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* COMMENTARY on *TOWARDS GC 34*

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Louisa Blair, Canadian journalist and writer, met Xolile Keteyi, S.J. at the Workshop on the Native Apostolate held at Anishinabe, Canada, in October, 1993. "Xolile and I struck up quite a friendship that weekend. I kept after him for an interview and he kept refusing but finally explained to me that in South Africa tape recorders are terrifying and dangerous things. So after a lot of cajoling I persuaded him to let me interview him without a tape recorder. When I heard the sad news of his sudden death in May 1994, I realized that the interview was a tribute to him. This is what he said, on October 14th."

A TRIBUTE to XOLILE

Louisa Blair

The architects of Apartheid hijacked culture and used it to support their policies, for example, they exploited commonalities to set up the homelands. Other aspects of culture were revitalized, for example, the importance of family life and decision-making systems.

The culture was weakened and people became cynical about it. But it didn't die. Cultures all have their own dynamism and so new forms of cultural expression developed. For example, the suppression of freedom of speech resulted in alternative theatre and comedy. The undermining of the extended family resulted in new ways of sharing, co-ops for example. The repression also resulted in the formation of links between different tribes who had the same aspirations.

Aspects of the traditional culture such as traditional economics, the acquisition and expression of wealth, were also subverted. But in the ruins, patterns of behaviour can be reappropriated. For example, the sensitivity to the land. Even though people have been deprived of land, that sensitivity to it (the relationship is much deeper than ownership) can be used to rework the land, to rebuild some form of agriculture.

There is the classic case of a people gaining freedom and chucking their religion. We have to find a new place for God in our lives, not just the God who vindicates the poor and oppressed. The new theology that is needed is right there in the culture: we have the God of vindication, but we also have the ancestors, who are protectors and providers. The current struggle for wellbeing and wealth cannot be separate from culture, and the ancestors make that link.

A lot of kids are cynical about their own culture, however. They are into the CNN-Hollywood culture. What I want to do is:

- teach them a re-appreciation of their culture;
- save them from the later shock and frustration of finding out just how empty and unfulfilling the CNN-Hollywood culture is, by re-acquainting them with their own which, when they make that discovery, will give them the roots to come back to;
- help them integrate the ancestors into their current values X i.e., you can't just go back to what was, a new synthesis has to emerge.

There are inevitably clashes between the old culture and the new: for example, the apparent non-involvement of the elders in the struggle for liberation. It's not that they aren't aware or don't believe in justice, it's because of their cultural resistance to being led by children, who are the political leadership of the struggle. There is a suspicion of them by the elders, so they might say "No" when they are asked to open a meeting with a prayer, or for the use of their house or their vehicle. I feel it myself when my students question me. I catch myself thinking, "What is this kid telling me? Wait a few years, get some experience, then form your opinion and come back to me." It's in my cultural background, too.

The traditional way to question an elder is very subtle. You suggest something in the form of a proposal for an area of inquiry: "I was just wondering if..." and then, if the elder responds, "Yes, I was wondering about that too," you have an opening to put across your opinion. It's not the right of young people to question their elders that is in question. It's the way you do it.

So in my teaching we will pick up what we can of the culture and move on. We can't go backwards, cultures have to adapt and move on. The young people know that they belong to their own people, but they don't know exactly how. They complain about their parents but they don't want to leave them, they love them. I worked with young people in Soweto for six years. The sense of belonging is not supported by their environment any more. They are immersed in a cash economy, and their parents don't have the money to buy them the Levi jeans. You have to play father, brother, and companion to them, and feel out the right response. There's no book to tell you how.

What is African theology? There has been a false dichotomy between theology and spirituality. If theology isn't lived out in practice, it means nothing. We have to find the spirit in which to live out those theological principles. Black consciousness helped X by the time we left high school we were thinking seriously about our identity and about the country X but it's only part of a new black theology. Black consciousness isn't just African, it's American as well, although it was born in Africa. And it is mainly about pain, whereas Africa is also joy. It leaves out joy.

So I try to help the students pick up the pieces. For example, in their use of language I try to get them to tighten it up, and don't allow them to use it loosely. The newspapers and TV pour out a flow of information that is all impressions. By contrast, in traditional Africa, ideas come out in very slow, deliberate conversations that dwell on one issue for a very long time.

Pointing out the meanings of words can tell them a lot about what knowledge is about. For example, in Sesotho there is a verb which means "to take note, to notice". In its noun form it means "mind", and in another noun form it means "wisdom". So you put those meanings together and you see that wisdom comes from taking note, noticing things and putting them together.

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May Xolile's spirit carry on this work, the discerning retrieval of culture with the kids in South Africa.

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SYMPOSIUM on ECOLOGY

With environmental awareness growing everywhere, the interface between the Church and the environmental movement is becoming very important. Jesuit communities, works and even Provinces are challenged:

- to change our own practices (e.g., to reduce waste, to recycle, etc.)
- to support causes (e.g., to protect the rainforest)
- to join with others on a local or global issue (e.g., to resist the construction of a hydro-electric dam or a nuclear reactor).

The Church, in order **both** to fulfil her responsibilities **and** to contribute to the environmental movement, must identify accurately the moral issues involved in ecological concerns; similarly, the Society. Eleven of our brothers X four of whom, Aguilar, Matthew, McCarthy, and Walpole, attended the Earth Summit at Rio X were invited to address the following questions:

1. As a Jesuit with expertise in environmental issues and the scientific method, what perspective, guidelines or procedures would you suggest to your fellow Jesuits? What are the criteria to use, what are the basic steps to take, in making a responsible judgment about the scientific merits of a specific ecological issue, campaign or movement?
2. In your experience, what contribution is being made and could be made to the environmental movement by our mission of faith that does justice, the Church's preferential option for the poor, and the Spiritual Exercises?

The Symposium concludes with the report, or *Relatio praevia*, prepared by the *Coetus praeivus* on the basis of the postulates on ecology passed by seventeen Provincial Congregations. None of the Symposium participants saw the *Relatio* before writing his own piece.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONING

Peter Walpole, S.J.

Over the last five years, a group of young physical and social scientists making up the Environmental Research Division of the Manila Observatory has been dedicated to the development of science for social concern. We work with cultural communities in the marginalized and degraded uplands in different parts of Asia and particularly the Philippines; our brief is to facilitate research activities on the environmental issues affecting these communities. With their participation, the communities challenge us to integrate our scientific fields with our faith.

The two questions posed above, being really general, are difficult, and the need is to respond in a useable and universal way. Drawing from much evaluation and Ignatian reflection upon our interaction with those who want to be more environmentally involved and responsible, and after some discussion with co-workers, I wrote down how we see things. The result is an open-ended check-list of simple comments rather than an essay. Since ecology can be seen as something

outside of society and to be protected from society, I have shifted the term from 'ecological' to 'environmental'.

What are the basic steps in evaluating the scientific merits of an environmental concern?

FIRST:

- Establish a clear understanding of what is meant by development, sustainability and underdevelopment, and the role and responsibility of science in this context.
- Begin with basic critical analytical skills and a healthy suspicion of what is presented.
- Be sensitive to the cultural perspective, avoiding initial judgements.
- Internalize mankind as an integral part of creation, ecosystems and environmental processes.

THEN ASK:

- What scientific data are actually presented in the analysis?
- Are the data up to date, consistent, non-sensational and non-biased?
- Are the limits of the data respected, keeping personal expectations apart?
- Are the necessary time, area and volume constraints tied down, avoiding any loopholes?
- Can a range of examples be drawn upon, rather than only one?
- When bio-physical data are presented, are social relations and consequences factored-in adequately?
- In the face of technologies and their applications to social reality, are the limitations of scientific knowledge respected?
- In the given context, do the data and analysis fall within a basic established theory extended with logical arguments?
- Is the effort educational rather than dictatorial?
- In the light of the evidence gathered, what action is called for?
- What is the realistic potential for achieving the projected outcome of the activity, and what further scientifically-based evidence is needed?
- How are social costs and resource depletion factored into the equations?
- Has sustainable resource use been sufficiently investigated not to short-change legitimate social concerns?
- If the scientific merits are fully evaluated, to what degree can action can be agreed upon, without being absolutist?

- Are projections or scenarios presented together with relevant factors and adequate time considerations?
- What is the historical, political and economic context of the scientific knowledge being discovered, and who might potentially be its beneficiary?
- Where social relations are changing, the quality of life is deteriorating, or minority and marginalized people's rights are imperilled, what environmental concerns can be identified?
- Do we seek collaboration with those working in related fields?
- Finally, what can we contribute to the growing concern, and where?

What do our mission of faith that does justice, the preferential option for the poor, and the Spiritual Exercises contribute?

OUR MISSION CONTRIBUTES:

- A keenness to address immediate concerns in a pioneering way, opening up to new environmental needs.
- Clarity to identify social issues and incorporate the marginalized in a proactive rather than reactive response.
- An acceptance of environmental reality and an ability to live the community's joys and sorrows.
- A new impulse for participative research so that, responding to people's needs, it becomes an on-going, local activity.
- A new criterion to apply to research: will it be just?
- A recognition of Christ accompanying our efforts and sending us further into an evolving world of challenge and responsibility.

THE OPTION FOR THE POOR FREES THE JESUIT:

- To respect poor communities deeply and participate in their greater quality of life, to discover what changes must be promoted, and to propose appropriate values both social and spiritual.
- To allow a faith in God to emerge in the rural communities, recognizing what can be done only by faithful response to His call.
- From spending half of his life working on the environmental problems of the marginalized and the other half in the upper segment of society that consumes the environment; the preferential option frees him to work to integrate the two worlds.

THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES GRANT US:

- A shift from traditional images to one of bio-physical Nature as alive and responsive to God, integral to His providential love for all.

- A view of the environment as integral to Divine Providence toward human and social reality.
- The grace to discern God's will, in research activities with poor communities, towards a just society balanced in the environment.
- To seek God's grace to remain open and carry on in hope.

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The GREENING of the SOCIETY

K.M. Matthew, S.J.

The environment is a gateway for Jesuit ministry into the third millennium. In today's environmental crisis, Jesuits should discern the inarticulate search for meaning, the birth pangs of the third millennium, a true planetary Pentecost; in "environment," the new religion, Jesuits should locate by far the best opportunity for apostolic insertion. **Awareness generation** at every level of Church life is crucially important. The 1988 pastoral letter of the Philippine Bishops *What is Happening to our Beautiful Land?* is a salutary example of relevant pastoral leadership. Commitment to the environment is much more than an option for the poor, it is the **option for life** on the planet.

The signs of the times

First World: The environmental restlessness, especially among the youth, is a good sign; the excesses of environmental movements, of all hues of green, should not be too severely judged. At bottom the restless young show idealism and commitment, with a readiness to simplify their life styles, to provide assistance (technical, even more than financial) to the Third World, in short, to create a better planet. I think the missionaries and martyrs of the third millennium will come from among these.

Third World: Guided growth (=development) is the goal, but let there be no illusions: the duration of a few generations will be required to obtain tangible results. Meanwhile, much waste of resources, inefficiency, corruption ... will have to be put up with. True partnership should characterize First World involvement in the development of the Third world.

Leadership is the crying need, (a) immediately, to control the damage of international debt; to stabilize population; to safeguard Nature's resources; (b) long-term, to guide growth in tune with the

native genius of peoples.¹

Leadership of the Church

"After all, Rachel Carson published her famous book *Silent Spring* in the spring of 1962; yet the Vatican Council, which opened in October of the same year and continued for four years, had nothing to say on the issue."² This was not accidental; the Church should be far more outward-looking. What is urgent is the massive commitment of the Christian community to the new hurricane of the environmental movement. Fortunately there are signs of an emerging Christian environmental leadership. Here it is that Jesuits should recognize planetary history in the making and insert themselves therein, to make Christ present in the development of that new history.

Moral and religious leadership

In his 1990 World Day of Peace message, Pope John Paul II correctly diagnosed the ecological crisis as a moral problem.³ Considerable theological reflection, both **doctrinal**⁴ and **pastoral**, provides a balanced synthesis and possible orientations. The blueprint of a comprehensive pastoral programme would include: (a) a theology of creation, stewardship, sin and redemption; (b) New Testament; (c) Church life down the centuries; (d) dialogue with other religions, especially with primitive peoples; (e) Earth liturgy; (f) sacraments; (g) a new moral theology, and (h) spirituality and mission.⁵ Christians should insert themselves into contemporary lived world reality, discover a new relevance in religion and, moving towards global ecumenism and cosmic worship of the Divinity in spirit and in truth, finally converge at the Omega Point.

"Finding God in all things," this comprehensive new programme for our own **personal** lives will flow into the ministry. We need an environmental version of the Spiritual Exercises; environmental conversion as a Damascus experience is a grace every Jesuit should earnestly desire and pray for. Many elements in the Exercises are ready, in the *First Week* and the *Contemplation to Attain Love*; theological reflection can elucidate others such as the *Two Standards* in the contemporary planetary reality. The GC 34 document (recommended below) resulting from careful, in-depth study, should offer practical guidelines for our personal lives and a lasting witness in our ministry.

Professional leadership

¹ United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), *Agenda 21*, Rio de Janeiro, 1992. The author has interpreted the Rio Summit: "The secular message," *SHOLA* 10 (1992), 140-143, reprinted in *Jivan* 14 (1993), 10-11; "The pastoral message," *Vidyajyothi Journal* 57 (1993), 215-222; and "The religious message," *Ignis* (Madras) 22 (1993), 39-43.

² S. McDonagh, *The Greening of the Church*, Geoffrey Chapman, 1990, p. 192.

³ John Paul II, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation*, 1990, § II.

⁴ For the theological doctrine of Fr. Thomas Berry, CP, see A. Lonergan & C. Richards, *Thomas Berry and the New Cosmology*, Connecticut: Twenty-third Publications, 1988.

⁵ McDonagh, *op.cit.* and *To Care for the Earth: a Call to a New Theology*, Geoffrey Chapman, 1986.

The title of McDonagh's *The Greening of the Church* sums up the scope of leadership needed. The biggest assets are the Church's and the Society's international networks and committed personnel, already in liaison with international agencies like the U.N. and its subsidiaries, NGOs, Government agencies. This should be strengthened qualitatively and quantitatively. Three instances by way of illustration:

Educational: An environmental thrust to our educational apostolate can make a tremendous difference and generate a newfound relevance. Our three-day programmes to generate environmental awareness, handling over 28,000 trainees (students, villagers and leaders) in less than ten years, are an international success story.⁶

Research and Development: The socio-economic and development ministry of Jesuits has created an extensive infrastructure; this should be expanded and strengthened, aiming at better local, national and international collaboration. Our biology men can do exciting research in bio-diversity that does not require sophisticated instrumentation.

Grassroots witness: If every Church station in the world, including hospitals, schools, orphanages, etc., had a greening centre actively cooperating with other committed workers for the benefit of the community, we should have done much to make ours a relevant Church. Especially in Third World countries, I should like every mission station to become a centre where seedlings are made available gratis, if possible, or at cost. The greening of the Church!

Practical Proposals

- a) A Jesuit Secretariat for Environment is most timely, in response to the signs of the times, and most pressing. This is not just one **more** establishment, but an effort to unify the various ongoing developmental and educational ministries under the environmental umbrella.
- b) A document from GC 34 on our commitment to the environment, providing both the *raison d'être* and practical orientations, would be most opportune.
- c) In practice, each Province should have at least a minimal environmental programme for which suitable personnel should be trained. To begin, an Assistancy-wide initiative can show the way.

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⁶ K.M. Matthew, "Environmental Awareness Generation in India," *Jesuits* (Year Book) 1992, 106-109.

GLOBAL versus LOCAL X ENVIRONMENT vs DEVELOPMENT

Lester Coutinho, S.J.

This paper discusses some issues concerning Jesuit involvement in environmental or ecological concerns. The paper is located within the perspective not just of the so-called Third World but specifically of the victims in these societies. This allows for a radical reinterpretation of some key concepts like culture and development which shape our understanding of environmental issues. Unless we seriously challenge the popular ideas of development and culture, not only will our response to environmental challenges be shallow, but we shall be doing more harm than good. This paper, humbly admitting that it does not offer concrete solutions, does attempt to articulate the critical awareness that must inform our response.

The concern for the environment has not emerged independently, but is a fundamental part of the on-going development debate. Development should not be misunderstood as just an economic problem, for it also concerns social, cultural and political relations within human communities, and between these communities and nature. In order to understand environmental challenges, it is imperative that we first examine the discourse of development.

The Hegemony of Development

In analyzing development and criticizing its discourse, we are examining those practices by which people govern themselves and others. Domains are set up in which the true and the false are distinguished; objectification takes place and transforms human beings into subjects; and a society gets established and structured for the sake of common welfare. By distinguishing what may be called scientific from what may not, by connecting "science" to power relations that define and maintain and legitimize, development is a superior form of knowledge and forms a "regime" of truth. Development in this sense is a political activity.

Discourse on development has operated like a mafia of the mind, forcing entire societies to constitute reality and conceive of their destinies in a particular way. It has crippled their abilities to imagine and trust anything different from the development credos and prescriptions of the West. In as much as the colonial constructions of the Third World deeply influenced people's self-perception, the discourse on development has led entire societies to perceive themselves as underdeveloped. Long after colonization ended, development allowed for the recolonization of the so-called "developing" world by the so-called "developed" world.

Development is a universalizing discourse that tries to establish an inseparable link between the level of civilization and the level of production. It is a hegemonic discourse because, as a body of specialized knowledge, it appropriates the power to represent the developing world, taking away from subjugated peoples the agency of their own histories. Development is a political coinage wherein new perceptions of one's own self and the other are created.

Not enough to conceive of development in a particular manner, development also has to be deployed, and this needs vehicles or strategies. The scientification of development allows for creating abnormalities such as "underdevelopment" that can then be remedied through specific

treatment. Having established a field where power might intervene, the discourse of development then goes on to establish the superior position of the developmentalist (the development expert or professional). Development as a discipline of research and study leads to the professionalisation of development as well as the formation of a field of knowledge, a field of control.

Finally, development is institutionalized at various levels through international organizations, state bodies and development agencies, including church-sponsored ones. These became the agents of development. Their control over the destinies of entire human communities is ever more subtly disguised, and development has found its own justifications. International agreements controlling trade, nuclear proliferation, intellectual property rights, human rights, bio-diversity and ecology are fundamentally aimed at allowing for recolonization X for recreating subject peoples without agency over their histories. Like the colonial constructions of the colonized world, the discourse on development allows the developed and civilized self to subject the uncivilized and underdeveloped other, not only economically but also socially, culturally and politically.

Homogenizing Culture and Globalizing Environment⁷

The homogenizing of culture takes place in parallel to the development process wherein the dominant West thrusts certain goals determined to be desirable upon the Third World. The philanthropic goal of developing the economies of the former colonies leads to the destruction of indigenous ways of life and knowledge; it imposes foreign institutions on these communities, resulting in a kind of cultural and social incapacitation that leads to various crises, tensions and often violence. Development and the dream of material prosperity have destroyed spiritual values and morally impoverished the recolonized nations. Communities which for centuries used and managed their natural resources and their labour in keeping with their own particular worldview, are defined as *homo economicus*, nothing more, and categorized under universalizing socio-economic concepts such as poverty, income group, standard of living, etc. All societies should obey the imperative and model themselves on the cultural prescriptions of the most developed. Gradually, the West (the North in more recent jargon) with all its values and dreams comes to exist in the East (South).

Thus the Church and all those concerned for the victims of history must challenge the globalizing process, the strategies of homogenizing culture and the use of environmental issues. While placing such issues in a global context may seem to help, doing so uncritically supports the recolonization of the Third World by prioritising global concerns over the specificities of the local.

But what exactly is our understanding of **culture**? By culture we do not mean the unique expressions of an artistic self, removed from a community's life and turned into commodities. Nor is culture used here, as in classical anthropology, to mean the organizing principles of a way of life or a set of traditions of living. This meaning gives the anthropologist an audible, authoritative voice to protest all encroachments and, paradoxically, to marginalize any less official dissent.

A third meaning sees culture as a form of political resistance and also a language within which this resistance is articulated. During British colonial rule, the assertion of Indian culture was often meant as a protest against political domination, a means of challenging its legitimacy, and a defiance

⁷ I am indebted to Dr. Ashish Nandy for these ideas on culture, borrowed from his unpublished paper "Development, Culture & Violence" (1993).

of its language X for example, the numerous spontaneous rebellions during the freedom movement, the Gandhian satyagrahas, the assertion of tribal identity in some parts of the country, and the anti-deforestation and anti-dam movements in more recent times. Similarly, in Africa, including South Africa, the expressions of ethnicity and identity by the local populations themselves became forms of resistance to domination.

Culture in this sense is not only the language of resistance, it is itself resistance. It resists the subjugation which is disguised as "historical necessity" and masked under universalized goals of scientific growth, economic progress and development. Those subjugated are targeted as the beneficiaries of development projects, and their voice is incorporated into the development discourse which is then reintroduced with new adjectives as "humanistic," "integrated" or "alternative" development.

Culture then is the victim's version of the truth, and this truth recognizes that domination and exploitation increasingly come from the pathologies of development credos. The language and voice of the victims are also gradually being incorporated into the discourse that legitimizes social injustice and domination. The victim's voice is subsumed into the global outcry against injustice and oppression and, tragic irony, helps to legitimize more subtle and widespread strategies for silencing the same victim. The terrible predicament of basic survival would be remedied through international agreements ranging from human rights to bio-diversity, from World Bank policies for protecting indigenous peoples to action plans for population control. All this attempts again to take away from victims the agency of their own histories. Whenever the global structures are threatened by resistance, the language of resistance has quickly been coopted, redefined and turned around to legitimate and reassert control.

The Challenge to Respond⁸

On the specific issue of environment, various micro-level movements denounce the ecological and social costs incurred by the forms of maldevelopment designed and financed by agencies such as the World Bank. Yet the language of environmentalists is now being taken over and re-made into the reason for strengthening institutions and policies which are as hegemonic as they are global. International policies have led to excessive deforestation, land alienation, erosion of people's rights to common resources, displacement of communities from their traditional lands. Now the victims of such policies are being told that their sacrifice is for a larger good. In India the notion of "national interest" is invoked when local interests must be sacrificed. Similarly, protecting tropical forests or a certain eco-system gains legitimacy not from local but from global interests, the latter often espoused by particular groups overseas. While the North/West refuses to change its ultra-consumerist lifestyle that causes serious damage to the environment, it bullies governments of the East/South on how their natural resources are to be managed and utilized.

The emergence of a global focus on environmental issues, instead of widening the agenda, only helps to narrow it in the interests of those who have the global reach. A kind of green imperialism now establishes the universal environmental agenda. The Third World must preserve its forests as carbon-sinks to serve the "larger" interests of the First, to which the local needs of communities to exploit and conserve their forests for subsistence are secondary by far. The ozone-layer and global

⁸ Vandana Shiva examines this in detail in "Conflicts of Global Ecology: Environmental Activism in a Period of Global Reach," *Alternatives* 19 (1994), 195-207.

warming are more important to the global environment agenda than public health problems caused by floods, chemical industries, or changes in the cropping patterns of rural communities in Asia or Africa.

Like the universalizing discourse of development, the globalizing of environmental concern now helps to mask the real problems of our societies. The victims are turned into the exploiters destroying the environment, and a field of power is again opened up to allow a superior know-ledge to intervene and subjugate local knowledges. The development professional is replaced by the environment expert who establishes an area of control and determines the strategies for protecting the environment. Documents on various aspects of the environment are produced at international conferences where poor countries have little bargaining power. The dominant then use these declarations to shirk their responsibilities and lay the blame on Third World peoples.

The Called-for Response

I have tried to show how environmental issues are used to bring the South under the specialized gaze of the North for the sake of greater political control. How then should we form our response? It is important that our response be developed locally rather than just globally. The greatest harm the Church could do (if it has not done so already), being an institution spread-out around the world, would be to attempt to globalize her response. Just as cultures exist in great pluralism, so a great variety exists of victims and their voices. The concern and the critical awareness should be global and must inform our response, but the responses themselves should be more local than global. This necessitates our accepting social, political, cultural and spiritual diversity at a very basic level, so that our response might be less chauvinistic and more relevant.

The Society of Jesus with our preferential option for the poor has a special responsibility to identify with the victims of history, and in doing so to challenge the present structures of domination. However, any such identification-with and opposition-to, if authentic, will also affect our own lifestyles. Credible witnessing to the Kingdom of God will be based on the Gospel values we live out generously in our calling. In the name of apostolic efficiency we often make options that alienate us from the victims of history, we become unwitting instruments that allow the dominant to co-opt the voice of victims. For example, do larger apostolic interests justify our investing financially in the very projects that threaten to displace thousands of tribals?

The Incarnation challenges us authentically and locally to allow ourselves to be broken with the victims. The challenge is as political as it is spiritual, and the response will have to be both. We can no longer blithely combine developmental and environmental globalism with the preferential option. Unless we critique environmental and developmental strategies and take our stand at the local level, we shall only abet the further victimizing of the victims.

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Not TECHNOLOGICAL but THEOLOGICAL

Paul Desmarais, S.J.

I protest against the questions being addressed to Jesuit "environmentalists/scientists." This implies that environmental issues might be the prerogative or sole interest of scientists. I say that environmental issues are everyone's responsibility, especially every Jesuit's. Scientists can help to perpetuate the problem or they can offer alternatives. But it seems to me that the basic issue of the environment resides in our theological vision.

By emphasizing scientific responses, the questions are posed in a dualistic way. What is required is a re-orientation of our thinking about ourselves in relation to the planet Earth. Do we see ourselves as one species evolving in unison with all other species on the earth? If not, we will perpetuate the problems besetting the world X wars, inequalities, poverty, hunger, poisoned air, soil and water X thanks to the whole military/industrial complex with all its terrible consequences. But if we see ourselves more integrally related with the earth....

Who is God for us?

Many scientific endeavours and achievements are oriented by the notions that people have of God, man and the world. If God is seen as purely transcendental and concerned primarily with eternal redemption, then the world is in great danger of being seen as simply at our disposal, to do with whatever serves our journey towards heaven.

If on the other hand the emphasis is on God as immanent, intimately involved in on-going creation, then we ourselves, with God, are concerned with all of creation. How in this light would we view water, food, housing, clothing, transport? Would such basic necessities be carefully developed within the capacity of the bio-region to sustain them into the future? Or would we continue to exhaust natural resources at the expense of future generations?

The basic issue is more fundamental than responsible judgements simply within the scientific method. It relates to our basic way of thinking X our theology X which leads to the scientific method, to our life style, to all the professions and to education. Several criteria will have to be examined in this fundamental approach to human existence on planet Earth.

Criteria for our Judgements

One criterion in making a responsible judgement on an issue is the ability of the earth system to sustain itself for the survival of future generations. Men and women live in inter-connectedness with other parts of the earth. If the soil, air and water are so polluted that other species die, there is a chance that future human generations will also prove unable to survive. We have classic examples in Chernobyl, Bhopal, DDT, and acid rain.

Another criterion to consider when examining environmental issues involves human rights, both individual and collective. The United Nations Declaration defines human rights as the minimal concrete conditions for participation in community with dignity. Certainly one of the most important "minimal concrete conditions" is a healthy environment for this generation and for future

ones. Respect for environment, which includes respect for all other species, is therefore an absolute necessity for fully respecting human rights.

Deeper Social Analysis

Beyond these criteria, a completely new rethinking of our relationship with the environment is required. Over the last twenty years we have been trained to look at the root causes of problems. Paulo Freire urged us to become critically conscious about all of social reality. But even if the poor had a critical consciousness regarding the reasons for their poverty, they could still share the same mindset or worldview as the privileged. As a result the environment would probably continue to suffer, because the poor could also subscribe to unrestrained growth and unsustainable development.

A truly adequate social analysis of today's reality needs to include consideration of environmental factors. Beyond the uncritical consciousness that places man at the centre of everything, we must form a society that has a different vision regarding the professions and the financial world. This criterion, proposed by Fr. Thomas Berry, CP, would have us first consider what effects any decision could have upon the earth. Employing this criterion necessitates a major change in world economics, agriculture and, in fact, all our undertakings.

Wider Moral Responsibility

We need to widen the scope of moral judgment beyond inter-personal and group behaviour to include our relationship with the earth community. Decisions and actions we take now will have repercussions for future generations, assuming that we have not totally annihilated the earth's life system. For example, in Zambia it is estimated that in twenty years most of our forests will have been cut for fuelwood, timber, and agriculture. Hence the lack of respect for the earth today constitutes an injustice towards generations to come.

First World countries are depleting natural resources at a galloping rate and committing an injustice against not only the present generation but all future ones, against not only their own but all people of the world, especially the poor. Businesses, especially transnational corporations (TNCs), should be held morally accountable for their actions as they affect people and the earth. It takes time for the earth's life system to renew and heal itself of pollutants.

Role of the Church

A newly appreciated spirituality emphasizes God's continual creation, with ourselves as co-creators in the evolutionary process. As an agronomist in Zambia, my work encourages "Low External Input Agriculture" X organic farming, conservation practices, agro-forestry, oxenization, alternative energies, appropriate technology, co-operatives, and new models of education. I urge the Church to offer a viable model of rural development growing from greater sensitivity to and harmony with the Creator's activities.

At present Zambia is under pressure from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund to follow a Structural Adjustment Program (SAP). SAP promotes a liberalized economy based on the free market. The assumption of this liberal view is that the decisions individuals make in their self-interest will be for the common good. In order for these self-interested decisions to flourish, the marketplace should be as free as possible, and it is also important for individual rights to be

protected. Hence the conclusion: privatization means prosperity for all.

The Church has criticized SAP for its insensitivity to the vulnerable, the majority poor of this country. But besides attacking SAP for its harsh effects upon the poor, the Church must also note the consequences the economic reforms are having on the environment. For the neo-liberal SAP is not an environmentally-friendly economic model.

Farm and Land Policies

What does this mean for agricultural policies and our efforts to feed Zambia's people? If farm policies simply reflect the neo-liberal economic view, then a real danger exists that TNCs and the rich will buy up land for the production and export of commodities. The neo-liberal argument claims that this approach is for the common good, that all will prosper. What really happens is that many poor people are displaced from the land, work for a pittance and go hungry, while the environment is degraded. Agribusiness' primary concern is making profit, not doing justice to the poor and least of all to the earth community.

Biblical justice, by contrast, concerns human relationships and the common good, respect and the full well-being of persons in community. Small-scale farms show more sensitivity to the environment and less concern for immediate profit-making than TNCs and agro-businesses. Such farms are more efficient than large corporate ones, promote decentralized decision-making, enhance rural communities, employ more people, and can be more sustainable and earth-friendly. Policies promoting small farms should be favoured.

The Zambian Parliament has recently been debating changes in the land-tenure system. Some parties favour a freehold system (completely private property owned in perpetuity) rather than a leasehold (property held for 99 years). Land is a gift of God X are we independent owners of the land or responsible stewards? What is our responsibility to future generations when deciding how to use a piece of land? In justice, consideration ought to be given to the effect of land tenure on the environment and on future generations.

Implications for Jesuits

I was surprised and disturbed at our Provincial Congregation. Some delegates, when discussing a postulate on Jesuit commitment to environmental issues, argued that we should not become involved in such issues because we already have more than enough in our faith and justice works to keep ourselves occupied. I don't see environmental ethics simply as a separate issue, but rather permeating all our thinking. It must suffuse all our works, the same as justice is part and parcel of our faith. Environmental awareness is a refinement of the faith that does justice.

In my own development as a Jesuit agronomist, the integration of concerns for justice and the earth affected my faith. Previous studies in conventional agriculture taught me that, to farm properly, one had to clear the fields of trees. In directing an agricultural training centre for young Zambian farmers, I became sensitive to community participation in development and began to understand the need for agro-forestry. Four years ago, I was not aware of creation spirituality and the deeper dimensions of environmental issues. After some studies in environment ethics, I now find that creation spirituality provides a broad-based and much deeper orientation and a different perspective on my apostolate. At Kasisi Agricultural Training Centre, we are growing vegetables organically, have a strong agro-forestry programme, are involved in oxenization and blacksmithing, and do

research on solar power and appropriate technologies.

All these concerns at Kasisi may appear very technological. But for me they are basically theological X rooted in my faith, influenced by creation spirituality. As a Jesuit, I believe that this orientation should guide all our apostolates, pastoral and educational, developmental and spiritual. Then we will have the correct approach, all of us being environmentalists.

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From ANALYSIS to DECISION

François Euvé, S.J.

Not being an expert in environmental issues, I fear that I may not be able to respond adequately to the questions. But such hesitation is no justification for silence, because in this area everyone is by definition involved. The great danger and permanent temptation would be to leave to experts alone the task of resolving environmental problems in our stead. Ecological questions must be debated as widely as possible, in a debate which is "political" in the genuine sense of the term. We must specify the exact role and contribution of the "experts," but they should not take the ultimate decisions. These must remain political.

Unlike problems which traditionally engage political debate, environmental problems have a dimension which we could call "macroscopic," and which therefore requires a **global approach**. With respect to time, these questions concern the **long term**. Choices we make today may not have immediate effects, but affect generations to come. For example, the decline in production of greenhouse gasses will only alter the climate measurably in a few decades. For this reason it is not easy to evaluate the consequences of actions taken, unless one resorts to predictive methods whose reliability is always debatable. With respect to space, environmental problems have an international, even **global**, dimension from the outset. For example, the pollution caused by the catastrophe of the Chernobyl nuclear reactor in Ukraine was felt above all in the neighbouring country, Byelorussia, and blithely crossed international state borders. No problem of this type can be treated at the level of one country alone. All of these questions are finally and closely **interconnected**. Industrial waste is connected to economic development, which in turn is connected to and conditioned by demographic growth. All the disciplines including highly specialized scientific ones are thus involved, and these are difficult for ordinary people to grasp. Thus we need new trans-disciplinary models and close collaboration among specialists in such disciplines, and also a capacity on their part to make these problems understandable to the "political" powers, that is, finally, to the citizen.

These short remarks already suggest some lines of action for the Society, for example, in educational institutions or in scholasticates. How to conscientize people to the long-term view at a time when X at least in developed countries X people are more inclined to withdraw into a more and

more precarious immediacy? At a time when nationalism is increasing, how to make people aware of a great solidarity which goes beyond their usual groups? Finally, how to help the public appreciate the problems at stake? On this last point, Jesuits working as specialists in the various sectors involved (geophysics, climatology, demography) could make their reflections available to their confrères, using already-existing networks.

Ecological problems call into question a style of development (scientific, technical, economic) employed for many centuries in the modern West which, via colonization, spread all over the planet. Awareness of the threats to mankind has grown in more or less the same countries which have been seriously trying to do something about pollution. But the effort is insufficient if not taken up by everyone. Countries which aspire to economic development according to the "western model" do not (yet) have the economic and technological means to overcome its perverse effects. Environmental clean-up is expensive. Should the developed world try to brake the pace of development of other countries in order to slow down pollution, or invest in these countries to assure both development and clean-up? If the environmental crisis puts the western model of development into question, what other model ought one to promote with respect for diverse cultures? I mention this aspect of the problem, the connection between ecology and development, because we are lucky to be an international body, especially active in the developing countries, which allows us to mount a debate on this topic. The present symposium is already a beginning, although the Society is not the only group able to respond to such questions.

Another more theoretical area in which I feel our reflection could be helpful is where one moves **from analysis to decision**. This is really very high stakes in environmental questions, and I have already alluded to it. Two levels must be distinguished very clearly or, if you prefer, two logics: the plural one of scientific analysis, and the binary one of decision-making. The latter is finally a matter of proposing an "either-or" alternative, which is why I speak of "binary logic," recognizing that a decision does not flow directly from an analysis. This is the trap that one falls into when relying only on "experts" to decide. The risk is even greater when they have so-called "unanimity" on a question. Any epistemologist knows that while science needs a minimum of consensus in order to progress (the "standard" models), a theory which by definition cannot be challenged does not deserve to be "scientific." The constant temptation, even among experts, is to force an issue to a consensus and so close off debate before any real alternative has been presented at a "political" level.

How may we contribute to this reflection? It seems to me that the pedagogy of the Exercises as a "decision-making dynamic" gives food for thought. In some cases a decision may be based on, but not deduced from, a detailed analysis of a problem; decisions flow from another source.

The final area where I think we could fruitfully work on ecological questions is the **theology of creation**. Here we may seem far from criteria-for-action on environmental problems, but it is not unrelated. For these problems, which must be dealt with technically, also show our contemporaries taking a new approach to "nature." Thus our engagement in the concrete and urgent challenges of the environment should not keep us from taking a certain distance and shedding some theological light on this "nature" which needs defending. The discussions at the 1989 European Ecumenical Assembly "Peace and Justice" in Basel offer a good approach to the question.

The scale of the questions raised here should urge us to get involved in reflection, not only among Jesuits (though there is work enough here), but also by opening ourselves up to other contexts, whether Church ones or not. We cannot pretend to play "the expert," even when one or another of

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us might well have the competence. It would be better to use our networks to conscientize as many people as possible to become active participants in the debate.

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DISCERNMENT via SOCIAL CONCERN

Chris Moss, S.J.

In the face of a growing awareness of the unprecedented environmental challenge which the world faces, we may ask what should the response of the Society and our personal response as Jesuits be? In approaching these questions, an historical consideration of environmental concerns can be very illuminating, as this brief article attempts to show.⁹

It is frequently assumed that the modern environmental movement originated in late nineteenth or early twentieth-century North America. The figures of Henry D. Thoreau, John Muir and George Perkins Marsh are often cited as the leading originators of this movement. What has been less appreciated until recently, however, is that environmental science has its origins more than a century earlier with the remarkably innovative work of early colonial conservationism. Indeed, Marsh drew much of the inspiration for his famous work, *Man and Nature*, published in 1864, from a detailed history of these colonial experiments.

One of the earliest and most influential of the early pioneer conservationists was the Jesuit priest, Pierre Poivre, who later left the Society and became, in 1766, Commissaire-Intendant of the island of Mauritius. Poivre first visited Mauritius in the 1740's as a scientist to collect spice tree specimens from the Moluccas, and made attempts to transplant imported species of spices in Mauritian soil. This led him to develop an interest in soil conditions, soil humidity, water table levels and the desirability of an extensive protective tree cover to maintain rainfall levels and prevent soil erosion in order that agriculture would flourish on the Island. Poivre acquired an unrivalled knowledge of tropical land-use practices. He was very critical of profligate and destructive felling of trees on Mauritius, and scathing in his criticism of colonial land-use practices. He suggested that a morality expressed in land use would complement the religious morality of the individual.

As Commissaire-Intendant, Poivre held a position to influence conservation policies. In November 1769, the first Forest Conservation Ordinance or *Règlement économique* was enacted as legislation for Mauritius and proved to be a model of its kind, the essential elements of which were incorporated in statutes in St. Vincent (West Indies), the Cape Colony, Natal and India. Poivre himself set up the State Botanical Garden at Pamplemousses which provided part of the essential intellectual and technical infrastructure needed for later environmental innovations. These included strengthened legislation for forest conservation in 1777 and 1795, with further elaboration in 1804, and pioneering legislation in the field of water pollution, fishing protection and the safeguarding of watersheds. Mauritius remained in the forefront of conservation ideas until the 1870's, and Poivre's dedication to conservationism left an intellectual legacy of environmental attitudes, not only in Mauritius but throughout a wider colonial context.

The story of the Society's involvement in environmental issues from early colonial times to the present day, in which Poivre is but one outstanding individual, is a story which largely remains to be told. While it would certainly be worthwhile to recover this history, it is not simply of antiquarian

⁹ Much of the historical material in this article has been taken from Richard H. Grove, *Cambridge Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993), 318. There is a popular article by this author covering similar material in the *Scientific American*, July 1992.

interest, for it contains valuable insights for our present-day environmental concerns and should be incorporated into environmental studies in the education work of the Society.

One such insight is the intimate connection between environmental concerns and social justice. In the early Dutch, French and British colonial period, groups of professional naturalists and scientists made biting critiques of the environmental effects of colonial rule which often surrogated for more direct, but politically less palatable, social commentaries on colonialism itself. Poivre was in the forefront of the anti-slavery movement, took initial steps to abolish slavery on Mauritius, a cause in which he was unable to succeed, and harshly criticized the Europeans' treatment of Native peoples in the Americas. For Jesuit missionaries such as Poivre, finding God in all things undoubtedly strengthened their appreciation for the indigenous people and native culture as well as their devotion to science, and powerfully reinforced their early environmental and social concerns.

The intimate connection between environmental issues and issues of social justice has, of course, been given particular emphasis by many meetings sponsored by the World Council of Churches around the world. A particularly significant event was the 1983 Vancouver Assembly which gave expression to the seminal phrase, "covenanting for justice, peace and the integrity of creation." Its meaning was explained by Kim Yong Bock, co-director of the Third World Leadership Training Centre in Korea:

Christian community as the ecumenical movement for justice, peace and the integrity of creation is a movement to cultivate justice, *koinonia* (fellowship) and *shalom* in the universe. In this context we recognise that the subject of the gardening work is the people of God, and at the same time all created things, not merely humans, are participants in the Garden.¹⁰

The stress here is on recognising the value of nature in its own right, and the need for justice as embracing not only the human community, but also the whole of creation. This is in contrast with the denial of value to nature which has been particularly common in Europe since the eighteenth century, and which is exemplified in the writings of Immanuel Kant. Kant held that God is absolutely world-transcendent and nature is absolutely non-divine, a collection of irrational forces to be subdued and kept in check by human effort. Nature is simply the arena for man to achieve "spiritual" freedom, but has no intrinsic value. By contrast, emphasis on the integrity of creation opens up a new sacramentalism, as Sallie McFague has vividly described:

We do not have to go to some special place ... to find God, for God is present with us here and now. We have a basis for a revived sacramentalism, that is, a perception of the divine as visible, as present, palpably present in the world. But it is a kind of sacramentalism that is painfully conscious of the world's vulnerability, its preciousness, its uniqueness. The beauty of the world and its ability to sustain the vast multitude of species it supports is not there for the taking. The world is a body that must be carefully tended, that must be nurtured, protected, guided, loved, and befriended both as valuable in itself X for like us, it is an expression of God X and as necessary to the continuation of life....¹¹

¹⁰ Kim Yong Bock, "Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation," in *Technology from the Underside*, eds. F. Carino and D. Gosling, Manila: NCCP, 1986, p. 48.

¹¹ S. McFague, "Imaging a Theology of Nature: The World as God's Body," in *Liberating Life*, eds. Birch, Eakin and McDaniel, Orbis Books, 1990, p. 217.

This new emphasis on the sacramentality of nature perhaps highlights the need for a new theology of nature, and constitutes a powerful contemporary challenge to the hegemony of a reductionist scientific world view and its associated injustices.

Given the long, dedicated and distinguished involvement of the Society in both scientific work and the development of environmental thinking, and given our contemporary commitment to faith and justice to which environmental concern has historically been linked, what should the response of the Society be to growing contemporary environmental awareness? I have an institutional suggestion, followed by an observation at a more personal or community level.

At an institutional level, is there need for an international interdisciplinary centre of environmental studies? Such a centre could be located in a country with an outstanding environmental awareness or in a region with particularly intractable environmental problems. The centre could act as a focus and catalyst for environmental studies throughout the Society and the Church. It would assist in the development of a renewed theology of nature, and undertake the specialist studies needed if the Church is to speak effectively on environmental issues. Not least, it would act as an encouragement for younger Jesuits to devote themselves to this field. There is no doubt that the Church is in a unique position to strengthen the ability of governments to act, by proclaiming Gospel values in an environmental context. But to be effective, serious study of the issues must be involved, and an interdisciplinary centre might prove invaluable.

On a more personal and community level, we are frequently challenged to respond to a growing environmental awareness. What perspective might be useful here?

For most important environmental issues there is going to be no "scientific" solution. Of course, a serious responsibility doubtless exists to be as well informed as we reasonably can be of the relevant scientific data for the environmental issue at hand, even though sometimes X perhaps often X we will need to make a judgment and act on the basis of necessarily incomplete information. But the most relevant factor of all will finally not be the scientific data itself, but the perspective afforded by our starting point. Which "facts" we consider to be important depends on our often unexamined social stance and prejudices. The most important knowledge of all is inaccessible to the "expert" as Kim Yong Bock has pointed out so well:

The victims of power and technology hold privileged knowledge not understood by the experts, the scientists, the academics. For they hold an epistemological advantage. The victims have a special knowledge and experience of history, real history, of which those who control are completely unaware. The biblical message must be understood as the account of what God is doing in the world through its victims. The reality is that the Bible is an account of the experience, not of the privileged in society, but of its victims.

To challenge our own prejudices effectively, we require the willingness to enter into another person's pain, as we seek to follow Christ who "gave His life as a ransom for many."

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A SICK PLANET

John Surette, S.J.

The earth is the matrix of man. It surrounds and supports us. It supplies the air we breathe, the water we drink, and the food we eat. It is a context that nurtures our imaginations, our artistic and intellectual lives. It calls forth our inborn sense of the Divine.

Despite this dependence we have managed to radically and, in some cases, irreversibly alter the earth. In the name of "progress" or "development" we continue to do so. Looking at this pathology is not pleasant, but it is necessary. We have been making the earth more toxic. Our industrial economies are diminishing the basic life systems of the planet. In those countries where survival is the order of the day, environmental concerns are a luxury. We are changing structures that have taken the natural world hundreds of millions of years to bring into existence. Even moderate estimates suggest that time is running out.

The old story of our relationship with the earth has not served us well. We have abandoned the pre-Copernican image of the earth as the centre of the universe but we continue to embrace the antiquated image of man as the centre of everything. The fact is, we are not at the top of some hierarchial pyramid of creation. We are not the be-all and end-all of the evolutionary process. To the extent that we alienate ourselves from the natural world, to that extent are we in trouble and the natural world as well. Concern for the earth is no longer one of many "single issues" but is the context of everything else: government, law, medicine, education, economics, and religion.

I am reminded of experiments involving fish in a large tank being kept at one end of the tank for a period of time by the insertion of a sheet of glass. When the barrier is removed the fish do not swim into the other part of the tank but remain where they have grown accustomed. For us the glass has been removed. We are involved in a shifting of worldviews. A new story is beginning to be told now for the first time, and it carries the dream and the energy of a viable future for Earth and its people.

The new science of ecology contributes to the telling of this new story. It focuses our attention on the inter-dependence of all the living and non-living systems of our planet. It invites us to lay aside the illusion that we are somehow separate from or "above" the rest of nature and to embrace our dignity and responsibility as members of the larger community of life. It summons us from our patriarchal stance before creation into a posture of identity and intimacy with the entire cosmic order. Within the community of life it is not so much the fittest species that survives but rather the one which finds its ecological niche and fits into the community X taking what it needs and also giving back something to the community. The question is not so much whether any particular cause, campaign, issue or movement is good for the human community but whether it is good for the bio-system and total community of life including the human. As we formulate our plans, implement our programs, re-structure our institutions, and seek to move into a sustainable future, we can be hopeful if we listen to the new story.

The scientific theory of living systems can provide us with a helpful formulation of this new ecological awareness. Systems are integrated wholes, the properties of which cannot be fully understood in their parts. This theory sees reality in terms of relationships. The human species is

part of the living system which is the Earth. As in interpersonal relationships where domination and control by one party causes the relationship to diminish and ultimately to die, so too in our relationships with the Earth. An ecological approach invites us into a new attitude, a *metanoia*. We need to think and act in terms not of domination and control but of cooperation and reciprocity in our relationships with the planet. This is the *magis* of our times!

Ecological awareness has only recently come into consciousness within our community (at least in its western half). On the one hand it is a fragile consciousness emerging within societies that are highly practised in consumption and individualism, but are novices in the arts of sustainable living and inter-relatedness. On the other hand the consciousness is strong and powerful because it carries hope for future generations and for the future of life's vitality on earth!

We Jesuits can be empowered within our service of the faith that does justice. The ecological paradigm provides us with a new context within which we can assist people to shape their lives and cultures. It is a context in which we become more human by participating in the ongoing creation and evolution of the cosmos. It is a context, according to geologist Thomas Berry, CP, in which "Earth is primary and the human is derivative."

Justice for the Earth's community is the larger context of justice for the human community. The environmental issue is not just another social issue among many. It is foundational! It is impossible to have healthy people on a sick planet. Our national economies will continue in their deficit mode as long as Earth continues in its pathology. Can we imagine the Earth and its human community involved in a mutually enhancing relationship? Can we begin to live that way now? I find all of this in line with Father General's suggestion that the concept of justice is being enlarged and that the issues of peace, justice, and ecology are intimately intertwined

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WHAT'S OUR LAMENT?

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Which environmental causes should receive our time and effort? How can we make sense of the claims and counter-claims that vie for our recognition? Ecological issues may rise and fall in popularity. The "mediatization" of an ecological problem depends on a multitude of factors interacting. The identification of a possible problem, conscientization of society, mobilization of a research program, political engagement and finally the implementation of concrete ameliorative or preventive action, all interact in a very complex and fluid way. What follows is an attempt to tease out some assumptions that determine how we assess a particular environmental challenge and respond to it. Employing concrete ecological issues as examples, the discussion focuses on some criteria which could help form our judgment regarding ecological concerns.

What are the facts?

A first concern is the scientific basis of any environmental claim. Are the alleged facts accepted by a general consensus of the scientific community, or are they still under debate among scientists? From a scientific viewpoint, how grave is the situation? Do we wait for scientific certainty before considering public concerns to be scientifically credible and committing ourselves to effective social change? Or do we adopt the "worst case scenario" and proceed to act before all the data come in?

Given their generally sceptical approach, scientists are most unlikely to commit themselves to a definitive diagnosis of an environmental situation before the data support a "best-available consensus." Furthermore, economic and political institutions are extremely reluctant to disturb the status quo by proceeding with ameliorative or preventive measures unless a definite need clearly exists. Given the cost of long-term measures, one can understand such hesitation when their value is questionable. On the other hand, real and pressing environmental problems do exist, yet a blind eye is turned because of economic obscurantism and political inertia.

Once the consequences and ramifications of certain behaviour or policies are studied scientifically, it becomes clear to what extent we had been acting simply unawares. Following World War II, for example, total emissions of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) increased steadily, but only in the 1980s was the destructive impact of CFCs on stratospheric ozone established. Ozone in the stratosphere was deteriorating alarmingly long before we were even aware of it.

Ecology made media

How do the visual and print media, subject to manipulation by special interest groups, influence what we consider to be important? How do the media, which often omit clarifying nuances, influence us in judging the validity of an environmental concern? A case in point: Environmental groups mounted significant international pressure in the 1980s and forced the eastern Canadian baby harp seal hunt to close. Extinction of the harp seal was the reason given, but the available data did not support such a claim. It was TV images of cute seal pups, menaced by hunters portrayed as barbaric and uncivilized, that effectively blocked out other considerations such as the seal population, or the intimate relationship between seal hunting and aboriginal culture, or the importance of this subsistence economy for both Inuit and Newfoundland fishermen. Here scientific, economic, and cultural values were ignored in an extremely well-organized and publicized media campaign that played upon aesthetics and sentimentality. A classic case.

The goose and the gazelle

Natural ecosystems and the life patterns of each species vary enormously. Therefore each environmental site needs to be understood in its specificity. Judgments regarding the nocivity or the benignity of particular human actions ought not to be applied broadly, universally. The ways in which any ecosystem responds to human intervention depend on a host of factors, many of them poorly understood or simply unknown at present. A particular management tool used in one area cannot be assumed to have the same effects in other regions. For instance, clear-cutting is a common management tool throughout the forest industry in Canada. But to attack clear-cutting in every Canadian forest, is to overlook the variety of sites where harvesting takes place. The size of the clearcut, the species being cut, the season, the method of harvesting, the topography of the land, the nutrient and hydraulic conditions of the soil, the presence of advance reproduction and many

other factors, all combine to determine the forest's response to clear-cutting. Yet many environmental groups criticize all clear-cutting. What makes certain management practices "bad" or "un-ecological"? What criteria ground such a conclusion? What is good for a goose is not necessarily good for a gazelle.

In the eye of the beholder?

Clear-cutting sheds lights on another central aspect in the evaluation of environmental problems. It is to specify exactly what the critics protest and to clarify the motivations underlying our laments:

- Loss of rare temperate rain forest?
- Acceleration of soil erosion and degradation of stream habitat?
- Loss of bio-diversity, much of which has not even been named yet?
- The sight of a bare, scar-like, splintered swath where once stood giant, moss-covered guardians of time?
- The loss of beauty? Are we before a case of real or "aesthetic" damage? Or is the aesthetic the real?
- The use of clear-cutting as an economic short-cut in the corporate promotion of high-volume, low-employment, "cut and run" forestry?
- The loss of the forest wilderness as a loss of our own humanity, as a diminution of the earthly "images" of God?
- Unable to articulate the ground of our action, do we simply know in a naive, intuitive way that we must act?

Maybe all of the above moves us to lament, causes us to rage, or motivates some form of protest or constructive action.

Man and nature

An extremely influential though often hidden factor motivating environmental activism is our conception of the relationship between man and nature. Do we envision men and women as fundamentally over and above nature, the latter simply a storehouse of resources for our material well-being and progress? Or do we acknowledge an intimate link with all other living species and a rootedness in the earth, the landscape, the geographical region in which we live? How we situate ourselves vis-à-vis the environment often determines our response to environmental issues.

Some western thinking divorced man from nature: nature stood in opposition, and human mastery and power over nature characterized the relationship. Ecological thought today, cognizant of the destruction induced by this rift, has swung to the other extreme, portraying the human as one species like all the others and reducing ethical discourse to the balancing of species rights. In North America, much contemporary ecological thought is suffused with a "naturalist" philosophy which views nature outside any theological context. The "creation" of the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic tradition has become the "nature" of the post-Enlightenment scientific revolution. This radically shifts our relation with the rest of creation to a categorically different plane, no longer like all of creation in relation to the Divine. Man is an ill-defined element of the Gaian whole, dissolving into the universe, the new transcendence. Such enervating "materialism" fails to recognize the environmental problem as essentially a human moral problem, a manifestation of sin which ruptures our relations with God, with each other and with the rest of creation. Inevitably man is silenced.

Humans cannot escape, neither into nature as one species among many, nor out of nature breaking the bonds that forever root us physically and psychically in the earth. Man is drawn from the earth and so is *imago mundi*, the articulated consciousness of the universe. Man is made in the image of God, *imago Dei*, called to contemplate God in creation and to lead all creation to final glory. In a unique priestly vocation, men and women stand before God on behalf of creation and before creation on behalf of God. But now possessing the technological means and the economic power to continue destroying the environment, often irreparably, this capacity must be faced responsibly and with deep, indeed religious humility.

Social-Environmental Justice

Development workers accuse the environmental movement of overlooking the complex issues of human diversity and culture and neglecting the need for authentic economic development. Environmentalists, on the other hand, claim that to ignore the ecological bases of all human activity, most especially the economy, dooms any and all attempts at sustainable development to failure, the latter becoming in effect an oxymoron.

The 1992 Earth Summit at Rio put to rest the view that the North's sole concern is ecology whereas the South is only interested in development. There is not an environmental crisis here, a development crisis there, an energy crisis apart. All are intricately intertwined, complex and interdependent. Can we forge an economy that supports viable, culturally-alive community and a vital ecological system, sustainable for the future? Yes, if we link social justice and environmental justice.

In his 1990 World Day of Peace message, Pope John Paul stated that "the proper ecological balance will not be found without directly addressing the structural forms of poverty that exist throughout the world."¹² In recent years we have begun to face and address some "structural forms of poverty." Now our focus must widen to encompass the natural ecosystems that underpin any form of human economy. We must learn to view global ecosystems, not simply in instrumental and utilitarian terms, but in light of their intrinsic vocation to give glory and praise to God. Father General pointed out that most of our Social Centres have yet to become ecologically conscious in their work. We could learn much from the ecological social teaching presently being developed, not only in papal documents, but by many episcopal conferences especially in the South.

A challenge in collaboration

The environmental network is rapidly growing politically throughout the world. Ranging from small handfuls of dedicated volunteers to large, professional, well-financed international organizations, the environmental NGOs possess considerable local and international expertise and are contributing ever more effectively to alternative policies based on ecological values. Yet few Jesuits have contact with the environmental movement. Learning to collaborate with such groups is imperative and will be mutually beneficial. They could help us to expand our notion of global justice and solidarity. The environmental movement, in turn, would benefit much from the Church's social teaching which stresses the inherent dignity and centrality of man, the marriage of economic and environmental justice, and a spirituality based on both Creation and Redemption.

¹² John Paul II, *Peace With God the Creator, Peace With All of Creation*, & 11.

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ECOLOGY under HEAVEN

Adolfo López, S.J.

Criteria for Ecological Issues

The most important criterion is surely to obtain the greatest good possible for the greatest number of people involved. This is not to say that the good of animals or the environment should not be considered, but the decisions reached must be based on the human or social good accrued. Cases have been made recently in the United States for halting the construction of a dam by reason of preserving the habitat of a tiny Darter fish, or the logging of a section of forest (I think in Oregon) in order to ensure nesting sites for the Spotted Owl. In both cases the animals were in danger of extinction, and that was the reason given for taking action.

There are valid criteria, but by themselves insufficient. The extinction of a species is indeed regrettable, but species are disappearing and new ones appearing continuously as Nature slowly zig-zags its way to ever greater perfection. The right approach for deciding on such issues must consider the social aspects involved, such as the local or national economy, work opportunities, the welfare of local communities, etc., as well as ecological criteria. You may remember the case of our Bishop Xavier in Northern Luzon, Philippines, who some years ago strongly opposed building a dam that would have flooded the Chico Valley, home to the Bontoc tribe people, for whom he was primarily concerned.

Social Justice

I think a good case can be made that the principal moral issue involved in ecological and conservationist issues is simply Social Justice. All peoples think of Nature as a gift of the gods to humanity, a gift to be enjoyed and carefully preserved for future generations, since it belongs to all. There is a famous letter of Chief Seattle to the Governor of his day expressing this idea:

Even the white man whose God walks and talks with him as friend to friend cannot escape this truth. One day he will see that we are brothers after all. One day he will see that his God is our God. You may think that you own Him as you wish to own our land,¹³ but you cannot. The earth is precious to Him and to harm the earth is to betray your Creator.¹³

¹³ The letter of Chief Seattle, though known to have been forged recently by an American ecologist, nevertheless expresses beautifully the fundamental insights.

As the ancient Chinese Odes have it: "Under Heaven all is public domain" X

The consequences are obvious: If someone is taking air, water, soil or whatever from the environment for the purpose of manufacturing something or transforming these elements, Social Justice demands that when they are returned to Nature, whether in the form they were taken or as waste, they must be in as good condition as when they were taken, and that they not affect the environment adversely, much less contaminate it, since it belongs to all and is something essential for life.

Spiritual Exercises

Ignatius invites us to join the Godhead as They contemplate the chaotic world situation where some are being born, others dying; some are laughing while others cry; some are saved, others condemned. As a result the Word Incarnate is sent to remedy the tragedy: "*Ecce Ego, mitte me* X Here I am, send me." This necessarily involves the material and ecological aspects of the situation as well as the spiritual, since "I have come that they may have life, and have it **abundantly**" (John 10:10), not just barely eke out a physical subsistence.

Thus our following of Christ will include watching out for the preservation of Nature, and some emphasis may be made on this point in that final *Contemplation to Attain Love*, which considers "how all good things and gifts descend from above; for example, my limited power from the Supreme and Infinite Power above; and so of justice, goodness, piety, mercy, and so forth X just as the rays come down from the sun, or the rains from their source" (237). Ezekiel also has his famous vision of water flowing from the temple of the Lord, a gushing torrent that gives life to the parched land through which it flows (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

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P.S. My brother Julio is in Australia visiting Solar Energy projects that the UCA will hopefully implement on his return. He did an outstanding job on researching solar energy in Nicaragua over a complete solar spot cycle, 24 hours a day, 52 weeks a year for eleven years. He has just published the set of computer generated maps giving the complete information on the different types of solar energy available at any point in Nicaragua, essential for knowing what can be done and what cannot be done.

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BEACONS of SANITY

Albert Fritsch, S.J.

All Jesuits are aware of the global environmental crisis to some degree. Some live where air and water pollution are severe and where human and other inhabitants suffer from deteriorating conditions required to sustain life. These do not need to be told about environmental problems. Others of us are more immune due to location or type of work. However, what all Jesuits need is encouragement X to change ourselves into more environmentally sensitive individuals and to change our Society into a better instrument at this critical hour. What we do individually varies according to our physical condition and location. If able bodied, we strive to conserve resources, discourage wasteful consumer practices, and make others aware of the need to preserve our precious and fragile planet. Though not always easy we become more environmentally conscious through daily practices, periodic examens and annual retreat reflection.

The Society's collective practice is somewhat more difficult to articulate and implement. Being realists we cannot be tempted to pessimism and say the crisis is overwhelming X thus rationalizing a fatalistic withdrawal. Nor can we be overly optimistic and expect other agencies and people to solve these problems, or trust that the Earth can heal itself. Likewise, to proclaim that a mere intellectual leap of consciousness or insight will bring about a solution may be equally naive. An authentic Jesuit eco-spirituality must be grounded in the Earth, find its healing power beyond ourselves, and show willingness to employ every tool in our spiritual arsenal for the work ahead. Our Society's forebears were unaware that human beings could severely damage this Earth. We are damaging it. Nor did they perceive the powers to heal our wounded Earth. We can heal it X through God's grace and our willingness to work together. We beg God to empower us to touch the creative edge of Earth healing, to suffer with Jesus and the poor of the Earth, and to generate a spirit-filled enthusiasm for all to use their talents in the task of healing our wounded Earth. In other words, our ecology must be profoundly Trinitarian.

Community Renewal

Should our eco-ministry be coloured by the gloom and doom prophets? Should we focus on new expressions of eco-spirituality that ignore or neglect our traditional social concerns? Must our local communities challenge their acquired affluence and a resultant insensitivity to the poor? Should we refocus our traditional perspective of Christ-centredness from the person of Jesus to some sort of Gaia or Earth vision? The panic of the moment tempts us to make rash decisions.

A Spirit of Discernment X Tackling these current ecological questions requires a discerning heart and, more, a discerning community of both the larger Society and its local communities. Our solutions need to be hope-filled, practical, implementable X not gloom and doom forecasts. Hopeful solutions take patience, time and hard work; they do not involve finger-pointing and are not usually as dramatic as apocalypses of decimated rain forests, ozone depletion, or global warming. They require a healthy awakening to ecological problems and Earth-healing solutions. However, we Jesuits face ridicule by those who would prefer that we not meddle in environmental affairs. We need to understand and accept that at the heart of this Earth-healing is the call for a profound change in our social order, and the road may be difficult.

Environmental Resource Assessments X Local communities need to simplify so as to stand as beacons of sanity and wholesomeness in a sea of excessive consumerism. We may need crash programs to bring our communities into solidarity with the world's poor and destitute. Just as individuals need a daily examen, so communities need periodic environmental resource assessments, namely, an evaluation of the community's use of interior space, extent and ornamental nature of exterior grounds, waste management and reuse of materials, energy sources and

conservation, water resources and conservation, food preparation and preservation, interior environment and chemical use, transportation, wildlife protection, and community relations on environmental matters. Such assessments could be done locally, but peer pressure may hamper worthwhile analysis.¹⁴

Appropriate Technology X Repairing the Earth begins at home. We need to use resources more conservatively and to value more traditional, less sophisticated, more humane and more community-focused methods of building, using energy, growing crops, and handling waste materials. The Society can reaffirm these methods, especially in the light of the highly successful 1988 International Jesuit Convention on Appropriate Technology at Baroda, India.¹⁵ Those at the frontiers of appropriate technology in all parts of the world need the Society's encouragement. Through our worldwide network Jesuits can muster educational research and communications resources in cooperation with others of good will.

Guidelines for Eco-Healing

An eco-philosophy is not first pronounced and then implemented. A lived experience with our suffering Earth comes with its imperfections and requires ever deeper reflection and application. If we are to become more environmentally aware, we need to refocus on the suffering and resurrected Jesus. This is done in several ways:

* We extend our solidarity with the poor beyond human beings to include all poor creatures of the Earth with whom we are closely related. Too often environmentalists tend to be the wealthy wanting to retain their own environment. But Jesuit concerns are broader. The poor cry out for eco-justice, that is, freedom from air pollution and contaminated food and dirty water, a safe place to live and work, and healthy surroundings in which to enjoy life. Jesuits are called to champion the cooperative role of all people working together and to emphasize the right of the poor as co-equal partners. And this call to wider cooperation is Good News.

* Our Society must listen and learn. Ours is a male religious organization and needs to acknowledge that, in healing, women take a leading role. It is quite a challenge to listen humbly and learn from those who are better attuned to healing the Earth X namely women. Are we open to learn from women, who for whatever reason are more in tune with ecological matters? Such a learning posture may be uncomfortable for Jesuits and other male religious and church people X but it is part of a renewal that includes our healing in a most profound manner.

* Our Society, while global in scope, needs to realize that healing the Earth is primarily a local concern. We commonly hear of "thinking globally and acting locally" but we should consider this more deeply. While global thinking has merit, without first acting locally we will be too vague about the global concerns. Knowing the local scene and making change there helps us recognize the complexity of environmental problems and makes us realistic in cooperating with others. Through ever-growing interaction of local groups we gradually realize the profound interconnectedness of

¹⁴ This author has helped perform 75 of these assessments in many parts of the United States with nearly half for religious communities of women (farms, retirement homes, retreat houses, colleges and motherhouses), but none for religious men's groups X though we have tried.

¹⁵ The Convention report is available in English from the Social Justice Secretariat, Rome.

Earth-related issues and eventually arrive at a more global awareness.

Invitation to Calvary

Jesus is our perfect ecological model. Our Christocentricity is not an embarrassment but an opportunity to proclaim the resurrection. We speak of the person of Jesus Christ, not a vague feeling that "Christ" is identified with Earth. Glorification of Gaia-Earth should make us nervous about an eco-spirituality that cannot distinguish good from bad spirits. For Jesuits, our actions are discerned through prayer and ever deeper communication with the Jesus who suffers in and with all the poor. Perhaps our traditional means of the Apostleship of Prayer and Sacred Heart devotion contain an ecological dimension. Why not encourage suffering believers to realize that their efforts can help bring about the advent of the New Heaven and New Earth?

Our Jesuit Ecological Gifts

The Spirit moves us forward to rediscover the tools needed to confront our materialistic age. Accepting our gifts from the Spirit is to accept the greatness of God's generosity to the Society. All spiritual gifts are needed today for a more healthy global ecology. A Jesuit spirituality can contribute to the new Eden just as much as Franciscan lifestyle and Benedictine sustainable communities do. These gifts are not exclusive X for all are gifted X but they are unique. Some of the Jesuit gifts include:

* Discernment of spirits is desperately needed at all levels of ecological reflection. A false desire to be universal, to be all things to all men, could use much discernment. Are we able to discern with other earnest people that not all eco-spirituality or whatever is called "spiritual" is of the good spirit? New spiritualities require critical evaluation: Are they self-centred or other-oriented? Do they have the community of all people, especially the poor, at heart? Are such spiritualities dependent on God or do they manifest human independence? Further discernment is also needed to find out how we are to effect environmental change, set priorities, and curb degradation of the Earth in an effective manner.

* The Principle and Foundation speaks of using those things necessary for our end and ridding ourselves of the superficial ones. To be conservation-conscious consumers in a world of expansive consumer aspirations where the difference between what is necessary and what is superficial becomes blurred, practical discernment is called for. Our Society's living this rule opens the door to a more environmentally-benign use of resources, e.g., renewable energy sources such as solar energy, "organic" farming techniques, and reuse of packaging materials.

* Rules for Thinking, Judging, and Feeling with the Church go beyond reading and pondering papal writings or national episcopal pronouncements on ecology. They include a prevailing spirit of being sensitive to the poor and suffering, something not frequently found in the secular literature. The call to this sensitivity is found in our deepest Biblical and Church traditions and needs to extend beyond our kind to include all endangered and threatened species of plants and animals. The call is ever deepening and includes stewardship and responsibility for all creatures and for the Earth itself. And in our day this call embraces the demands for ongoing purification of mind and heart so that we may act wisely and forthrightly.

A Vision

As a hope-filled Society, we are both uncertain of the immediate outcome and certain that all will work to God's glory. If this Earth has been wounded, with inner groaning it still awaits its fulfilment. The vision of the Trinity calls us to be participants in this grand enterprise, that is, to be co-creators of this New Earth, to be united in the redeeming mystery of the suffering Christ, and to spread the ever enlivening Spirit through a vast array of gifts and talents. We proclaim the closely-allied ecological principles of the fundamental goodness and interrelatedness of all Creation (uniting with others to pronounce all created things good by not being wasteful), the conservation of all human activity (offering our sacrifices for the healing of the Earth), and the immense diversity and health of differentiation of our Spirit-empowered world (encouraging diverse expressions of ecological healing in such forms as humour, research, stewardship, and prophetic witness).

Interrelatedness, conservation of resources, and diversity are part of the Trinitarian ecology that calls us to deeper prayer, where we find our own inner creative and God-given powers that can allow us to go forward in working with people of good will. In our Christ-centredness we proclaim in word and deed that Jesus' blood falls on a holy land now extended to the entire planet. In our Spirit-directed work we encourage our brothers and sisters to use a vast array of talents, gifts and experiences for healing the Earth and for proclaiming the presence of the Spirit in our midst.

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The ENVIRONMENTAL DEBT

José Aguilar, S.J.

Repeated experiences in life X which, given the peculiarities of our behaviour, we accept X cause us to recognize that quite often we only appreciate loved ones and valued objects properly when they become scarce or leave or are gone forever.

There are essential values in life which we consider, or consider consciously, only when some party embroiled in controversy vigorously demands them, which is when they invade our daily life or threaten our tranquillity: discrimination based on social rank or status, on sex or race or age, or authoritarian regimes or lack democracy. The rising and spreading levels of violence are beginning to affect many of our communities directly, forcing us to confront anew the complex causes which may be generating the violence.

These biased perceptions, which we have noted many times, serve as evidence for our limitations in discovering our own reality and, just as often, our own sin. Once we manage to accept it, we find ourselves confused and, at times, ashamed at having ignored it. Then we wish we had incorporated such elements, goods and values in our lives for their intrinsic value: democracy, participation, equality, fairness.

Paradoxically, critical or limit situations due to scarcity become opportunities for growth which can then correct contradictions and imbalances. In the environmental area, situations of scarcity directly affecting our conditions of life and welfare, may have helped us become aware of environmental problems. Given our many different works and situations as Jesuits, each one obviously approaches this problematic in a different way at different levels and with nuances depending on the country in which he lives, the specific conflicts between the dominant model of development and the environment of his region, and the kind of work each one is doing.

This relatively new problematic in our lives contains new challenges and possible limitations in its initial phases. To start with, the great danger of turning into yet another cause, among the many which today are being pushed, disconnected from the central discussions about models of development, each cause demanding that public opinion give it the highest priority and that the relevant institutions and powers respond most urgently. How scattered are all these initiatives in the midst of truly conflictive situations, and how wasteful are many efforts: too local, too ad-hoc.

Let's try to synthesize the current understanding of the environmental problematic in the following terms: the first law of ecology states that everything in nature is interconnected. If the demand for resources or the degradation of the environment caused by development, is greater than the ecosystem's capacity for solid production or its regenerative capacity respectively, then an environmental debt begins to accumulate which, if the trend continues, reaches a bio-physical or economic point of irreversibility. The processes become too expensive to rehabilitate or, in a word, unsustainable. To the extent that all of us are consumers of goods and services, we place demands on the economy which, via all the productive processes using resources and generating contamination, translate into demands upon the environment. Up to this point there's consensus among analysts of the environmental problem. But when it comes to proposing solutions, an exercise which in turn requires going deeper into the causes of the problem, there are two very different approaches to the concept of sustainable development around which all the analyses and discussions converge today.

The first approach recognizes the market's inability to respect the limits of the environment and therefore proposes that warning devices be set up to monitor the market's functioning, such as prices, interest rates, profit margins relative to investments, etc., which would assure the continuity of the development model.

This notion of sustainable development represents the effort to apply the logic of productivity to the economy of nature: not to waste natural resources in the sense that they are needed for productive processes to continue. Considering nature as capital, one tries to maintain conditions for the current development model to carry on and expand, without altering the structures of power. Applying the logic of capital to natural processes generates another tendency: increasingly to expropriate the communities which maintain some control over natural resources. It's a matter of privatizing nature even more, as land already has been, and to patent living things such as the rights to genetic or biogenetic materials and so forth.

The idea is to extend market regulation over nature, so that the social struggle for the control over natural resources would pass ever more via the market and ever less via the political sphere. In this way the stronger actors in the market will certainly have greater opportunities to progress.

A second approach claims that the environmental crisis originates precisely in the structures of power which control the use of natural resources and the environment. It interprets the environ-

mental crisis as manifesting a crisis in the model of development and points to the introduction of changes in the structure of power over natural resources as the way to overcome the crisis.

In this latter diagnosis, the solution to the environmental crisis passes via the democratization of control over natural resources and the de-privatization of the common environment. Since it's a struggle to make the environment public, this struggle should essentially take place in the political field.

From one point of view, although the concept of sustainable development would have a globalizing effect and reorient the relationships among people and between them and nature, it can be based within the economic sphere and on this decisive basis consider the social dimension. This first interpretation has the novelty of including nature within the analysis of the costs of production. Hence the concept of sustainable development follows upon earlier ones of integral development and eco-development, without managing to break out of the predominantly economicist mould.

This situation is new only in relation to the current concepts. Throughout recent history, the very notion of development has been subject to disputes over different ways of appropriating natural wealth and of regulating the processes of maintaining and stabilizing societies. Now a new element is being added to the controversy, namely, how to appropriate nature in a wider sense: water, air, and the various genetic forms of life.

Old actors are showing up to argue over the concept of development, and they use the new notion of sustainability merely as a subterfuge to legitimate old practices. "Sustainable" policies, corporations and businesses are multiplying apace, which is what Greenpeace denounces as green or ecological marketing on the part of business and government.

Often within these discussions X the Cairo Conference is a recent example X the problems of urban and rural poverty, with their different indicators and manifestations, are perceived as the result of high demographic growth and low productivity. The solution would be to control the demographic trends and, via various research and development projects, improve production and generate profit without damaging the environment.

We cannot forget that the 1992 Rio Summit on Environment and Development took place on the twentieth anniversary of the Stockholm Conference, a conference at which nations allegedly agreed upon ways to cooperate on solutions. Two decades of institutional and technological innovations in agriculture notwithstanding, rural poverty and low productivity still persist. The distribution of benefits has been extremely unequal, favouring the transnational producers of agro-chemicals and the farmers who own more capital, the best lands and other resources. In many areas the end result has been increased concentration of lands, peasant society scattered and stratified, ever more peasants without land, and worsening environmental problems closely connected with production. During all these years different models of development have followed one upon another X with enormous quantities of financial, technical, scientific and human resources at their disposal and with various strategies defined from above and directed towards below, from growth models at whatever cost in the 50s to programmes of redistribution with growth towards the end of the 60s X and all have failed.

Our focus on sustainability should be the search for new forms of development and of managing resources, sustained by the people's cultural heritage and enhancing it, encouraging social organization and local participation. The notion of sustainability was born in technical-economic

analyses of forestry and fishing projects, looking for ways to make them last, and now the concept is growing broader and richer to the point of becoming holistic.

The failure of the different models and paradigms of development, as demonstrated in today's levels of poverty and environmental degradation, has caused and entailed the loss of identity and cultural values; natural links of solidarity and survival have been falling apart; space for democracy and participation is being restricted. Failed economic models are viable only if sustained by the repressive, authoritarian and violent exercise of power.

From our perspective, it is not possible to think of sustainable development unless democracy, culture and the spirit of peoples recover their value and have a chance to express and recreate themselves continually X become sustainable. A true, effective democracy, in order to function adequately, needs its citizens and politicians to be ever better informed about how the environment, the systems of production, the economic system, the social system and the cultural system interact, so that they can judge the possible consequences, short- and long-term, of their decisions.

Thus, strategies of conservation should be undertaken not only in terms of bio-physical sustainability but also for the sake of sustainable societies, with freedom, participation, justice, and opportunities for human development, especially for the less privileged sectors of society. Of great relevance in the long run are those complementary actions oriented towards the elimination of extreme poverty, the process of democratization, the improvement of education with emphasis on values, and a greater external financial independence via efficient production and improved terms of trade, which generate savings and foreign exchange. Such strategies would try to narrow the gap between a natural (Divine) project and the projects implemented by men and women, would try to generate processes which respond to spiritual and material necessities simultaneously and which do so using the resources of the bio-sphere rationally.

As far as these tasks and challenges are concerned, the Society is endowed with excellent opportunities, tools and instruments.

The ideal would be for each of our different apostolic works to link up locally and regionally with integral projects of sustainable development in which the essential dimensions of development and welfare are envisioned. Our initial experiences in the Valley of Cauca, in Colombia, suggest the infinite possibilities which Jesuits have in many countries of the world, thanks to the rich multiplicity of our works and projects.

In various schools of our educational apostolate, we could invite more of our students to get involved in development and building new culture, contributing criteria of our own spirituality and the appropriate tools which an environmental education offers today.

This perspective can also strategically channel the enormous potential of our universities. These centres of research and teaching can join with projects of development planning, execution, follow-up and evaluation at different regional levels, collecting hypotheses in the field to define the central strategies and establish priorities relevant to concrete, local realities. One can easily imagine the enormous contribution which professionals could make in key areas like Economics, Administration, Environmental Law, the faculties of Architecture and Engineering: working together on urban planning and housing, on production in harmony with nature and resource availability, as well as helping to repair any serious environmental damage already done and to reverse any deterioration currently underway.

A Christian spirituality and sacramental life can inspire these perspectives by incorporating our relations with nature and all other beings of the universe within the dynamics of reconciliation, which we traditionally used to restrict to human relations, wherein we pursue our own paths of conversion, following and commitment.

The formation of our scholastics can also put explicit emphasis on environmental ethics, creation theology, eco-theology and theology of the Earth. Our spirituality provides specially rich veins to work in the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Contemplation to Attain Love*.

All these options surely offer our communities concrete things to do, in order to adapt our lifestyle to the current circumstances and find less consumerist, polluting and wasteful forms of living.

The environmental challenge is so broad that it opens up a most interesting contemporary space for ecumenical conversation and action. Beginning with concrete options in the defense of life, other important steps could keep us going towards unity and reconciliation as threatened by our historic incapacity to make the right decisions about secondary matters in relation to the priorities of the Kingdom. The Rio Conference beautifully lived and celebrated this new reality.

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***RELATIO PRAEVIA* on ECOLOGY**

A) WHAT the NINETEEN POSTULATES on ECOLOGY REQUEST

1. In general:

To stress the seriousness, and to promote awareness of the urgency, of the ecological problem and its link to the question of faith-justice.

The Society should commit itself more earnestly to serious theological and scientific work / reflection in close collaboration with other institutions, lay people and churches.

The religious tradition is rich in bonding peoples with the earth and with the planet; the Church's doctrine / theology of creation on the environment should be developed.

The concept of the wholeness and integrity of creation should inspire our spirituality, our way of living and proceeding.

To promote the responsible use and equitable distribution of the earth's resources, conservation and sustainable growth.

To initiate effective steps to counter the worldwide destruction of the environment and particularly as it affects indigenous peoples.

2. More concrete:

To elaborate a decree or short statement on the responsibility of the Society for the environment.

To make a declaration that ecology is an integral part of the promotion of faith-justice legislated in Decree 4 of GC 32 as fundamental to the mission of the entire Society.

The ecological concern should be coordinated by the Social Justice Secretariat in Rome, or by an international "ecological secretariat."

Reasons for:

- The ecological situation is a global ethical challenge; the world expects the Church's guidance.
- Our planet has entered a period of ecological instability; it is undergoing rapid, often irreparable, ecological decline resulting from human activities.
- Ecological issues, being connected with demographic and economic problems, form part of the complex question of faith-justice-option for the poor.
- The weaker sections of society, especially indigenous peoples, are those who suffer most of all because of their dependence on day-to-day and measured use of the natural resources that surround them.

- The Judaeo-Christian tradition is accused by some philosophers and ecologists of being one of the principal cultural causes of the problem.
- The ecology question ranks among the frontier apostolates of the Society and represents a valuable service to the Church.
- The Society with its international organization, its intellectual, moral, pastoral, and practical resources, is one of the few Christian bodies capable of responding to the immense challenge and threat this issue poses.
- It is an invitation to the Society to enter into dialogue with the world and show our sensitivity; Jesuit leadership will be welcomed in this area of concern both inside and outside the Church; the issue has ecumenical aspects.
- Our fundamental inspiration is the Spiritual Exercises. Especially the *Principle and Foundation* and the *Contemplation to Attain Love* provide the foundation for a universal response to the ecological crisis by plunging us into a world freely and lovingly created and sustained by God, a world which acts as a revealer of God.
- Ignatian freedom calls us to fulfil our profound human vocation as those made in the image of God, as those who constantly see God in all things and all things in God.

B) EVALUATION by the *COETUS PRAEVIUS*

1. The issue of ecology was not treated by recent General Congregations. It is an important and urgent question. As a global ethical challenge of today, it needs to be taken into consideration.
2. This topic is obviously connected with questions of justice and peace in the world.
3. Our spirituality, based on the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius, provides a foundation for a universal response to the ecological crisis, for living in full respect and harmony with nature.
4. We are aware of the fact that an "ecological manner of living" may be very demanding; it will affect our style of everyday living, imposing a more modest, sober, rational and responsible use of goods.

C) PROPOSALS of the *COETUS PRAEVIUS*

1. To stress and promote the awareness and significance of the ecological question.
2. To recommend and encourage serious objective scientific research / studies on ecology, as well as practical steps.
3. To identify the basic problem as a moral question: loss of moral equilibrium, moral pollution, egoism; a change of mentality, a conversion is needed.
4. To emphasize the question of faith-justice in ecology, in a broader meaning of Decree 4

(distribution of goods, exploitation of resources, consumerism: energy...).

5. Some recommendations on this topic might be included in a longer decree on "Our Mission today and tomorrow." These recommendations could make reference to points of Christian theology and Jesuit spirituality such as the following or others:

a) The Biblical account of Creation and the radical relationship of everything to God's free and loving self-communication.

b) The relationship of Humanity to the rest of the created world: man and woman as God's image; Dominion of the earth X in the name of God, that is, as caring and responsible stewardship; the task of humans as life-giving, life-protecting, co-creative activity in harmony and friendship with all beings.

c) The Prophetic and Eschatological references to the care of the earth, the meaning of the land, the sober and ordered use of resources, the task to enhance goodness, justice and peace for all peoples X and the dream of a world without hostility between humans and other beings.

d) The New Testament references to Christ's radical relationship to Creation (Colossians, Ephesians, Romans, John, and so forth).

e) The contemplative relationship of the human community to a world created out of God's love and immersed in it (*Contemplation to Attain Love*).

f) The growing awareness of the sacramentality of Creation, which finds its highest expression in the Eucharist.

Coetus Praevius
Rome

July 1994

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COMMENTARY on *TOWARDS GC 34*

Fernando Riaza Pérez

My purpose in writing down those thoughts is to contribute to the reflection involved in preparing a General Congregation. While aware of my situation as an outsider, I sincerely esteem the Society which continues to be my basic point of reference as a Christian.

Before presenting my reflections, necessarily fragmentary and slanted, I want to say that my general impression upon reading the preparatory Essays¹⁶ is that they reflect the vitality and spirit of Ignatius in the final years of our millennium and the extraordinary grace that is a vocation to the Society of Jesus. So convinced am I of God's grace at work in the Society that, when I compare what I know of its current reality with what I know to be that grace, my criticisms may seem harsh at times, perhaps inappropriate or even worse when coming from an "ex." I should add that they are the comments of an "ex" who is happy as a Christian to be one but who credits practically everything of Christian value to his once having been "in."

1. Universal apostolate, least Society, the Church

1.1. A universal apostolic attitude and individual and collective humility are essential values in the Society. Hence it is not surprising to find them underlined in the preparatory materials for a General Congregation. Moreover, the Essays tried to "locate" these attitudes in a composition of place "of the world within which we are immersed," in order to shape the perennial attitudes of apostolate and humility here and now.

It is difficult, nevertheless, for these fundamental attitudes, so often repeated in official documents, to rise above the necessary and typical verbal formulae and manage to become a real change in the real attitudes of Jesuits. In our world, at once so vast and so tiny, so complex and so diverse, it is very difficult to experience the universal apostolic urgency. An awareness of total dispossession and of radical littleness before God's grace are the indispensable, yet almost utopian, prerequisites of this universal attitude when the human beings to whom one should reach out number five billion. For that reason, the language which sets out the demands for a Christian body is, oh so often! overlaid with an obligatory exterior varnish so as to present in public realities that are neither so universally apostolic nor so radically humble. Naturally I am not criticizing the fact the these attitudes are set out, but only signalling the inherent danger that the language of official documents may be empty, even though they cannot not use the language.

Furthermore, an attempt has been made to avoid the danger of institutional verbiage by adding a new concept such as "inculturation." This concept tries to make the generic attitudes of universal apostolate and evangelical humility more concrete and specific.

Universal apostolate and inculturated apostolate are opposed realities whose expression should have been carefully worked out in theory. Not to develop it in the Essays, which are not the place for it, but previously in such a way that the calls made to apostolic universality and to apostolic

¹⁶ *The Jesuits: Towards GC 34*, CIS 75 (1994). All the references are to this publication.

inculturation come after the contradictions which these realities present have been resolved. Should a Jesuit, who has worked for decades to inculturate the Gospel in a specific milieu, be so detached from this task X which implies a profound change of mentality X that he can begin a different inculturation from scratch? Rootedness, and Ignatian indifference to rootedness: aren't they opposite directions?

1.2. The allusion to the qualifier "least" and the claim that it is "no exaggeration, no irony, no hidden boast" is a new stance, a desire to give meaning to a traditional expression that very often was rhetorical. I am happy that this problem is being approached with truth, a truth also manifest in the analysis and self-criticism of the preparatory Essays. I think it is a perennial problem: the tension between, on the one hand, great personal and institutional worth recognized from without and, on the other hand, a self awareness of sincere evangelical humility, of *sine me nihil potestis facere*, "without Me you can do nothing."

This same tension is in the Essays. A general outline is presented in Essay 1, the characteristics of the contemporary world regarding the Society's mission, while in Essays 2-4 the Society's responses to these challenges are laid out. This polarity between the world-demanding and the Society-responding reveals a self-consciousness of being a world force and power, which is the truth, but a consciousness of smallness, which is the supernatural Ignatian heritage, ought also to shine through. This awareness of littleness ought to appear explicitly, also based on human motives taken from the sociology of contemporary culture, to which the contribution of the Society of Jesus really is minimal. Many other cultural and religious institutions X UNESCO, evangelical sects, other religious orders, Opus Dei, and so forth X should also be called "least" if only out of elementary realism, if they are compared, as has been done here, with the whole of humanity. When the Society is confronted with the world, I miss this consciousness of littleness, natural as well as supernatural.

And although it seems paradoxical, I also find this awareness missing in not recognizing explicitly the achievements and merits of the Society. When one is really humble, one has no great difficulty in recognizing them. There are, for example, the Society's real advances in a process of conversion towards the most disadvantaged, the effectiveness of its ministries, the religious devotion of its members, or their intellectual strength and courage in confronting contemporary problems, in being present in the world of science, and so forth. Of some or all of this there could have been simple mention when reflecting on the current status of the Society.

1.3. This awareness of littleness may also be lacking when it comes to expressing the Society's relationship with the Church. On the one hand, its rootedness in the Church is categorically affirmed: "The Society receives its very existence, its mission in the world, and its mandate to minister to the People of God from this Church in which it wishes to serve loyally and generously."¹⁷ At the beginning of the same essay the question is posed whether "the apostolic life is ... always grasped or lived in its fullness. Our relationship to the hierarchical Church is sometimes questioned," and a little afterward, in the epigraph "A Free Offering of Self (*Gratuidad*)," the Jesuit is declared to belong "to a Society that stands at the disposition of the sovereign Pontiff so as to be available for the universal mission."¹⁸ All these are well-known claims.

¹⁷ Essay 5, "The Framework of Missionary Commitment: the Apostolic Community," especially & 3.1.10.

¹⁸ Essay 5, & 0.3.3., 2.0.1.

But they have not served to guide the elaboration of the Essays. The Society appears as the frame of reference for the Jesuit, not the Church. "A Jesuit's primary community is the universal body of the Society."¹⁹ The Society is "placed" facing the world and the world facing the Society, and it is forgotten, perhaps as self-understood, that this is not the primary apostolic polarity, but that the essential polarity of the apostolic mission exists between the Church and the world, not between the Society and the world.

Nor are there references to the Pope or the Vatican as presently constituted, nor to relations with the Bishops, with the clergy, with other orders, and so forth. Some allusion to the charism of other religious groups, to the apostolic division of labour in the Church directed by the Pope, would have been appropriate so that the radically ecclesial character of the Society, explicitly affirmed, would have helped to orient the development of these themes. The apostolic response of the Society is essentially mediated by the Church as a whole and in her hierarchy, since the Society is a member of a larger body.

I would gladly be mistaken in this opinion, perhaps it's just a matter of editorial accidents. Or perhaps again, it may be a perfectly conscious silence given the Society's current relations with the Vatican, with the Curia, with certain Bishops, and so forth. In any case, reducing the sense of apostolic self-sufficiency, of being the vanguard of the Church, even of being a super-church within the Church X reducing this spirit which I remember having run into more or less explicitly on some occasions X seems to me a Christian achievement within the Society.

To find a balance in this topic between the simple recognition of one's own values and their non-exaggeration is an arduous but necessary task, and I believe that great strides have been made since my years in the Society. Precisely for that reason am I very sensitive to perceiving the old spirit of Jesuit pride in the Society's documents about itself. And the explicit recognition of those values X those already mentioned and others that could be listed, as well as those I will speak about, such as the stance towards contemporary atheism, relationships with lay people, the dialogue with Protestants and non-Christians X is positive and does not necessarily imply self-sufficiency. All these values, which ought not be hidden, are in close relationship with those of other apostolic groups inside the Church. These close relationships I do not find even alluded to.

2. Evangelical inculturation

2.1. In western culture

I find thought-provoking and practical the endeavour to establish an awareness of the necessity of inculturation as an indispensable condition for evangelization, with special attention to cultures of minority, marginalized or oppressed cultures. This focus is sound, although Essay 2 may suffer from an excess of theory X otherwise quite obvious X about the meaning of culture and inculturation as anthropological categories.

What I miss most, because of its importance for the Church, is the historical fact that the great inculturation of the Gospel, after the first Greek centuries, has been the Western, Latin-medieval and renaissance-baroque one. Out of this inculturation was born nothing less than the official language of the Church, the formulation of most of its dogmas, an age-old theological tradition, and some

¹⁹ Essay 5, & 3.1.10.

ethical-philosophical categories still widely used today. For today's humanity, western culture represents the largest number of world achievements: justice and law as bases for national and international coexistence, democracy as the acceptable political organization, science as the road to knowledge, and technology as the indispensable instrument of advancement for all peoples.

The defects of the West and the crimes that must be charged to it are known to everyone, and the Church has not been free from them, especially the spirit of conquest and domination. These crimes must be denounced uncompromisingly, and this is already underway. But the blanket negativity prevalent in some intellectual quarters (I am acquainted with some in Islam and Latin American countries) that rejects everything western, seems to me unjustified. And this tendency, albeit in a small way or moderate form, marks Essay 2 on inculturation, as it completely ignores the inculturation of the Gospel in the West.

One can and should criticize western consumerism, but one should also evaluate as positive the spread of the ideal and reality of social services available to everyone. The Crusades and the Inquisition came from the West but also the spirit of tolerance and understanding of the one who is different. We are the most religiously and culturally conquering world culture. But also to the West are owed, fundamentally, the concepts of human rights and their spreading acceptance.

Distinguishing the lights from the shadows in order to attain a balanced awareness of our belonging to that culture, is an analysis left undone. Rather here, the point of departure is a textbook concept of inculturation, not incarnated in the real history of the Society. The Essays which very rightly criticize the excesses of this culture are, paradoxically, elaborated from a critical viewpoint typical of the West, in a style of dialogue which nowadays is quite our own, and using a kind of analysis thoroughly relevant in this culture.

2.2. Atheism in Europe

The intellectual stand against atheism has been a traditional task of the Jesuit apostolate. Today the task takes on, at least in Europe, some special characteristics. The cultural density of post-modern, post-Christian and post-religious Europe is so solid that, more than its conversion, what is urgently needed is to defend Christians from its advance, especially in intellectual circles. I believe that right now, despite some recent religious reawakening, Europe continues to be de-christianized. There is a type of intellectual apostolate which consists in trying to conserve the faith in this remnant of Israel which we Christians in Europe represent today. It is an urgent undertaking and, along this line, the Society has a rich tradition which it should in no way renounce.

Perhaps something like this is alluded to when Essay 5 compares religious life with counter-cultural movements. I do not like the comparison because these movements betray a strain of nihilism and sterility, but I agree with the intention: being a minority in the West does not mean that we need suffer from the inferiority complex which we sometimes have; we can simply give an account of the hope that is in us and be conscious of the values forming our cultural framework.

3. **Community life and spirituality**

Remembering some personal experiences of mine, I am enormously pleased with the question in Essay 5 about the core of religious life, which asks whether "the Society must be strongly animated today by the demands of an interior life, as bequeathed to us by Ignatius.... This includes a sense of

contemplating God in all things and all things in him."²⁰ This fundamental attitude should not be taken for granted as well known.

But the novelty I notice in Essay 5 which also marks other Essays, is the use of the Spiritual Exercises and other Ignatian writings not in an individual but in a collective sense. They thus serve to strengthen community life, collective frames of reference, methods of social and even global discernment. That the Ignatian notion of the renaissance Christian gentleman is replaced as the point of reference by the community of faith is, I think, a very valuable transcultural achievement. The spiritual education that I received and lived was not like this, and much have I regretted it.

Thus it is a matter of overcoming the attitude of self-contemplation, very typical of official documents in which that apostolic self-sufficiency, which at times was cultivated, is manifest again. The path towards renewal that arises from the necessities and demands of our time is much more fruitful than what flows from self-analysis. It is possible that this new consciousness is coming from Jesuits in contact with the Third World and with its tragedy, but it is as welcome as fresh air in this more rarefied atmosphere of European culture and reality, inundated with information and weary of so much verbiage.

4. The relationship with lay people

In Essay 7, various and flexible forms of integrating lay persons into the Society, both as individuals and in diverse groups and organizations, are offered for reflection. To me this seems hopeful, and I wish that some fruitful initiatives might arise along this line.

But above all what I hope for here is that, insofar as it depends on the Society, the phrase, "the hour of the laity has come," often repeated in clerical circles, will in acceptable measure come true. This has been an expression playing to the audience, but with hardly any content until now.

The monarchical, hierarchical and clerical structure of the Church can be qualified as iron-clad until today when, because of its unpopularity, one does not talk about it with outsiders. The Society, even assuming it will run into opposition from certain ecclesiastical quarters, can be a ferment of consciousness for this clerical Church which we have and suffer. In it we lay people continue to be flocks under the orders of shepherds, mini-shepherds and apprentice mini-shepherds. Since I have been in both places and have tried "from outside" to collaborate with the hierarchy, I think I can define it as one of the evils that the Church in Europe suffers today.

5. The preferential option for the poor

I think here we face one of the deepest changes in the mentality and the life of Jesuits. Perhaps we have already left behind the era of witness by a few, and well-intentioned but inoperative verbalism of the many, and are already seriously advancing along the path of a real incarnation in the grim world of poverty and the marginalized. Again the Latin American and Third World breath is decisive, perhaps even more than the beginnings of the worker priests and so forth.

However this option continues to belong, if it is taken seriously, to the utopian parts of the life of the Society. What I have known and do know of the Society still resembles a powerful body,

²⁰ Essay 5, & 0.3.2.

optimizing its strengths, efficient in its ministries and outstanding for the intellectual training and human formation of its members. How can this world organization, which is not an organization of poor men, dedicate itself to the preferential service of the poor? Nor does it offer the image of such dedication. The communities of Jesuits which I know, including the new communities, are groups of men whose form of life is simple, good professionals in the work they do, ever more imbedded in the fabric of civil society, but without that prophetic trait in favour of the disinherited which the Essays talk of. The spirit which breathes in these men is oriented in that direction, but I believe that they have not as yet found the external and community forms of the preferential option.

It may be falsely utopian to expect more from Jesuit daily life lived in common and to demand this heroic attitude for a lifetime. But in the Essays something more is demanded than what is actually being done, and they ask for realism at the same time as trust in the call of God.

The presence of the Third World and its frightful needs, this presence become so familiar in the media that it has ceased to make much impression, is what can become a sign of the times and an effective beginning of conversion. The need for a world viewpoint, not that of the tourist but of someone who lives the global reach of poverty, is a goal of contemporary man but one which may be accessible only to ethically- or religiously-oriented persons. This is certainly not what is asked of every Jesuit. But it can be asked, and therefore earnestly desired, that they be standard-bearers of this consciousness of belonging to a destroyed humanity and that from this perspective they orient their concrete individual and community lives.

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If you are struck by an idea in the Symposium or the above Commentary, your brief response is very welcome. To send a letter to *PJ* for inclusion in a future issue, please use the address, fax number or e-mail address on the cover.

Wassean-Danda "new light for our eyes" was the name of a workshop on the Native Apostolate (October 1993) and is the title of the proceedings published in English only, available by writing to Anishinabe Spiritual Centre, P.O.Box 665, Espanola, Ontario, Canada, P0P 1C0. Remittance of US\$ 5 per copy to cover costs would be appreciated, but is not necessary if onerous.

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