I think there is no one social movement, rather a variety of interrelated movements, none of which is central or decisive.

My contribution may be to provide an overall view of certain problems and deep-rooted trends in European society. This has been a way of proceeding very typical of the MO: confronting personal and group discernment with the major trends of society.

But before getting into the subject, I think it important to emphasize the fundamental problem which we have to face: the identity crisis of MO linked to the identity crisis both of the labour movement and of socialism. This crisis is not simply on an intellectual or ideological level. On the contrary, its roots run deep in the radical transformations which our society is undergoing and which, in my opinion, will continue for a long time to come.

I believe we should face these diverse transformations with the original spirit of the MO: a very intimate closeness to the structural conflicts and dynamics of society, with the will to incarnate the Gospel in them; in this closeness the viewpoint of the exploited and oppressed was privileged, not only a theoretical viewpoint. In fact, there was a great emphasis on sharing and working with them, with the objective of collaborating in a liberation whose principal protagonist was not us, but they themselves. Our aim was to provide a modest contribution, but one we believed decisively important: the liberating power of the Gospel's gratuity.

I would like modestly to locate my contribution within this line of drawing close to social reality, from which we will draw neither absolute nor comforting certainties that our commitment is most surely located in the line of liberation, but yes we can manage to insert ourselves in the social dynamic with genuine liberty of spirit. In this way we can play the difficult role of a prophet who challenges the people to heed the call of God written in the events of history. We also need spiritual freedom to challenge ourselves to ask, what is the best contribution we can make here and now? for this is the question which can lead us to important changes in our viewpoints and behaviour.

2. REASONS FOR THE IDENTITY CRISIS:
   WHERE DID WE COME FROM?

We have no need to hide our identity crisis and the fact that it is linked to the identity crisis of socialism and the labour movement. If we are to understand ourselves and not lose our dynamism, I think it very necessary to recall our beginnings. I propose to treat schematically three distinct scenarios: the birth of industrial society, the establishment of the so-called welfare state, and finally the "failure" of the radical revolutions.

2.1. Industrial society

The labour movement and socialism are very linked to the type of society created by the first industrial revolution. For my purposes I need remind you of only two points:

     - In the first instance, the industrial revolution placed the <u>economy</u> in the <u>conscious</u> centre of society. Marx rightly insisted in the *Communist Manifesto* that religion and politics would cede their central place to the economy, consequently, <u>oppression</u> took the form especially of <u>exploitation in work</u> via the economic mechanisms of production and of the <u>market</u>. The labour movement and socialism rightly saw that the root of economic exploitation was found in economic life based on private property and the totally free labour market.

     - The cultural system also changed decisively; society owed its survival to science and industry; and so science displaced religion as "ultimate legitimator" of the social order. This explains why the great ideologies typical of the industrial revolution (liberalism and socialism) are secular ideologies and ostensibly "scientific".

The word "science", however, is a misnomer. In the 19th century "science" did not have the meaning it does at the end of the 20th. It was a self-confident science convinced that its conclusions "reflected" (as in a mirror) the <u>reality</u> of nature or history.

And so these ideologies took the form of "secular religions" which promised paradise thanks to a "key element" of society: the market in the case of liberalism; planning in the case of socialism.

In conclusion, the first industrial revolution created a society divided into classes defined by their position in the productive system. In this society, the decisive element was ownership of the means of production. It also produced a <u>class struggle strongly ideologized by both sides</u>. Socialism and the labour movement remained deeply marked by this technological, social and cultural situation which <u>is undergoing extremely rapid transformation</u>.

2.2. The Welfare State

The welfare state began being built in Europe in the 1960s.[1] One of its aims was to create a more human society and so better integrated into the capitalist system. I think it only fair to acknowledge both sides of the story: on the one hand the effort to maintain a class society, but undeniably, behind the development of the welfare state, a profoundly humanist motivation. The tension between private interests and universal and humanist motivations is inevitable in every historic process.

The policies of the welfare state consisted in policies of full employment, the extension of purchasing power, and the creation of a broad system of social security that aimed to guarantee all members of society a minimum living standard.

The welfare state developed very unevenly in Europe but now we can say that in a certain way it achieved what it set out to: Greatly simplifying a controversial issue, one can affirm that an important part of the "working classes" today belongs to the middle classes (at least in terms of purchasing power and certain shared values). These middle classes are not necessarily conservative, but neither are they revolutionary, probably they could be called "reformist."

Regarding the cultural system, radical changes have occurred and all of them have tended to relativize the major ideologies and especially their claim to offer a sure path to the ideal society.

In the first place, Western societies experienced a political pluralism and so the coexistence of ideologies in a single society. This coexistence (and general economic improvement) helped to relativize the ideologies: liberalism accepted social reforms, and socialisms gradually became reform-minded.

Furthermore, progress in the theory of science relativized scientific knowledge. Today everyone accepts that science provides, not a "photograph" of reality, but only theories based on hypotheses, theories always subject to refutation and always revisable.

These two facts, pluralism and the relativization of scientific knowledge, combined to undermine the major ideologies and the security they offered of a future society rich, free and happy. This weakening however was uneven. Liberalism become less doctrinaire in the 60s and 70s but it had the "overwhelming weight of reality" on its side: the Western economic system was based on private property and on the free market, and liberalism "fits" well in this social reality. Social and economic reality reinforce the "lived" or "spontaneous" liberalism of many people who have never read a single liberal author.

On the other hand the integration of the working classes as middle classes undermined the revolutionary dimension of the labour movement and of socialism. The reformist socialism of social democracy took this complex social and cultural reality into account. With social

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[1] The Welfare State began much earlier in some countries of Europe, but at the beginning of the 1960s it became quite wide-spread and elaborated in a new form.

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democracy, socialism ceased to be the global alternative and became a political programme, in competition with programmes of the centre and the right. This programme was closely linked with the social advances of the welfare state. Consequently, when technological change (the second industrial revolution[2]) and economic and political crises raise questions about the welfare state, western socialism feels its identity questioned.

2.3. The "failure" of the radical revolutions

The evolution of social democracy towards reformism did not put an end to the socialist aspiration for a radical transformation of society. Radical hope often took refuge in the "radical revolutions" of Russia, China, Cuba or Nicaragua. These revolutions were like a sign that the radical transformation of society was possible.

As long as these revolutions were defeated from without, the hope could endure. The "enemy" was "outside". I think that the collapse of the Soviet paragon has had such an impact because it signals the failure of a model that proved incapable of continuing the development it had begun in the 1950s. This time it is not an "outside" enemy, but the failure of a model from within.

But the question remains, what kind of revolution has failed? In my opinion, it is a revolutionary model centred on the economic and, to a certain extent, on the political. I will come back to this in a moment, but I want to stress that the "failure" of these "radical revolutions" by no means implies the failure of every attempt at a thorough transformation of society, only of one way of understanding such transformation.

2.4. Some observations

First of all, let us note that the MO was born in the initial years of the welfare state, when the latter still did not exist, and the reality of the working class and social conflict clearly prevailed in the factories and the working class neighbourhoods. It was wise for the MO to move into this world as it was and there to discover its aspirations for justice, its prophetic call to society and to the Church. It was wise to try humbly to bring Gospel hope and gratuity to this human reality.

Have the labour movement and socialism failed, and with them the MO, because their identity seems called into question? I don't think they have failed; they have fulfilled an historic purpose, responding to certain specific historical challenges: those of industrial society.

The problem is that historical reality always surprises; thanks to the welfare state, the working class achieved undeniable successes. What happens is that the "successes" of the working class have had a negative aspect: Economic growth called for working class solidarity to grow, but when part of the working class moved into the middle classes, individualism increased and solidarity declined. Perhaps there is a lesson for us to learn. Every success contains an inherent

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[2] This refers to the present-day technological transformation based on micro-electronics and computers, though in this respect terminologies differ.

risk. When a liberating process reaches a certain point, it finds a new choice to make, a new moral challenge to meet.

Nevertheless European society has been transformed not only along lines of welfare and "reformism". In fact the welfare state encountered new problems which to a certain extent are of its own making:
- the dramatic situation of the Third World which challenges the wealthier countries;
- the development of some Third World countries which are now competing aggressively with the wealthy countries;
- the new technological development of the industrial revolution now underway;
- the increase in social exclusion and margination due to prolonged unemployment in wealthy societies;
- consumerism in the rich societies, which seems so difficult to moderate in moments of crisis.

In this situation, the MO's enduring task is tenaciously to draw close, over and over again, to historical reality in order to discover therein the call of the changing working world and of the "new" exploited and excluded of our society. But we must do it with an appropriate theoretical model that enables us to grasp the complexity of our world.

Obviously, no theoretical model can promise a secure path toward a just and happy future, as one thought when it was deemed possible to know the keys of historical processes. But this does not mean that radical hope is no longer meaningful. We must distinguish optimism from hope. Optimism thinks things will work out well of their own accord. Hope believes that certain values are worth fighting for. Granted that historical experience has snatched away a certain naive optimism, but it supports the value of our hope: the historical struggle of the working world has been fruitful in Europe.

3. TO GRASP THE COMPLEXITY ... WITHOUT BECOMING DEMORALIZED

3.1. The socialist revolutions ... a caricature

In order to have a more complex model of analysis, I think it would be interesting to analyze what people mean when they criticize the "radical revolutions".

In effect, due to the transformations of eastern Europe and the evolution of countries like Nicaragua and Cuba, we are often accused of having believed in revolutions that failed. I think that, beyond the concrete experiences, we have to ask what kind of revolution are people thinking of when they criticize us ... and if indeed we believed in it.

It's true enough that 19th century thought (and so including doctrinaire Marxism and doctrinaire liberalism) emphasized what a friend of mine called "the model of the single key element". This means that the social structure would have one key element (e.g., property) and that, by changing this key element, the entire society could be transformed and pointed in a clearly foreseeable direction.

On the other hand, popular opinion (of our critics and sometimes even our own) has underlined the decisive importance of the <u>political moment of the revolution</u>: the taking of power, after which building the new society can begin. This would allow one to identify signs (admired ones or feared ones, depending on where one stood) such as Nicaragua, Cuba, etc.

I think that what I have just said is a caricature of our convictions. The experience shared with the working class had shown us that reality was very complex and that building a new society was a slow process always prone to reversals. Despite all that, I think we have often leaned on a more profound conviction of an anthropological and religious type (and which we should not disclaim): the belief that the human being is capable of conversion, can change, and that there can be similar irreversible "steps" upward. Perhaps we have wanted to see "signs" of those steps already "climbed" in historical revolutions. At least it seemed to us especially important to collaborate in them.

3.2. A more "systematic" perspective

I think we have to make a thorough criticism of the "key element" model of revolution without it robbing us of the deepest convictions and hopes which took it as the necessary "historical support".

We must realize that we are living in a society of "multiple elements" and especially of "multiple relationships" and that both the elements and the relationships are rapidly changing. Let's look at some examples:

- Marx had emphasized some of these elements, e.g., the importance of technological development (the "productive forces" developed by the first industrial revolution), but now we are already starting the second industrial revolution which will change our society, in the span of some 60 years, into an "information society", very different from the "industrial society" of 1950 or 1960.

- Social relations change, Marx used to say, as technology changes. The second industrial revolution is changing the relation with the instruments of production and the way businesses are organized, and this generates new types of dominance, conflict and collaboration.

- But new geographical factors must also be taken into consideration, such as the emergence of large economic spheres such as the Common Market, the North American Free Trade Agreement,[3] the Pacific Rim area, etc.

- Important, too, is the demographic factor, essential for understanding the problem of the Third World.

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[3] NAFTA was signed by the United States, Canada and Mexico in December of 1992.

- Our overpopulated world is beginning to realize that we depend collectively on our relationship with nature, and ecological problems are beginning to be seen for what they really are, problems of survival for the entire human race.

- In a world of highspeed scientific and technological change where geographical barriers are constantly being broken, the problem of cultural transformation and of the relationship between cultures shows up as a decisive problem of co-existence in societies which are inevitably (but fortunately) pluralistic.

In this immense complexity I do not think we can state that any one element or relationship is necessarily the decisive one, the only one which deserves our every effort because on it depend all the others.

If we take all this seriously, it may seem as if the very basis of the revolutionary convictions of the past could disappear. In effect this is what philosophical and environmental "post-modernity" says. For postmodernity there are no "great narratives" any more, no englobing visions of the world, which might orient our actions and guarantee their effects. It seems as if the capacity to predict whether the effects of our actions are the ones we would desire is disappearing, because the complexity of the factors at play prevents us from recognizing the decisive relations and being able to control them. And if we cannot be sure that our action goes "in good direction", then why bother?

To adopt a model of multiple relationships, however, does not mean that we are unable to detect long-term trends in society. As I shall underline later, these trends are closely linked to technological developments, to the creation of a society where communication becomes more and more a key element, etc.

Still, adopting a "multiple-element" model does mean that no single act by itself is revolutionary per se. If by revolution we understand a deep transformation of society which admits no turning back, then we realize that the great real transformations have been based on technological transformations and on deep cultural movements. The political moment has been necessary and even decisive at a given moment, but in the whole picture it was not the only important one.

On the other hand we realize that there can always be "perverse effects", that is, "reversals" in the gains already achieved.

In all this, I believe that we should not lose our faith in the human capacity for conversion nor our hope in the transformation of society, but our commitment must take new forms. As we will see later on, there are myriad forms of domination and exploitation and exclusion, which cannot easily be reduced to a unity. And so it seems that our commitment with the oppressed, exploited and excluded should take different forms, inserting ourselves in very different situations.

Two problems immediately arise: are we truly contributing to a deep transformation when we tie ourselves up in particular issues (racism, margination) that seem unconnected from a "key element" of society? And related to this, if we lack a concrete political programme, towards where should we "push"?

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In reply to the first question, I would say that in our world it is imperative to view the different tasks and fields of work as "open", as related among themselves, although it is sometimes difficult to establish the concrete links, particularly organizational ones. It is very important, as I will shortly explain, to create an awareness of relationship, which is to create the basis of solidarity, although sometimes solidarity as a value comes first and brings about the practical relationship.

As for the second question, I believe that right now it is more important to defend long-term values and orientations rather than specific programmes, although, if the latter are satisfactory, one should obviously defend them. Nevertheless, I think that, in so complex a world, political programmes are too short-term and soon reveal their inevitable weaknesses, while values and trends allow one to maintain the orientation better.

Finally, the great question can come up: do we manage to transform something really essential with our modest tasks at a time when the market imposes itself as a key element of this complex society? I have no illusions about offering a firm answer to this question. I think the market is an essential but not so decisive element of society. The problem is how to create a "context" which gives the market a different meaning and which controls it effectively. For example, a labour market in a society ruled by a handful of chieftains does not have the same connotations as in a country where its power is counterbalanced by strong labour unions and effective social legislation rooted in a specific culture. I think that the transformation of the productive system and the cultural transformation can be so strong that in fact they give the market a different meaning. This will without doubt be difficult and always subject to setbacks, but I do not believe it to be any more difficult than other attempts to make concrete the hope which moves us.

I would now like to specify today's major trends and major challenges a little more. The treatment will necessarily be schematic, but I will try to explore them from the perspective of the evolution of the MO. I will focus on three areas: those surrounding social conflicts, the cultural dynamics which have their origins in technological change, and lastly I will ask what kind of religion seems appropriate for our world.

4. TRENDS ... SOCIAL CHALLENGES

Within social conflict, I think there are three major sources of problems.

4.1. The relationship with the Third World

Interest in the Third World has always been very strong in the MO. So important has it been that at times one could have said that it represented a "flight" from the hard reality of a secularized and established First World society, in search of more religious, more dynamic and more hopeful societies.

Our mission may well consist in getting the industrialized world to take up the reality of the Third World. What I mean is that the Third World is entering — and will enter more and more — into our society. Because, for example, poverty and oppression will ignite regional conflicts,

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and the developed world will intervene to "restore order" (in its own interests). From this point of view, the development of movements in favour of peace (based on justice) will be very important. Our specific concern is that they be fostered from a very concrete standpoint in our society: that of the immigrants from this same Third World.

According to demographers, immigration will be one of the major problems in the coming years and will bring about a specific material presence of the Third World in our society. I think that your insertion in the working and popular world brings you close to one of the decisive points of their problem: that of their insertion into (or rather, their rejection from) work that is socially recognized and legally protected.

But the presence of immigrants has many other consequences. Society reacts with racist and xenophobic tendencies, and the working classes are not beyond such reactions. Our insertion in the "national" workers' world offers a new orientation here. Because the objective conflict of interests which often exists between immigrants and natives (although this is sometimes exaggerated) must not be hidden. It shows us something of what I said earlier about the complexity of the problems and the fact that the "enemy" is not always "outside", but can often be found "inside" the same working class, which is given a new moral challenge: will it be capable of welcoming the immigrant who could become a competitor and who above all from the start is "strange" insofar as "stranger".

The immigrant presence throws into relief the enormous implications of the problems in our society. Acceptance of the foreigner is above all a cultural problem: to live together with people whose way of understanding life and living it is deeply different from one's own and who therefore seem at first less "human".

Being a cultural problem it is also a problem of public opinion. Immigration becomes particularly problematic in those neighbourhoods and circumstances where they are concentrated, but the presence of foreigners easily turns into a problem for the population as a whole. Our presence and our actions should therefore open up to society in general, with awareness of the fact that the legislative measures of governments often depend on what they perceive to be popular feeling and of the fact that a current of opinion in favour of the immigrants can be decisive in improving their legal situation.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) can play an important rôle here in raising the collective consciousness, as much by sending volunteers to the Third World as by raising social consciousness in our countries.

In sum, in a broader picture, the developed societies face the challenge of being multicultural societies and of making this, not an occasion for conflict, but an opportunity for collective growth. Thus, our insertion among the immigrants takes on a broader sense, not only limited to helping with the defense of their rights, but aimed at creating a type of society very different from the traditionally European, a society open to the contribution of cultures which until now it had dominated.

4.2.   The technological dynamism of the developed world:
the "second industrial revolution"

I believe that we can react successfully to the technological revolution only if we take some historical distance. For example, let's imagine how an English or German peasant might have felt about the first industrial revolution. He probably thought that the advent of industry was a terrible thing because it would drive people from the countryside, robbing the population of its means of subsistence. In retrospect we know that the industrial revolution also increased agricultural productivity, stimulated major economic growth and distributed wealth better than did the authoritarian or monarchic regimes.

In the same way, we can see the phenomena of unemployment and the non-formal economy only from within the immediate past of full employment in the welfare state. Viewed from this angle, the second industrial revolution also appears pernicious. Wealth may increase, but there aren't jobs enough for everyone, and logically they cannot be distributed. On the other hand, technological development requires a more skilled labour force, and many will be shunted aside because they are unable to reach the kind and level of knowledge which society requires. The non-formal economy, menial jobs and temporary employment are objective aspects of the same problem.

All of this is true, and I believe our presence is very important in this frontier area of temporary work - non-formal economy - exclusion from labour. Here we make good use of our tradition as worker priests and locate ourselves at a central hub of social transformation currently occurring. Actually, as was said earlier, the problems of integrating foreigners necessarily and decisively require integration into the work force.

Our presence is also very meaningful in those places where better professional training is being struggled for or where it is offered, or where young people are being prepared to receive it.

Still, all this is to view the problem in terms of the recent past with a yearning for the full (or almost full) employment created by the welfare state. This would be a limited focus, because these problems need to be viewed while trying to discern the fundamental trends towards an "information society". In other words, how can unemployment be combatted with openness towards an inevitable but as yet ill-defined future, a future which might take the form of Orwell's *1984*, like Masuda's optimistic utopia[4] ... and in many other ways?

I find it difficult to venture any predictions, but I will risk a few suggestions, certainly very debatable. I think that one of the greatest dangers is the setting-up of a "dual" society, controlled by those who possess and control knowledge, which leaves out an important part of society. The upper echelon of such a society will have to foster information, communication, initiative, if it wants to foster wealth not based on the quantity but on the quality and the development of knowledge.

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[4] George Orwell, *1984*. Yoneji Masuda, *La sociedad informatizada como sociedad postindustrial*, Madrid: Fundesco Tecnos, 1984.

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Therefore apparently we must insist on working for a more democratic society (not just a State), where information about decisions and the decisions themselves get "popularized" to the maximum. Democracy implies liberty, creativity. To advocate this type of society is to combine the demands of justice with the characteristics of a society that will advance insofar as it makes use of the information, the initiative and the creativity of each one of its members, because knowledge is the basis of its system of survival.

4.3. Exclusion and margination

As I said earlier, one of the "successes" of the welfare state has been to transform the old societies polarized by class struggle into "middle class societies". Obviously, this statement is open to discussion, but it certainly contains some truth. But the "integration" into the system achieved by the welfare state has been offset, especially in years of crisis and decreased growth, by an increase in exclusion and margination. A Spanish sociologist, Salustiano del Campo, speaks of the "diabolical power of margination typical of middle class society."[5] He mentions three basic means of socialization and social integration, the family, the school and work, and notes the malfunctioning of all three institutions.

The family is an institution in crisis. The number of single-parent families is on the increase. Here the proper socialization of the child becomes difficult, but to this is added the economic and social problem of the head of the family. A single-parent family headed by a woman will most probably sink below the poverty line.

The failure of professional training, the school system structured to separate out at a very early age, and the "gap" between a democratic society's need for human formation and the lack of formation provided by the schools, all add up to a worrisome picture of the sociological mechanisms which frustrate the correct integration of a young person into society.

In our society work has now become a socializing mechanism of utmost importance. Hence the gravity of the unemployment problem: it is not simply an economic problem, but has become a social and cultural problem of "dis-integration" of the person vis-à-vis society.

There are still other groups of excluded and marginated which claim our attention. Senior citizens, ironically labelled by a Spanish writer as "the institutional poor."[6] Meagre pensions condemn them to poverty, a poverty whose cause is essentially social and political. Largely middle class societies are reluctant to sacrifice their welfare in higher taxes, and the State does not dare enact a bold social policy.

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[5] S. Campo, *La sociedad de clases medias*, Madrid: Espasa-Calpe, 1989; R. Salazar, *¿Todavía la clase obrera?*, Madrid: Ediciones HOAC, 1990.

[6] D. Casado, "Viejos y nuevos pobres en la España de los 80," found in VI jornadas de estudio del Comité Español para el Bienestar Social, *La Pobreza en los 80*, Madrid, 1989, pp. 15-36.

Lastly, I believe to be important the problem of margination in the large cities. Here a series of factors combine which make it difficult to integrate people who are "weaker" for one reason or another: anonymity, the economy totally based on money, the frantic pace of work, the competition and demands in work itself. All these factors cause such pressure that people with any sort of personal weakness are easily cut off and soon marginated from all human communication.

Obviously these situations stretch far from the original viewpoint of the classical *Mission Ouvrière*, but the current evolution of society would have them seen with different eyes. Because they show above all the "dark aspect", the "other side of the coin" of rich and comfortable Western society. The MO entered the workers' world because it was the "other aspect" of capitalist society, the one which displayed its exploitive character. Nowadays the marginated and excluded fulfil this sad function, and this distresses me deeply because it seems to me, if MO wants to be faithful to the signs of the times, it cannot ignore this fact. Perhaps the question consists above all in getting right the analyses of, the perspectives and the orientations towards, this whole complex world.

Regarding the analyses, to me it seems important to note that the economic dimension of all these problems is always important, but it is not always decisive. Analyzing the situations just mentioned, we have noticed the importance which the strictly social, political and cultural causes acquire in many of these problems.

I think that in the next years we will have to continue trying to analyze these problems up close and not be satisfied with sweeping generalizations about the evil of the economic and social system in general. Not that I want to defend the system, but it strikes me as futile to insist along this line because, as I said earlier, the problem will not consist in eliminating the market economy but of making it work in a different manner by introducing multiple technological, economic, social, political and cultural correctives.

When I was speaking before about the importance of the perspective, I think it was easy to understand what I meant. The spirituality of the MO has always been one of sharing with those below. Obviously, working with the marginated poses specific problems in this respect, but in any case it seems necessary to avoid social positions of power and of course any sort of paternalism.

This brings us to the problem of the objectives. It seems to me that our work with these groups should contribute to their becoming aware of their own dignity and where possible to their "*prise de la parole*" as groups aware of their distinctive social situation, their own dignity and their own contribution to society.

True, it is highly unlikely that the marginated will become a transforming social force. But I think it necessary to collaborate so that no one is excluded from the efforts to attain a more just, free, and human society. Perhaps our faith especially impels us to value the "little ones", the useless members of a society which values efficiency, profits, and consumption beyond all measure.

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In any case, it seems to me that, if we are to be inserted in these areas, our insertion has to be in the direction of a "social democratization". In a pluralist and multi-cultural society of which I spoke earlier, it is necessary that different cultural, ethnic, labour and age groups, etc., find a way of expressing themselves and of collaborating. In a corporatist society it is important that threatened groups organize in order to be able to defend themselves. Moreover to deepen democracy is probably to prepare society to be more solidary.

All this is closely related to a subject very familiar and important to us: the labour unions. Insertion in the unions has been one of the approaches frequently taken by MO members, and now we are especially sensitive to the problems they have before them.

Labour unions were born as mutual aid societies which soon acquired a demanding and socially transforming character. At a historical moment when there was one major problem (the social problem, as was said before), it was logical for popular organizations to galvanize around work. But at a moment when social life connotes many more dimensions, perhaps the problem consists in stimulating that combination of organizations which the different groups need in order to press their various demands. An important question is whether labour unions should retain their specific focus or can contribute to broaden the scope of their fields of interest.

The labour unions are asking themselves many other questions, as we all know. The internationalization of capital should be met by a European-wide trade-union proposal, but this runs into very great difficulties because of the different situations of the working-classes in the different countries of Europe. Above all the unions face the challenge of the transformation of the work force due to the surge in services and to the new technologies. The unions run the risk of becoming "corporatist" in the pejorative sense of the word.

Without proposing a specific project, MO could perhaps contribute a unique capacity of openness and of universality to union proposals, wherever possible and appropriate.

5. A CULTURAL PROJECT OF SOLIDARITY

Some years ago there were lengthy discussions whether the transformation of society should be brought about primarily by changing individual persons or rather through "structural" transformations. I think that recent experience has given the lie to the latter option insofar as only the economic and political aspects of society were isolated. Today the danger consists of naively turning to "personal conversion" as the only way of change. I think that paying attention to culture can help get us out of the jam.

By culture I understand the system of values and norms shared by a society, as well as the legitimation of these values. Culture is an "objective" reality because it can be analyzed, it is something shared and can be transformed as an effect of specific historical actions. However, it is also "subjective" because it is real only to the extent that it is accepted and lived by each individual. From this perspective, individual conversion can be seen, either as "a more thorough assimilation of a particular culture," or as a "change of culture." In my opinion, every apostolic mission of the Society has to consider what type of culture it wants to help build.

The productive system sets the limits of the cultural systems possible in a particular society. Indeed, the culture cannot promote "dysfunctional" values for the productive system without risking the "collapse" of the society.

Now we are faced with the production system in advanced societies changing rapidly. The decisive "productive force" is increasingly science and technology, and society finds itself living off of both scientific and technological "innovation". If society wants to survive with "dignity", it should adapt its values, norms and legitimations to this new situation.

First of all this means that the culture of the new "information society"[7] must be <u>compatible</u> with science and technology and with the convictions and values they imply. Yet the relative, refutable, and always hypothetical character of science makes it increasingly difficult to accept ideologies and religions that appear as absolute values imposed by authority. This will strengthen the current critique of the "great narratives" or ideologies (liberalism, socialism) and of religions (at least in their dogmatic and allegedly absolute aspects).

But on the other hand science and technology offer society neither <u>values</u> nor <u>objectives</u>. This means that we are moving towards a society which does not count on traditional religions and ideologies for its collective orientation, and for which science does not provide a collective orientation either. In this situation one can foresee that society must design "projects" which provide orientation to the different groups that make up societies.

Thus we are approaching an unprecedented cultural situation. Unable to depend on "revealed" religions or on presumably scientific ideologies, we humans find ourselves confronted with our own responsibility for organizing coexistence in a highly complex world. We must shoulder our historic responsibility to build a habitable world. The time is past for invoking natural or historic "fate" or "destiny" to justify the exploitation or domination of one group by another.

On the other hand, we cannot think of monolithic societies in a world which lives from science, and science lives from freedom in the intellectual field and also in the order of values. This will be a society whose different groups will have to design their own cultural "projects", but always making sure above all that they are compatible with the "projects" of the other groups.

In reality this is beginning to be our present situation. It is not easy for a society to accept its own creativity. It is easier to put faith in false collective securities which obviate the effort to think and to create. Along lines of this "fear of freedom", I understand the resurgence of liberalism (neo-liberalisms), certain religious fundamentalisms or, in other areas, the emergence of nationalistic xenophobia. Obviously, each of these phenomena has its own characteristics and cannot be explained by one single factor. All, however, have one thing in common. They affirm their "faith" in an "incontrovertible fact" based on nature, on God, or on history, to avoid the effort of creating a cultural project really open to pluralism and not dominating.

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[7] Masuda, op.cit.

All this makes us think of certain values that should be incorporated into the "central" constellation of our society. Liberal individualism and monolithic collectivism cannot organize a dynamic, scientific and technological society.

In an "information society", freedom will have to be understood as creativity and will have to be based on information and mutual communication. But the very strong interdependence of the different groups will have to counterbalance freedom with responsibility for society as a whole and also for the planet on which we live. For this reason it will not do to "add" values like "solidarity", "world awareness", "ecology" to standard political programmes (liberal or social democratic), but really central values of new projects that are not only political but of human coexistence at all levels.

Mission ouvrière throughout its history has struggled above all in the fields of socio-economic structures, via the union struggle and in other popular organizations. The cultural panorama I have just sketched leads me to wonder whether MO should not also consider creating and transmitting a cultural project proper to the exploited and dominated sectors of our society, in such a way that this project would not only be built on the basis of the past, but also point toward the future; a future whose basic trends seem inevitable, but which is an open future, and which we must not allow to be hijacked in favour of the perennial winners.

Were MO to do this, it would salvage the most valid points of the debate about how to accomplish social transformation. In working on culture, MO would at once be located at the "objective" and "structural" pole (because culture is a social reality) and at the subjective pole, because culture shapes the subjectivity of the members of every society.

6. RELIGION

Considering the importance of the cultural dimension in our mission brings us to reflect on how we situate ourselves in the current pluralist religious panorama. In fact, sociologically speaking, religion is an element of culture and to build a cultural project implies taking a position on the religious fact.

I think it especially important to analyze well and take a nuanced stance towards the different current neo-conservatisms. I am thinking of the American neo-conservatism, but also the neo-conservative features of some charismatic movements or certain orientations of the hierarchy which, on the other hand, include suggestive elements.

I think all these agree in valuing the religious fact as a socially important and positive fact, one which should acquire a socially-visible aspect via the "media". But this social presence has to lead (for the American neo-conservatives at least) to a consolidation of the capitalist system, which they consider very close to Christian inspiration.

Here come our reservations. We can agree on the importance of the religious phenomenon, but we are convinced that secularization is not merely an ideological movement, but a cultural process based on the technological and social transformation of societies. And so faith, if it seeks

not only to survive but also to make its own contribution to this world, cannot remain in the religion of the past (which would serve to justify capitalism), but should seriously consider its insertion into the society that is emerging before our eyes.

I think that a society lacking in "ultimate legitimators" and "great ideologies" is a society lacking in external points of reference for coexistence and for structuring justice and liberty. This type of society faces two great problems: in the first place, without accepted and external points of reference, individualism in its most brutal form can set itself up as the supreme value and prove the truth of Hobbes' definition of "*homo homini lupus*". Secondly, the socialization and education of children and more generally the formation of persons cannot have recourse to these external references.

I believe that, at this moment, a Christianity committed to the transformation of society must "rediscover mysticism".

It is more necessary than ever to seek a way of structuring personal interiority; persons should find in themselves, in their "interior", the source of energy and of "inspiration" which lets them "discern" in each situation what is humanly better, in a situation which, as I just said, lacks external points of reference. When I think of "rediscovering mysticism", I do not mean extraordinary phenomena (ecstasies, etc.) but the nurturing of spiritual experience, emphasizing the globally-encompassing sense of the word 'experience'. I think that the MO of the Society of Jesus has, in the Spiritual Exercises and in the rules for discernment of spirits, an instrument to promote in this direction.

In my more utopian moments I occasionally dream that we should not limit the explicit nourishment of spiritual experience to believers. We should find a way and a pedagogy to cultivate spiritual sensitivity in everyone, believer or not, who is ready to follow this path. I am convinced that we would find many persons, very fine ones, interested in cultivating their interiority to strengthen their action of service to others.

What I just said means that religion should gradually take the form of a personal and communitarian process of transformation which should not result, absolutely not, in an individualist or escapist spiritualism but, on the contrary, should be the condition for transforming action in the long run, without relying on the social supports which the believer and the activist were afforded in earlier times.

And the criterion which would verify this "non-escapism" would be the perspective from which this special "mysticism" should be lived: the "non-centred-on-oneself" perspective from the viewpoint of the brother, the sister, of the stranger, the poor (exploited, dominated or manipulated); definitively from the "Cross", and not from the "face" of society.

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The JESUIT SCIENTIST and
the APOSTOLATE of FAITH and JUSTICE

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* Why are there not more younger Jesuits actively pursing work in science?

* Should younger Jesuits be interested in science, and how might it be possible to encourage them to be so?

* How does serious scientific work relate to the apostolate of the Society for faith and justice and a preferential option for the poor?

The above questions were discussed at the third meeting of European Jesuit scientists held at Gdynia in Poland in September 1993. The participants divided into three separate age-groups. The youngest group noted how both for Jesuits who were trained as scientists before entering the Society, and for those trained later, the experience of the scientific apostolate was frequently an isolated one, compounded by the fact that today there are fewer older Jesuit scientists to act as positive examples for this apostolate. Furthermore, whereas in the United States there are departments of science in Jesuit universities, the career structure for a Jesuit scientist in Europe is less obvious and there is a need for their work to be better inserted in the framework of a Province's apostolate.

Nevertheless, scientific work within the Society has many positive spiritual dimensions, bringing a deep contact with others and touching in depth a vital strand of modern culture, and giving a freedom and liberating power for one's own faith.

For today, environmental concerns, which are intimately connected with economic issues, are seen as a key issue of justice with which we, as Jesuits in science, should be concerned first at the level of scientific understanding, and then by discernment for active involvement for effective action. The possibility of a network or centre to encourage younger Jesuit scientists to engage in environmental work was discussed and the need for a new theology of nature was noted.

The older age-groups and the plenary discussion focused on the relation between scientific work and work for faith and justice. All agreed on the need to aim at excellence in academic and research work. Scientific study is actually needed if justice is to be realised in the world, for it may be able to address the root causes of injustice rather than simply its results. Those who worked in a university context were in a privileged position to be able to influence students in their attitudes towards the poor, and as Jesuit scientists we must help to open the eyes of our fellow scientists to broader realities than simply a scientific view of the world, including the situation of the poor. Today scientific work cannot be done simply in an ivory tower. Physics may be 'fun', but it should not be done only for fun. Science itself is no longer innocent; to be conscious of this is part of our concern for the poor.

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Some feel, nevertheless, that the promotion of justice is not the primary justification of the scientific apostolate, but that its main justification is rather its role in inculturation of the faith. According to this view, the Jesuit scientist should do science and not worry about a preferential option for the poor, since he lives it implicitly and can best help the poor by assisting the Church in providing an up-to-date presentation of the faith. Others point out that the understanding of the faith itself has to be formed from a perspective of the underprivileged. The Jesuit scientist — as much as any other Jesuit — needs to appropriate and constantly renew this perspective, not least for the sake of the development of his own life of faith. This should indeed have an effect on his lifestyle, which effect may take many different forms according to circumstances.

The individual scientist must make ethical choices and is responsible for his own research programme. The individualistic view of scientific ethics, however, is hardly sufficient. Not only do we influence a situation we may be in — the situation itself also has a decisive influence on us, often consciously and subconsciously moulding our outlook, our presuppositions and our view of reality. For this reason, attention needed to be paid to structural change for an ethical programme to be truly effective. The Jesuit scientist in the course of his work eventually creates his own community around him: he has responsibility for the type of community this becomes.

A personal reflection

The two views above on the relation between the scientific apostolate and the promotion of justice perhaps allow us to attempt to explore more deeply the causes of a division between science and Christianity.

According to the first view, the main problem lies in the fact that in the scientific world no place is left for God, and the result is a secularised society devoid of human values. The main task would appear to be to show that theological truth is not contradicted by scientific evidence, and to find ways to express the faith which will carry conviction in a scientific age.

The second view would, however, perhaps encourage us to look deeper, to explore the relationship between scientific reductionism and injustice. After all, many profess a belief in God, but are far from acknowledging the profound demands of the biblical God for justice in relations with their neighbour. Attempts have been made, by scientists and theologians alike, to deduce the nature of God from the facts of cosmology, but is such a God recognisable as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Father to whom Jesus prayed? A scientific reductionism has selectively ontologised just those aspects of nature which are capable of prediction, and thus of domination and control, while neglecting and treating as less than real more important human values. There seems little doubt of the harm that is often done by applications of scientific reductionist thinking to technical and social problems when wider human values are neglected. But is it also possible that the reductionist view functions, at least in part, as an ideological support of a 'scientific' economics equally devoid of human values and constitutive of an unjust social order, while itself drawing credibility from the manifest success and dazzling power of technological achievement fostered and sustained by this unjust economic order itself? Might it not be that this role for scientific reductionism damages the moral standing of science itself, as well as being more closely connected to an unjust social order than is at first realised?

These questions are very speculative, but in view of their importance they surely deserve serious philosophical and theological study by Jesuit theologians and scientists. Insight into these issues could not only help our understanding of the apostolate of faith and justice, particularly in relation to science; but also contribute to the deep renewal of the scientific vocation, for both Jesuit and non-Jesuit scientists alike.

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LETTERS and COMMENTARIES

The personal and theoretic reflections on the option for the poor contained in *Promotio Justitiae* n° 52 made little if any mention of community, and it occurs to me that there are some important connections.

I can't offer much in the way of theoretical reflections, but I can present my experience of living for a number of years in the Ignatius Farm Community, Guelph, a community consisting of some Jesuits and religious, some temporary volunteers, and some more permanent members who had spent parts of their lives in psychiatric hospitals, prisons or other institutions.

While a member of this community I had a personal sense of living a type of authentic religious life, a sense which I have not had to the same degree when living in more traditional Jesuit houses. On reflection, I think there are several reasons for this, which relate to what I sense as a certain impoverishment of religious life.

I wonder whether our sense of religious life has become so focused on apostolic activity that the way we live is seen as a sort of residue, judged chiefly according to its functionality for the apostolate. But a sense of vocation is normally a sense of a call to live a certain sort of life, including the evangelical counsels, prayer, and community. In this sense, how we live has a certain priority to what we actually do. This sort of thing is said often enough, but I only experienced it to a significant degree when I was living in a community with the poor.

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When I was living in this community, I was working as a chaplain at the local state university. Whether or not the students there appreciated how I was living (and many did), at least it was intelligible to them. Living in a community with the poor was a form of religious life that they could understand. Sometimes I experienced conflict in terms of time and commitment between the community and the apostolate, but in fact at the heart of the matter there was no real conflict. Not only did the way I was living lend a certain credibility to my work, but also students respected the fact that, as they might put it, "I had a life".

Of course on a more personal level, this community was very important for me, both in terms of having a sense of integrity in my own life, and in terms of simple human affection and friendship and support. I did not have to cast around outside of my community for these things. Of course, the community was often very demanding and painful, but the very fact of its making demands required that I deepen my own commitment.

In terms of the option for the poor, I have a suspicion that we Jesuits today need the poor in order to live an authentic religious life. Perhaps individualism and professionalism have such a hold on us that we need the poor to call us back to community as something which is central to religious life.

The community in which I lived was established as an expression of the option for the poor, and its aim was to provide a community and a home for people who had been wounded in their lives, usually through experiences of marginalization and institutionalization. Yet as it turned out, those whom we welcomed as the poor gave back much more than they were given. They gave back a sense of religious life and religious community.

I don't think my experience is idiosyncratic. Many Jesuits have been involved in L'Arche,[1] and perhaps would be more articulate than I am on the connections between an option for the poor and an authentically religious community life. At the very least, I don't think we should underestimate the sort of crisis in the meaning of religious life, which is often experienced by young Jesuits as unhappiness in community. It seems to me that if the option for the poor can serve as a sort of hermeneutic principle for the renewal of Jesuit life and commitment, it has to be able to speak to the reality and the possibilities of Jesuit community.

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[1] Communities in which handicapped people and those who help them live, work, and share their lives together. Some 97 communities in 20 countries belong to the L'Arche federation.

I liked the conversation in *PJ* n° 54 and would like to join in. I appreciate knowing where I am in the world — "n° 24" — and not in terms of GNP! The Human Development Index (which must have taken much work to do) includes the "ability to communicate and to participate in the life of the community, and to have sufficient resources to obtain a decent living." The concern of many people in Hong Kong is not to have a life like China's, which I notice is "n° 101". I notice Catholics and religious in Hong Kong are like most people, thinking of the situation of Catholics in China, and some are leaving.

In the context of working for justice and removing oppression, I wonder if we could work out indices for the values of the Kingdom of God. I say this because I have seen the majority of the population here climb from hillside shacks to high-rise air-conditioned flats, family size reduced to an average of two children, with good education and full employment. We are the third-most expensive city in the world. We are most likely better off in terms of social justice, but are we nearer to **God's Justice** and the values of the Kingdom of God?

I write as a school teacher, with pupils who pay virtually no fees. About 50 per cent of the students come from homes whose income is less than that of a secondary school teacher. Promoting justice is more than compassion and studying hard, along with having good relations with others. It is an inner glow coming with Charity, and with the Light of faith. How then to communicate this?

There is need of a mysticism, which is more than poetic imagination. There is need to desire to be with Christ-Poor, but who in his right "worldly" mind would want that? Here is the challenge I see to the majority of Jesuits, who are my age or older. These 60+ are usually rather frugal but well padded, and they have security. Could a renewal come from "them" — "us"?

The well-prepared tabloid G.C. 34 was a boost for us all, but I feel it did not reflect the agenda of most Jesuits. With about a year to our next Congregation, it might be good to have more of "conversation" in your pages. There is environmental degradation brought on by our life style, and the "greed" and "waste" of our economy. There is the breakdown of families, but look at the number of Jesuits who have changed the minds they had — when they took their First Vows. Then there is the time we spend on TV and newspapers, etc., and our "dis-edifying conversation" with each other.

"Where in the World are We" in the sense of the spiritual world? and how do we see our Mission in our weekly lives? I trust G.C. 34 will see that we are a much smaller, more mobile and vital group, than we were thirty years ago. We need leadership — and much more the grace of God.

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Dear Raymond Parent and Martin Voill,

Your article "Media Gone Missing" (*PJ* n° 53) about the absence of concern for mass media in the preparatory documents, made a connection between the Society's option for the poor and mass media but, I think, it was a flawed one.

I agree that mass media and communication are very important, but I don't think we should enter into this area on the supposition that the poor cannot organize and that therefore we should be a voice for them — a basic proposition of your paper.

I wanted to respond in November citing examples of the indigenous people in Chiapas (Mexico) but now, after the uprising in January, my case is much stronger. They can organise, and they can gain access to the media. The Zapatista army, mostly indigenous people with others who accompany them, have managed the media in an extraordinarily astute way. They have forbidden access to the big Mexican media chain, *Televisa*, almost a monopoly, because of its long track record of distortion and outright lies, and so they have enabled the smaller media groups who report on the uprising with much more integrity to become the major sources of information for what is the single biggest news item within the country.

To the Society: I think we should also be about providing access to media for the poor, especially those who show an inclination to want to organise themselves. Our role should be one of accompaniment, not "being their voice" for them. The latter is another paternalism, isn't it?

What do you think?

John Sweeney, S.J.
[in letters omit "Rev" or "Fr" or "S.J."]
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