

# Promotio Iustitiae

## **THE APOSTOLATE WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE**

### **Latin American Context**

X. Albó, F. Alvarado, J. Hernández

### **Indian Context**

C. Lakra, A. Toppo, X. Manjooran

### **Asia-Pacific Context**

J. Fung, B. McCoy

### **Canadian Context**

M. Murray and Companions SJ

## **PARADIGM CHANGE AND FAITH**

G. Costa, G. Uríbarri, A. Ferro, P. Béré, V. Jeyaraj

## **ECONOMIC CRISIS: DRONGEN MEETING**

F. Turner, W. Ryan, J. Sagastagoitia

## **DOCUMENTS**

H. Delétraz, G. Soetomo, C. Collins, J. Park

## **REMEMBERING JEAN-YVES CALVEZ SJ**

H. Madelin, B. Cassaigne, P. de Charentenay







# Promotio Iustitiae

At the service of Faith that does Justice



**Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat**

<http://www.sjweb.info/sjs/pj>

[sjs-pj@sjcuria.org](mailto:sjs-pj@sjcuria.org)

**Editor:** Fernando Franco SJ  
**Associate Editor:** Suguna Ramanathan  
**Production Assistant** Filippo Duranti  
**Publishing Coordinator:** Liliana Carvajal

*Promotio Iustitiae* is published by the Social Justice Secretariat at the General Curia of the Society of Jesus (Rome) in English, French, Italian and Spanish. *Promotio Iustitiae* is available electronically on the World Wide Web at the following address: [www.sjweb.info/sjs](http://www.sjweb.info/sjs), where you can download single articles or the complete issue.

If you are struck by an idea in this issue, your brief comment is very welcome. To send a letter to *Promotio Iustitiae* for inclusion in a future issue, please write to the address, fax or email address shown on the back cover.

The re-printing of articles is encouraged; please cite *Promotio Iustitiae* as the source, along with the address, and send a copy of the re-print to the Editor.

# CONTENTS

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>EDITORIAL</b>   | 5 |
| Fernando Franco SJ |   |

## THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES APOSTOLATE

### Latin American Context

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>A Response from Latin America and Bolivia</b> | 8 |
| Xavier Albó SJ                                   |   |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>An experience of working with the native peoples of Southern Bolivia</b> | 20 |
| Fernando Alvarado SJ  |    |

|                       |    |
|-----------------------|----|
| <b>An Open Setter</b> | 26 |
| Jerónimo Hernández SJ |    |

### Indian Context

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Tribals/ Indigenous People: the most Marginalized in the World</b> | 32 |
| Christopher Lakra SJ  |    |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>The <i>ADIVASIS</i> and their World Today</b> | 40 |
| Alfred Toppo SJ                                  |    |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| <b>Indigenous People: A perspective from Gujarat</b> | 46 |
| Xavier Manjooran SJ                                  |    |

### Asia-Pacific Context

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| <b>Some comments from Malaysia</b> | 52 |
| Joseph Fung SJ                     |    |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Indigenous Peoples - An Australian Perspective</b> | 54 |
| Brian F. McCoy SJ                                     |    |

### Canadian Context

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Indigenous Peoples and Marginalization: Notes from Ontario, Canada</b> | 60 |
| Michael Murray and companions SJ  |    |

## PARADIGM CHANGE AND FAITH

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Aggiornamento: A Continual Challenge</b> | 63 |
| Giacomo Costa SJ                            |    |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Christian Faith Calls for Justice and Reconciliation</b> | 69 |
| Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao SJ                                   |    |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| <b>The faith that leads us to justice and reconciliation in a multicultural, multireligious world</b> | <b>75</b>  |
| Alfredo Ferro M. SJ   |            |
| <b>“The concept of ‘Justice’ in the second synod for Africa!”</b>                                     | <b>81</b>  |
| Paul Béré SJ  |            |
| <b>Our Jesuit Faith Today: An Indian Perspective</b>  | <b>86</b>  |
| Veluswamy Jeyaraj SJ  |            |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>ECONOMIC CRISIS: DRONGEN MEETING</b>   |            |
| <b>Drongen - Convergences and Divergences</b>   | <b>93</b>  |
| Frank Turner SJ   |            |
| <b>Report on the Drongen discussion</b>   | <b>99</b>  |
| William Ryan SJ   |            |
| <b>Viewing the International Crisis from Europe</b>   |            |
| <b>Interview with Pierre Defraigne</b>  | <b>107</b> |
| Jon Sagastagoitia SJ  |            |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>DOCUMENTS</b>  |            |
| <b>Post-modernism opens new perspectives for evangelization</b>                                       | <b>111</b> |
| Hugues Delétraz SJ  |            |
| <b>Ecofarming and Green Commerce:</b>   |            |
| <b>A Jesuit Agricultural Training Centre in Indonesia</b>   | <b>124</b> |
| Greg Soetomo SJ   |            |
| <b>Christology and Prophetic Witness in <i>Caritas in Veritate</i></b>                                | <b>129</b> |
| Christopher S Collins SJ  |            |
| <b>In search of fuel for the fire in our hearts</b>   | <b>138</b> |
| Jinhyuk Park SJ   |            |
| <br>  |            |
| <b>REMEMBERING FR. JEAN-YVES CALVEZ SJ</b>  |            |
| <b>Homily</b>   | <b>141</b> |
| Henri Madelin SJ  |            |
| <b>Tireless!</b>  | <b>143</b> |
| Bertrand Cassaigne SJ   |            |
| <b>Jean-Yves Calvez SJ</b>  | <b>145</b> |
| Pierre de Charentenay SJ  |            |

**I**n a chapter of the documents of General Congregation 35 (GC 35) called 'Issues for the Ordinary Government,' which is not frequently read nor quoted, we find a collection of themes selected by the Congregation for discussion in the aula. As the text explains:

*The Congregation decided to form commissions to deal with these topics. Each commission prepared a document which was then presented and discussed in a plenary session. After receiving reactions, the commission made proposals for action on the party of the ordinary government of the Society. In other plenary sessions the opinion of the General Congregation was sought by means of a vote. Some of the approved proposals were included in decrees; others were presented to Fr. General for his government; still others were directed to the Provinces and Conferences of Provincials and are included in this document. (GC 35, Other Documents).*

One of the topics included in this chapter that I have quoted from is 'Indigenous Peoples'. In light of the Society's traditional commitment to these communities throughout our history, the epochal and encouraging political awakening they are experiencing in many countries, and the systematic destruction of their habitats and way of living by a neo-liberal model of development, we decided to ask a number of Jesuits to answer a few questions related to the text of GC 35 and share with the readers of *Promotio Iustitiae* their hopes and anxieties. A short note below clarifies the questions posed to them. The response has been excellent if at times somewhat repetitive. The Editor takes the blame for this limitation. Preserving the voices of those who decided to write was given priority and, as in other instances, choices have their shortfalls.

The last Encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate* (CiV), seems to be offering us a new understanding of the relationship between faith and justice. To stimulate reflection on these new perspectives I asked Giacomo Costa SJ, Director of the Jesuit journal *Aggiornamento Sociali*, for permission to re-print in *Promotio* a slightly edited version of an editorial article he published some time ago. The new 'understanding' of faith in a pluri-religious and multi-cultural society offered by the author seemed to me an interesting starting point for a debate. I sent his text to a few Jesuits and asked them to write a response following some minimal guidelines:

*I would like to ask you for a contribution for Promotio Iustitiae. The article should respond to the question: what is the kind of 'faith' that leads to justice and reconciliation in a multi-cultural and multi-religious world? An article written by Giacomo Costa to be published in the same issue is attached to serve as a background. I would like you to reflect on his definition of faith. The*

*question is important for us Jesuits in a world where we hear that there is a return to 'religion' and where the debate about secularism and fundamentalism is becoming crucial to an understanding of the changes taking place.*

We are also glad to offer an outline of the second meeting of a group of Jesuits and lay persons at Drongen, Belgium, to deal with the ethical and moral issues of the economic and financial crisis. In the context of the crisis, the Encyclical CiV was discussed and we profited immensely from a long evening session with Pierre Defraigne. Three articles in this issue give our readers a brief but incisive view of the main topics.

The section on 'Documentation' brings together a set of longer contributions on various important aspects: a positive and balanced view on post-modernity as a creative balance between heart and reason; an experience of inter-religious dialogue with Muslims in Indonesia; and a theological contribution by a young Jesuit studying theology at Boston College.

With affection and respect we have collected a few testimonies on the life of Fr. Jean-Yves Calvez.

Fernando Franco SJ

# INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

## THE SOCIETY OF JESUS AND THE APOSTOLATE WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

### Setting the Framework for the Reflection

**T**his issue of *Promotio Iustitiae* makes a modest effort to understand a number of Jesuits working with indigenous communities across the world. All those who have generously contributed were presented with a set of questions on the issue framed against the background of the discussion that took place in General Congregation 35 on that subject. We went to all the authors the following text.

In the Document on the 'Issues of Ordinary Governance', GC 35 has the following to say:

*Indigenous Peoples: GC35 received numerous postulates on this topic and the commission that studied them emphasised in the plenary the fact that indigenous peoples, dispersed throughout the world, are today about 370 million people with a rich cultural heritage and an important legacy of contribution to civilisation. Due to diverse political and socioeconomic processes, indigenous peoples are among the most marginalised and exploited in the world. The process of globalisation – partly responsible for environmental degradation and the pillage of natural resources – affects them in particular, as well as climate change that continues to seriously harm them*

*Because of this situation which endangers the very survival of these peoples, the Society ought to increase its commitment to them. The General Congregation suggests the formation of “work groups” of Jesuits in the indigenous Apostolate in each Conference of Provincials where this apostolic challenge exists.*

In the light of this text, I would like you to respond to the following questions bearing your local context in mind:

- (1) What are the factors rendering indigenous people the “most exploited and marginalised in the world” today? Make references to the process of globalisation, ecological degradation and the financial and economic crisis.
- (2) What is happening to their culture?
- (3) Which new socio-political and economic initiatives are strengthening them? What is your evaluation of these?
- (4) Is the Society “increasing its commitment? What would you say about the “work groups” that need to be formed in every Conference?

To facilitate the reading we have ordered the various contributions region-wise.

# Latin America Context

## A Response from Latin America and Bolivia

Xavier Albó SJ

### My geographical perspective

I am responding to the questions from in Bolivia, where I live and work. Bolivia is at present in quite an exceptional situation. Some 62% of its population has been identified as indigenous; and for the first time in the country's history, we have an indigenous (Aymara) president, elected democratically in December 2005 with 54% of the vote and re-elected in December 2009 with 64% of the vote. What is more, Bolivia's new Political Constitution was officially promulgated in January 2009.

For each question I will first give an answer in the broader context of Latin America [LA] and then respond with reference to Bolivia in particular [B]. I am naturally more familiar with the situation in Bolivia, which may also serve as something of an alternative. I must point out that my knowledge of the larger Latin American context dates mainly to the years before 2005, when I worked as coordinator of the pastoral ministry and solidarity with indigenous peoples for the two Latin American assistancies. My understanding of the overall continental perspective for the period after 2005 is therefore somewhat limited.

What factors are currently responsible for the indigenous peoples being among the most marginalized and most exploited of the world?

[LA] One needs to introduce a nuance into the implicit premise of this question. While it is certainly true that there is usually a greater concentration of indigenous peoples in rural areas with high rates of poverty, it is necessary to distinguish between groups of countries, areas within countries, and the processes to be found in all of them.

In recent times, a major factor contributing to the seizure of territory and other abuses against the indigenous peoples has been the occupation by multinational corporations (and their local associates) of what were formerly peripheral areas where the new strategic resources are located. These are the same areas where the native peoples have long lived or have taken refuge. The corporations exploit these zones with their capitalist logic of realizing a quick profit, which means they pay little attention to sustainability and ecological equilibrium. Many types of firms are involved, among them lumbering, mining, petroleum, and large hydroelectric projects.

Their relationship with the indigenous people ranges from straightforward pillage and expulsion<sup>1</sup> to negotiation, though the latter is seen simply as part of their strategy for avoiding conflicts and improving their international image. In just a few decades, millions of hectares in indigenous territories have been deforested and transformed into vast cattle ranches or farms for soybean production. The result is increasing inequality as regards access to the land. Other problems have arisen as well, such as the introduction of transgenic products, which increase production but also increase dependence on outside factors for each new crop. Steps such as these have marginalized the indigenous peoples, and in some cases even made them disappear; their quality of life has deteriorated sharply, and many are forced to emigrate.

For years now, in all the Latin American countries there has been, and there continues to be, *migration* of indigenous peoples away from their original homes and land; they migrate to the cities, to newly colonized areas, to neighbouring countries, the United States, and, in recent decades, Europe as well. The migration in most cases is mainly due to economic and employment factors, which affect both indigenous and non-indigenous populations. There are also many people who have been driven out of their land by armed political conflicts, for example, in Peru (towards Lima and the coast), in Guatemala (towards Mexico and the capital), in the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua, or along Ecuador's borders with Colombia and Peru.

Many of the migrants never return but become integrated with their new countries. Many, however, still maintain economic and personal ties with their native land; the remittances they send are sometimes vital for the maintenance of those who remain at home. It is not always easy to defend simultaneously the rights of these displaced populations and the rights of the people who receive them.

[B] In 1984, after seven years of political and economic crisis, *Bolivia* was forcibly subjected to the neo-liberal model, through which the government generously allowed international capital to exploit the country's abundant natural resources. The World Bank even held Bolivia up as an example for other poor countries of what a successful, peaceful transition should look like. In 2001, however, the model abruptly collapsed, mainly because of discontent over the way the country's natural resources were being managed by the multinationals that had entered. This crisis and a series of mass protests contributed to the emergence of indigenous protagonism led by Evo Morales and his MAS party (Movement to Socialism).

Morales and his party came to power in reaction to another kind of international intrusion. The *ambiguous war the United States is waging against*

---

<sup>1</sup>In 2008, before the Bagua conflict (see below) the president of Peru compared the indigenous peoples and their organizations with "the farmer's dog, which neither eats nor allows others to eat."

*drugs* determined that its “principal enemies” in Bolivia were some 50,000 unsuspecting families, many of them indigenous, who cultivated coca leaves to make a living. Even though they were the weakest link in the drug chain, they were considered the most culpable. *Coca* is the basic ingredient for cocaine, but it also has many local uses not connected with drug-trafficking. The great majority of families that had migrated there had done so only to survive, and the involvement of a small number of people in the production of “basic paste” from coca was in fact the result of that “war” which had sought to discourage the farmers by driving down the price of the coca leaves. The unintended result of that anti-coca policy was to mobilize the people into action and to increase their activities in other sectors of the nation. Evo himself, who had migrated there from the distant Aymara high plateau, emerged as a leader who defended the cultivation of coca. The problems of drug trafficking and the channelling of coca towards it are still not resolved, but it would be wrong to characterize the present government as an accomplice of the drug trafficking business. The trafficking in no way sustains the government or constitutes one of its objectives. At the same time, the government does not know how to develop more effective instruments to combat it and prevent its expansion. This is without a doubt a pending assignment. We should make it clear, nevertheless, that Bolivia is still only the third largest producer of cocaine, after Colombia and Peru, both of which countries are completely aligned with the U.S.

The recent financial and economic crisis has been felt less in *Bolivia* than in other countries, perhaps in part because the economy is small and a large portion of the population, especially in rural and indigenous areas, is less dependent on such international fluctuations. I do not have any recent data on the effect of the crisis among the indigenous peoples of other *Latin American* countries.

### **What is happening with their cultures?**

[LA] It is now difficult to find “pure” or “isolated” indigenous cultures in our ever more globalized and interconnected world of today. All native peoples have opened up to others and adopted syncretistic elements. There is therefore a need to distinguish between two kinds of borrowing:

- a. the adoption of *practical, functional* cultural elements from some other source (for example, in matters of clothing, housing, energy, transport, language, or means of communication, including cell phones, TV, Internet).
- b. the adoption of elements that either reinforce or dilute their own *identity*. In the latter case it is almost always a question of adopting an expressive element with strong symbolic force, which has to do with their own

language, their values, or their vision of the world, including religious and artistic dimensions. Or it could involve factors affecting their survival and development as a people, such as their organizations, their internal forms of governing, or the definition of their territory. However, it is not always easy to distinguish between these two types of elements, the functional and the symbolic. With regard to development, for example, there is a permanent dialectic between, on the one hand, defence of the people's rights and their world vision and, on the other, adoption of practical external elements, such as whether they manage their resources by themselves or in association with others.

The native cultural forms of each people are better maintained in the traditional rural territories, where the acquisition of practical elements as mentioned above can be an advantage rather than a threat. Nevertheless, it is not always the case that indigenous peoples succeed in consolidating the elements that most identify them, especially as regards their self-government within the local and national context.

Many indigenous people now living in the cities or in other countries are experiencing much greater changes. In such places they will perhaps have greater opportunities of the first type of practical functional borrowing even while living in slums, but they will also find it much more difficult to resist the second type of borrowing of elements that dilute their essential identity. Many suffer greater discrimination if they are identified as indigenous, so they tend to make that identity "invisible." In the course of time, if they are unable to sustain their internal bonds through deliberate practices and organizations, they become anonymous members of the urban society, and are completely dissolved in that society's culture. The native language is used less and less and ceases to be transmitted to new generations. Naturally, the cultural elements associated with rural life undergo significant transformations; some of them are simply lost, and others are subjected to various forms of syncretism. This is what happens, for example, with their social and economic relations, their ways of resolving conflicts among themselves, and their celebrations and beliefs.

As regards the symbolic identity deriving from the religious culture, there continues to be a traditional syncretism between indigenous and Christian rites and beliefs. Such syncretism varies considerably from one place to another or one people to another - those living in central regions, for example, are different from forest-dwelling groups with whom contact has been more recent. Then of course there is variation between the rural and urban areas. Although Catholic traditions predominate, the Catholic "monopoly" is on the decline in both areas, and an increase in the variety of different Christian denominations, including charismatic or pentecostal groups (for example, in Guatemala). Some minority peoples have adopted en masse, but

syncretistically, the religion of their missionaries (for example, the New Tribes). There are very few people who can be called indigenous and at the same time atheist. One wonders whether they changed their faith for the sake of certain material benefits. If so, it is possible that once the benefits disappear, they may lose their faith.

[B] In **Bolivia** processes such as these have had and continue to have much force. After the Revolution of 1952, for example, it was not thought advisable, even in the countryside, for people to identify themselves, or to be identified by others, as “indigenous.” The only “correct” thing then was to become a *campesino*; this was the case in Bolivia even more than in Mexico. It was also quite common for many migrants to the city and even to colonized areas to become culturally invisible.

A half century later, however, with the strong emergence of indigenous-campesino organizations, this attitude has been somewhat modified, at least as regards the way people identify themselves. According to the census of 2001 (taken five years before the present government), more than 50% of the people living in all the cities of the Andean area claimed to be Quechua or Aymara, including many who no longer spoke the language. With the political changes that have taken place since 2006, it would not be surprising if the percentage of indigenous self-identification were even higher in the next census (though perhaps not the percentage of those speaking the native language).

The new Constitution (art. 4) places more emphasis on religious liberty and separation between the church and the lay (though not laicized) state, and it makes specific mention of the spiritualities and worldviews of the Andean peoples.

**What are the new social and economic processes that are fortifying [or not] the indigenous peoples? What is to be thought of them?**

Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO) (1989) and the Declaration of the United Nations on the rights of the indigenous peoples (2007) are useful instruments for improving relations. However, there is still a very unequal struggle between the vulnerable indigenous peoples and the powerful multinational corporations, which are frequently supported by governments in the hope of realizing handsome returns from such an alliance.

[LA] Differentiating the countries, I will look especially at the native peoples’ political emergence, which has as its dialectical counterpoint the exploitation and social and political discrimination they have suffered.

The principal indigenous concentrations are in **Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Guatemala**, and some states in southeastern *Mexico*. Owing to of differences in

their recent histories, the results achieved have varied from country to country. I will begin with those cases that show more innovation.

[B] **Bolivia** (62% indigenous: 31% Quechua, 25% Aymara, 6% other, among 29 smaller groups)

For five centuries the indigenous peoples were highly marginalized and exploited by the Spanish colonial system, which utilized them ruthlessly to develop their mines and estates. After independence was achieved in 1825, the creole leadership, descended from the Spanish, kept in place a *neo-colonial* system. The Bolivian state was established without taking into account the indigenous peoples (then 90% of the population), except as taxpayers and cheap labour. The Republic doubled the extent of the lands controlled by large estates, and it despoiled indigenous communities and territories for that purpose, even as it adhered to a presumably more “scientific” conception of racism, based on “social Darwinism.”

Beginning in 1952, a National Revolution began, incorporating the indigenous peoples into Bolivian society, but in a way that that involved cultural, social and political *assimilation* to the dominant minority, with the resulting loss of their native identities. Though carried out under the fiction of creating universal uniformity within a “mestizo state,” this revolution actually gave rise to a nation-wide “campesino” organization which became politically active, first as part of the MNR party (National Revolutionary Movement) and later as part of a “campesino-military pact.”

In the 1970s and 80s that model was in a state of crisis, starting in the Andean territory but then spreading to the minority populations in the lowlands. The indigenous organizations broke free of the “military pact” and, calling themselves “nations,” began to demand a state that was “unitary but multinational.” Thus, step by step, using the electoral process, Bolivia came to have the present government presided over by Evo Morales, an Aymara, and the country took on a new image, both internally and internationally, as a pioneer in the region. There has been a change in the groups in control of both the executive and the legislative branches of government, although in the former only one-fourth of the indigenous president’s ministers are of similar origin because of the difficulties of finding people with adequate qualifications and preparedness.

Between 2006 and 2008, a constituent assembly, truly representative of the country but with only a few jurists with specialized expertise, worked for 16 months on a new *Constitution*, which is today the most inclusive one in Latin America. The process involved hard struggles and constant conflicts with the opposition, especially in the eastern lowlands, where the bulk of the dominant non-indigenous population lives and where the country’s greatest wealth and

resources are located. In 2008 these opposing forces did everything in their power to overthrow the government, but the attempt was thwarted thanks to help from other nations in the continent and beyond. That conflict actually helped to achieve widespread agreement on the text of the constitution, which was submitted to a referendum and finally approved with 61% of the vote in January 2009. The new constitution recognizes the multinational and intercultural character of the state and its institutions; for example, it allows for autonomous indigenous regions with their own government and judicial system. It proposes the ideal of the *suma qamaña*, that is, “living all together” (not some living better than others), both among ourselves and with nature. The new constitution is being gradually implemented by the new Legislative Assembly, elected at the end of 2009 with a two-thirds official majority (indigenous and non-indigenous). The democratic process has its bright and its dark spots, but it has already brought about a major shift in key actors and emphases, a shift which greatly favours indigenous inclusion. It is still too early, however, to judge the results.

**[C] Ecuador** (35% indigenous, mainly Quichua plus 13 smaller groups).

This is the only country with accomplishments comparable with Bolivia’s, but to a lesser degree. The Coordination of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) was formed in 1986 and gave birth to the Pachakutik party in 1995, in alliance with other leftist groups. Even as a minority party, it helped in 1998 to bring about important changes in the constitution (at the time the most progressive in Latin America), and in 2003 it became part of the government, with allies in the military. The latter however, adopted a populist style, weakening the indigenous party and organization, which soon shifted to neo-liberal proposals, and eventually suffered defeat. However, in 2007 the new government was led by Correa as president, and he was more open than his predecessors to the “poor,” inclusive, obviously, of indigenous peoples. It called for a new constitution, approved in 2008, which reaffirmed the gains of the former constitution and also adopted elements such as the “multinational state” and the *sumac kawsay* (=living well). It is also the first constitution to speak of “the rights of Mother Earth,” a theme later taken up by Evo in Bolivia. The new constitution, however, does not pay as much heed to the specific needs of the indigenous peoples.

**[D] Mexico.**

In absolute terms, Mexico has the largest indigenous population of Latin America: 13 million, belonging to 62 groups. They represent, however, only 13% of the total population. The greatest concentration (25% or more) are in Chiapas and other states of south-eastern Mexico. In ethnic terms, the number of indigenous would actually be much greater, but after the Revolution of 1917

an effort was made to integrate them into a new “mestizo” state, such as the one proposed years later by the MNR in Bolivia. The assimilation process was quite successful, with the result that at present only 13% of the people identify themselves indigenous; the rest, having been Hispanicized, simply consider themselves Mexican city dwellers or campesinos. In the meantime, Mexico has drawn ever closer to the United States, to the point of signing a free-trade agreement (NAFTA) with that country, thus opening itself much more to U.S. economic interests.

As a counterpoint, on the same day that NAFTA became effective (January 1, 1994), the Zapatista indigenous rebellion broke out in *Chiapas*, and succeeded in shaking up the conscience of the people, both nationally and the internationally. The movement even managed to set up some autonomous indigenous regions, and has contributed to the organization of indigenous peoples in other states of Mexico. In 2001, after a long march across the country and a massive demonstration in the capital, the Zapatistas made a fruitless attempt to have the parliament change the federal constitution in favour of the indigenous peoples. The attempt to gain greater rights was stymied by the strong influence of government and business interests, and the large-scale migration of people to the cities and to the U.S. took the edge off the campaign.

[E] **Guatemala** (50% indigenous, belonging to 24 groups mainly of the Maya family).

Guatemala is perhaps the most politically and economically polarized country in Latin America. Thirty-six years of armed struggle resulted in 150,000 deaths (including 422 massacres) and 50,000 people “disappeared.” Of the documented cases, some 75% were indigenous people (see the *Nunca más* report). During those years there were strong indigenous-campesino organizations (like the CUC, of Nobel prize winner Rigoberta Menchú), and the communities of resistance survived in the jungle. On the basis of the U.N.-backed peace accords, pioneering proposals for a constitutional reform were made between 1994 and 1996, but the proposals were rejected by a referendum in 1999 in which only 18% of the electorate voted – a reflection of the mistrust and fear still felt by the people. The previous year, the bishop coordinating the detailed *Nunca más* report had been murdered two days after officially releasing it, but despite this reversal, the indigenous organizations have persisted in their efforts, though without much in the way of tangible results.

[E] **Peru** (37% indigenous: 30% Quechuas, 4% Aymaras, 3% belonging to 68 other groups).

This Andean country has remained largely on the sidelines since the 1980s, when an internal war was waged between the Sendero Luminoso (a Maoist

group with little sensitivity toward the indigenous) and the army. According to the *Truth Commission*, that war left 70,000 dead; most of those killed were non-combatants, and about 75% were indigenous. Although the better-organized places managed to survive the ordeal, the country's social texture was in shreds, and since then right-wing governments have prevailed. The 2006 elections manifested the people's desire for change, especially in the Andean Sierra and the Amazon territory, where there is a greater concentration of indigenous peoples. The principal organizing efforts and mobilizations in recent years have been in reaction to the negative effects of exploitation by multinational mining companies in the Sierra and oil companies in the jungle.

In 14 other countries, the indigenous populations are demographically marginal (between 0.4 and 15% of the total), but many of them already have solid organizations which, with international assistance (from IBIS, Oxfam, etc.), have made solid advances.

There are also important populations of African descent in Brazil and in the Caribbean basin (islands and mainland). Their history and problems are different from, but related to, that of the indigenous populations. Until now, however, the Society has not made special efforts for them, except in Haiti and Jamaica, where they make up the whole population.

By the end of 2009 a strong continental alliance had developed between Bolivia, Venezuela, Cuba, Ecuador, and Nicaragua, and included more moderate allies such as Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Chile.<sup>2</sup> Although their common denominator is the desire to gain greater regional autonomy vis-à-vis the United States, concern for indigenous rights is also part of their agenda in varying degrees, with Bolivia exercising leadership in this regard. A countervailing force in Latin America, led by Mexico and Colombia (and probably Chile as of 2010), is more open to the presence of the U.S. and more dependent on the U.S. model of neo-liberal globalization.

Is the Society "growing in its commitment to the indigenous peoples"? What is thought of the "work groups" that are to be formed in the Conferences?

[LA] Most of the provinces have made some commitment to the indigenous peoples, although with our reduced numbers, the commitment may not be very extensive nor always seen as a priority, especially in those provinces tied down by the need to attend to large institutions.

Some of the present commitments come from the times when the provinces considered it important to have their own internal "indigenous

<sup>2</sup>As of 2010 the newly elected government in Chile holds a contrary political position, and a similar shift may also occur in some of the coming elections in other countries, with movement in one direction or the other depending on the place.

mission" (Mato Grosso in Brazil, Tarahumara and Chiapas in Mexico, Marañón in Peru), and they have been quite diligent in updating the focus of their work and their methodology despite fewer available personnel. The more recent commitments have arisen from province-level decisions and planning (e.g., Central America, Chile), from personal initiatives and vocations (e.g., Ecuador, Venezuela), or from a combination of both.

As a starting point, it is important to highlight the fact that the commitment to the indigenous peoples involves working in multiple dimensions: social, political, pastoral, and theological, including a strong component of inter-religious dialogue. It also makes us aware of the potential that indigenous cultures have to inspire our world-weary society to dream of new horizons. In what follows I will call attention to certain dialectical tensions to be found in this work.

**Between the institutions and insertion.** In the light of the new missiology, most of the old boarding schools, which carried the old colonial baggage of a "civilizing" function, have been closed. What is stressed instead is communal living, without completely discounting the institutional character of the local inculturated church or other secular institutions. This same tension may be expressed in various ways: should we convert people and establish the Church or should we simply accompany them? How do we combine accompaniment, pastoral work, and political strengthening? The late Ronco Robles (MEX) for many years was inserted in a small Tarahumara community, but he was surprised when he was summoned by the Zapatista indigenous movement to advise them in their negotiations with the government in distant Chiapas, – even though other Jesuits were available close by. Their argument was: "You really understand us, after living so many years in a native community, and you have no hidden ambitions."

**Between lasting commitment to a people and availability.** From the perspective of governance, this tension involves, on the one hand, knowing how to interpret, accompany, and orient the charisms of each person and, on the other, being able to count on subjects to take on vital jobs in key places. Marcos Recolons, working now in the Roman Curia after many years among the indigenous people of Bolivia, used to say that the (institutional and/or personal) commitment to an indigenous people could well demand 60 years of life, because it requires a long-term investment that must begin early (so as to learn the language and thereby enter into the culture), and must then continue with different rhythms in order to achieve results and consolidate them. For that reason, some Jesuits, observing older men who have made this kind of commitment, will sometimes comment that they are "admirable but not imitable."

**Indigenous vocations to the Society.** We have not really dealt with this issue, though we already have several cases, above all (but not only) in Bolivia. Due

to our socio-cultural origins and our own way of being, however, it is not easy to adapt our community lifestyles so that indigenous youth feel “at home” among us. Nevertheless, given the privation and the discrimination they experience in their places of origin, some of these indigenous Jesuits can realize their potential in other socio-cultural settings better than they would in their own.

**A “work group” in each Conference.** We might find useful the experience of the present Coordinating Group for Indigenous Solidarity and Pastoral Ministry in Latin America. The group came into existence not from above but from the grassroots, in response to the felt need for mutual support among our dispersed numbers. The Internet is also gradually extending its reach to some of the more far-flung places, thus making communication easier, but this is no substitute for actually meeting together physically. Every two years we come together for a meeting, preferably in one of the places where we work and with significant participation of the local population. Within inevitable budget limitations, an attempt is made to facilitate the participation of Jesuits (and/or lay collaborators) and also indigenous representatives. Extra time is set aside for the Jesuits to talk among themselves. During the meetings we dedicate time to sharing our experiences, but also to particular topics such as indigenous spirituality, intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, political participation, ecology, or postulates for GC 35. The Social Justice Secretary from Rome or his delegate, as well as local provincials and persons representing CPAL have been regular participants.

The Coordinating Group has had extended discussions with CPAL about our structural link, and it was finally decided to make it a subsector within the Social Sector of CPAL, so that our coordinator would have a permanent link with the larger structure of government. However, although the social dimension is a fundamental part of our work among the indigenous peoples, it is not the only dimension. In some places we have meaningful relations with teams of theological and pastoral reflection, and in a few instances, with university groups. Attempts have also been made to establish links with the programme for migrants and with *Fe y Alegría*, but without much success.

We have tried to avoid becoming simply a group of friends or “colleagues,” because we realize the importance this apostolate has had, and still has, as a real option and a source of inspiration for the whole Society, even though in terms of numbers neither the indigenous peoples, nor we Jesuits dedicated to the work, are numerous.

[B] **Bolivia.** In the 1950s, what was then the vice-province of Bolivia made a clear option for the indigenous peoples by making it possible for scholastics to learn Quechua and set up the first rural works. At that time also, the first Quechuas entered the Society. During the planning process of the years 1977-

82, this option continued to be one of the central apostolic thrusts, from both a pastoral and a social perspective, and even from a linguistic perspective. Several Bolivian Jesuits have closely accompanied the innovations and advances that have taken place on these three fronts, as well as in the political realm. We have been in quite a new situation since 2006, and with this changed situation, there is a wide range of opinions and options for the Jesuits. It will be impossible to keep us on the sidelines. May God grant us the wisdom to be creative companions as we face up to the challenge of moving toward a more inclusive and diverse society against a background of ongoing discernment.

Xavier Albó SJ  
Bolivia

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*



# An experience of working with the native peoples of Southern Bolivia

## Fernando Alvarado<sup>1</sup> SJ

### Introduction

In these pages I would like to share some reflections on the experience and challenges facing the Loyola Cultural Action Foundation (ACLO) in its work with the indigenous people of rural Southern Bolivia in the context of the great changes taking place today in Bolivia, Latin America and the world at large. In this article we place more emphasis on the problems and risks that could, and do, occur in the relations between civil society (the native peoples) and the State, and our position vis-à-vis those events. For us this theme is very current and controversial, whether it involves public and private agencies of international cooperation, which are the social agents with whom we work, or the State, which wants to take charge of everything that was done, or is being done, by NGOs or private development organizations such as ACLO.

At the outset however I would like to answer, very briefly, the questions put to us in the letter requesting this article on the native peoples in our Province.

On the one hand, I think it is a good initiative to form or strengthen groups of Jesuits who work in the native apostolate in those provincial conferences where this apostolic challenge exists. In the case of Latin America (CPAL) and specifically in Bolivia, this theme is fundamental.

On the other hand, with respect to our (36) cultures and the new social, economic and political processes of the present, let us note that the last 10 years in Bolivia have seen social, political, juridical and economic changes that are very rapid, profound and radical. The historical debts of justice, economic equality, social inclusion and solidarity with and for native people, campesinos, the unemployed, and popular sectors in general, are, little by little, being settled, since Evo Morales and the present government, the *Movement to Socialism, Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples* (MAS-IPSP), came to power. Nevertheless, as with any process of change, we have our difficulties, problems and pitfalls, as much in the heart of the same government as in civil society – especially in the powerful, conservative sectors which want no change and offer stiff resistance. Nevertheless it continues to build and strengthen.

---

<sup>1</sup>Fernando Alvarado is Director General of the Loyola Cultural Action Foundation (ACLO) which has been working in Sucre, Bolivia since 1966.

Finally, I think that the Society in Latin America, and specifically in Bolivia, does not give much importance to work in the social sector, especially to direct ministry in the campesino and native sectors. Little manpower is sent to that sector; priority and promotion of constant growth are given to parishes in poor areas and popular education in the cities.

### **The context: Civil Society - Government**

Prior to the founding of ACLO in 1966, both civil society and government existed in the absence of campesinos and natives. The latter had no human rights, only obligations to fulfill. Such was the reality of the native peoples. Although statistically they constituted the majority of the Bolivian population, their place in the society of the time was similar to that of slaves.

The boost of the Revolution of 1952 made the “Indians turn into campesinos”, visible in Bolivia, while the natives of the East (the warm tropical zone) and of the Chaco (the warm dry zone) remained in the underclass of Bolivia. Among the achievements of the Revolution of '52 were universal suffrage and the right to education and health care. Despite these victories, successive governments tried to “assimilate and inculturate” the campesinos to a monist state: the Bolivian Nation, overlooking once again their majority presence in the national

Beginning with the march of native peoples of the East in the 1990s, the State and its mono-cultural society began to pay serious attention to the native demands for land and territory.

The cycle of “traumatic and formal” inclusion of the native rural indigenous peoples<sup>2</sup> began in December 2005, with the election of the first indigenous president of Bolivia. From that date, civil society and the same government have been in a process of transformation towards a new plurinational State and society with regions that are territorially autonomous.

### **ACLO: Word, Commitment and Action**

The old dreams of the ACLO of 1966 are today translated into its institutional “Vision”. In this vision, campesinos and organized natives are the principal subjects of its action. The dream is of an “inclusive, democratic, just, supportive society and a multicultural state” to be constructed in an “alliance of campesinos with natives” from the south of Bolivia (the regions of Potosí, Chuquisaca and Tarija), where a high percentage of the poverty of Bolivia is

<sup>2</sup>Editor's Note: “A Native Rural Indigenous People [nación y pueblo indígena originario campesino] is the entire human collectivity which shares a cultural identity, language, historical traditions, institutions, territoriality and worldview, whose origins predate the Spanish colonial invasion.” New Political Constitution of Bolivia, Fourth Chapter, Article 30.1

concentrated – generating rural development actions which have an effect on power relationships at the local, regional and national levels.

Starting in 2000, that dream has begun to make sense with the entrance of campesinos and natives into the national political scene. This dream brings with it the challenge for ACLO to take responsibility for the risks entailed by the changes since its creation in 1966: the risks of questioning the organizations of a mono-cultural, anti-campesino society while thinking about the opportunities of the historic moment which Bolivia is now traversing.

ACLO was born with the “option for the poor”, in our case for the campesinos and natives of Southern Bolivia; in fact that option is a risk and at the same time an opportunity to fulfill the original vision with which it was born 44 years ago. Through these years ACLO has played “a part in the struggles, the hopes and the challenges of the campesinos and the native peoples”.

Beyond the institutional risks, the alliance and engagement with the campesinos and native peoples have borne fruit in credibility and recognition for the work of ACLO, at the local, regional and national levels.

Despite the risks and threats represented by the process of the Constituent Assembly, formally initiated in 2006, ACLO ratified its alliance and trust with the campesinos and native peoples of Southern Bolivia. This commitment of ACLO was made visible through its wager on the Constituent Assembly, its support of the rural development commissions on the environment, and its collaboration in organizing regional forums. In this sense, ACLO also contributed to the development of the Statutes of the so-called “Bartolinas” (Bartolina Sisa Women’s Federation of Chuquisaca) and the Autonomous Statute of the Campesinos of Chuquisaca.

Now as always, our commitment will continue to be to accompany rural and indigenous organizations in Southern Bolivia on the long journey to construct an “inclusive, democratic, just and supportive society and a plurinational state with autonomies”. However this does not close the door to our taking on new challenges and achievements, for example, working with migrants, popular sectors in the marginal neighbourhoods of our cities, and work with migratory youth.

We will continue to collaborate, work and synergize, together with many social activists, and public and private institutions. We will carry on “together but not scrambled”, each one with its own ROLE. Nevertheless we ask the following questions:

How much distance should there be between society and the State given our new social, political and economic context? This question arises as it is often the same organizations and the same campesino leaders formed by

ACLO who now ask us to advise and support them in their new roles as mayors and members of parliament and of assemblies.

On the other hand, we wonder, does a sincere cooperation exist among the poor?

### **Campesino Organizations: Party and State**

The revolution of 1952 changed the “Indians” into voting campesinos in order to favour the “candidates of a lettered and wealthy society and party machine”. While their votes were used by the governing class for their own purposes, from the underclass of Bolivia sprang the hope for a Plurinational State.

Previously they had had to pass milestones like the Military-Campesino Pact with the then government of René Barrientos, in which the campesinos were at the service of the military regime. However they grew tired of being used as “doormats”, sought independence from the traditional parties, and succeeded in founding their own *Movement to Socialism, Political Instrument for the Sovereignty of the Peoples* (MAS-IPSP).

The creation of the IPSP – MAS in Santa Cruz signified the beginning of a transformation of the Anti-Campesino State to a Campesino–Native State. This process grew in strength from the elections of 2005 up to the naming of the first native president of the Plurinational State with autonomies in December 2009.

### **A glance at the process: Government and organizations:**

- According to some analysts there exists a theoretical confusion within the campesino organizations with respect to the MAS government: the famous union independence from the party in power.
- But for the campesino leaders and also for native people, the IPSP – MAS is the political instrument for *them*, by which they are part of the government.
- The Constitution of the New Plurinational State (starting February 2009) has a great impact on society and on the mono-cultural republican State. Because of this, the civil society – State relationship, of which the campesino and native organizations are an important part, is now different: it is one of mutual correspondence. More simply we may say that there is a co-governance between the IPSP- MAS and the social organizations (Social Movements). Thus it makes no sense for the social movements to seek their independence.

- At present there is not even much clarity in the relation between “State and Civil Society in transition”; the challenge for all is to settle precisely those limits and roles.
- Those campesinos and native people who are presently part of the government will in the future have trouble making a critical analysis of government performance. Can we break the paradigm of Judge and Jury?
- Moreover, in the discourse of the expanded organizations, congresses and meetings, they declare, “We are part of the government.”
- At the same time, simply to be the government does not imply automatically a change of economic, political, social or cultural structures.
- Some sectors of the social movements are of the opinion that many NGOs have supported the constitutional process from the beginning: CIPCA, ACLO, CEJIS.
- What does it mean to be a leader and a public servant in a State in transition? A leader in the process of becoming a public servant? What role do the NGOs play in that context?
- If we are in a Civil Society and State in transition, with the same subjects – campesinos and native people – in other roles, what is the new role of the NGOs, and specifically of ACLO with the same subjects?

### **Current Reality: the Position of ACLO**

Without going deep into the political history of Bolivia, we may say that from the installation of the Constituent Assembly in August 2006 to the present, ACLO has been the ally of Bolivian campesinos and native peoples.

As never before in history, civil society as a whole has become the principal agent in the construction and maintenance of a type of State; one need only remember the conflicted moments Bolivia has gone through. To be sure, for the Native Rural Indigenous Peoples it will be a different State from that of '52.

Despite the somewhat confused situation of the new State – Civil Society relationship, ACLO will not abandon the historical subjects of its action: campesinos and natives. The path we have taken is not a new one; we are committed to the change, we are part of the change, we seek a more just and supportive society.

Moreover we know we are not civil servants; we cannot be used or instrumentalized for party purposes. In this unclear scenario, we reiterate our commitment to the campesinos and native peoples of Southern Bolivia.

ACLO considers this the best moment to participate, through the campesino organizations, in “policy design and construction” of the New Plurinational State and including the same civil society.

Historic NGOs such as ACLO began to play the role of the State in abandoned communities and/or regions; later we accompanied them in their struggle to win their political rights. Now that the campesinos and native peoples are part of the government, we the NGOs will assume a different role: to facilitate and deepen the changes in the communities (from bottom to top), so that the changes may be real and not just cosmetic.

**To Sum up:**

- Since the social organizations have been present in the government, overcoming poverty, marginalization and exclusion are now the public policy of the State; the only thing that needs to be done is to make it a reality. In this sense NGOs like ACLO can act in two ways: promote new public policies (beyond social and political); and deepen the changes (make them a reality in the communities).

- ACLO will continue to support campesino and native organizations so that the changes will come to pass in the communities, so that they may be more than mere talk in the media, something like a campaign in favour of change. This means keeping ourselves in touch with the process of change, despite the limitations and risks. ACLO will, as always, maintain in its actions a distance from the party politics of campesino and native organizations. Nevertheless our commitment to strengthen and make concrete democracy, justice and equality will remain the principal focus of ACLO.

Fernando Alvarado SJ  
Bolivia

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Newman SJ*

## An Open Letter Jerónimo Hernández SJ

Dear Fernando:

Excuse me for writing in the form of a letter something that is supposed to be an article for *Promotio Iustitiae*. An article, of course, does not usually begin like this. It starts with a title and something of structure; it is addressed to a broad public; it is clear about the point or theme that it wants to develop; it situates itself in the context of a journal dedicated to a particular topic – and who knows what else! You indicated how many words you want from me – no more than 2500. Oh, and also a date: February 20<sup>th</sup>! You also suggested that I might consider some questions that offer guidelines: indigenous peoples as the world’s most marginalized and exploited; factors that affect them; transformation of their cultures; new processes that strengthen them; the Society’s commitment to them today.

I think I understand well what you are asking of me and what you would like to do with these reflections if I ever finish them. But if I were to ask our indigenous brothers and sisters what they thought of your request, they would first ask me, and I mean *they* would ask *me*: who are these gentlemen who wish to know about us, and what are their aims? And they would respond that way not because they are “hostile” or “closed,” as our western way of thinking would have us believe, but for many reasons, of which I will mention just two. One reason would be that among the indigenous – as we have learned from our experience and knowledge of their cultures, which we call “usages and customs” – when you have a talk with someone, there must be first a greeting; then you have to know something about the other person, ask “how his heart is doing”; maybe then you offer him a little food or coffee, since you don’t know where he’s coming from or where he is going (“So how was the journey? No doubt you’re hungry?”); and then at last you talk about business. The point is, their style of human relations, including diplomacy, is very different from our western manner, which, as we know well, is interested, first and foremost, in the business at hand and avoids wasting time in trivialities. Another reason for their responding that way is because ... so many things have happened in their history, both recent and long past, that they need to know what people who are interested in their situation want to do with them. They have been deceived and despoiled so many times that they invest much effort in getting to know the people they’re dealing with well. It may sound as if they are distrustful, I grant you, but they have little choice. Every time they have entered into relations with people from other worlds, that is, western cultures, they have emerged so battered and betrayed that they now prefer to proceed with great prudence.

That's the way it's been, they say, since the relationship with westerners started. First, when the conquistadors arrived, they robbed them of their lands, their riches, their women, their elders, their priests, their principles, their beliefs. The colonizers ground them into the cement of the great colonial edifices. The indigenous peoples were made peons on the haciendas, they were yoked to the wagons of civilizations, and they were enslaved in their own land. Afterwards, once they had been impoverished and devastated, they were abandoned to their fate. The native peoples were forced by the creoles and mestizos to build great cities and to work in industries and mines, and subsequently they were banished to the farthest hills and mountains of the planet. There, always excluded from all progress and development, they were sentenced to oblivion. For countless years the modern world paid no heed to them, or if it did, it was only to register them as a negative balance or a necessary social residue, for the most part made invisible by the same society. They were considered childish, incompetent, dangerous, superstitious. When they actually betrayed the confidence that someone claimed to have placed in them, they were judged quite bluntly - as the refrain goes: "The Indian is not to blame, but the one who trusts in him."

Nevertheless, in the course of the years, all these people knew enough to preserve their cultures, their vision of the cosmos, and their identity, often having to camouflage them within the alien structures imposed upon them. For centuries they learned to speak in another language while preserving their own; they learned to think in another culture without ceasing to be true to themselves; they learned to walk and dress and work like a white man or a mestizo, but keeping safe in their hearts, and there alone, their own identity. They learned to converse with God in hidden places, knowing that God was their companion in resistance: in dances and foul weather, on highways and mountain trails, in hunger and hard labour, in feasts and moments of joy, and in the truest expressions of indigenous faith.

Well aware, then, that for them the God of nearness and of wholeness was to be found in the earth as well as in heaven, they devised a new way of relating with God, with nature, and with humankind, a way that made them capable of surviving until today. Through that relation with the Earth, Mother of all living things, they learned how to maintain the ecological balance of their hills and mountains, their natural pools, and their rivers and springs. They knew how to preserve, care for, and protect the natural world, since that was the very reason that God had placed them in it. And up to this very day this world has stayed alive thanks to that attitude of responsibility and gratitude manifested by the Indian peoples toward nature.

Nevertheless, the world of capital - which cares nothing about the agony of the world, inhabitants included, as long as it obtains its juicy profits - discovered that there is still more wealth to be garnered in the form of

minerals, petroleum, fresh water, biodiversity, and all the other natural resources which are located precisely in those territories inhabited by the indigenous peoples. And so capital decided to wage a new war of pillage and extermination against them in order to take control of their resources. It is no longer now a question of sequestering the native peoples in what used to be considered poor-quality lands, as was done in times of the colony. The aim now is to regiment them, globalize them, and employ them as day-workers in their own land, which has been put to other uses. Or if they resist, to exterminate them. What is being sought now by capital is not the exploitation of agricultural lands with medieval systems, but the acquisition of territories rich in natural resources that can be utilized according to the needs of neo-liberal capital accumulation, which has become today highly predatory and irrational. To that end the capitalist economy has designed an extermination strategy, or rather a programme for acculturating and re-educating the Indians. Through this programme, the new younger generations of indigenous people, with their desires to adopt a modern lifestyle, are converted into masses of unemployed youth, or, at best, into new reserve armies of cybernetic labour. That is to say, if they want to survive, they must be prepared to serve capital by learning to handle the new instruments of digital technology. Those who do not fit into this new reordering of functions will die of hunger.

And what is happening to their cultures? Everything is changing in our world these days. Just as climate change is profoundly affecting everybody, even those who live in the remotest places on the planet, so today, cultural change, a product of globalization, is also affecting all the earth's peoples. The climatic change is brought about by the emission of contaminating gases, and it doesn't matter whether those gases are emitted by certain countries or others, or by certain industries or others. No matter who produces them, those gases are causing a change in the world's climate that affects every remote corner of the planet. Most especially affected are those populations, such as the indigenous peoples, that depend on agriculture for their livelihood. These peoples are accustomed to planting, harvesting and processing their crops in accordance with the normal cycles of rainy and dry seasons. That is how it has always been, but climate change has provoked huge changes in the weather cycles. That is to say, during what used to be the wet season - when rain could be counted on so that crops would grow and bear fruit - there is now no rain, or else it rains much more than usual. As a result, the crops are lost. On the other hand, during the dry season, when it is not supposed to rain, it rains heavily now, or else the drought is much worse than before. All these changes have profound effects on both the seasonal crops and the permanent growths of jungle and forest. Also seriously affected by climate change are both the hunting and the raising of animals that supply food for the indigenous populations.

Thus, as a consequence of the phenomenon of globalization, the cultures of all the people are also undergoing change. In earlier times the indigenous peoples may have been exploited, oppressed, and excluded from social, economic and cultural development, but they were still able, precisely because of that marginalization, to take refuge in their own native cultural patterns. Their language, their dances, their feasts, their rites, their cosmic visions- all were mechanisms used to resist and to survive. Earlier, without taking part in the mainstream economic or social activities of the countries that contained them, the indigenous peoples could still live in the forests and the mountains. There they sowed, they harvested, and they gathered fruits; there they fished in the rivers and lakes. In this manner they obtained from their habitat or territory all that they needed for their survival. This way of life tied them even closer to the land that nourished them and to their vision of themselves as children of the earth on which they depended. But today that is not the case. Climate change has dislodged them violently from that form of subsistence, partly because they can no longer gather what is no longer produced naturally, but also because climate change is not an isolated phenomenon. It comes accompanied by changes in the international or transnational assignment of indigenous territories, to serve the new needs of neo-liberalism. One reason for these changes is that it is precisely the indigenous territories that have become the main sources of fresh water, energy-producing resources (like petroleum), and minerals such as gold, silver, copper and uranium, needed for industry and capital operations generally. Another reason is that those indigenous territories are now best suited to, and therefore most in demand for large-scale agri-business (for example, production of soybeans, rice, sorghum), or for the cultivation of seed crops that can be processed into biofuels like ethanol and its derivatives. However, in order to get the indigenous peoples to leave their lands, there has to be not only a reassignment of territories and a radical change in the use of the soils, but also regulatory and cultural change. The regulatory change has been taken on by the national governments, but the cultural change is being woven together little by little, from above and from below.

The essence of the cultural change lies in the recent introduction of money into the indigenous cultures, not only as an exchange value - as a means for buying and selling in the markets and for trading agricultural products - but as a value which changes the value of everything else, turning everything it touches into money. Once money began to circulate among the indigenous peoples and touch their hearts, everything they had before their eyes began to change in appearance, and the meaning of everything changed as well. Ever since then, the things that exist in their lands and the purpose they serve no longer seem important; it no longer matters what God made them for, or how the ancients used them. What matters now is only *how much they are worth*. The only important thing is whether they can be bought and sold, whether they

can be exchanged for money, whether they help to make money and more money. For example, the cornfields, which before were places where the communities could obtain their food and their medicines, are now seen only as terrains appropriate for agribusiness investment or for the production of biofuels. Formerly, the indigenous peoples sowed their fields with a wide variety of seeds, and from the forest they gathered herbs, fruits, and other plants, either to eat themselves or to exchange for products from other peoples. Now, however, their territories have been converted into lands suitable only for *commercial monoculture*. Their sacred places, where their ancestors resided, and their rivers and lakes, where they offered gifts to the "spirits of the earth," have become nothing more than sites for *eco-tourism*. The great treasures of medicinal and spiritual plants are considered now only in terms of their potential for bio-piracy. Their forests and mountains, their life-giving environment, their indigenous lands and territories are now viewed simply as carbon "sinks" which the transnational companies fight over in order to cover their international quotas for *environmental services*. The hills and the caves, which had always been spiritual places, are now being transformed into *gold mines* and *exploited* by large companies in order to make *great sums of money*. Their rivers, their lakes, their springs, which are God's gift to them, the children of the Earth, are now being disputed by companies that seek to *privatize* them in order to *sell the water*, the gift of the earth, in little plastic bottles. Other companies and the governments themselves view the rivers in terms of *hydroelectric potential*, which means: *business, business, and more business*, but only for the benefit of those who live elsewhere. The Earth, Mother Earth, is being sold. It is being sold to those who bid highest and fastest for her. Since the advent of money, the peoples' culture, their wisdom, and their tradition are also being bought and sold. Money is everything. It changes not only people's needs but also the ways those needs are satisfied. The young also seek money, but they discover, to their dismay, that the money is not within their reach. Thus, climatic change and cultural change join forces in driving the native peoples away from their lands, so that they will be absorbed, with new functions, in the new belts of misery surrounding the large cities.

In the face of this war of extermination and neo-liberal depredation, which does away with everything valuable, ecosystems and cultures included, the indigenous peoples still maintain their own strategies for resistance. They attempt to re-establish safe spaces of autonomy where they can continue to be the people they want to be. For them, preserving the traditional festivals, dances, and celebrations is a strategy of resistance and a vital way of recreating their collective subjectivity. Preserving such cultural practices is an ever more daunting challenge, but they often succeed in maintaining them. For as long as they can, they resist by dancing. They have a conception of development very different from our western conception, which is murdering

the planet. They know that God placed them in this world to care for it, not to destroy it.

Is the Society of Jesus ready to stand by them? It does not seem to us that it is. As a universal body, the Society of Jesus has also been touched by cultural change. Both older and younger Jesuits are now guided by the idea of success. Some will say: the indigenous peoples are a "lost cause." Others will say: "If one way or another the world is going to change, then just let it change." Perhaps working groups can be formed to think about the new "role" of the indigenous peoples in our globalized world; some analysis can be done of their cultures and of how they are gradually disappearing; studies can be made of their migratory flows, like those of the Canadian geese or the monarch butterflies. All that is possible. But what the indigenous peoples ask of us Companions of Jesus is that we stand by them, not to resolve their difficult situation, not to tell them what to do, not to evangelize them, nor to announce what is to come. They want us just to be there, just to remain at their side.

JXel (Jerónimo) Hernandez SJ  
Mexico

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

# Indian Context

## Tribals/Indigenous People: the most Marginalized in the World

Christopher Lakra<sup>1</sup> SJ

### The World Scenario

Owing to diverse socio-economics and political processes, indigenous peoples are among the most marginalized sections in the world today. They stand on the cusp of the crisis in sustainable development. Their communities are concrete examples of sustainable societies, historically evolved in diverse ecosystems. Ecosystems have been, and still are, an inalienable part of their social and cultural life. Today, they face the challenges of extinction or survival and renewal in a globalized world. Globalization has the strongest impact on these populations, perhaps more than on any other, because their communities have no voice and can be easily swept away by the invisible hand of the market and its proponents. Globalization does much more than marginalize indigenous peoples; it launches a multi-pronged attack on the very foundation of their existence and livelihood.

By luck or providence the tribals/indigenous people throughout the world sit on the “frontiers” of globalization’s expansion, occupying, as they do, the last pristine places on earth where resources are rich and abundant: forests, minerals, water, landscapes, and living creatures thrive in all their genetic diversity. All these are ferociously sought after by global corporations, which are trying to push them off their lands. Examples of this are available from practically every continent save Antarctica: the Bayaka in Central African Republic whose community is being destroyed by logging; the Dinka and Nuer in Sudan whose lands are being taken over for oil reserves; the Wichi in Argentina facing a major highway through their territory; gold mining on Miskito lands in Nicaragua; eco-tourism on Kuna land in Panama; mining on Australian aboriginal lands. The list is long: industrial plantations in the tropical forests of the Dayak people in Indonesia; export coffee plantations evicting Montangards from their homeland in Vietnam; uranium mining generating toxic waste that destroys ecosystems in Dene and Cree in Canada; over-fishing jeopardizing the survival of the Chukchi and Eskimos in Russia; mining in North American Indian lands that affects the Western Shoshone, Quechan Nation, Mohawk, and Zuni peoples.

---

<sup>1</sup>Christopher Lakra, ex-Provincial of Ranchi, is presently the Director of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

The situation in India is no less grim. This paper is concerned with land acquisition and displacement of tribal communities caused by mining and large industries in the states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, West Bengal and Maharashtra in India. Multinational Companies (MNCs) such as TATA, MITTAL, JINDAL, ESSAR, POSCO, VEDANTA have taken over the agricultural lands and forests of the tribals.

### **The Indian Scenario**

India has 84 million tribals ( 8.10% of the tribal population) according to the 2001 census, though some demographers estimate it at around 90 million. They inhabit resource-rich lands but are poor and exploited. The major tribal groups are Santhals, Munda, Oraon, Kharia, Ho, Gonds, Bhils, Meena, Lodha. They are also spread over the neighbouring countries of Bagladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, places to which they migrated in the early colonial period in search of jobs.

When industrialization led to the commercialisation of natural resources, tribal/indigenous people were harassed and marginalized. They were dispossessed of their lands and forests and therefore of their sustenance. The global economic policies of institutions like the GATT, World Bank, and WTO which were adopted by major world agencies have had a drastic effect on the tribals who are now even further are further marginalized. Today advanced technologies oriented towards export-led development to satisfy world markets threaten to exterminate the native tribal communities that lie in their way. Extraction of natural resources from erstwhile inaccessible territory has pushed the people to the wall in defence of their homeland. In India hundreds of hectares of tribal lands have been acquired in the districts of Bastar in Chhattisgarh, Lalgarh in West Bengal, Singbhum in Jharkhand, and Kalahandi, Lanjigarh and Belangir in Orissa. The land is handed over for mining, industry, development projects and big dams. From Independence in 1947 down to the present day about 5 million people have been displaced, out of which 50% are tribals. Forcibly displaced without any provision for proper rehabilitation, they are unable to fight for their rights, even the fundamental right to make a decent livelihood.

The unprecedented rate and scale of invasion of tribal homelands for building mega dams, mines, pipelines, roads, energy developments, animal sanctuaries, reserve forests and military manoeuvres are startling. Big global corporations are engaged in exploiting resources that rightly belong to the indigenous people - forests, minerals, oil, fish, and wildlife. Development agencies and governments launch and develop giant infrastructures - pipelines, dams, water ways, ports, roads - which not only damage tribal land

and the environment but also displace the rightful owners and settle a new alien population on their land. These projects have been encouraged and financed by global financial institutions like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other credit agencies.

The rate of land acquisition accelerated after liberalization. A study of land acquisition in the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa and Chhattisgarh by Action Aid accounted for a total of 314700.31 hectares of land as of 2007. These lands were for water sourcing, industries, mining, and non-hydro power plants, not counting land acquired for defence and other development purposes. They contain 80 % of the tribal population of the country. The lands 'acquired' belonged to tribals and forest dwellers (Source: State Gazettes). It is worth noting that more than 60% of India's industries and mining are located in these regions.

The land is acquired by anti-tribal groups who seek control over these resources to feed the demands of global trade and urban dwellers in cities. Efforts by hundreds of indigenous groups to defend themselves have gained little attention from the media, NGOs, and most importantly, the state governments. It hardly needs to be said that such projects impinge upon the ecosystem and environment of the native tribes. Water shortages, pollution, agricultural land scarcity, and deforestation are devastating the habitat of the indigenous people, who are then forced to migrate to cities and towns to seek unskilled jobs and live in misery. Today more than 300,000 young women are engaged in domestic work in Delhi alone, or work as unskilled and unorganized labourers. Almost the same number of young male tribals have shifted to the modernized agricultural states of Punjab and Haryana to work as agricultural labourers. The reality is that unless rapid and urgent action is taken these tribal communities will disperse and be wiped out, taking with them vast stores of indigenous knowledge, rich culture and traditions. With them will disappear any hope of preserving the natural world and a simpler more holistic way of life for future generations.

### **Cultural Transformation**

Culture can flourish only in a society with a clearly defined territory, social system, traditional economic activities and its own art and literature. In the current circumstances, the native tribals are uprooted from their environment and social system, deprived of their land and resources and displaced from their habitat. Due to migration, new cultural contacts, industrialization, urbanization, and changed economic settings, to say nothing of westernization and globalization, there has been a sea change in their social and cultural heritage.

The tribals, once confined to hills and forests, have now sought to be absorbed in the regional and national mainstreams. Here they occupy the lower rungs of the social hierarchy. They tribals have now shifted from their traditional subsistence economy to a market economy that encourages consumerism. The impact of liberalization and the opening up of the market in the economic reforms of the 1990s pushed them to the industrial belts and urban cities as cheap labour. The consequence – social and moral disintegration—has been disastrous. P.C. Jain, who visited the Jharsugura district of Orissa on 4 April 2009, comments on how “the collective and commune culture of the Kharia tribe has been badly distorted by ‘demon culture of globalization’ where there is no feeling, no sentiment, no emotion, war footing destruction. Ultimately the free and frank culture of tribal society is being converted into child sexual abuse practices by state and non-state actors knowingly and unknowingly.” This is the dismal reflection of what is happening to tribal society across the country.

Tribal culture has been based on agriculture and forests from time immemorial. The tradition in which their resources were held in common by the community has been replaced by the new economy of private ownership and money-oriented production. Migration forced on them by development projects added to alienation from their land and forest produce. Tribals in the city can no longer retain their agricultural and forest-based festivals, worship and traditional customs. Their culture, language and traditions, including their arts, are all disappearing. Tribal identity is doomed to vanish under the new economic liberalization.

The process of migration to cities and industries starts from the loss of their economic base. The taking away of land leaves them without employment; they then move to big cities and industrial areas in search of jobs, more often than not as cheap labour. The emigration of tribals started some two hundred years ago from the states of Jharkhand, Orissa, Chhattisgarh and Bihar. They settled down in their new homes but as labourers. The process of outmigration continues even today, accelerated by the new forces of globalization. Young unmarried boys and girls from rural areas are cut-off from their family and many of them are lost in the crowds of big cities like, Delhi, Calcutta, Mumbai and Bangalore. These groups are vulnerable to malpractices – slave labour, sexual harassment, human trafficking, prostitution, human organ trading rackets, even drug peddlers.

Back home in a mainly rural agricultural setup, there are fewer opportunities for employment because most of them have lost their land; traditional agriculture has little scope to absorb them all. Male school dropouts are not motivated to engage in agriculture, but prefer to go out in search of non-agriculture occupations in industries located in the cities. A large number

are lured by Naxalites (extremists groups) to join their movement, which is based on violence. Many young boys and girls are new recruits in the movement and are getting killed. This trend leads to the social disintegration of the tribals who have little or no education.

### **Ecological and Environmental Degradation**

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges of our time, to combat which calls for strong political will among world leaders. The world leaders gathered at Copenhagen ended the convention with this resolution: "We emphasize our strong political will to urgently combat climate change in accordance with the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities. To achieve the ultimate objective of the Convention to stabilize greenhouse gas concentration in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system, we shall, recognizing the scientific view that the increase in global temperature should be below 2 degrees Celsius, on the basis of equity and in the context of sustainable development, enhance our long-term cooperative action to combat climate change. We recognize the impacts of climate change and ...the need to establish a comprehensive adaptation programme including international support," (Draft Decision -/CP.15, Copenhagen Accord, 18 December 2009). It sounds impressive, closing with a solemn pledge, but time and political will power alone will show how determined world leaders are to redeem this pledge.

About the time India became independent, forest cover in the country accounted for more than 40 per cent of the total geographical area. Today, according to the 2001 census, it has been reduced to 20.55 per cent. This statistic is enough to explain the ecological and environmental change in the country. Two regions in India which are rich in forestation and water sources but have suffered devastating denudation and the construction of big dams are the hills and river valleys of Arunachal Pradesh in Eastern India and Uttaranchal in Northwestern India. There are plans for constructing major hydroelectric dams in these two areas, both of which are extremely rich in greenery and biodiversity. In the Brahmaputra river basin 168 dams are to be constructed generating 63,328 MW of electricity power. Out of these 87 mega dams are located in a single state – Arunachal Pradesh (Menon et al, 2003). In 2003 the then Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee launched 50,000 MW power plants for the entire Northeast (*The Telegraph* May 24, 2003). Most of these dams are located in tribal areas where land is community owned by their customary law. Since the state of Arunachal Pradesh is not covered under the Sixth Scheduled area of the Indian Constitution, the protective customary law is not effective unlike in other Scheduled areas. These projects have severely eroded the forest cover in the hills of Arunachal Pradesh. Its rich bio-diversity will be lost. Once the

means of livelihood of hill tribals are taken away, they will resort to cutting the forests for their survival. This drastic step was taken by the Khasi hills tribes of Meghalaya in Northeast when they learned that they were prohibited by legislation (the Supreme Court verdict of 1996 to tap benefits from the forests around them. So they started cutting the trees before these we) re sold out. After all, they had nurtured it for centuries like their children. It is clear that the local communities are not taken into confidence before passing legislation that bans means of livelihood; and no alternatives are offered for their food production and use of forest produce.

In the State of Uttaranchal there are many dams and electricity supply projects coming up as proposed by National Hydro Project Commission (NHPC). In the whole of Uttarakhand there are 558 big dam projects for generation of electricity that will affect 20-22 lakhs people in about 5000 villages. The water levels are decreasing and the effects of global warming and climate change are palpable. Himalayan glaciers are melting away and the threat of rivers drying up looms in the foreseeable future. Dam construction is bound to affect river waters. The mighty rivers flowing down to the plains of north India, the Ganga and the Yamuna, will have less water as a consequence. Besides, the people will lose their land and ultimately face displacement. The state and the central governments have invited multinational companies as stakeholders in these profit-oriented projects (Jal-yatra 2009/3). A big protest rally of a few thousands of the affected people walked the path for one month till they reached the State capital in protest against these big dams and against climate change that would affect their agriculture and horticulture adversely.

### **The Present Juncture**

The tribal/indigenous people are today caught in the network of global economic competition and their resource-rich habitats are in danger. The entire globe seems to be divided into two worlds: the North consisting of developed nations, and the South consisting of the developing nations (with the exception of Australia). In the sphere of economic activities the North possesses advanced technology and the capacity to produce manufactured goods and services, while the South is relatively backward in technology but has all the natural resources, both above and below the ground and an abundance of cheap labour. Further, the rich easier to extract. The rich industrialists of the South are in alignment with the North, and both now are jointly pouncing on the resources of the indigenous people who have little social or political clout and are thus vulnerable and defenceless. All modern economic wisdom is against them, leaving them open to exploitation. It is a fight for survival of the richly endowed indigenous people with the developed powerful giants. Socialist governments, for example the Indian government,

are committed to work for the welfare of all, especially the weaker sections. But the actual reality is that now governments also are joining hands with the economically and technologically powerful. Private and corporate interests are promoted over the public good in the very land of the indigenous tribal farmers. For example, the Sterlite-Vedanta group is given free rein to acquire tribal land in Orissa. In doing so the Company has infringed government guidelines, violating the Forest Act and the rights of the primitive tribals called Dongriya Khond (13 March, *Times of India*). This one example is only the tip of the iceberg of illegal activities. The whole move of the international companies signing Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the State and Central governments is alarming. Private profit interests have clearly taken precedence over public good.

### **Jesuit Commitment**

The Jesuit commitment to the Social Justice Ministry among the Tribal/Indigenous people needs serious renewal in the wake of aggressive globalization. One needs to understand deeply how these native industrialists and foreign investors are deliberately creating a situation in which the poor and the weaker sections are helpless and unable to defend their resources, even their constitutional rights. They are compelled take whatever is offered to them, evicted from their land and dumped in slums in cities where they are further subjected to exploitation, all sorts of abuse, humiliation, and finally extinction.

It is imperative for the Society of the South Asian Assistancy to identify Jesuits with deep commitment, a clear grasp of the situation, and a readiness to work with enthusiasm, energy and a willingness to struggle. The united peoples' movements of the tribals and marginalized could be a direction for a positive socio-political initiative to save the vanishing tribals. Jesuits as a group should be challenged to take up this ministry among this group of the marginalized. The problems of Dalits and Christians are doubtless important but somewhat sectarian, whereas the problems of tribals /indigenous people are more fundamental and universal worldwide. This ministry has emerged today with a new dimension and urgent commitment to work among tribals who not only face impoverishment and marginalization, but whose livelihoods and very existence are in danger. In the real sense of the word, we need Jesuit enthusiasts! What a tragic history of tribals we will write if we let them go as a "dying species" while we remain mere spectators! They are like an "endangered species" and, unless there is timely intervention, are bound to be overpowered and decimated by the multi-national giants with whom local powerful industrialists and business houses are complicit.

## Work Group in Conference

The new structure of the Social Justice Apostolate is a new and most welcome initiative from which underdeveloped and developing countries stand to benefit most. Apart from the volume of work that it would undertake, I am sure the apostolate will be revamped with the induction of motivated people, and will bear much fruit. A good network developed internationally can be of immense help in this undertaking since problems today, as described above, are internationally connected and have a bearing on the future of the tribals/indigenous people worldwide. No longer isolated, they stand vulnerable and exposed to international interests; their valuable resources are eyed with greed, given the current direction of the world economy.

There should be a proper choice of personnel who are qualified, interested and visionary; and, of course, spiritually committed to the work of the social apostolate. I received a list of names in the first draft, which was encouraging. This work requires younger blood with greater energy and dynamism. Decentralizing the justice secretariat is a very welcome step in its form and intent, though the actual details of this structural adjustment are yet to be worked out. When it comes out in its operational framework we will be able to comment on it more concretely and constructively.

Christopher Lakra SJ  
India

## The *ADIVASIS* and their World Today

### Alfred Toppo SJ

#### Introduction

Jesuits, at least some of them, have seen a silver lining in the cloud when it comes to the holistic development of indigenous people all over the world. This silver lining grew brighter and clearer during the 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation when Jesuits recognized that the subject of indigenous peoples is an important one. They then reflected on how they could accompany these groups of marginalized people as they move towards defining their identity and accelerate the process of their own development. My understanding and analysis are limited to Central India, and more specifically to the state of Chhattisgarh.

To begin with, it is important to have a clear understanding of the concept 'indigenous people'. The official term for indigenous people in India is 'Scheduled Tribes'. In most part of the country they are popularly known as *Adivasis*, meaning original inhabitants, a term that I prefer to use. There are many different *Adivasi* groups/communities in India but some of them are scheduled as Scheduled Tribes, which means that they are on an official government list. From time to time the President of India either schedules or de-schedules groups of people as eligible for inclusion in the Scheduled Tribes list according to certain criteria, which are thought to be characteristic of *Adivasis*.<sup>1</sup>

While in the eyes of the Administration and before the law *Adivasis* can only be those groups who are in the official Scheduled Tribes list, it must be recognized that there are many *Adivasis* who are kept out of the list even though they are *Adivasis*. This may be because these *Adivasis* are seen as 'Scheduled Castes' and not as tribes or genuine *Adivasis*. Being described as Scheduled Castes by the government means they are kept out for the Constitutional Provisions made for *Adivasis* or tribes. The government of India often plays foul by using specific terminology ('caste' instead of 'tribe') just to stop them away from taking advantage of the benefits provided for them by the Constitution.

---

<sup>1</sup>A well established criterion being followed is based on certain attributes such as:-

- **Geographical isolation** - They live in cloistered, exclusive remote and inhospitable areas like hills, forests.
- **Backwardness**- Livelihood is based on primitive agriculture. Theirs is a low cost, closed economy based on low levels of technology, literacy and health. All this leads to their poverty. Their **distinctive culture, language and religion are different from the mainstream**. They have developed their own distinctive culture, language and religion in a community-wise manner.
- **Cultural isolation**-“They have very little contact with other cultures and people.” ([http://labourbureau.gov.in/SE\\_GUJARAT%2006-07\\_CHAPTER%20I.pdf](http://labourbureau.gov.in/SE_GUJARAT%2006-07_CHAPTER%20I.pdf)).

## **Adivasis: the most exploited and marginalized**

*Adivasis* once lived in harmony with the Divine, with nature and with their fellow human beings. They considered their *Jal-Jungle-Jamin* (water, forest and land) to be sacred and they had an inseparable relationship with water, forest and land. The free flowing water in the rivers and brooks quenched their thirst and purified their bodies. The forest they lived in was a source of livelihood and shelter. The land they tilled produced grains and gave them their identity. Life without *jal-jungle-jamin* was unimaginable. They used nature only to meet their needs, not to satisfy their greed. Their experiences in life over the years led to a triangular relationship inasmuch as they reached the Divine through nature and their fellow human beings.

But they were often forced to retreat deep into the forests and hills as outsiders invaded their habitat. The harmonious relationship with nature started cracking when non-*Adivasis* invaded *Adivasi* land. They were taken as bonded labourers and forced to do things wholly against their way of life and ethos. For example, they were made to clear vast areas of their beloved forests for rulers who came from outside and for petty business people. The land which they had cultivated for years was taken away from them. Kings, emperors, colonisers and, now, the government came marching in to snatch away what was dear to the *Adivasis* and, in the process, destroyed their way of life. They who had lived joyously and fearlessly lived in the forests and hills were harassed and cruelly treated, totally subdued and made prey to all forms of exploitation. Fear set in. Is it any wonder that literacy levels remained low as they retreated further and further?

The world outside was advancing in science and information technology with unimaginable rapidity. The digital communication media was revolutionising the world. The forces of the market grew strong enough to affect policy by heads of States. Globalisation forces fascinate most human beings everywhere on the planet, and governments chose to modify policies to suit the rich North, bowing to the market. *Adivasis*, exposed to this chaotic world like everybody else, succumbed to its spell.

Traditionally, most *Adivasis* had engaged in subsistence agriculture in small plots of lands and been dependent on forest produce for a livelihood. The 'brave new world' ushered in by globalisation and the digital revolution hit the *Adivasis* hard, rendering their traditional means of production obsolete. They were caught unawares; these new forces seemed at first sweet but soon they found themselves being strangled. They certainly experienced the fast changes but they were unable to check and control their adverse impact. The young *Adivasis* were the most adversely affected. The *Adivasi* ethos, inherited through the ages, began to vanish.

Globalisation brought to the *Adivasi* world a culture of individualism that went against the grain of their communitarian and humanitarian culture. The community, which bound the people together, started losing ground. The end result has been skewed development among the *Adivasis*. Few of them are able to cope with the demands of the day; many are losing their purchasing power; their very survival is being challenged.

The forests they had lived in for centuries and which they had nurtured carefully, regenerating them over and over again, are today infested with government Forest Departments, wood smugglers, mega national and multinational companies, and extremist forces who take advantage of the dispossessed tribals. Trees are felled for selling and mining activities by stakeholders riding roughshod with power and money over the policies meant to favour the *Adivasis*. Some of them have even started felling trees themselves to earn a living.

### **What is happening to their culture?**

Culture<sup>2</sup> is a dynamic process, changing and adapting all the time through forces that come from within and without. The change however should be such that a community adjusts to it without being destroyed.

The *Adivasis* had beautiful cultures, each tribe with its distinct traditions and way of life, but change in *Adivasi* culture came at an accelerated speed with invaders who rushed into their habitat and brought in an alien education. *Adivasi* children do not study their own history, geography or culture, but are taught an alien history and culture which has little to do with their experience of day-to-day life. Their precious cultural heritage has all but disappeared despite a strong innate value system which *Adivasis* inherit from their communities. While there are *Adivasis* who have drifted away from their moorings for various reasons, the core ethos remains and many fall back on the community once they realise that they have gone too far.

The habitat of the *Adivasis* has been repeatedly invaded and the cultural practices of the powerful newcomers imposed on them. The result is that it is difficult to safeguard their cultural identity; and their meaning system, their ethos, their rituals and cultural practices are slowly disappearing, their profound meaning lost forever.

The digital media has made a revolutionary breakthrough in the *Adivasi* world. First the television and compact discs took over; of late it is the ubiquitous cell phone. The new information gadgets fascinate the minds and

---

<sup>2</sup>Culture can be defined as “the sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another. Culture is transmitted, through language, material objects, ritual, institutions, and art, from one generation to the next.” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/culture>: Browsed on February 19, 2010).

hearts of the young Adivasis and they have started to live in the world of the imagination. The gap between the young and the old has widened to the extent that it is difficult to bring the young and the old generations to a common platform for community-based action.

The *Adivasi* community is experiencing a dialectic tension between what is offered by the modern world and their own value system. A few have surrendered to the forces of globalisation and digital revolution, but there are many who are forced to reflect on their way of life today. There is a realisation that the community has been a shelter to all *Adivasis* irrespective of their ideology and way of life. There are many instances in the community of young people who have come back, like the prodigal son, to loving fathers. Realisations of this kind have made many people take life and community values seriously. Ultimately it is the family and the community that support and sustain life and value systems

### **The new socio-political and economic initiatives that strengthen *Adivasis***

Dr. Ambedkar was the Chairperson of the Constitution Drafting Committee. He was a *Dalit* and he had gone through all the pains and suffering of untouchability, exclusion and exploitation that a *Dalit* or an *Adivasi* goes through. Under his chairmanship, many constitutional provisions were made to safeguard *Adivasis*. The irony is that these Provisions for *Adivasis* have not been implemented in the last very many years. Now *Adivasis* are becoming aware of these provisions and fighting for their constitutional and fundamental rights. This awareness has certainly strengthened their hand.

There has been a continuous move by Brahminical ideologues to rename *Adivasis* as *Vanvasi* (forest dwellers). They have opened many *Vanvasi Ashrams* to instil Brahminical ideologies in the minds of the young. These *Ashrams* are meant only for *Adivasis*. The political leaders upholding Brahminical ideology are constantly poisoning the innocent minds of *Adivasis* through speeches and talks in which there is an undercurrent of Hindu fundamentalism. Once *Adivasis* start calling themselves *Vanvasis*, they may be deprived of all the Constitutional Provisions meant for the *Adivasis* because the Indian Constitution does not recognise the term '*Vanvasi*'. This would also create divisions among the various *Adivasi* groups. And above all, *Adivasis* would remain as they were in terms of development and awareness. *Adivasis* and others who want the holistic development of *Adivasis* oppose the imposition of such ideologies.

While the *Adivasis* have their own distinct way of life and their understanding of the Creator and religion, Christian missionaries brought in education, health care and some awareness along with faith in Jesus Christ. *Adivasis* who accepted Christianity have certainly progressed in life; they have

also resisted the supremacy of Brahminical ideology. Their progress has threatened non-*Adivasis* and Hindu fundamentalists who see the *Adivasis* slipping out of their grasp. This has led to their dividing *Adivasi* communities in the name of religion and they have had some success in bringing them into the Hindu fold. However, now more and more *Adivasis* are realising the fact that they are not Hindus but have a distinct way of relating to the Creator. This understanding is becoming a platform for them to re-examine their way of life and ethos.

*Adivasis* live in close proximity with forests and hills; they used to feel secure in the forest. This security was threatened when the cultivable land they had prepared over the years was snatched away by non-*Adivasis*. The deepening threat made the *Adivasis* retreat further into the forests. Today they are faced with an ironical dilemma: they are poor in their rich land. The government machinery and the mega companies have found out that immense mineral wealth lies below *Adivasi* land, and on this wealth they have cast covetous eyes. They are going ahead with mining at the cost of the *Adivasis*, as Memorandums of Understandings are signed each year between government and the mining companies to extract minerals. The *Adivasis*, understanding the adverse effects of displacement and loss of their very identity, have begun to come together to protest against these moves by government and private companies. These protests have been taking shape of *Adivasi* movements to safeguard their life and identity.

There are many *Adivasis* who are part of the Self Help Groups initiated by the government programmes or development programmes of Non-governmental Organisations. The very process of forming Self Help Groups has made them sit down in their respective groups to reflect and make action plans for their own holistic development. This process has made them think; and their mental capabilities have been enhanced. The outcome of this process is that *Adivasis* have begun to look at their way of life, culture and socio-economic conditions more critically. Self Help Groups came with the purpose of teaching small savings in groups through pooling financial resources to meet unforeseen eventualities and take up economic activities to better their means of livelihood. Self Help Groups have made a huge difference in the lives of the *Adivasis*.

### **Increasing Jesuit commitment and their 'work groups'**

The Society of Jesus has been working with and for the poor and marginalized. Its commitment to the *Adivasis* is not new, but of late it has consolidated its realisation that the *Adivasis* are at the lowest level even among the marginalized. This realisation itself is a big leap towards *Adivasi* development. Now Jesuits will surely make a reference to the *Adivasis* in their

deliberations for setting priorities for missions, and this I hope will lead to more concerted efforts for their holistic development. The idea of having a 'Work Group' in every Conference to work for, and with, the *Adivasis* is really important if work among them is to surge ahead. Past efforts for Adivasi development by individual Provinces and Jesuits can be consolidated and broadened with the help of the work group. The only word of caution I would like to make is this: let this work group be active and mean business. Let this work group not become a fine task group of ideologies only. It is very important that the *Adivasis* feel that the Society stands by them to accompany them in the days to come.

Alfred Toppo SJ  
India

# Indigenous People: A perspective from Gujarat

## Xavier Manjooran<sup>1</sup> SJ

### Introduction

**I**ndigenous people are the first inhabitants of a country and hence the original owners of the land and its resources. The UN declaration on Indigenous people says:

*“Indigenous peoples have the right to the lands, territories and resources which they have traditionally owned, occupied or otherwise used or acquired. Indigenous peoples have the right to own, use, develop and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional ownership or other traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired”* (Article 26-1, 2).

### Factors leading to marginalization

In spite of this UN declaration indigenous people have been the most exploited and dispossessed group in the world. This is as true of India as of other places. Indigenous peoples have suffered from historical injustices as a result of, inter alia, colonization and dispossession of their lands, territories and resources, all of which prevented them from exercising their rights, in particular the right to development in accordance with their own needs and interests.<sup>2</sup>

People from outside with different value systems and worldview have pushed the original inhabitants to the interior forests and mountains, and snatched away their land and rights over the resources. As time went by and more outsiders came into India, the British took control of the forest and forest resources and started using these resources to make profit. This approach was quite different from that of the indigenous people who have dealt with forest, land and natural resources from time immemorial. Besides, the rules and

<sup>1</sup>Xavier Manjooran is presently Director of the Rajpipla Social Service Society, in Seva mandal marg, (Poicha Rd), Dt. Narmada, Rajpipla, Gujarat, INDIA. Ph: 2640-220176/ 220476 email: <rsss.rajpipla@gmail.com> <jai.adivasi@gmail.com>

<sup>2</sup>The UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples states: “From the perspective of many indigenous peoples, ‘dominant’ development paradigms and practices, characterized by ‘their strong focus on economic progress without the integration of cultural development, social justice and environmental sustainability’ have failed, since they undermined and negated indigenous peoples’ cultures and worldviews, even considering them as an obstacle. Indigenous peoples today continue to face serious discrimination in terms of access to basic social services and are disproportionately represented amongst the world’s poor. Many populations have suffered historically from forced displacement, and their vulnerability to the impacts of globalization and climate change remains particularly high.” (Indigenous Peoples Development With Culture And Identity, from the website “Indigenous people’s Issues and resources”).

regulations created by the British, which were continued in India even after Independence, made the Indigenous people “encroachers” and law breakers in the forest and in their own land. Thus the original inhabitants were pushed to the receiving end.<sup>3</sup> It is a fact that the majority of Adivasis or tribals continue to live below the poverty line, have poor literacy rates, suffer from malnutrition and disease and are vulnerable to displacement and seasonal migration. They are also subjected to physical, psychological and sexual exploitation. On the one hand, the country is developing fast in terms of both its GDP and its infrastructure, and on the other hand, the poor are becoming poorer and increasingly dispossessed. The majority of the poor and the displaced are from the indigenous communities.

With globalization extending its tentacles everywhere, the value system cannot help but be affected by the market economy. Indigenous people whose world view is one of “live and let live” and “nature and land as mother and life giver” are made the victims of this new economic policy. Their land is taken away by private companies and government in the name of development; They are reduced to mere labourers and victims of liberalization, privatization and globalization. In a country like India the indigenous people are used today as vote banks by the politicians, and as cheap labour in the big farms and construction companies.

### **Effect on Culture and Identity**

Together with the effects of Liberalization, Privatization and Globalization, the forces of religious fundamentalism are also active in their midst, alienating them from their culture and destroying their identity.<sup>4</sup> Market forces and the profit-making values of the market economy are affecting tribal identity and changing their life style and traditional values.<sup>5</sup> The sanskritization process is causing the Adivasis to replace their cultural identity and adopt upper caste practices. One can see that Brahminical methods of celebrating rituals and observing Hindu festivals and visiting Hindu religious places are growing rapidly in the entire tribal belt all over India. In some areas sanskritization is so pervasive that some tribal people

<sup>3</sup>As other authors in this section have pointed out, the plight of the Indigenous people is going from bad to worse. Being dependent on rains for cultivation and possessing limited resources, many of them are forced to migrate to cities and towns for labour. Education, health facilities, transport system and such social infrastructure as the government is supposed to take care of is not available in most of the villages where the indigenous communities live.

<sup>4</sup>“Globalization has also given birth to a world culture affecting all cultures; often this has resulted in a process of homogenization and in policies of assimilation that deny the right of individuals and groups to live and develop their own cultures.” (GC 35,3)

<sup>5</sup>The idea of private property, exposure to market opportunities outside and shrinking of common property resources are slowly replacing the communal resource holding. This has caused disparity in the traditional composition of tribal communities and competition to get higher social status.

have given up altogether their traditional way of living and culture and have completely accepted upper caste Hindu ways of living.

Adivasi languages, their culture and their life style are considered low and uncivilized and many NGOs vie with one another to bring them into the "mainstream" and to "develop" them. The values of community spirit, concern for nature and ecology, respect for elders, sincerity, and refusal to hoard have disappeared to a great degree; the youth are affected by consumerist values and the desire to make money at any cost. Rape, orphaned children, and theft, which were unheard of in tribal communities, have become common. As a result their rich culture and noble human values are fast disappearing from their lives.

### **New socio-political and economic initiatives**

Let me point out some government initiatives that have tried to help these communities.

- (1) **Constitutional Provisions.** The constitution of India, like the UN declaration, has acknowledged and given the indigenous people of India several rights.<sup>6</sup> In the Constitution of India the term "scheduled tribe" is understood to be "Adivasis", a word that literally means 'first dwellers' or original inhabitants (indigenous people). But strangely the government of India declared in Geneva in 1989 that India does not have indigenous people. India has therefore not signed ILO 169, which gives rights to the indigenous people for self-determination and use and control over natural resources. The constitutional rights have remained largely on paper.<sup>7</sup> The Laws passed to safeguard and protect tribal lands have been surpassed by other laws in favour of the government and private companies. As a result, tribals have been displaced from their land; their culture has been destroyed by such displacement. After Independence,

<sup>6</sup>In Articles 244(1) and 244(2) of Indian constitution, the Adivasi-tribal areas are specially protected and given special rights under Vth and VIth schedule. Recognizing the traditional rights of Tribals over land, the government has provided Laws protecting their land rights and restricting its distribution to non-tribals. The principle of Tribal self-rule was accepted in the Constitution of India through its 73rd Amendment by following the framework laid down by the Bhuria Committee Report. This has been legalized through the Provision of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) (PESA) Act 1996. PESA has made specific provisions for giving wide-ranging powers to the tribals on matters relating to decision-making and the development of their community. The Act specifically asserts that the tribal community through the Gram sabha (peoples parliament) is "**Competent to manage the affairs of its own**". It not only accepts the validity of "customary law, social and religious practices, and traditional management practices of community resources", but also directs the state governments not to make any law which is inconsistent with these.

<sup>7</sup>Under the provisions of Vth and VIth schedules the Governors of the states have been entrusted with legislative powers to suspend or amend any act that is harmful for the Adivasis and also to watch over the well being, peace and good governance of tribal areas. However, so far no Governor has ever exercised that power though several Acts like Land Acquisition Act, Forest Act etc. have been effective in tribal areas too.

over 10 million people have been displaced of which more than 40% are tribals. A recent study on 'Land alienation shows that over 7% tribals are alienated from their land every decade due to development projects, industries and failure of legal safeguards like law of protecting the tribal lands.

- (2) The **PESA Act**,<sup>8</sup> which gives extensive powers to the Gramsabha (village parliament) and was to usher in self-rule for the tribals, has not been taken seriously in any of the Indian States.<sup>9</sup> So far none of the States has framed even the rules for implementation. Hence the tribal self-rule is only a promise on paper. The tribal areas are also ruled by the general Panchayati Raj- act 1993.
- (3) The **Forest Rights Act**.<sup>10</sup> As mentioned in the preamble of the Act, its purpose is to *remove the historical injustice, to recognize, to re-establish and to vest* the rights of the Adivasis which were unjustly taken away by the laws created by the British and carried on by our own Indian government even after the British left India. Besides giving a maximum of 4 hectares to any family that was cultivating the forest before the year 2005, the Forest Rights Act also provides community rights to the tribals over the forest and its products. So this provision to some extent re-establishes the right of Adivasis over forest resources. The Act has also empowered the gramsabha to initiate and to examine the claims for these rights. Though this historic Act has been one of the most people-oriented, pro-Adivasi act and has given power to the people to initiate the implementation, the final decision is vested in a committee of bureaucrats and elected representatives. These committees are influenced by the Forest Department which from the beginning has been anti-tribal and non cooperative. As a result the implementation of the Act has been only slow, and it has failed to fulfil the aim with which it was passed. It is feared that even after providing Adivasis the land to cultivate, the Forest Department will still hold the key to control its use and thus continue the atrocities and the injustices meted out to the tribals from its inception by the British.
- (4) **Government and NGO programmes.** In Gujarat, various agencies including state, market or industries, non-government organisations (NGOs) and Gandhians have been working with tribals for their uplift. By

<sup>8</sup>The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA, 1996)

<sup>9</sup>As mentioned earlier the tribal society is competent to manage its own affairs and many tribes have a distinct organizational form called 'panch' (council) as a justice delivery mechanism. The Panchayati Raj system that is the present form of local governance, is not in consonance with the tribal way of life.

<sup>10</sup>The Scheduled Tribe and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (recognition of forest rights) Act, 2006' states in its prologue: "The forest rights on ancestral lands and their habitat were not adequately recognized in the consolidation of state forests during the colonial period as well as in independent India, resulting in historical injustice to the forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who are integral to very survival and sustainability of the forest ecosystem."

and large their approach for tribal development has been paternal and condescending, wanting to assimilate them into the so-called mainstream. Despite separate tribal development programmes and safeguards like reservation in educational and political institutions, high illiteracy rates, and increase in the numbers of migrants and displaced people indicate that tribal development programmes have not achieved desired goals.

- (5) **Joint Forest Management.** The forest policy of 1988 spoke of a partnership between forest dwelling communities and the government for conservation of forests. So a new project called Joint Forest Management (JFM) was launched. Despite the claim of 'promoting partnership', the authority and manipulation of the Forest Department continues. In many cases people were not even paid the minimum wages prescribed by the government. Besides, even a partnership makes for change in the tribal attitude and values regarding the forest. The forest which was for tribals a 'mother' now becomes a source of income.
- (6) **Self-Help Groups.** The introduction of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through government programmes and supported by NGOs has introduced the habit of savings and credit among tribals, which encourages individual growth through market opportunities. At the same time these groups often causes divisions in the community; they concentrate on profit making, and encourage consumerism, which they claim to be 'development'. But in fact they cause the erosion of tribal values.

### **The Society of Jesus's commitment**

"In this globalised world of ours, the number of those excluded by all is increasing. Let us not forget the poor. They need the prophetic message of God..." These words of Fr. Adolfo invites us, the Jesuits, to be increasingly aware of our mission to work for justice and development of indigenous community and other marginalized communities. This needs not only good will and commitment but also research, a deep study of the community's culture and problems, and its socio-economic situation. It calls for a critical analysis of the situation. The problems affecting indigenous communities and other marginalized communities are too large and the causes very complicated, and the solution cannot be found locally or just by ourselves. We need to join hands with other groups and like-minded organizations. We may observe such attempts in several places. However, often when it comes to going beyond our circles we are shy and reluctant and prefer to do the "little we can" and avoid the maximum we could. Today our commitment to the marginalized and exploited has to be in collaboration with others through networking with local, national and international groups. In 2002 the Adivasis cultivating the forestland were threatened with eviction by the Forest

Department. Several groups then joined hands and formed a national front and state level networks and forced the government to enact the Forest Rights Act. But the Jesuit presence in this united struggle was not much noticed. Even those provinces which have a predominantly tribal presence did not come out in the open to show their solidarity though many were sympathetic. In such a situation we need more than just sympathy; we need actual reaching out and standing up for the cause.

As suggested by GC 35, Jesuit conferences must have 'work groups' that will research, study, reflect and act in situations that demand our involvement "to accelerate the ministry of enlightenment and empowerment of these indigenous people for their integral liberation". By reaching out and joining hands we can be not only more effective but can also contribute a lot through our commitment, dedication, study and leadership.

Xavier Manjooran SJ  
India

# Asia-Pacific Context

## Some comments from Malaysia

Joseph Fung<sup>1</sup> SJ

### Factors rendering indigenous people the “most exploited and marginalised in the world”

**T**here is no doubt that economic and cultural globalization has led to the government to push for the economic “development” of what are called “designated state lands.” These are the ancestral lands of the indigenous peoples (IPs) and have Native Customary Land (NCL) status. There is a tussle between the IPs who lay claim to their ancestral land and the government which “annexes” it land for constructing dams, roads, cash-crop plantations, even national parks.

### What is happening to their culture?

At the same time, development calls for “mainstreaming” the IPs so that they are “modernized.” The forces of globalization have commodified their land and cultures and monetized their way of life. It is not only the current model of “development” that has eroded their culture; the education system, and a monetized economy and way of life have contributed to further erosion of their cultures. The educated younger generation are made to feel ashamed of their culture, which is categorized as “uncivilized” “backward” or “primitive.” Not unnaturally, they prefer to be mainstreamed and integrated rather than return to their ancestral homeland.

### Which new socio-political and economic initiatives are strengthening them?

Seminars conducted by the NGOs in collaboration with the Church have certainly strengthened them, not to mention the life-giving gospels that sustain their faith in their struggle. Their methods of resistance to encroachment of their land include going through the judicial process, road blockades, and prayer services. I believe the NGOs, civil society and ecclesial leaders should express a sense of solidarity with the IPs so that such initiatives can empower them.

---

<sup>1</sup>When the request to write this article was sent to the author, he sent us this reply: “As my dad was taken ill with pneumonia and was in the ICU in Sabah before coming back to the medical ward with viral infection, I was not able to attend to any email as there is no access in my parents’ house. I managed to get registered at the Good Shepherd Convent. Given my current predicament, allow me to send you my less-than-satisfactory responses” (Editor’s note).

**Is the Society “increasing its commitment? What would you say about the “work groups” that need to be formed in every Conference?**

At JCEAO, we have a peer group known as JCIM (Jesuit Companions in Indigenous Ministry) which was initiated in 1999 and named thus in Chiangmai in 2001. JCIM intends to meet this year in September 2010 (see attachment) with delegates from other Jesuit IP networks around the world. We plan to discuss the possibility of an international meeting of Jesuit IP networks in the course of the next three to five years.

Joseph Fung SJ  
Malaysia

## Indigenous Peoples – An Australian Perspective

### Brian McCoy<sup>1</sup> SJ

In terms of the following comments, it needs be noted at the outset, I speak as a non-indigenous person. While I have spent four decades living and working in a variety of indigenous communities and with indigenous people, I cannot speak as an indigenous person, nor for them. However, I am aware of my indigenous friends and colleagues, their advice and wisdom, as I offer these reflections. I am also aware that others will speak and emphasise some things differently.

#### Introduction

The indigenous peoples of Australia comprise two major distinct groups – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. Within both groups there are important linguistic and cultural differences. It can prove both dangerous and difficult to generalise about these groups, some of whom share common cultural values and practices, while others do not.

When colonisation began in Australia in 1788 not all indigenous communities and language groups were affected in the same way. Some suffered immediately from the violence of early contact and deaths caused by imported diseases, while others remained relatively free of white contact for some decades. Hence, while there are many similarities across the range of remote, rural and urban indigenous communities in Australia today, the historical effects of colonisation upon the indigenous peoples of this land are varied.

#### Comparisons with other Indigenous Peoples

Compared with other indigenous peoples there are some important similarities between Australia's indigenous peoples and those of New Zealand and North America and places where English remains the dominant language. In these countries colonisation was brought by European peoples, along with the imposing of Western cultural values and particular expressions of Christianity. There is, however, one very significant difference that separates Australia from these countries. No treaty was ever signed between the indigenous peoples of Australia and their colonisers.

Despite this significant difference, there are similarities that over recent years have invited greater communication and collaboration between the indigenous peoples of these countries. Australia, New Zealand, Canada and

---

<sup>1</sup>Senior Research Fellow, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health. La Trobe University. Jesuit Provincial Assistant for Ministries Among Indigenous Peoples

the USA are now counted to be among the most developed, resourced and rich nations of the world. They all have within them indigenous peoples on whom the effects of colonisation are manifest in many similar ways when compared with the dominant population. They share common experiences around lower life expectancy with higher imprisonment, suicide and unemployment rates, alcohol abuse, dependency on welfare and signs of prevalent and early onset of chronic disease. Indigenous people within these countries share very particular forms of poverty that are revealed in great social inequalities. These disparities are very clearly obvious within Australia.

Australia, as also other countries with indigenous peoples, has its own particular history of discrimination and racism. In Australia there is Government legislation that makes discrimination on the basis of race illegal. However, racism continues to be expressed and to operate in a range of ways. It can be expressed in peoples' attitudes, in Government policies and the ways in which ordinary educational, health and welfare services are delivered. What lies deeply within this racism are attitudes that seek to dominate and assimilate those who are different. What settler Australians have struggled to negotiate with its indigenous peoples is a relationship based on their rights of being the original peoples of the land and having these rights recognized and respected.

### **What today are the factors rendering indigenous people the 'most exploited and marginalised in the world?'**

What renders Australia's indigenous people the poorest of its population is the legacy of its colonial history. Indigenous and non-indigenous both struggle to understand, and agree on the full implications of this legacy, and about how any legacy may be acknowledged and turned around. Not having a treaty, not having constitutional rights or recognition, leaves the indigenous people without a political, economic and united voice. Their numbers, while growing at a faster rate than the rest of Australian society, are now more than half a million, but that is still less than 3% of the total population.

What has also made indigenous people vulnerable, as also in other parts of the world, is that invaders and colonisers sought to possess their lands and its resources. There are many experiences of dispossession in Australia where British law, along with the support of the police, worked together to control and pacify the indigenous people. The most profitable lands and seas, particularly those that supported agriculture, sheep, cattle, fishing and mining, were the ones immediately appropriated. Australia is the driest of all the continents. Those who control the eastern and south-eastern fringes of the land control the resources of the country and that is where most of the non-indigenous people live.

The effect of colonisation in Australia, as with colonisation in general, is the generational damage inflicted upon the spirit of a people. The communities not only suffered decades of violence and control by white society, but formed no healthy and sustaining relationships with members of that dominant society. Indigenous people have not been respected for their own knowledge and wisdom, for their ceremonies, languages and beliefs. The legacy of colonisation is terrible – the crushing of self-belief and self-value within an ancient people, where pain, loss and grief lead later to alcohol, gambling, sexual activity and violence.

One of the particular ways in which this generational damage is manifested in Australia is upon those known as the ‘Stolen Generations’. These were children who were forcibly removed from their families, over many decades prior to the 1970s, in order to be assimilated into the ‘white’ dominant culture. Many of these had a non-indigenous parent but the separation of these children from their families was often violent and without the permission of the parents. Two years ago the Prime Minister of Australia apologised for these removals. However, the separation of children from their families, as also from their culture and ancestral lands, continues to have an effect upon the health and wellbeing of later generations. Trauma is passed on.

One of the major hurdles to socio-political and economic initiatives in Australia is that the number of indigenous people, while proportionately younger than mainstream society, remains relatively small. Hence there remains a considerable burden on older people within communities where, at the same time, the number of young people is on the increase. As pressure is applied on these communities to improve educational outcomes, increase employment and ‘close the gap’ in terms of health inequalities, the pool of older indigenous people to assist these changes, negotiate and navigate non-indigenous people and their pressures, remains critically small and poorly resourced.

### **What is happening to their culture?**

Despite the damage done to the indigenous people of this land and a historical lack of respect offered to their heritage, many continue to make an effort to strengthen and support their culture in a wide variety of ways. A large number of people still speak their traditional languages, perform ceremonies and express key cultural values in terms of family relationships and responsibilities.

There is also a widespread use of art, music and dance in urban and remote communities. These expressions incorporate, to varying degrees, new expressions within older memories and traditions. Culture remains changing and dynamic and there are many indigenous people who are exploring what it

means to be 'Aboriginal' or 'Torres Strait Islander' in contemporary Australia and in a wider, global world. Linking with other indigenous groups – for conferences, cultural and educational exchange and so on – helps support local expressions of culture, provides new ideas and develops networks within Australia and across the seas. Many indigenous people use the advantages of living in a 'global' world to increase links and relationships with other indigenous groups, many of whom share similar colonial experiences.

As they do so, they can find themselves battling against the pressure of mainstream society. A strong pressure to be assimilated and adopt the values of the dominant society continues. As people enter the workforce, or assume tertiary education, finding ways to engage the dominant society while also being faithful to their families, communities and traditions can remain a serious tension and challenge. Despite this, there remains a growing number of indigenous people who are becoming more educated and articulate about what it means to be indigenous in a changing and challenging contemporary world.

As with other indigenous groups throughout the world, people can experience pressure to deny their culture, use modern technology and avail themselves of the material benefits of contemporary Western society. Navigating out of poverty, along with family and community, is no easy task. There is much pressure on leaders to find solutions to decades of discrimination and poverty. They do not come quickly or easily. Past Government policies and neglect cannot be quickly turned around. Tensions remain, for example, over the need for private home ownership versus community home ownership, endorsing mining versus leaving the land and sea untouched, moving to cities and urban centres for employment versus staying on ancestral lands where there is little opportunity for paid work. Western capitalism offers many benefits and opportunities but often at a cost.

### **Which are the new socio-political and economic initiatives that are strengthening them?**

There have been moves within recent years to increase the economy of indigenous communities, many of whom remain in isolated areas of the continent, away from the resources that are poured continually into major cities and their developing, demanding and needy infrastructures. However, there is an increasingly loud indigenous voice asking for more economic opportunity and a chance to share in the wealth of the country that is premised on dispossessing the land of its original peoples.

Hence, many more indigenous groups and communities are seeking ways to negotiate the use of their lands in ways that promise future employment and economic wellbeing for their people. No longer does one have to be

'indigenous' and 'poor,' but negotiating such arrangements takes time, energy and resources.

### **Is the Society 'increasing the commitment'? 'Work groups in every Conference?'**

The Australian Province has had a long and chequered history of association with its indigenous peoples. It began with the people in the Daly River (Northern Territory) in the 1880s and but then closed that work in 1899. It took up the work again in the 1970s. Since then there has been a small number of Jesuits involved. However, there are now some indigenous people engaged in some of the Province's works and these same works are, in differing ways, seeking new forms of partnerships with indigenous people and their communities.

#### **What is needed within this Province is:**

a) A greater awareness by Jesuits and lay colleagues of the importance of our local and national history and its relationships with indigenous peoples. Most Australians do not know personally any indigenous people. Their needs and aspirations can remain far removed from the attention and priorities of Jesuits and their ministries.

b) An increased capacity within our ministries in relation to the indigenous people. This can be done in a number of ways. We need to support strongly those few indigenous people we do employ within our ministries. Partnership with indigenous communities remains possible. At the same time, we need to develop the capacity of all who work in our various ministries and develop their attitudes and behaviour towards indigenous people.

Note: It is worth noting that while our work with the Jesuit Refugee Service would seem to be very different from indigenous ministry, what both hold in common is their challenge to Jesuits and lay colleagues to experience life 'from the margins' of mainstream society. Both seek to challenge the increasing 'comfort' that can be found in Western societies and where resistance has developed to prevent others sharing their riches and benefits. At the heart of this challenge is an understanding of being 'privileged' and the possibilities of living in a more global world where privilege is exposed and challenged.

c) A working group within each region or Province to aid the two goals above. The formation of 'work groups' within every Conference would depend on the needs and history of that Conference. What is needed is a more focussed attention on local history and the needs of local communities. While larger networks can be informative and encouraging, and links can be made across the differences of language and culture, the challenge remains to link Jesuit

works with local indigenous communities. The principle of subsidiarity suggests more resourcing at the local level. However, indigenous people are themselves forming new networks and strengthening those they already have across Australia and with other indigenous groups. How Jesuits and their ministries can further support those networks remains an important challenge.

## Conclusion

The contemporary film *Avatar* links issues within our global world around the key themes of indigenous people, their ancestral and spiritual links to the land versus competing and economic interests. There remains a global tension between Western and indigenous societies and their differing values regarding land, spirituality and human relationships.

As the film captures a Western cultural desire for land and its resources, it also captures very different, even polarised, values held by both groups. The challenge for non-indigenous people is neither to romanticise indigenous people because of their perceived relationships to the land and each other, nor to depict them as inferior because of their different values and lifestyles. An old tension that continues to exist today is the question of how non-indigenous people can better engage indigenous people, and vice versa, in mutually enriching relationships.

Key questions remain. How can indigenous people attain better health and social wellbeing while being faithful to their ancestral traditions and living within a rapidly changing material, dominant and consumer world? How can we non-indigenous people recognise that all will benefit if we experience a better relationship with indigenous people? How do we recognise our own need to change?

Brian McCoy SJ  
Australia

## Canadian Context

### Indigenous Peoples and Marginalization:

#### Notes from Ontario, Canada

Michael Murray and companions<sup>1</sup> SJ

Some call it the “Cash for Life” syndrome, others simply an over reliance on welfare that creates a chronic dependency on the Reserves, a poor sense of worth, and a perturbing sense of shame. Ingrained patterns of addiction, an easily effaced sense of right and wrong, moments of generalized lawlessness at times are features of Reserve life. From the moment of first contact with Europeans there has been an affront to the traditional ways of life that were so much simpler than those of their foreign visitors with their abundance of material goods: tools, implements, guns, metals, medicines.

Reserves (aka reservations) are artificial constructs for an essentially nomadic people who were accustomed to travel in small bands of tightly knit families to trap in Winter, hunt in the Fall, fish and pick berries in the Summer. The fur trade brought a measure of affluence to these clever native traders, but also a move away from the traditional grounds, and often a new life in the vicinity of the trading posts where European goods were coveted in exchange for the furs. A credit system of advances kept the native people indebted to the Fur Companies, and precipitated a change in their ways of life in settlements near the trading posts. At the collapse of the fur trade, a way of life had shifted in terms of traditional lands, clothing, guns, cooking utensils, blankets, dwellings, the passing on of traditions and stories, and the purity of the race and its language.

The Reserve system soon followed in exchange for lands and this further increased reliance on governments for every necessity of life, practically speaking. Reserves are becoming better equipped with modern schools, health care centres, community halls, Band offices offering a variety of services and providing employment. Though education is fully available, and homelessness is no longer a reality, and though poverty is virtually non-existent, and there is even affluence, yet, the social conditions are deplorable.

In the largest Reserve in the area (3000 people), the social workers estimate that 80% of girls are pregnant by the age of sixteen. Alcohol and prescription drug addiction are widespread and lead to all kinds of destructive patterns: violence, theft, loss of work, missed attendance, incapacitation.

Though Reserves show signs of material progress, these outwards signs are more a mirage than an indication of real change. A new Band Office, for

<sup>1</sup>together with Larry Kroker, Doug McCarthy, Jim Kelly, Gerry Forest, Jesuits working among the Ojibway, Odawas, and Pottowatomi of Northern Ontario.

instance, with offices for health workers and addiction counsellors, or community development officers, might find the majority of these people busy playing solitaire or gaming on the net at any given time. The reason for this is that programmes are undefined, unmonitored, and not properly prepared for; no expectations have been properly configured. This is especially true in the more northern underdeveloped communities, which are in early stages of adaptation to the new realities that have been introduced into the community.

There are people with great capacity and good skills, but with nothing organized for them to do. Planning gatherings, however, like annual powwows, tournaments, fishing derbies, elders' days, and feasts of all kinds are social events happen quite organically.

Gambling is a major preoccupation, Bingo especially, followed closely by alcohol and prescription drug addiction. Diabetes (type II, adult onset) is well above the national average and is probably the main cause for early deaths and the absence of active and significant elders in the community.

Politically, nepotism rules the day as elected ones and their families garner the benefits of office, especially in terms of housing, employment grants, hydro payments, housing rent payments, heating fuel and other such conveniences. This is tribal-centred politics with deep rootedness in the culture. Family, bloodlines, and the art of survival are all tied in here, and any transition to a more representational way of governance has not yet happened. One is elected chief or councillor when he or she promises to pay bills, get grants for housing, recreation, travel, vehicles sometimes, and promises to cover accumulated hydro bills, or rent arrears on housing. The more powerful the family, the more politically successful they are.

In each community, then, there are 'haves' and 'have-nots'. No business that extends credit has ever survived. Survival is for the day, and elders knew that they had to hunt or to fish, or sell furs, or have a job in order to eat that day. No longer is that true. Anyone can survive without working. Simply collect welfare. And as people gradually move into the cities, many simply join the welfare systems of urban areas and are taken care of. The migration to the cities is increasing rapidly, and it is estimated that within 20 years the population of the city of roughly 100,000 will increase from 15% Amerindian to 50%.

Being taken care of, being victim has taken over the consciousness of many First Nations People today. The Residential School debacle has created the term 'survivor' for those who went to these schools. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) and their chief made this the central piece of their administration and extracted billions of dollars from government and churches as reparation for the abuses and loss of culture that were brought about by these schools. Politicians, fearful of the international repercussions of human rights violations, were forthcoming with their apologies and disbursements. Now a commission for reconciliation has been set up to vent the stories of abuse across the country.

Schools had been set up by the churches and financed by the governments to provide education as native people blended more closely with the dominant society for transitions into new economies. Many people became educators, and even doctors and lawyers in some cases, but sexual abuse in some schools, separation from family and tribal life have left deep scars. There were abuses, and the jury is still out as to the benefits of these schools, but the collective victimization has created a monster of much greater proportions than the reality warranted, I believe.

Politicians are so fearful of native protests and international perceptions that they are loath to press for changes to the local autonomies that would require much greater accountability and transparency from native leaders who trumpet the abuse as the ace up their sleeve against change to the Indian Act.

Governments, then, treat the First Nations People like indulgent parents who give in to every desire of the people in order to keep peace. Gandhi named some structural and collective sins that are as deadly as the seven we know about in the church. He speaks about politics without principles, wealth without work, pleasure without conscience, commerce without morality, and worship without sacrifice. Indigenous peoples have probably learned these practices from us; still, they are a reality that paralyses life on the Reserves, and in the urban centres to which they move.

There is something left of the traditional culture. I find it difficult to define at the moment where the impact of this richness lies in their everyday lives and values. The opening ceremonies of the Vancouver Olympic Games in February 2010 were a grand celebration of four indigenous nations with all the accoutrements of their various cultures and provided a beauty and richness to the event that gave technology an opportunity to admire this marvel.

There is a slight danger in the questions you proposed for discussion in that they lead only to increase the guilt of non-native people vis-à-vis our indigenous brothers and sisters. While there is responsibility to be taken, I wish to point out that once your questions are answered, none of the internal problems will be solved.

Perhaps the work groups that are suggested for each Assistancy might at least help name the realities that we are each dealing with in our regional areas. An international linkage and dialogue may give us a different and stronger voice to meet the challenge of ministry and service with and among the Indigenous peoples of the world. At the moment, our focus lacks definition.

Michael Murray SJ  
Canada

# PARADIGM CHANGE & FAITH

## Aggiornamento: A Continual Challenge<sup>1</sup>

Giacomo Costa SJ

**A**ggiornamento (“updating”), a programmatic term of the Second Vatican Council, is understood as an exigency that is intrinsic to the relation which the Church is called to establish with the world. The church renewal desired and carried out by the Council presupposes *aggiornamento*: “The whole church must adapt itself to the new needs of the world: after the celebration of the Council, the whole Church is to be committed to this spiritual and organizational renewal” (Paul VI, *Message to all the priests of the Catholic Church*, 30 June 1968; all pontifical and conciliar texts are available at [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)).

Much has been written by way of stressing that this *aggiornamento* must be renewal and not revolution; it is a new gesture, but it does not overshadow the continuity and the link with tradition; it is a gesture made with “creative fidelity,” as Benedict XVI has phrased it several times. Perhaps the great concern shown for emphasizing both the novelties and the continuity has thrust the profound dynamic which the Council actually provoked into the background. Paul VI indicated something of this dynamic in his general audience of 7 May 1969: “What has happened? Even while the vision of the Church has been emerging in its real and ideal truth, the significance of its concrete human imperfections and our discontent with them have also become more acute. The Church ... is inserted in the flowing river of history; consequently, in its contingent explanations it is subject to the changes typical of the times. Now we have clearly seen a great desire for ‘updating,’ for reform, for authenticity, for ‘rejuvenation of the Church’ (cfr Siri, G., *Il ringiovanimento nella Chiesa*, Paoline, Roma 1965). Since the Council, however, a concern has spread in many spheres which has disturbed the dialogue within the very bosom of the Church and in its environs.” Without concealing the difficulties involved in this updating, Paul VI concluded as follows: “We believe that the opportunity offered to the Church to attend to its own reform is ‘a sign of the times,’ a grace of the Lord. ... Understanding the phrase in its true sense, we can adopt as ours the programme of a continual reform of the Church: *Ecclesia semper reformanda*.”

With its spirit of dynamism, *aggiornamento* is an ongoing programme and a way of being, not something that can be taken as accomplished once and for all. The Church always discovers itself in the process of reform, and it must continually deal with the tensions between its historical dimension and its

---

<sup>1</sup>We are grateful to the journal *Aggiornamenti Sociali* for allowing the publication of the present text, which is a reworking of the Editorial of January 2010 (pp. 9-14). The insistence on *aggiornamento* (“updating”) is related in the original text to the title of the journal, which prophetically proclaimed the relevance of the term in the 1950s.

fidelity to the mission it has received; such tensions are today quite strong, as may be seen in the daily newscasts that we read. This process involves a constant discernment, whose deepest aspect consists in learning to read the signs of the times, as the Council invites us to do: "To fulfill this commitment, the Church has the permanent duty of scrutinizing in depth the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, so that, by adapting to each generation, the Church can respond to the constant questions people have about the meaning of this life and the future life and about their mutual relations."<sup>2</sup>

## 1. Faith and society, today

Fulfilling this task today, as demanded of us by the Council, brings us face to face with the problem of the interaction between our diagnostic instruments, especially the instruments of the social sciences and the perspective of faith, which grounds our reading of the "signs of the times." The need to facilitate this interaction is expressed well by Benedict XVI in his encyclical, *Caritas in veritate* (2009): "Faced with the phenomena that lie before us, charity in truth requires first of all that we know and understand, acknowledging and respecting the specific competence of every level of knowledge. Charity is not an added extra, like an appendix to work already concluded in each of the various disciplines: it engages them in dialogue from the very beginning" (no. 30).

Despite the "return of the religious spirit," we cannot ignore the fact that society has been gradually distancing itself from Christian humanism and from that vision of humanity and the world which for centuries provided a shared rational foundation; it was a vision with which Christian faith connected "naturally." At the same time, there were many reasons that made us realize that the objective of reconstructing a "new Christendom" was no longer credible. Within this context, the relation of Christian communities to the reality in which they live has been changing profoundly, especially as regards their social presence and the way in which they make their voice heard in public debate.

In its collective expressions, social commitment has difficulty capturing what is most proper to the Christian identity and what, indeed, such an identity can offer. For those who are socially committed in daily practice, that identity often seems distant, almost disconnected from social and political realities; meanwhile, believing Christians do not know how to give reasons for their own faith, neither to others nor to themselves. Those who can speak of the faith that lives in them do so almost always in terms of personal or community life, but they do not articulate it effectively to answer questions

---

<sup>2</sup>VATICAN COUNCIL II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, no. 4.

arising from confrontations within society. This is the difficulty of understanding and living the social dimension of faith.

All the same, it would be a serious matter if we had to resign ourselves to a society without faith, just as it would be if we had to resign ourselves to a faith without society. What is at stake here is the future of society and faith, for, as the Council already declared, "We may legitimately think that the future of humanity is in the hands of those who know how to give future generations reasons for living and for hoping" (*Gaudium et Spes*, no. 31). The true challenge of reading the signs of the times today consists in finding faith also in social practices. But what "faith" are we talking about? By way of answer, let us allow ourselves to be provoked by the theologian Christoph Theobald: "Without a doubt, fundamental faith need not be understood immediately as faith in God or explicit faith in Christ, although even in the gospel accounts it arises from mere contact with Christ and is already active in those who meet him: 'Woman, your faith has saved you' (Mk 5,34)."<sup>3</sup> Theobald explains: "It is possible to interpret this 'credit' made to life as an act necessary for living, without ever taking it immediately for granted; it is almost a miraculous act each time, an act which no one can perform for anyone else and which is possible only in the encounter with others, within a determined social context. It may be a valiant act of resistance in the face of one's own sickness or a collective problem; ... In each case, this 'faith' is shown to be the manifestation of a victory that is echoed in the word 'conviction'" (*ibid.*) The "sign of the times" we must seek then is that act of trust in the "mystery" of life, when fear gives way to trust and to the "courage to be"; it is an act by which one risks not just some thing, but one's very existence, with no guarantee.

This "faith," understood as courage in facing the future, is characterized by the strength of its radiation and its capacity to become "contagious." At the same time, it never exists in a pure state, but is always mixed with events of another sort, which are produced or amplified by public opinion and church attitudes. It is not easy to discern such faith; it requires that we place ourselves in a medium to long-term perspective so that we are neither overwhelmed by facile enthusiasms nor inhibited by the concrete questions engendered ceaselessly by present-day political and social situations. It is a task in which a monthly journal, as in the present case, can make a contribution by its regular appearance. In this instance, with the further help of Christoph Theobald, we limit ourselves to tracing in depth some of the perspectives from which it is possible to initiate discernment of concrete problems.

---

<sup>3</sup>Christoph Theobald, *Lire les signes des temps. Dimension sociale et politique de la foi*, in *Etudes*, 2 [2006] 204. This whole article is indebted to this author.

## 2. Commitment to the development of democracy

Today we are all very conscious of the fragility of democratic institutions; we need do no more than read the headlines of our newspapers. The threats are numerous, and they range from our welfare state citizens turning into individuals driven by vested interests to the exaggerated development of a world economy that is scarcely governable at the national level. The threats are present both in politicians who employ populist dynamics and strategies as well as in the gradual disappearance of a sense of solidarity at all levels.

More radically, there emerges a difficulty typical of every secularized society: it is structurally unable to present itself as a single body. This crops up when societies have lost an exemplar on to which they can project themselves symbolically in order to recognize themselves as a single body, a unity beyond the individual multiplicities – whether in the form of religion, royalty, homeland, or the people. Given these conditions, the basis of the social bond becomes invisible, and often substitutes are sought. Democracy gets worn down because it lacks this support – the very basis on which the *demos*, the people, is established – and it seeks it in realms that are pre-political, not to say pre-democratic or even religious. Nevertheless, while the recovery of those realms and the symbolic resources they offer for the public sphere may be of capital importance, it cannot be a shortcut taken to avoid the patient labour, inevitably shot through with conflicts and attempts at mediation, of having us all devise and construct the future of our society together. “In fact,” Cardinal Ratzinger once stated, “the guarantee of mutual cooperation in the sphere of law and the just administration of power is the essential reason for defining democracy as the most adequate form of political order.”<sup>4</sup>

In the present situation of democratic fragility, the distinction made by Christoph Theobald between basic faith and explicitly Christian faith takes on political and social value. How are we to imagine society constituting itself without an “anthropological” faith that vouches for the future without obscuring it with ideological visions or purely particular interests? Without a doubt, the task of Christians is to discern the signs of this “faith” wherever they become manifest in society, and to value them and encourage them, while “making them grow.” This means, above all, identifying the “significant” persons who incarnate this faith, wherever they may come from, and at the same time forming other persons of the same kind.

It is not too much to state that even today democracy is a question of faith. In the face of the many technocratic or populist “temptations” that exist, political practice – understood as debate about the priorities among primary social goods and about the short- and long-term objectives of good

---

<sup>4</sup>Habermas J. – Ratzinger J., *Etica, ragione e Stato liberale*, Morcelliana, Brescia 2004, 43 f.

government – requires persons who are expert in using the resources that democracy makes available for the construction of a more just society, the fundamental task. But besides those experts, it also requires witnesses who know how to convince people, through works and through commitment, that it is worth the effort to move forward in the democratic debate and to participate actively in it, whatever one's position in society.

### 3. Allowing a lay culture to grow

The arrival in the public sphere of new interlocutors from other religions or ideological positions is a fact. Those taking part in the debate about society will have to do so on the basis of their own identity and with their own resources, while accepting, in turn, the basic rules of communication. To this end they will need time to learn, and they will have to be able to reflect both on themselves and on the positions held by all the interlocutors.

Difficulties and resistance may emerge at various levels, including from those who wish to place all creeds on the same level by accepting only the lowest common denominator (relativism). Such an opinion is widespread and seems to be simple commonsense. When religions are thus considered interchangeable, society shows itself to be insensitive, and loses the capacity to say anything with respect to different religious manifestations, which are intimately related to the cultural and artistic expressions of the ethical patrimony of humankind.

For our European societies, it would seem more promising for us to count on the ability that religions have to question one another and be critical of themselves, through confidence in the use of reason. This is what is proposed in *Caritas in veritate*: “The exclusion of religion from the public sphere – and, at the other extreme, religious fundamentalism – hinders an encounter between persons and their collaboration for the progress of humanity. Public life is sapped of its motivation and politics takes on a domineering and aggressive character. ... Secularism and fundamentalism exclude the possibility of fruitful dialogue and effective cooperation between reason and religious faith. *Reason always stands in need of being purified by faith*: this also holds true for political reason, which must not consider itself omnipotent. For its part, *religion always needs to be purified by reason* in order to show its authentically human face” (no. 56).

The challenge for Christians lies in entering into this perspective with their own theological, spiritual, and ethical resources, and inviting others to do the same. There is no guaranteed result. Our society is riddled with violence, including religious violence, but for precisely that reason we need the vital contribution of those who dare to cross frontiers and who know how to risk their existence and take the first step, thus drawing close to others in

compassion and accepting the hazards of violence and failure in the encounter.

In assuming such a risk, the Church could show that it is possible to encourage a shared process for deciphering the paradoxes of living together without renouncing its own resources, but rather revealing them even more and risking them, even while respecting a communicability whose limits are revealed little by little. And precisely because the threat of violence never ceases to be present, society needs to be pacified by the rediscovery and, if need be, the invention of shared rules and by the concrete experience of common practices that run all the way from education to coexistence.

Giacomo Costa SJ  
Italy

*Original Italian*

## Christian Faith Calls for Justice and Reconciliation

### Gabino Uríbarri SJ

**A** believer is a person who is distinguished by faith. Our Christian faith, if we are to be guided by the creed, is clearly trinitarian, while remaining monotheist. We propose to examine briefly each of the articles of the creed<sup>1</sup> so as to see what they might suggest to us about justice and reconciliation.

#### a) I believe in God the Father

The creed begins with God, almighty Father, creator of all things, visible and invisible, thus capturing a basic conviction found throughout the scriptures. The essence of the conviction may be expressed in three points.

First, God is the creator of all (Gn 1-2), and therefore there is no other principle that can compare with him. There is no reality of any type that can make being arise from nothing (2 Mac 7,28), or that can make the dead return to life (Rm 4,17). God is thus distinct from every other reality that exists, as he makes manifest through his power, his majesty, his sovereignty, and his providence.

Second, the scriptures, following this same line, emphasize that everything that comes from the hand of God is good (Gn 1,4.10.12.18.21.25.31). Creation finds its culmination in human beings, who occupy a predominant place in it since they are created *in the image and likeness* (Gn 1,27) of God himself. No such assertion is made of any other creature. This is therefore an unequivocal affirmation of the supreme dignity of all human persons. According to Christian faith, every human being is fashioned creatively by God, that is, by the Father who simultaneously designs and loves. Creation includes a call to friendship and communion with God, which is expressed through commandments (Gn 2,16-17). The commandments are not arbitrary or fastidious impositions by God, but are the expression of the true relation between Creator and creature, a relation based on free recognition of God's lordship. Consequently, obedience means placing oneself before God as a creature, not as an equal. The seductiveness of the serpent's temptation, "You will be like gods" (Gn 3,5), lies precisely in the appeal of placing oneself at the same level as God and thus erasing the crucial distance which exists between God and his creatures. This is the line used by the subtle serpent to tempt and seduce Eve with an apparent deception (cf. *Exercises* 329).

The third point is one that especially needs restating since sometimes it is not well understood. Given creation as conceived by Christian faith, all

---

<sup>1</sup>I take as a reference the so-called Nicene Creed of Constantinople (DH 150).

persons have the dignity of being made in the image and likeness of God; not only that, but the creation story, well interpreted, does not introduce any theological differences of grade between men and women. That is to say, the creation story we are commenting on places men and women on the same level, and it does so in both accounts of creation. Genesis 1 certainly makes the point more clearly: "God created humans in his own image, in the image of God he created them: male and female he created them" (Gn 1,27). No difference is indicated here between men and women. The same equality is expressed in Genesis 2, though in a somewhat more sophisticated manner. When Adam sees Eve, who has been made out of his rib, he exclaims: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gn 2,23). With these words Adam stresses the identity and equality between himself and Eve. Furthermore, as Theophilus of Antioch<sup>2</sup> points out, what is at stake here is nothing less than monotheism: there is not a masculine god from whom men proceed and another feminine god who created women. One God alone, in a single, unique creative process, created women and men to be equal. The creative monotheism of Christianity is the best guarantee of shared equality and dignity between men and women.

### **b) I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ**

The second article of the creed is the longest one. It speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ, his eternal origins, his incarnation, death, and resurrection, and his future coming in judgment. The creed does not recount the mysteries of Christ's life, except for a scant allusion to his incarnation, birth, death, and resurrection. Nevertheless, it places us directly before the Lord Jesus.

Regarding the ministry of Jesus, I will simply comment on three well-known aspects of it. First, the ministry of Jesus focused on the announcement of the coming of God's kingdom (Mk 1,14-15), which was linked to his person (Lk 11,20) and was good news for everybody, especially the poor (Lk 4,18; cf. Is 61,1), the sick, and the sinful (Mk 2,17). Jesus came especially to rescue those who were lost, as is shown splendidly in Luke 15. Those who murmur because Jesus the good shepherd associates and eats with sinners receive from him in response three parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. What is more, Jesus' behaviour is explained by comparing it to the joy that bursts forth in heaven when one sinner, one lost soul, repents and is saved (Lk 15,7.10). In the parable of the lost son, there is a clear allusion to the Father (God), as is true of the gospel as a whole. The very way in which Jesus conducts himself is an expression of his union with the Father, so that his ministry is shown to be guided by his relation to the Father, thus revealing the merciful face of this God.

<sup>2</sup>*Ad Autholicum*, II,28.

A second and related characteristic of Jesus' ministry is that he excludes no one from his message about the kingdom; no one open to conversion is denied the possibility of entering into it. No reason exists – by reason of race (Mt 8,11-12 par.), gender, social status, or purity – which of itself prevents a person from entering into God's kingdom. The group around Jesus included women (Lk 23,49), and many of the persons cured by Jesus were women.<sup>3</sup> Jesus cured lepers, who in Israel were considered impure and bearers of impurity. Despite this, Jesus approached them and touched them (Lk 5,12-13). It is plain to see, then, that Jesus' ministry had an unmistakably inclusive character, which bestowed dignity on those who had lost it.<sup>4</sup> Jesus healed the whole person, to the point of pardoning sins (Mk 2,1-12). Not only did he heal sicknesses, he also expelled demons and reintegrated those who confided in him back into the people to which they socially and religiously belonged. We can see clearly how in his ministry Jesus reinterpreted holiness in terms of mercy, for, instead of the command from Leviticus, "Be holy, as I am holy" (11,44), Jesus pronounces an invitation: "Be compassionate, as your Father is compassionate" (Lk 6,36). The mercy preached by Jesus realigns the borders of the people of God, so that they include everybody, but in particular those who for whatever reason find themselves excluded and in dire straits.

Third, the Lord Jesus identified himself in a special way with the poor and the weak. The best known text is of course the parable of the final judgment, Mt 25,31ff., but there are many others. Jesus also took a rather bold stance for his time with regard to children (Mt 10,42; 18,10).

### c) I believe in the Holy Spirit

The third article of the creed runs the risk of not being given due attention. Here we profess our faith in the Holy Spirit, Lord and giver of life. Christian faith recognizes that there are certain points where the Spirit's action is concentrated, such as in the sacraments, but it also acknowledges the Spirit's great liberty to blow where she will (Jn 3,8). The apostles were amazed that certain persons had received the Spirit even before being baptized (cf. Acts 10,47). Thus, even while granting the Spirit's intense presence in the Church and the sacraments, we need also to recognize her universality. Through the Spirit, God dwells in all the creatures that proceed from his hand, and he draws them back toward himself as long as the creatures do nothing to impede the dynamism of God's Spirit, which is present in them. In the *Spiritual Exercises*, the contemplation for attaining love neatly captures this keen awareness of the presence of God in all creatures.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. E. Estévez, *Mediadoras de sanación. Encuentros entre Jesús y las mujeres: Una nueva mirada*, U.P. Comillas – San Pablo, Madrid 2008.

<sup>4</sup>Cf. R. Aguirre, *La mesa compartida. Estudios del NT desde las ciencias sociales*, Sal Terrae, Santander 1994.

#### d) Faith

For us Christians, our faith is not just one more opinion amidst a multitude of others; rather, it is an expression of the inward conviction that gives meaning and consistency to the whole of our reality and defines norms for moral action that are in keeping with the real meaning of things, beginning with human beings and proceeding through all the rest of reality. Though it may appear, given our present multicultural and multi-religious social context, that our faith is just one opinion among many, for us that is not the case. The multicultural panorama is by no means a negative factor for Christian faith. Indeed, on Pentecost we preach that all peoples will hear of the marvels of God in their own language. For Christianity there is no one sacred language that is required for all those who are converted; rather, each person lives the faith in his or her own language and culture, in this way demonstrating the richness of Christian faith and the variety of different languages and cultures in which it can be expressed.<sup>5</sup>

In Christianity there is no room for fundamentalism, for we are convinced that our Christian faith, insofar as it genuinely reflects the truths of God, humanity, and the world, is a gift and a grace of God which does not restrict freedom. Imposing faith forcibly is a contradiction. It can be offered with joy, with conviction, and with witness to the true life that springs from it, but it can never be imposed. Furthermore, going back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-century Church fathers and the New Testament itself (1 Peter 3,15), Christian faith has insisted on the need for us Christians to give reasons for our hope to those who ask for them, and to do so “with kindness and respect” (1 Peter 3,16). As a religious stance, therefore, fundamentalism simply does not fit within the parameters of Christian faith.

Moreover, the Second Vatican Council declared that the proper attitude of the Church towards the world and other religions is one of dialogue (cf. NA). Of course, engaging in dialogue does not mean that we should be reluctant to express our own convictions or that we should abandon our sense of mission,<sup>6</sup> but dialogue remains a privileged means for encountering people who are different from us in the ways they live and think.

At the same time, Christian faith has a public, political dimension which is essential to it. It is on the basis of faith that social and public realities are created. The Church is a reality with a social, historical character; the sacraments bring about juridical effects by their very dynamics. Christian faith is not reducible to subjective, private convictions or to interior emotions. For

<sup>5</sup>Cf. G. Uríbarri, “Multiculturalidad. Una perspectiva teológica,” *Razón y Fe* 253 (February 2006) 131-142.

<sup>6</sup>Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples, Instruction “Dialogue and Proclamation” (May 19, 1991), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 84 (1992), 414-446.

Christianity, Spirit and faith seek to take on flesh and blood, to become history. Faith is therefore not only expressed and proclaimed publicly, but it also produces social, political, and cultural realities. We have seen these realities throughout history in the form of schools, hospitals, cooperatives, shelters, and other institutions that reach out to teach, heal and sustain. Faith that does not produce culture and become solidified in social or public institutions is a faith cut off from its incarnational dynamic. Consequently, while faith does not supplant politics or take up arms, it cannot fail to be interested in all that is going on in public forums and social gatherings, for it is on such terrain that faith can work its own dynamic with regard to the human person. Only thus can our faith strive for a true correspondence between human beings and the plan of God; otherwise it will be ineffective.

### **e) Christian faith, justice, and reconciliation**

Given this background, there can be no doubt that Christian faith includes within its own dynamic the impulse to work courageously for justice and reconciliation.<sup>7</sup> That does not mean that faith limits itself to this dynamic, for charity always goes beyond justice, and love of our enemies presupposes a generosity that is over and above reconciliation, though going in the same direction. Even so, seeking justice and working for reconciliation are both essential and inherent aspects of faith. Why is this true?

It is true because if all persons, having been created by God, possess the same dignity, then treating them with that same dignity conferred on them by God, independently of their race, culture, religion, or social condition, is an intrinsic element of our faith in God the creator of all. It is also true because, if we all have one God who is Father, then we are all radically brothers and sisters. Consequently, discrimination, injustice, and enmity are all contrary to the most real part of our reality.

It is true because the Lord Jesus in his preaching addressed everybody without exception, thus redefining the borders for the new people of God, the new Israel, so as to include the publicans and the prostitutes, the infirm and the sinners, the Jews and the Gentiles. As a result, those human beings who refuse to be reconciled with God and one another have still not attained what God designed through Jesus Christ. Christ destroyed the wall which separated Jews and Gentiles (Eph 2,14) and created hostilities between them, and according to Paul he entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor 5,18) as a continuation of his own redemptive work of reconciliation. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus was especially concerned about the poor, the socially excluded, and the vulnerable, and he identified himself with them. The following of

---

<sup>7</sup>These aspects are developed more concretely in the following decrees: GC 32, D 4; GC 34, D 3; GC 35, D 3,12-36 (reconciliation).

Jesus therefore entails, as part of its own dynamic, ministering to those who are excluded in order to reconcile them with the community and reintegrate them back into society. The preferential option for the poor is an intrinsic component in the Christological faith of the Church, as Benedict XVI has recently reminded us.<sup>8</sup>

It is true because the Spirit is present in all creatures and in all persons, for God desires to dwell in them and bring them to their fullness in the life of Christ (Eph 4,13). Thus, when we encounter other people, we are dealing with persons created by the Father, persons for whom Christ has shed his blood, persons in whom the Spirit dwells fully.

Gabino Uríbarri Bilbao SJ  
Spain

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

---

<sup>8</sup>Allocution to GC 35, § 8.

## The faith which leads us to justice and reconciliation in a multicultural, multireligious world

Alfredo Ferro SJ

**A**t the risk of appearing simplistic, I must state that I believe there is a more vital, less theoretical way of approaching an experience-based faith. We nowadays link reason and the formulation of dogma with practical action and most definitely with life, and here we will try to show how that is done. The pastoral letter of James states that faith without works is dead (2,17). We seek here, however, as the title of this essay indicates, not so much to treat faith in itself as to try to respond to the question: *What kind of faith leads to justice and reconciliation in a multicultural and multireligious world?*

We are called to struggle for justice and reconciliation out of our experience of faith, a faith which is both personal and collective (though we would need to ask ourselves what kind of faith we are referring to). These are weighty words, which require of us some clarification or further treatment, but first it seems fitting to ask ourselves what kind of FAITH it is that becomes reconciliation and justice.

Perhaps we might best start by situating ourselves in the world we actually live in and examining the reality that we have called multicultural and multireligious. It is a reality that is ever more acknowledged and affirmed, even though it still has not been well assimilated. We live in a context in which diversity is becoming an ever greater force; it emerges and stands out, manifesting itself as “the other”; it affirms itself and seeks its own identity, precisely because it was for so long hidden, oppressed, and unknown. Even though this growing diversity is at times consciously or unconsciously denied – since it may threaten my security and my truth and therefore my tranquillity – still, it is becoming ever more evident thanks to globalization.

In the same way that the famous spiritual writer Alonso Rodríguez SJ used to cite “certain examples” to make his points, I would like to offer a more existential perspective by using an example from my personal experience. When I was still in the Jesuit novitiate, I dreamt of going on the “missions” and of making “offerings of greater value and of more importance.” Following the teachings of our Father Ignatius, I dedicated myself to following Jesus, a commitment I try to renew every day. As a student I asked to be sent on an apostolic experience to Africa, and that became for me a very special grace. I have to recognize that it was an experience that affected me greatly, and not just because of the poverty I found in what was then Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of the Congo. What was most significant for me was my encounter or my collision – or perhaps both – with a reality and a culture that

were so different from my own. There in Africa I became aware that the West and the Catholic Church – and therefore our faith as based on a certain history, tradition, and culture, rich as these may be – represented only one among many possible experiences of faith and culture. The important conclusion at which I arrived, painfully and at the same time marvellously, was that we were not in possession of the TRUTH, even though we have been convinced of that, much to our own disadvantage. Of course, this is not just a problem of the Catholic Church or other churches; it is also a problem of capitalism in general and of our modern societies with their neo-liberal economics, the “end of history” that Francis Fukuyama described in his famous book, published in 1992. Perhaps the greatest perversity of all is that the same so-called TRUTH, which oppressively isolates us and prevents any form of dialogue, reconciliation, or justice, is also the gateway that leads to different forms of fundamentalism, among other things. In sum, I came to understand that we had to relativize many things, and we also had to realize that the only way to “evangelize” – a term that rings false in contexts outside our own – was by learning from “the other” and by entering into true dialogue with other cultures, without imposing revealed truths or other verities. Thus, rather than “evangelizing,” we needed to let ourselves “be evangelized.”

Viewing the world from our Latin American continent, which is traditionally Catholic in religion and European in culture, I find myself challenged by the thought that there are 1.2 billion Muslims in the world and that they, in all their own diversity, are tremendously different from me and from all westerners. The alternative would be to deny them, ignore them, or consider them my enemies since they are different from me, and unfortunately this is what is happening in one form or another in our western societies, aided in large part by the dominant ideologies of North America.

I have the impression that a superior approach, one that is not always possible, consists in having close contact with “the other.” That is, we should try to become “neighbours” to other cultures or other religions, following the lead of the Good Samaritan. We need to move beyond being multicultural, which can be somewhat passive, and take on the real challenge of being inter-cultural or inter-religious. The world’s other cultures and religions are not abstractions; they are treasure houses of spiritualities, visions, logics, customs, traditions, music, rhythms, dances, foods, entertainment, rituals, beliefs, and religious practices.

I am convinced that that we need a profound spiritual experience of faith in life and in living beings. We need a Christian faith which believes in the God of life who became incarnate not just in us humans but in all of nature and in “the other.” With such a faith, we cannot understand our own selves apart from “the other.” For me there is nothing as evangelical as the encounter with what is different from me, and I am more convinced than ever that such

was the profound experience of Jesus. That is most definitely what gave Jesus his great freedom and allowed him to practice “mercy,” understanding “mercy” as the ability to let oneself be gripped from the heart and to experience the depths of “the other” – and not just any other, but especially those whose lives are distressed and under constant threat.

I see ever more clearly that the mission of Jesus was never a question of founding a Church. I don’t think he even dreamed of that. Nor was his mission a matter of defining a faith or laws or principles or doctrines or rites. On the contrary, his mission was to make his faith into his life, which he then wove into the faith of his companions and his people. His whole life grew out of the faith he had in God the Father, the caring and compassionate *Abba*, the God of promise and hope who announces a land flowing with milk and honey, the God of life not death, the God who constantly regenerates and renews so that we may have life and life in abundance, as John’s gospel tells us.

Jesus’ life consisted of unquestionable commitment to the disowned, the excluded, and the outcasts of history, no matter what the reason, whether economic, social, or cultural. He took the side of those who were and continue to be considered inferior for being poor, for having other traditions, other customs, other truths, other thoughts, other rituals or religions. That is the faith we profess, the faith in Jesus Christ. He is our point of reference, and with him as model we seek to live our own experience of a faith that is limited, fragile, always new, and also shared. And we do so without failing to recognize the permanent, challenging tension that exists, one filled with many doubts, worries, and uncertainties. At the same time we are confident that that FAITH will be able to respond to our longings for justice and reconciliation.

Throughout the gospels Jesus is clearly shown to be inclusive in his practice. That inclusiveness is seen in his encounter with the leper who cannot enter the city, with the tax collector who is controversial for being an ally of the empire, with the prostitute who is rejected and about to be stoned, with the soldier who is a traitor, with the foreigner who is scorned for not following the rites and customs of the traditional religion, with the rich man who wants to be converted but fears for his fortune, and with so many others whom he meets along the way.

Focusing now on our modern western society, we might say that exclusion is one of the results of the socio-cultural and economic model which presently dominates our world, creating an ever greater homogenization. We sometimes wonder: what are the root causes of the ideological and religious wars and the battles of opinion which produce violence and polarization? Going no further than our own countries here in Latin America, we can easily answer that question by examining the context in which we have been brought up and

educated. We have been made to think that there exists a single way of thinking, an infallible power of reason, an indisputable criterion for judgment, a single true religion, a supremely civilized culture, and so on. This monolithic system depends upon the mass media monopolies, which are in the hands of powerful people who seek to defend their own interests by inculcating a contrary culture of faith. They understand faith to mean adherence to truths, principles, or traditions that nourish submission, domination, confrontation, and conflict, which in turn produce every form of dogmatism and fundamentalism. We deceive ourselves when we believe that the only forms of fundamentalism are those of the Muslims or the Ayatollahs, but that is what the media constantly tell us. Thus, even among ourselves we promote disagreements and altercations, for we have a very hard time acknowledging people who are different, and we are all too ready to fabricate enemies. A few days ago I was travelling on the metro, where I met up with a group of people who were on their way to the carnival celebrations; on their T-shirts they had a very interesting slogan printed: *"The different is normal."*

If we speak of reconciliation in these contexts, it is because we are in need of it, and for the same reason we need processes that help raise our awareness and move us to heartfelt contrition. Our aim should be to immerse ourselves in a prolonged ritual of purification or a sort of exorcism, which will free us from what we have considered the forces of evil. These forces have dominated us and prevented us from seeing the other shores, the other channels, the other roads, the other directions, because we have fled from the crossroads.

The recent 35<sup>th</sup> General Congregation has ratified our mission of serving the faith, working for justice, and promoting dialogue with other cultures and religions, and we are to do this within a perspective of reconciliation with ourselves, with others, with nature, and with God (GC35 D. 3,12). This means also a reconciliation with history, which is diverse, not uniform; it means reconciliation with the cultures that have been dominated and forgotten (such as the African and indigenous communities on our continent, toward which we have a historical debt); it means reconciliation with the religions of those who believe in a God who is not mine but who still is God; it means reconciliation with the churches and with our own Church, outside which there is also salvation; and most innovatively and challengingly, it means reconciliation with nature, which should help us to integrate the whole, but which unfortunately we have dominated and not respected. We are called to return to a sort of animism, a religion in which we find the God of life in every space and every being, and where nature is therefore the privileged niche for learning.

Becoming reconciled and asking for pardon means freeing oneself from an excess of opprobrium, disrespect, despotic truth, pride, power, and

ostentation. It means setting forth on a faith adventure that does justice in a multicultural, multireligious world.

During my special studies I worked on the theme of popular religion and its practices, and I always stood in admiration of the great vitality and richness I found there. I learned a great many lessons and kept discovering new things in my years of contact with the small farmer communities that I accompanied. Our general inability to understand that world of popular religion is an example of how distant we are from it and how hard it is for us to approach realities that have different logics, different practices, and ultimately different worldviews. For me it wasn't properly a case of "popular religiosity" as opposed to "official religion," since the former term itself denotes a certain disdain. The manifestations of popular religion, which must be understood as part of peoples' histories, traditions, and cultures, are often viewed by the academy or by ecclesial power as something secondary, or worse still, they are considered to be backward practices, the result of superstition and magic. This is just one more proof of how difficult it is for us, given our institutional power and our own formation, to discover and acknowledge "others" in all their richness and diversity. The important thing now is to learn from the "other" and immerse oneself in the "other." My brother Germán is an anthropologist specializing in religion, so I have discussed all these matters with him and been greatly enriched by the exchange. Once, when I invited him to attend my classes in the theology faculty of the Universidad Javeriana, one of my students asked him whether he thought that "popular religiosity" contained a lot of magic and superstition. He responded, "What is more magical than believing that a piece of bread or a little wine become the body and blood of Christ?" Sometimes we view this as something completely normal, and yet we find it hard to understand and take part in something that is not our own or that we have not made our own.

What we have to do, then, in order to be more radical in recognizing the value of each religion or culture, is to dismantle what we have erroneously called the struggle for cultural or religious identities. This is not at all easy, but we should no longer claim: I am Catholic, Lutheran, Evangelical, Orthodox, Jew, or Muslim. Our aim should be to allow ourselves to be inspired by the spirituality of others, their way of believing, their idea of God, their practices. We are reminded of the song of Ana Belén and Víctor Manuel: *"Tell me the story of the date tree, the deserts, the mosques of your grandparents. Provide me with the rhythms of the darbuka drums and the secrets of the books I do not read. Contaminate me, but not with the smoke that smothers the air. Come to me with your eyes and your dances; come, but not with rage and terrible dreams; come instead with lips that announce kisses. Contaminate me, blend with me, and under my branch you will find shelter. Tell me the story of the chains that brought you, of the chains and the travellers. Provide me with the rhythms of the bouzoukis; with the dark eyes and the*

*restless dance of the wizard contaminate me.*" Either we will allow ourselves to become contaminated or infected by the other, or we will have a great fear of acknowledging the other and of recognizing ourselves in the other. Naturally, that destabilizes us; it makes us feel insecure and disoriented. It is easier to remain in what is my own, in what is our own.

It is necessary to enter into religious experience beyond that prescribed by formal ritual and the established institution. We need to find ourselves solely with the faith of our everyday experience, expressed in the pain, the joy, the simplicity, the celebration, the struggle for survival, the playfulness, the casual conversation, the use of time, and everything that makes up part of a life at once profound and simple, a life in which that same faith is not separated from living and therefore does not create dichotomies.

Alfredo Ferro SJ  
CPAL  
Brazil

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

## “The concept of ‘Justice’ in the second synod for Africa”

### Paul Béré SJ<sup>1</sup>

**T**hree basic concepts were of concern to the Church in the second synod for Africa: reconciliation, justice and peace. These are the concepts that define the challenges of evangelization faced by the Church in Africa today. The articulation of these three concepts may not have been systematic in the preparatory documents; each of them was, however, the object of particular attention. Following the path traced by *Instrumentum laboris*, the *Relatio ante-disceptationem* took in hand and developed further the concept of justice in its biblical dimension. A retrospective study shows that the Synod drew upon a dual conceptualization of justice: the traditional meaning inherited from the Roman tradition, attributed among others to Cicero<sup>2</sup> – “*suum cuique tribuere*” (distributive justice), and the Biblical meaning, where justice is understood as an adherence to the terms of the Covenant, which leads to an understanding of justice as justification.

#### Distributive justice: “To each his due”

In *Instrumentum laboris*, which is essentially a summary of answers coming from different ecclesial communities, the notion of justice is understood in its common meaning: “render to every man his due.” In this document, we find that Joseph “offered to Mary, his wife and to the child in her womb, what was their due: the protection of life.”<sup>2</sup> One sees here an extension of the notion of justice that needs to be articulated. This interpretation of the traditional maxim must be explained however on the basis of African social realities marked by flagrant injustices. Indeed, if the gap between the rich and the poor is deplored all over the world, the African context pricks our conscience even more. In fact non-African companies or the African oligarchies are the ones who, at the expense of the African people, make unscrupulous and enormous profits from mining and exporting the immense resources that are found on African soil. There is therefore a serious problem of “distribution” of wealth, which guarantees that each and every person has the minimum required in order to lead a dignified life. It is true that in the light of the discussions triggered by such an understanding of justice, this “minimum” raises the difficulty<sup>3</sup> of who should take care of this distribution.

In the speeches and documents of the Synod Fathers, governments, as well as the political and economic actors, are held accountable for the unequal

<sup>1</sup>Professor of Sacred Scripture at the Institute of Theology of the Society of Jesus in Abidjan and **Consultor** to the General Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops.

<sup>2</sup>Synod for Africa, *Instrumentum laboris*, n.44.

<sup>3</sup>See Mathieu Ndomba, « De l’injustice comme violence à la justice comme contenu de l’éthique de la paix », *Akwaba* 2 (2009) 55-63.

distribution of goods. Indeed, it is stated in the *Nuntius*: “Whatever the level of liability attributable to foreign interests, we cannot deny a shameful and tragic complicity of local leaders: politicians who betray their nations and put them up for auction, shameless businessmen who gang up with greedy multinationals, African arms dealers and sellers speculating on those small firearms which destroy human lives, and local staff members of international organizations getting paid to spread harmful ideologies with which they themselves disagree.”<sup>4</sup> This accusatory tone is based on the idea of distributive justice. The Synod does justice by casting a positive light on the efforts of some African leaders to uproot this exploitation. Those who make an effort deserve proper recognition for what they do at the political level and at the level of the economy.<sup>5</sup> In fact, the Mécanisme Africain d'Évaluation par les Pairs (MAEP), which assesses itself on its administration of economic and political affairs, receives great attention from the Synod.

In interpreting this phenomenon of globalization, the Synod applies the concept of distributive justice. It notes a situation of injustice vis-à-vis Africa, scorned and rejected, not only when it comes to its ability to function autonomously, but also, and more importantly, in its culture and religious soul. Even if Africa is the “spiritual lung of today’s world today”, this Continent “runs the risk of being infected by the double virus of materialism and religious fanaticism.”<sup>6</sup> In fact, sellers of “magic” solutions of development manipulate the young, thanks to the media, and induce in them the belief that materialistic culture is a sign and proof of development. In such a context, who is to give present and future generations of Africa their due?

These considerations show the need, indeed the necessity, of an operative concept of justice in a horizontal sense. At the same time, such a vision of justice would be inadequate, not in its tangible results, but in attaining the profundity of an authentic justice. As a result, the Synod Fathers underline the importance of adopting as a starting point the Sacred Scriptures so as to take into consideration the transcendent dimension of the concept of justice.

### **Justice-justification in the context of the Covenant**

By referring to the Old Testament, as well as to the New one, the term “justice” is revised to indicate no longer “objects” (physical) to be given, but relations to be restored. This approach vis-à-vis justice, in which the Biblical Covenant becomes the reference point, is developed in *Relatio ante-disceptationem* which rejects “certain secularized forms of the concept of justice,” namely, “the mere’ survival of the fittest,” “a social compromise that avoids greater evils,” “and the benefits of impartiality in the general

<sup>4</sup>Synod for Africa, *Nuntius*, n. 36.

<sup>5</sup>See Synod for Africa, *Instrumentum Laboris*, n. 8; *Nuntius* n. 34.

<sup>6</sup>Synod for Africa, *Nuntius* n. 38.

application of a singular law, without regard for natural justice.”<sup>7</sup> It then notes that the “rise of the ‘spirit of capitalism’ has contributed to alienating the concept of justice from all transcendent roots. For example, the morality of the economy became based on the rational and individualistic. Its main interest was profit, completely separated from the demands of solidarity, of an ‘*ordo amoris*’ and from all religious and moral ties. The whole notion of social justice was thus eliminated, and ‘justice’ was only applied according to the conventions of contracts, negotiated under the law of supply and demand without any restriction on the individualistic enterprise. The State simply maintained public order and contract commitments, but remained totally neutral as to their content.”<sup>8</sup>

To correct this view, the Synod returns to the Word of God. It points out that the history of the story of salvation in the Old Testament has shown the inability of the sons of Israel to rise up to the standards required of them by the Covenant. They were consistently unfaithful to their partner: the Lord God. The latter, however, expressed his loyalty by coming to the aid of his people in their weakness. In spite of everything, He restored their dignity. In other words, He justified his people. As a result, the justice which the Synod echoes is that of the Scriptures, where justice is seen as a gift from God, who thus reveals Himself in an outstanding manner and grants the grace of salvation to those who are without merit.

When “justice” becomes “justification”, the human person is no longer seen as being able to adjust himself to God and others all by himself. The force required must come to him from elsewhere i.e. from God<sup>9</sup> “for it is He who makes the sinner capable of entering into a relationship of communication and covenant with Him, and enables him to do justice.”<sup>10</sup> Once mankind is justified, men and women benefit from the grace that allows them, in turn, to do justice. It appears that the transcendent dimension of justice has its own internal logic, where the person admitted back into the relationship of covenant with God will also become a restorer of relationships and just structures with others.

Justice will become meaningful when it re-establishes the original relationships of a covenant in which all Africans would live as sons and daughters of the same family. It is this kind of justice, greater than that of human beings, that the Church, as the Family of God, feels duty-bound to promote. This concept of justice finds its culmination in reconciliation, of which peace is a sign. It is rooted in the relationship with God and is revealed in the relationship that human beings have amongst themselves.

---

<sup>7</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>8</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>9</sup>Synod for Africa, Proposition 14.

## From distributive justice to justice justification

This extremely rapid study of mine shows that two concepts of justice are at work in the documents of the Synod. The question we must face is the following: "How can distributive justice link up with that of the Covenant?" According to the Synod, "the justice of the Christian *Diakonia* is the right order of things and the satisfaction of legitimate demands within relationships. It is the justice and righteousness of God and of His kingdom (cf. *Mt* 6:33)."<sup>10</sup> Implicitly, then, one can say that to give everyone his due according to the paradigm of distribution, justice has to be broadened by being inscribed "within a wider framework of relationships [that] can account for aspects of what is owed to a person or to a group of people and (which) would not correspond to the structure of distribution."<sup>11</sup>

Meeting the requirements of a relationship seems to me to be a point to emphasize when dealing with the concept of justice, even in its transcendent dimension. One reads for example that a life of communion between humanity and God assumes a character of justice: "humanity giving God his proper due." In Scripture, humanity gives God his just due when man 'listens to the voice of God', 'believes in Him', 'fears Him' and 'worships Him'. Where this is lacking, humanity must show itself "repentant" (*Acts* 17, 30).<sup>12</sup> This spiritual dimension of justice becomes the means by which the Synod foresees the formation of the promoter of justice: helping him to adjust to God and, in doing so, enabling him to adjust to others for "the sheer force of the human person is not enough for justice to take place. It is a gift from God. ... This God who justifies through Christ."

## Conclusion

This brief overview of the concept of 'justice' in the documents of the second Synod of Bishops for Africa has shown that, actually, two concepts are at stake: the traditional concept of justice on the one hand, and the Biblical concept on the other hand. The articulation of the two was an effort visibly present in the *Relatio ante-disceptationem*, The theme of the Synod in all probability explains the direction taken i.e. how practical matters were questioning the conscience of evangelizers. Behind the positions taken, one can detect the dominant concept of justice, which remains that of "giving every man his due." However, the insistence on the transcendent dimension makes that the very condition of distributive justice being possible as well as effective. As I have already noted, its insertion into the sphere of relations

<sup>10</sup>Card. Turkson, *Relatio ante-disceptationem*.

<sup>11</sup>M. Ndomba, « De l'injustice », 60.

<sup>12</sup>Card. Turkson, *Relatio ante-disceptationem*.

broadens even the paradigm of distribution to include non-distributable realities.

Finally, I would like to point out that for pastors dealing with situations as critical as those found in Africa, it is not surprising that the conceptual basis of justice has not been sufficiently developed for it to be operational in the analysis of pastoral situations. When we say that "God justifies the sinner by grace, and man does justice to his offender by forgiving him his sins,"<sup>13</sup> the role of the mediations necessary in the human order of things is still not clarified. Indeed, how can forgiveness between humans beings be considered as a constituent element of that justice which is modeled after God's justice?<sup>14</sup>

Paul Béré SJ  
Côte d'Ivoire

*Original French*  
*Translation by Mark Cachia SJ*

---

<sup>13</sup>Synod for Africa, Proposition 14.

<sup>14</sup>Much work has still to be done, from the philosophical as well as from the theological point of view, in order to render "Justice" operational by conceptualizing it.

## Our Jesuit Faith Today: An Indian Perspective

### Veluswamy Jeyaraj<sup>1</sup> SJ

A faith that defends as well as empowers the poor and dalits,  
A faith that combats injustice and inequality  
But a faith that seeks reconciliation, not retaliation or revenge!

#### Introduction

The biggest irony about India is that it is, on the one hand, the cradle and home to great religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism) and many sacred scriptures (the Upanishads, the Vedas and the Puranas, the Gita and the Adi Granth), home to many sacred rivers and numberless temples and pilgrim centres, home also to newer gurus and newer *matas* (literally mothers, used to signify women who are spiritual leaders). On the other hand, it is also, at the same time, the land of untold inequalities and injustices, of superstitious beliefs and ungodly practices, of the so-called pure people and the impure 'untouchables;' on this holy land are carried out the most noble as well as the most evil deeds, the kindest as well as the deadliest deeds, invoking the names of Gods and Goddesses; both bandits and dacoits, pundits and priests frequent temples and holy places to worship and offer pujas and sacrifices to the deities with equal piety and devotion. This is what baffles every one about India, whether an Indian or an outsider, a tourist or a researcher, a missionary or a filmmaker.

Such a context of ironies and complexities, of extraordinary faiths and religiosities, is where we, the Jesuits, are missioned to work for, and promote, justice, reconciliation, peace and love of the Kingdom of God preached by Jesus. In this article I venture to share what justice means to millions of people in India, and would like to suggest some ways and means that I see as essential in carrying out and carrying forward our well defined mission - i.e. the 'service of faith and promotion of justice' in the multi religious and multi cultural milieus of India or South Asia.

#### Inequality and Injustice Inherent in the Social-Caste System

In India the question of justice and equal rights/opportunities is not an occasional issue that crops up from time to time, here and there. Rather, it is, for millions of dalits, tribals, and the so-called backward caste people across India, an every day, daunting struggle to go through, a shameful and humiliating experience to suffer silently, and even, many times, a matter of doing or dying. This is what life is all about for as many as 20 per cent of

<sup>1</sup>Fr. Veluswamy Jeyaraj SJ is the Novice Master of the Hazaribag Province [Editor's note].

India's population – the dalits, tribals, other backward castes. For these unfortunate people justice remains an ever elusive, empty promise and injustice their daily plight. This is because the Indian caste system denies justice, dignity and human rights from cradle to grave to the dalits or the 'untouchables.' For those who know the hard truth about the Indian social-religious-political context, the real (rural) India is through and through caste-ridden, with the people caught up in a vicious, multi layered caste maze.

History tells us that systems of slavery and slave trade have had their success stories in the past. Apartheid too had its days of gains and glories, but when the time came for them to go, slavery and apartheid just went. They both are now pages in history. Indian casteism, by contrast, refuses to depart and continues to claim newer and newer victims day after day, month after month, without the slightest sign that it is on its way out. In this it is very unlike slavery and apartheid.

### **God of Justice: Where are you?**

Even a cursory study reveals the following truth about India:

- 1 crime is committed against a Dalit every 18 minutes
- 27 atrocities against Dalits every day
- 13 Dalits are murdered every week
- 5 Dalit's homes or possessions are burnt every week
- 6 Dalits are kidnapped or abducted every week
- 3 Dalit women are raped every day

A random sampling of headlines in mainstream Indian newspapers tells their story: "Dalit boy beaten to death for plucking flowers"; "7 year dalit girl burnt to death in front of her mother for walking through an upper caste street"; "Dalit tortured by cops for three days"; "Dalit 'witch' paraded naked in Bihar"; "Dalit killed in lock-up at Kurnool"; "7 Dalits burnt alive in caste clash"; "Five Dalits lynched in Haryana"; "Dalit woman gang-raped, paraded naked"; "Police egged on mob to lynch Dalits."

These are but newspaper headlines to run through and forget about for most people. These are, again, a few more cases to register or more often ignore for the custodians of law and order. But for the 250 million dalits, tribals and poor people, these are their daily Calvary stories.

Prime Minister Sri Manmohan Singh himself described "untouchability" as a "blot on humanity", adding, "even after 60 years of constitutional and legal protection and state support, there is still social discrimination against Dalits in many parts of our country."

"Dalits are not allowed to drink from the same wells, attend the same temples, wear shoes in the presence of an upper caste, or drink from the same

cups in tea stalls," said Smita Narula, a senior researcher with Human Rights Watch, and author of *Broken People: Caste Violence Against India's "Untouchables."* Human Rights Watch is a worldwide activist organization based in New York.

### **An Unjust Social (caste) System: Its Victims and Its Victors**

It happened in 1970 in my own village, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. I was in class V then. It was a summer morning in the month of May. I had gone home for vacation from St. Joseph's Home for Boys, a Catholic boarding, situated in the premises of St. Aloysius Church at Dharapuram town, 6 km away from our typically Hindu village. It was roughly 7 in the morning. I was having breakfast at home. Just then I heard some loud and very quick foot steps running down the street and saw many people, including children running with much excitement, all in one direction towards some particular house or spot. I could sense some thing terrible or untoward had happened.

I leapt out of the house at once, leaving my breakfast half finished. I had no time even to tell my mother where I was rushing! The next moment I was part of the excited, anger-charged village crowd gathering at one of the village wells exclusively reserved for the use of the caste Hindus. A terrible but daring crime had been committed in the early hours of that summer morning by an elderly untouchable dalit woman. She had dared to draw water from the well reserved only for the high caste Hindus and forbidden to all the untouchable sub-castes in the village. The untouchables could use the water from that well, provided some one of the caste Hindus drew the water with his or her own pail and, holding that bucket sufficiently high for it not to touch that of the dalits, poured it into the pots of the untouchables.

The crowd was furious and all too eager and ready to join hands in punishing the woman for this unpardonable crime. Some shouted, 'Tie her up with the same rope she used to draw the water'. Some others said, 'Put a garland of torn slippers around her neck and parade her around the village on a donkey.' Some others raised their voice, 'How daring she has become to commit such an act.' Still others commented, 'No such thing has ever happened in our village.' Still some others worried saying, 'we cannot drink of this well unless it is completely emptied and a purification ritual performed by the village pandit (ironically my own uncle was the village priest). The old wretch has polluted our well.'

Though only 9 years of age, I was happy over what that courageous woman had done that morning and felt sorry for what was going to happen to her. I was too young to say anything. I must have been silently praying for that old woman.

Soon the angry and aggressive voices fell silent and calm. Some sensible people arrived at the well and the mood and tide began to change. Some educated person warned the crowd, 'She is a Christian now – a Protestant convert. Tomorrow is Sunday and some Christians will come here to pray in her house.' Another man added, 'The law would not stand as a mute witness and watch if we do any harm to this woman.' The crowd began to come to its senses, realising that the law was on the side of this untouchable woman who had challenged one of centuries old unjust caste practices of the village life.

### **His Is The Model, Message and Mission For Justice**

It is the message as well as the mission Jesus gives every follower of his to be an agent for establishing the Kingdom of God here on earth. Jesus called the twelve apostles, many more disciples who opted to follow Jesus in his new and radical way of living, and even the ordinary people who flocked to hear him narrate stories and parables through which he taught them, turning them into active and effective agents of the Kingdom of God *vis a vis* other earthly kingdoms.

This mission to establish God's Kingdom in our midst is upon the shoulder of every Christian today, as it is our firm belief that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb 13/8). Hence the mission of Jesus is ever beckoning and urging us:

*The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the free those who are oppressed (Lk 5).*

George Soares-Prabhu describes in a candid way the dynamic process in which the Kingdom of God enters and takes root in human society:

*When the revelation of God's love (the Kingdom) meets its appropriate response in mans' trusting acceptance of this love (repentance), there begins a mighty movement of personal and societal liberation which sweeps through human history. The movement brings freedom inasmuch it liberates each individual from the inadequacies and obsessions that shackle him. ...It summons us to a ceaseless struggle against the demonic structures of unfreedom (psychological and sociological) erected by mammon; and to a ceaseless creativity that will produce in every age new blueprints for a society ever more consonant with the Gospel vision of man.<sup>2</sup>*

Michaelraj Lourdu Ratinam of Madurai Province in his inspiring sharing about being part of an insertion community among the dalits – the broken people – in the state of Tamil Nadu, South India, has this simple liberative-pedagogy to share with the readers in the article, 'Taking Sides with the Poor. An Experience of Insertion Communities in Madurai Province':

<sup>2</sup>George Soares-Prabhu, 'The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society,' D. S. Amalorpavadass (ed), *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, Bangalore: NBCLC, 1981, pp. 600 ff.

*I feel that promotion of justice starts from taking sides with the poor as Jesus did. Taking sides to me means a close friendship with the poor. Such a friendship is realized only in our availability to the poor. We have our own schedules and timetables. The poor may need us at any moment because their troubles shoot from anywhere and at any time. This availability is very essential to creating the relationships, friendships and confidence so crucial for a meaningful ministry.<sup>3</sup>*

### **Our Mission for Others is Our Mission With Others Today**

That 'Jesuits are men for others and with others' may have seemed too simple, slogan-like a definition when Fr. Kolvenbach, former General of the Society of Jesus, used it to define the identity and the mission of the Jesuits in the multi-religious and globalised world of today. But a close and careful look at this statement tells us that it is the most simple and, at the same time, very insightful definition of our Jesuit identity and mission for our times. It crystallizes for us what our mission is and how our mission needs to be carried out especially in today's multi-cultural and religious world. Our mission therefore has to be necessarily planned and carried out in collaboration with people of other faiths and ideologies, since justice, reconciliation and peace are a common cause for all to come together for.

Reflecting on what the Jesuit Mission Today should be in an Indian and Asian context, Fr. M. Amaladoss states:

*Our task in India will focus on our service for the liberation of Dalits, Tribals, women and nature. Being a small minority (just 2.3 per cent), we Christians cannot bring about any social transformation unless we collaborate with people of good will of all religions and ideologies. As a matter of fact, our contemporary experience is one of inter-religious conflict. Religious fundamentalism and communalism are vitiating relations between people and leading to violence. For this reason, even before promoting justice, we will have to engage in conflict resolution and reconciliation.<sup>4</sup>*

### **Where Faiths Can Meet, Not Part**

One positive, constructive step towards promoting among all religious communities a collaborative approach to combat the many unjust social systems and practices rampant across communities in the multi-religious, pluri-cultural Indian context could be to cull out and highlight before the followers of all faiths those scriptural texts and verses found in all religious scriptures. For these sacred verses universally and without bias affirm and uphold human dignity and rights of all persons. In the Indian context in particular, we find enshrined in the various sacred scriptures the Golden Rule

<sup>3</sup>Michaelraj Lourdu Ratnam, 'Taking Sides with the Poor. An Experience of Insertion Communities in Madurai Province', *Promotio Iustitiae* 100 (2008/3), pp 102 ff.

<sup>4</sup>Amaladoss Michael, 'Faith and Justice in a Postmodern World,' *Promotio Iustitiae* 100 (2008/3), pp 34 ff.

of the Gospel, - "Do to others as you would have them do to you" (Lk 6:13) -, which can serve as a critique as well as a solid edifice on which justice, reconciliation and peace could be established.

### **Indian Religious Scriptures and Human Dignity**

Here below are injunctions from other religious scriptures:

**Hinduism:** *"This is the sum of Dharma [duty]: Do naught unto others which would cause you pain if done to you."* Mahabharata, 5:1517.

**Islam:** *"None of you [truly] believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."* Number 13 of Imam "Al-Nawawi's Forty Hadiths.

**Sufism:** *"The basis of Sufism is consideration of the hearts and feelings of others. If you haven't the will to gladden someone's heart, then at least beware lest you hurt someone's heart, for on our path, no sin exists but this."* Dr. Javad Nurbakhsh, Master of the Nimatullahi Sufi Order.

**Janism:** *"In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self."* Lord Mahavira, 24th Tirthankara  
*"A man should wander about treating all creatures as he himself would be treated."* Suttrakritanga 1.11.33

**Buddhism:** *"A state that is not pleasing or delightful to me, how could I inflict that upon another?"* Samyutta Nikaya v. 353  
*"Hurt not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful."* Udana-Varga 5:18

**Sikhism:** *"Don't create enmity with anyone as God is within everyone."* Guru Arjan Devji 259.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion it must be stated that the strongest, most systematic antidote to all injustices sanctioned and perpetrated by the caste system has come in the form of the Constitution of India, adopted on November 26, 1949. India's Constitution guarantees the right of all its citizens to justice, liberty, equality, and dignity. It has been a long and arduous journey from ancient caste distinctions based on Hindu philosophy and religious traditions to the constitutional pledge of a democratic government with equality, dignity, and justice for all human beings.

It is a fact, though ironical, that the law of the land or the Constitution has succeeded in guaranteeing and ensuring justice and equality to thousands of its citizens as well as many marginalized groups where the glorified religions

have miserably failed. The fact that India, as a democratic, republic, socialist and secular nation, has seen in her 60 years of existence two of her dalit sons rise to the two top offices in the country, K.R.Narayan as President of India and K.G. Balakrishnan as Chief Justice of India, makes us all hopeful that a truly and fully just and egalitarian society will come about in our midst.<sup>5</sup>

Veluswamy Jeyara SJ  
India

---

<sup>5</sup>Katju Markandey, "Looking back on the Caste System," in *The Hindu*, January 8, 2010.

# ECONOMIC CRISIS

## ECONOMIC CRISIS: DRONGEN MEETING

### Drongen – Convergences and Divergences

Frank Turner<sup>1</sup> SJ

**W**e were nineteen participants at Drongen in November 2009, most but not all Jesuits, from a range of intellectual fields and from several countries within Europe and beyond. Our meeting followed a smaller seminar in Brussels in April, 2009.<sup>2</sup> In Drongen we continued our reflection on the international financial and economic crisis and on the Church's response to it, including Pope Benedict's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*: our discussion of the encyclical is reported elsewhere in this issue of *Promotio*.

One stimulating challenge of inter-disciplinary meetings is to step outside our own mental 'comfort zones' so as really to listen to other perspectives. There were agreements and disagreements – or, more accurately, convergences and divergences: differences of perspective and of emphasis about the comparative weight to be given to various factors.

#### The Crisis

We agreed, at least, on the massive complexity of the crisis. It was, in part, this very complexity of the international economic and financial order that brought it about. If we recall what triggered the crisis (without being its ultimate cause), the debacle of US 'sub-prime mortgages', it is easy to think that many thousands of householders were tragically rash in treating their most important single asset as an investment that would always rise in value, and therefore count as solid security against excessive consumer borrowing. But what constituted the international crisis was that some of the world's most expert economic actors (for example, major international banks), almost the lords of the market, also failed to understand. Thousands of these unsafe mortgages, bundled together, were magically deemed safe. Either the system was simply taken for granted (working at a level beyond people's practical understanding) or the euphoric momentum of growth dulled all critical faculties. Put like this, it is not complexity that is striking, but blindness. But the complexity derives from the bewildering speed of capital movements,

---

<sup>1</sup>Frank Turner is the Director of the Jesuit European Office (JEO), Brussels. The Drongen meeting was hosted by the JEO (Editor's Note).

<sup>2</sup>This event was reported in *Promotio Iustitiae* 101 (2009/1): cf.

[http://www.sjweb.info/documents/sjs/pj/docs\\_pdf/PJ101ENG.pdf](http://www.sjweb.info/documents/sjs/pj/docs_pdf/PJ101ENG.pdf)

coupled with the astronomical sums involved, and the intricacy of the interlocking macro-financial systems.

A more hopeful inference from this complexity interested us: if the situation is so complex as to be beyond calculation, then pragmatism, the cool weighing of consequences is not feasible precisely because consequences can rarely be confidently predicted. Therefore we are driven back to principle. The question remains, though: which principle? One principle, which has dominated international economic life since the 1980s, and was articulated famously by the neo-liberal economist Friedrich Hayek, is that of 'faith in the free market': faith that the short-term damage manifestly inflicted by market trends (e.g. on those who lost their homes in the USA) must be assumed to count for little in comparison with the certitude of the market's long-term beneficence. But why should anyone make this act of faith? Are there not better things to trust in? We strongly converged on the contrary principle: a clear acceptance of the human responsibility of governing the market in the name of social justice and the common good.

We saw two principal dimensions of the crisis: the systemic and the moral-psycho-social.

The underlying systemic problem (the 'root cause' of the crisis) seems to combine two factors:

- the economic system driven by the dynamic of ever more rapid growth. This does not tolerate any serious brake on growth. Growth causes its own problems; but stagnation causes nothing less than a crisis.
- the disjunction between the global nature of market capitalism and the predominantly national mechanisms – such as tax systems – for controlling it. Rules setting parameters to the market differ in each country, and supra-national bodies find it difficult to gain assent for their proposals from national governments. If we do not understand the global system we fall back on what we feel we understand – that level of government which has some acknowledged authority to act, the national state. In so doing, we compound the problem, since we evade the essential need to devise a governance system that matches the scale of the economic and financial reality. We also conveniently ignore the reality that many countries suffering the impact of globalisation most harshly lack the capacity to regulate it

International markets, we therefore agreed, cannot be oriented towards the common good without some form of global authority (which is not to propose a single form of 'global government').

Within this shared view, there were divergences. Our participants represented two perspectives on markets: broadly positive or broadly

suspicious, though in both cases, nuanced. Can markets serve the common good? 'Yes', says the positive view – as long as they assure fair exchange, stability, impersonal efficiency. Markets are essential since money is a practical way of assigning value. However, they also relate to other social and political systems. In particular, this virtue of the market presupposes a political framework that can ensure equity and take care of failures. (This 'moderate pro-market' position is therefore markedly different from the theory held by Hayek, which attributes virtue to the market itself and holds that the 'political framework' is the beginning of 'the road to tyranny.') 'Yes' says the positive view, secondly, since the suppression of markets has historically proved to be catastrophic, ending in the centralised allocation of production according to some non-market principle, and one ends with warehouses full of unwanted shoes, and factories turned uncompetitive and defunct because they were incapable of modernisation. Even labour is a market – up to a point. If you wish to rule out unemployment, you must ultimately make the state an employer.

In the more sceptical view, markets (while being essential within strict boundaries) are 'impersonal' in the worst sense. They have no regard for people or for ecology. They do not distinguish between the luxuries of the rich and the urgent needs of the poor – except by an abstract, purely monetary index. Markets work well for some commodities, in some countries and conditions: but the problems begin when market theory is applied rigidly to human elements such as labour, to the basic necessities of life (food and water, medical care) or to intrinsically limited resources such as land. Crucially, the principle that transcends 'rigidity' cannot derive from the market itself.

These differing assessments converged to a position that, hardly surprisingly, echoes that of mainstream Catholic social teaching. Markets are irreplaceable – but precisely in their place, subordinate to the political order, which can never be impersonal if oriented to the common good and to social justice. Markets presume that there exists below them a culture of honesty and mutual concern (as Adam Smith himself thought). But neo-liberalism splits the function of the market from this necessary guarantee of its health – a responsible commitment to the public good, even dismissing it in some cases as economically irrational. 'Markets need a reflection on themselves', as was said in Drogen.

At the level of social morality and social psychology, it is hard to overlook the element of greed in the development of the crisis: the search not only for reasonable profit as the legitimate reward of the provision of goods and services, but for maximum profit. To allow profit margins to fall counts as entrepreneurial failure. In 2009, moral opprobrium quickly attached itself to excessive executive bonuses, but that distasteful phenomenon is part of

capitalist culture, since the signifiers of worth are precisely profit and growth. Greed as one of the classic 'seven deadly sins' is defined precisely by excess. Can liberal capitalism accept the concept of excess?

But fear (a demoralising form of consciousness that is oddly not counted among the seven deadly sins) also played its part. If greed drives the growth phase of an economic bubble, fear drives the overreaction. Excessive growth is not reversed gently, by restraint or even by moderate austerity. Instead, the bubble 'bursts' – instantly seems to have been an illusion. The mass selling of shares drives the price down so rapidly that it does not restore equilibrium, but endangers the entire previously overvalued company. Pessimism is as contagious, and perhaps as irrational, as optimism: both irrationalities project some current trend indefinitely, as if the trend were irreversible and determined.

### Responses to the crisis

We distinguished three different levels of an ecclesial response. I proceed from the broader and more general to the particular.

There is naturally the need to respond theologically. *Caritas in Veritate* is one such authoritative response, setting out a comprehensive Christian anthropology rooted in Scripture and doctrine, and proposing its central elements (inter-personality, transcendence, the gift-nature of life, and the fullness of human freedom) to all, not only to Christians, as the necessary foundation to meet the crisis. Another response is that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in a speech given to the UK Trades Union Congress in November 2009, 'Human Well-Being and Economic Decision-Making'. He adopted a more indirect method than Pope Benedict: reflecting first on the conditions of a fully human economy that 'would go on nourishing proper three-dimensional human beings – people whose family bonds, imaginative lives and capacity for mutual understanding and sympathy were regarded as every bit as important as their material prosperity'; then deepening his reflection to root it in Christian faith (as, he noted, his secular audience would expect!).

Secondly, we identified a manner of response through Ignatian spirituality. Here it is not easy to be specific, since we were embarking on what will be a long journey of exploration. One participant noted that the British research institute the *New Economics Foundation*, in no way a 'religious' organisation, described the present situation as an ecological and spiritual, not only an economic, crisis. So we asked ourselves what spiritual resources might nourish our response. Two were identified, one of which evokes the earlier discussion of 'greed.'

Ignatian discernment is rooted in the Spirit-led capacity to sift, reflect on and deepen the quality of our feeling (for example, through the experiences of 'consolation' and 'desolation'), so that we are not governed by compulsions or preferences, but by those authentic desires of the heart that may be far from self-evident. The task is not to 'solve the crisis', but to find an authentic path of living through it, seeking to transform our human and natural environment only as our desires are purified – rather than, for example, assuming that we ourselves need not change but that some group of experts can discover a technical fix. Secondly, when livelihoods (and entire economies) are at stake and powerful interests are to be defended, discussions are often far from constructive and may be remarkably free from self-questioning. The Ignatian procedure is (at its best) a mind-set rather than a methodology, seeking to avoid a style of debate that only hardens people in their prior positions.

Thirdly, we began by questioning the specific purpose of our own meeting. There was no clear 'end-product' – except articles such as this, and a continuing process that will feed, for some of us, into a 2010 conference of Jesuit universities in Mexico and, for most of us, into subsequent discussion with other partners. Perhaps a sustained collective reflection is virtually its own justification – since the crisis has arisen not least because of economic models accepted without reflection or critical judgement. The Jesuits, someone noted, even today manage 200 universities and 165 departments of economics – some of which may still teach the theories that are now deeply in question – as well as being committed to many forms of direct service. Careful reflection is neither a luxury nor a distraction, so long as we are willing to allow the reflection to affect our lives.

On the other hand, there was a fair degree of consensus about certain prudent or essential political measures, outlined below:

- The market should be allowed to function – but whenever we can, we should improve the terms of its functioning. The problems are often those of asymmetric information (as when the greengrocer, but not the customer, knows which are the bad apples) – a form of unfairness that can and must be tackled.
- The systemic risk to markets can be limited by enhancing transparency. In terms of global governance, we need to encourage supervision by bodies such as the UN, in which all nations in principle have a voice, rather than the G8 or even the G20. One specific need is to control tax havens. We have progressively deregulated when what we need is better regulation. To coordinate corporate taxation better could free many resources for development.
- If the 'Right to Development' is indeed a right then the rich countries have to move in the direction of sharing with the developing world. Some

variant of the Tobin Tax would both help Northern governments recover some of the huge deficits they have incurred by bailing out financial institutions, and help finance the urgent development of the South.<sup>3</sup> 'The instruments are there.'

Finally, a crucial point that (simply because we all agreed on it) was relatively little debated and therefore is under-represented in this report. The economic and financial crisis must never be considered in isolation from either the still more momentous ecological crisis, or the blatant realities of world poverty and inequality. In fact we believe the essential axis for any authentic response is that between the defence of the environment and the well being of the world's poor. If growth is sought as a remedy to this crisis it must be sustainable, and it must privilege those who urgently need growth in order to emerge from serious poverty. The uncontrolled growth that provides extra luxury for the already satiated affluent is a threat to humanity and to the earth.

Frank Turner SJ  
OCIPE  
Belgium

---

<sup>3</sup>The Tobin Tax on foreign currency transactions would rein in the extraordinary and unaccountable freedom of macro-finance - so discouraging the speculative currency flows that have caused such disruption to world markets. Its inventor died in 2002, and the tax has been proposed in several variant forms since then.

## Report on the Drongen discussion<sup>1</sup>

### William Ryan SJ

#### My own views on the Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*

Pope Benedict's *Caritas in Veritate* is a new experience in Catholic social teaching. It is a kind of *summa* of the Church's 'social magisterium.' As Thomas Aquinas brought together material from many strands of the theological thought of his day, including its ventures into Greek, Arab and Jewish sources, so Benedict has brought themes from pro-life work, social justice, ecology and more into a single spiritual and theological framework. In this transcendent vision, the dynamism of divine love penetrates all interrelationships in creation, including those in which humans are immersed. A contemplative reading of this teaching unlocks more of its value than can be reached by intellectual analysis alone. Benedict himself suggests that a conversion from our present individualist, utilitarian culture is required to enter into this holistic vision.

Four years in the making, *Caritas in Veritate* was timed for the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Populorum Progressio* (issued in 1967). Benedict uses the 1967 letter as his principal reference, updates it and adopts much of its inspiration. In fact, he sees *Populorum Progressio* as today's *Rerum Novarum*, worthy of celebration on a regular basis.

Like other recent social encyclicals, *Caritas* is addressed to Catholics but also to all persons of good will. A novel fact about the text: it was issued first in vernacular languages – though, unfortunately, not in inclusive language. Its English title is *Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*. Indeed, the Pope's basic question is 'What does it mean to be fully human, and how can the structures of public and communal life assist people in reaching their full human stature?'

Benedict sees progress towards integral human development presently endangered by some aspects of globalization. As he writes,

*"The risk of our time is that the de facto interdependence of people and nations is not matched by ethical interaction of consciences and minds that would give rise to truly human development. Only in charity/love illumined by the light of reason and faith is it possible to pursue development goals that possess a more humane and humanizing value."*

And again he states,

---

<sup>1</sup>The article is a summary of my presentation on *Caritas in Veritate*, at the Drongen Meeting. It also contains the highlights of Frank Turner's presentation on the same topic, a short summary of two other papers presented at the meeting and concludes with a few comments on the group discussion.

*“Without truth, without trust and love for what is true there is no social conscience and responsibility, and social action ends up serving private interests and the logic of power, resulting in social fragmentation, especially in a globalized society at difficult times like the present.”*

Personally, I am attracted to Benedict’s theology because it echoes the profound synthesis of Gerard Gilleman SJ, which I absorbed as a student at Leuven in the 1950s, when I translated into English his classic – *Le Primat de La Charite en Theologie Morale*. Following Thomas, Gilleman saw charity (love) as the form, the core, the soul, the basic dynamic force in human action. Love is mediated by other virtues and is inseparable from justice. In recent years there has been much discussion of justice as inseparable from faith. Benedict takes these links as foundational: love is inseparable from justice and vice versa, and both grow in the light of faith in dialogue with reason.

Benedict’s theological focus here is on the possibilities of divine love, through human conversion, opening pathways for integral human development for all – and meeting ongoing resistance from the self-destructive human drive rooted in original sin. Here is Benedict’s topical sentence:

*“Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the primary driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love –caritas – is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth.”*

All persons, in this vision, have a vocation to pursue integral human development for themselves and all others in all their relationships, both private and public, personal and institutional and structural. The Trinity image and drive are projected onto the whole of creation including every human society. I see two central ideas or forces at work here that mark the entire document.

The first is a vision of faith: Divine Love – that is God – sustains all creation. Every human heart is capable of receiving the flame of divine love. A person touched by this flame, and enlightened by the knowledge of faith and reason in dialogue, is made ready to act with wisdom in the world which is the home of the human family. Loving action is mediated through the virtues as well as through human cultures, institutions and structures; and in this way Divine Love is at work shaping and bringing about a civilization of love through a process of integral human development. However imperfectly, this movement already prefigures the promised new heaven and new earth.

Benedict gives not merely a list of suggestions to make the world a better place. His theological understanding of integral human development fuses preaching the Gospel with doing social justice. He breaks the polarity between

right and left, spirituality and justice, human and natural ecologies. He rejects all reductionist thinking that leads to relativism. Divine charity or love is the ultimate driving force in all this historic movement of integral human development. The presence or absence of such development becomes the criterion or measurement of the current state of civilization. And, of course, the ultimate model of integral human development is Christ Himself. One could suggest that Benedict is like a symphony concert conductor directing a masterpiece wherein the recurring melody is "ALL YOU NEED IS LOVE!" But for Benedict such love has to be enlightened and guided by the truth of faith and reason – else it risks degeneration into sentimentality.

The second core idea is the essential role played by "giftedness" or self-giving in creating a fraternal society or civilization. Free self-giving is our human response to divine love. It includes all attitudes and actions not covered by contractual or strict justice. It reaches beyond and above our obligations to the state and narrow self-interest. The "gift dimension" often goes unrecognized in our prevalent consumerist and utilitarian view of life. It includes friendship, family and religious life, and all the love and friendship found in civil society – yes, even in the economy and in politics. It is the antithesis of the present drive to monetize or put a price on everything in life. A fully monetized society would surely crumble without trust and love. Even markets cannot function where there is no trust, cannot thrive in the total absence of spontaneity and friendship. Benedict believes that the neglect of gratuity, of a generous readiness to give for the good of others, is a root cause of the current economic crisis. He contends further that

*"the great challenge before us [in the unfolding of globalization] is not only the need for the principles of social ethics, like transparency, honesty, and responsibility, but also that in commercial relationships the logic of gift as the expression of fraternity can and must find its place within normal economic activity."*

These two dynamic forces – love, fraternity or friendship and giftedness – transcend particular cultures. Thus his criterion for evaluating society, even civilization, is to ask to what degree is it fostering integral human development by its esteem for fraternity/friendship and for "the principle of gratuitousness".

### **Here are a few other important points made by Benedict.**

He urges the promotion of stakeholder enterprises wherein all the agents of production have a voice and responsibility – not only the investors. He sees the need for effective trade unions and insists that corporations must take more social responsibility. He opens new space for civil society and "civil" markets wherein enterprises such as cooperatives, whether or not they include

profit among their goals, have more primary goals of social and human welfare. And he sees the need for market regulation and of a global authority with “teeth” to regulate international economy, finances, health, trade, migration, etc.

Benedict does not make simple condemnatory statements. He measures all institutions, public or private, by their effectiveness in supporting integral human development. Based on this standard, he judges that our present day capitalist system- he calls it the free market system - is marked by grave deviations and failures and needs fundamental re-thinking, especially at the international level.

The Pope recognizes the good that globalization has wrought. He agrees that it has lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty; but he also sees the glaring scandal of the steadily widening gap between rich and poor - with most of the new wealth going to the rich. He is harsh on the greed and selfishness of financiers - those who make huge profits on money and credit rather than on economic production; and he deplores the lack of adequate supervision of banking and investment houses.

Benedict sees human and natural ecology as inseparable; whatever damage is done to one - is done also to the other. Every violation of solidarity and civic friendship harms the environment, just as every instance of environmental deterioration upsets relations in society. In a global economy, ecology can no longer be taken as an independent variable, as economists are wont to do. It is a fundamental dimension of all authentic development.

In introducing pro life issues as an integral dimension of social teaching, Benedict does not limit himself to the issue of abortion. For him pro life means being pro integral human development, especially given the connections between poverty and infant mortality. He sees that the only way to promote the true development of people is to provide a culture in which every human life is welcomed and valued.

The pope saves his harshest critique for the present and probable abuses of technology. He fears that the era of ideologies will give way to technologism - whatever is possible is true - with ethics running after technological innovation, rather than guiding it. He is especially worried about biotechnicians who would attempt to recreate humans in their own image by genetic manipulation. Similarly, powerful agents tend to use the media to impose cultural models that serve their own ideological and political agendas. We should resist using technology to avoid personal and social responsibility. We need a spiritual dimension and ‘new eyes’ and a new heart, capable of rising above a materialistic vision of human events, capable of glimpsing the “beyond’ that technology cannot reach.

And remember – God is the dynamic power of love that can transform all these relationships. Whether micro or macro, they are ultimately shaped and directed by God’s love. The corollary is clear: the institutional path for charity, says Benedict, is no less excellent than the one that encounters the neighbour directly outside of the institutional mediations of political life. And these mediations can themselves also prefigure the ultimate future, the promised new heaven and new earth.

In this encyclical and elsewhere, Benedict rejects an overly narrow concept of reason that leads to reductionist knowledge. He opts for a broader concept of reason in constant dialogue with faith for their mutual benefit. He looks to interdisciplinary approaches to support his own approach. Recall that for him it is reason and faith that enlighten the fire of divine love in humans. He sees that, because of its interdisciplinary dimensions, social teaching can have a function of extraordinary effectiveness in this process. It allows faith, theology, metaphysics and science to come together for a deeper vision of the possibilities of civilization.

### **Frank Turner’s comments on the Encyclical**

Frank Turner’s paper is entitled ‘*Caritas in Veritate* and its Use in the Secular Public Space.’ Though he gives us an excellent summary and analysis of the encyclical, his primary goal is to comment on its value and relevance for Christians working for international justice in a secular context –specifically OCIPE in the European Union.

Frank’s analysis is more systematic than my own but there are really only two important differences: he does not give Benedict’s integrating vision of the dynamic power of divine love and self-giving the primary significance I give it for understanding the whole document; and he thinks that its Christian anthropology and magisterial style do not leave room for debate using critical reason in the public secular forum – at least in the European context. For him the authority issue of *Caritas* weakens its practical usefulness except for Christians. And he prefers the gentle beauty of the English expression used by the Archbishop of Canterbury in reflecting on the economic crisis to the demanding dense articulation of Benedict.

### **Raul Gonzalez and Gaël Giraud’s papers**

The papers prepared for the conference by the economists Raul Gonzales Fabre and Gaël Giraud were prepared as a comment on the financial crisis, independently of *Caritas in Veritate*, and so do not engage faith or religion directly. I limit my remarks on them since their papers were not discussed in any detail but rather served as stimulus for our general discussion. Gonzalez looks to prudence and ethical rules to guide dialogue among professionals. I

find his analysis somewhat detached and benign especially in regard to the dominant role played by multinational corporations including banks. The Giraud paper is a précis of a book entitled *Twenty Propositions for the Reform of Capitalism*. The analysis here is tougher and more “iconoclastic” than that of Gonzales. It aims at getting specialists and non-specialists, that is, citizens of good will, to work together collectively to agree on rules and bylaws for living with others. Neither questions fundamentally the validity of market capitalism if properly regulated and guided by government. Nor do they question whether good will and rational ethics are sufficient to move people to action today.

### **A few notes on the group discussion**

We were well served in our general discussion by the economists who were present. All saw the need for markets in a democracy; however, all conceded that capital and markets have to be regulated in various degrees. There were several good ideas on how to improve global financial structures, with less attention paid to real market concerns such as unemployment. Ecology received serious attention, but did not seem to most to be the urgent global crisis for the planet that I personally perceive. And I found the group over-confident that a better system of rules and regulations could bring about the changes we need in the economic system. Likewise, Europeans seemed confident that governments could effectively control huge corporations including banks. There was general agreement that an isolated human rights approach was insufficient. And there was heavy disillusionment with democracy as presently experienced in most of the world – with the suggestion that political capacity in complex situations may be lacking even more than political will. There was also fascination at what China has been able to achieve under very difficult circumstances in recent decades.

Most of the discussion on *Caritas* was taken up not with the message of the document but rather with the pragmatic question of whether it will be useful for Jesuit ministry in social justice. Clearly, some, if not most, would have preferred a more analytic statement more directly focussed on the financial and economic crisis than on the human person. Here are a few of the concerns raised. Will this theological top-down approach weaken the role of the poor as agents of their own development? Given his earlier bias against liberation theology, has Benedict here weakened the preferential option for the poor and the idea of social and institutional sin? This was hotly contested. Will the introduction of pro life issues under the umbrella of social teaching divide social activists?

A more serious concern was that introducing theological language such as “truth” may exaggerate the authority of social teaching and open it to a new

dogmatism. And will theological discourse on dogma and doctrine take the place of personal experience and the evolution of consciences?

Nevertheless, there was a strong sentiment that spirituality has to play a bigger role in our global social ministry – for example, in reading the signs of the times with a desolation/ consolation approach, as suggested by Jacques Haers.

### **Final Personal Reflections**

I suspect that Benedict and his critics are both wrestling with the same troubling problem of how religion and/or the church can effectively engage secular culture and society in today's world. Or more concretely: how do we integrate our knowledge from faith with our knowledge from reason – our theology with social sciences? For example, Catholic economists first do analysis and only afterwards ask the faith and ethics questions. But Benedict says God's love and giftedness are present and its influence must be recognized consciously right from the very beginning and throughout the whole process. I fear our general tendency is to accept, in practice, the false premise that scientific and secular knowledge is objective, neutral and value-free. Such an evaluation makes us hesitant to assert our religious identity, beliefs and convictions in academic and public discourse. And so, as believers, we always seem left on the defensive in our dialogue with secular culture. Perhaps we can learn from the genuine progress made in recent decades in the dialogue and sharing between religions and ecological scientists, where believers are now often welcomed as equal partners in the discourse.

Only mentioned but not discussed is Benedict's disconcerting assertion that "a humanism that excludes God is not a human humanism." And yet he urges us to work with all people to build up a more just and human society – and spiritually we know that no one knows what the Spirit is doing in another's heart.

With regard to secularity, we can take some comfort from the Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor's detailed study, *The Secular Age*. Taylor establishes that only a small minority at either end of the continuum are either totally secular/ atheist or totally fundamentalist. In other words, the great majority of humans are not fully closed to the transcendent in some form. And so he holds that with patience we can pursue genuine dialogue with 'secularists' and fundamentalists provided we accept that there is very likely something deep and powerful animating them, something that makes sense of their lives and leaves them open to the possibility of friendship across barriers of difference in religious and atheistic perspectives. He is convinced that something new and creative can happen here if we really give ourselves to this type of honest dialogue. It will require that we grasp fully what Taylor calls

the “modern social imagination” or complex background of our western culture and remain ever open to what the Spirit may be already working in the other and in our dialogue itself. This will also prove necessary in our dialogue with Chinese culture. This in all likelihood will require a personal conversion—but that is after all what Benedict tells us is required for us to understand his *Caritas in Veritate*! Perhaps we could begin by holding a seminar between theologians and economists to study carefully their different approaches and methodologies and how they might be integrated in sound holistic prudential judgements, weighing wisely the data from both disciplines in the light of both faith and reason, including options for the poor and the earth. And as for sharing the riches of *Caritas* widely, I know of no better way to proceed than by beginning with small groups committed to personal sharing and learning how to be trusting friends before engaging the encyclical through contemplation and dialogue.

William Ryan SJ  
Canada

# Viewing the International Crisis from Europe<sup>1</sup>

## Interview with Pierre Defraigne<sup>2</sup>

### Jon Sagastagoitia SJ

#### When will the crisis in which we find ourselves end?

**A**s regards the real economy, it is thought that recovery will be gradual, with a tendency toward slight economic growth. There are several different intellectual and political views as to how best to deal with the crisis. For example, the German government has concentrated on reinforcing demand and providing public funding for research, a measure which looks to the long term and will assure competitiveness in the future. In the financial sector, the banking system is concerned about the possibility of rising inflation as a consequence of excessive liquidity, which has its sources in the loans granted during this time of crisis. This is the reason why they want to recover the loans granted as soon as possible. As regards the labour market, the unemployment rate may worsen, even if there is slight growth in the real economy. This is a matter related to the productivity of labour and capital. Productivity may increase by 2.5% a year, but we do not know how that will be apportioned. Those who will be most affected by the crisis in the labour market are young people and women. At the same time, the depreciation of the US dollar against the Euro increases the competitiveness of American products as compared to European. In the socio-political sphere, some analysts have gone so far as to say that Europe has reached its limit as far as the welfare society is concerned. There is concern about sustainability. There is also the question of immigration, which is treated rather from a theoretical perspective.

#### What are the significant changes we should expect?

In the real economy, the industrial sector will make progress in developing technologies that reduce carbon emissions. This process involves

<sup>1</sup>This article was prepared on the basis of notes taken by the author during a session with Pierre Defraigne on November 24, 2009, in the context of the Conference on the Economic and Financial Crisis held in Drogen, Belgium. The questions were elaborated by Fernando Franco SJ.

<sup>2</sup>Defraigne worked as an economist and European official from 1970 to 2005 and is presently the Executive Director of the Fundación Colegio de Europa—Madariaga, in Brussels. He was assistant general director of the DG TRADE after serving as cabinet chief for Pascal Lamy, the European Commerce Commissioner. From 1985 to 1999 he was Director of North-South Relations, and before that cabinet chief for Etienne Davignon, then Vice-president of the European Commission. He set up the Brussels delegation of the EUR-IFRI (French Institute of International Relations), and he directed it from 2005 to 2008. He is a professor of political economy in the College of Europe of Bruges, in the Institute of European Studies, in Louvain University, and in St. Louis University in Belgium. He is also visiting professor at Zhejiang University in China. His main area of interest is international economic policies, political economy, and relations with developing countries. [http://www.coleurop.be/w/Pierre.Defraigne, accessed January 20, 2010]

changes in the structure of the capital stock and so will require an enormous volume of investment. As regards the labour market, there is a need to develop policies that aim at full employment as a way of achieving greater equity in the distribution of income. A renewed spirit of solidarity will bring about social and economic changes. For example, such solidarity will motivate us to consume more goods made by local producers, including those of the agricultural sector. We will stop seeing so many exotic fruits from distant locales on our tables. At the same time, the global crisis has placed the financial sector at the eye of the storm. That sector, which had reigned supreme during the last few decades, is now seen to be in need of restructuring. As a result of the global crisis, the free circulation of capital will not be so free, and it may even be subject to taxation. There will also be a revision of the status of the tax havens, the so-called fiscal paradises. Capital should be authorized to circulate only among those countries which accept the standard conditions of transparency. There is also the matter of the transnational firms, which are the ones that really “move” the world. It is therefore necessary to limit their power, regulate their activities, make them pay taxes, etc. All the foregoing is a question of political will. The art of regulating capitalism is related to the regulation of corporations.

There is also a need to recover, over the long-term, the concept of business as a community that encompasses workers, suppliers, sub-contractors, and owners. Given all these changes, it is probable that the relative weight of the financial sector will be reduced with respect to the economy as a whole. In the social sector, there is concern about how best to engage the younger generation. Education is a basic asset that requires much discussion, because society has been training more and more people in universities, but they are being trained in areas of study that society no longer needs. As a result, when young people finish their studies, they find themselves obliged to take jobs for which their training is not at all relevant. In earlier times the university formed persons. Nowadays it has become a sort of secondary school. Two other things that will be debated more intensely are the matter of a general agreement on climate change and the problem of housing.

### **Is it really a question of political will, or rather a question of political ability?**

The measures taken to help the economy recover from the crisis and the conversations of the G-20 bloc reveal that the crisis is affecting the West as a whole. Before the fall of the communist system, the western bloc was constituted as democratic political systems with capitalist economies. There was confidence that the capitalist system could be controlled by democracy and the values on which democracy was founded. With the fall of the Berlin wall, all nations were incorporated into the currents of global capitalism.

Reality demonstrates that the power of money cannot be controlled easily by a government, and this causes problems for any democracy. The reason for the existence of the European Union today is to regulate the capitalist market. If the European Union were to cease to play this regulatory role, there would be no interest in it. Proof of that is how little heed European citizens pay to institutions like the European Parliament. Most definitely, the link between democracy and the free market appears to be less effective than was previously thought. In this sense, the neo-liberal thinker Francis Fukuyama claims that the triumph of global capitalism marks the end of an era. At the same time, the system in the West is led by politicians whose vision is not at all ambitious. They never speak of finances or taxes because such topics make them uncomfortable. Most certainly, as we view the panorama of Europe, we find ourselves in a crisis of both the economy and also the society. We are in need of values different from the familiar ones that have thus far been guiding our decisions. In this sense, the participation and leadership of young people are very important. We live in a time that is very interesting, a time of change from a situation of depression to one of hope. Religion and spirituality can play a very important role in the present circumstances. In fact, the force of religion and spirituality is so powerful that it can succeed in controlling and orienting the system, something that not even human rights can do.

### **How is this crisis viewed from China?**

China has not only become a fast-growing economy, but is also developing an economic model that is different from the western one. In the last decade the European Union and the United States have been criticizing the lack of sophistication in China's financial system, which may even be slowing down its economic growth. Nevertheless, during this time of economic crisis, China's economy is growing at a 9% annual rate. Furthermore, perhaps because of the size of its population, it has many people who are very well trained: excellent engineers, etc. They are very creative, and they are generating advanced technology. However, the model of economic growth in China is different from that of Europe or the West generally. The difference is rooted in the mechanisms used to control the system. Generally, to control an economy a country needs either strong, deep-rooted values or authoritarian power. China has leaned in the direction of authoritarian power; it is applying Leninist control mechanisms to a capitalist economy. It is a system that accepts economic inequalities and makes use of communism to keep the country united. The strong Chinese government has the last word and will make sure that things will remain so. In this sense, they also expend great effort on the selection of leaders. There is a nationalist sentiment solidly rooted in the society, but until now they have been a peaceful people. There is no reason to fear China.

## China in Africa

There is one final point I would like to mention. In the West there has been some questioning of China's involvement in Africa and its way of operating there. In recent times Europe has been concerned about development in Africa. Development aid is made dependent on good governance, in contrast to the colonial epoch, when the Europeans were doing quite the contrary (for example, in Niger and Congo). Certainly, if the Africans were capable of applying taxes to the mining industry and energy resources, they would have sufficient funds to finance their own development. But why is it that the Chinese might do better by Africa than the Europeans did? If we look at history, for example, the Berlin conference of 1884, by which areas of commercial influence in Africa were awarded to European powers, it was a crime against humanity. Today there are many Chinese workers in Africa, and they are working hard, like the Africans themselves. In return for the natural resources that China is extracting from the African continent, it is building infrastructure there. It is possible that China's influence on Africa will be positive.

The global economic crisis calls the liberal model into question and compromises its sustainability. The demands which derive from this situation will produce new economic models, new relations among the different actors, and new values, all of which will call for decisions to be made in the political and regulatory spheres. Events such as the presence of China in Africa should be studied with due historical perspective.

Jon Sagastagoitia SJ  
Spain

*Original Spanish*  
*Translation by Joseph Owens SJ*

## Post-modernism opens new perspectives for evangelization

Hugues Delétraz SJ

**W**estern societies,<sup>1</sup> as Marcel Gauchet stated in 1985,<sup>2</sup> entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century weakened and disenchanted. On the one hand, Western influence in world affairs continues to decrease, and the time of a break draws near in the balance and reordering of international relationships at the expense of the West, thrown out of the dominant position it used to occupy. On the other hand, Western culture itself is going through a large-scale mutation, identified as an exit from modernism and an entrance into post-modernism, the outcome of which is uncertain. These two aspects, external and internal, of ongoing evolutions, are somewhat linked. It is in this context of more and more secularised, post-Christian societies that there emerges a postmodern culture, which we think may be open to new perspectives to evangelization.

### 1. The withdrawal of Western influence in the world.

Western decline on the international scene is made visible in its demographic,<sup>3</sup> economic,<sup>4</sup> and political components. In order to better identify its cultural and ethnic causes, it is useful to recall several major geopolitical changes that have accelerated this process: in 1945, the weakening of Europe to the benefit of the United States and the USSR after two world wars; in 1989-1991, the fall of the USSR at the end of the cold war. The fall of communist regimes in 1989-1991 has returned to freedom-exhausted populations that have discovered no other future than that of modern secularized societies, materialistic and consumerist. Having become the only world super-power,<sup>5</sup> the United States then led a policy of national interest at the expense of its traditional "leadership" regarding freedom and democracy. Its opposition to international institutions' efforts<sup>6</sup> to respond to the great challenges of

---

<sup>1</sup>Europe, The United States and Canada, Australia and New Zealand...

<sup>2</sup>Marcel Gauchet: *Le désenchantement du monde. Une histoire politique de la religion*. Gallimard, Paris, 1985.

<sup>3</sup>The European population (included Belarussia, Russia, and the Ukraine) represented 20% of the world population at the start of the twentieth century, 11% today, and probably 8% in 2050. That of North America (United States and Canada) represents 5% of the world population.

<sup>4</sup>While their economies take an increasing part in the world economy, developing countries (Brazil, China, India...) aim at becoming full time players in international relations.

<sup>5</sup>Population: 4.5% of the world population; GDP: 24% of the world GDP; military spending: 41% of the world military spending.

<sup>6</sup>Over the past twenty years, the United States has mostly opposed resolutions from the international community concerning issues of general interest. For example, regarding human rights: the non-ratification of the International Charter on Children's Rights (1989), the refusal to non sign the second facultative protocol regarding the International Agreement Relative to Civil and Political Rights, aiming at abolishing the death penalty; the non-ratification of the Treaty of Rome (1989) instituting the

humankind has made void the idea of an international order based on right, and reinforced the position of those contesting the universality of human rights and of democratic values. The financial crisis of 2008-2009 and its economic and social consequences show that the Republican administration, after having served categorical interests for eight years, rather than promoting an international order based on right, has lost everything, even the wealth that it attempted to acquire.<sup>7</sup>

The contingent causes above do not in themselves explain the Western decline that we observe. The totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which left millions dead behind them, represent the obscure side of modernism. As a woman from Hungary said “the Communists promised us a bright future, and we woke up with a hangover.” One after another, modern utopias and ideologies, beginning with positivism<sup>8</sup> and rationalism, have disappointed. Even the perspective of infinite progress able to face the challenges presented to humankind does not convince anymore. The persistence of some pathologies such as cancer, and the appearance of new ones such as AIDS, make one doubt the ability of modern medicine to master health issues. The persistent existence of pockets of poverty in spite of all the existing social safety nets implemented by over-indebted developed countries shows the limitations of modernism’s approaches in resolving social problems. In spite of impressive scientific, technical, and economic successes, modernism faces a crisis with deep cultural and ethical causes. Even the universality of the values that are put forward by modernism, such as the respect of individual rights, is contested in the name of cultural diversity. Modernism’s crisis is not a crisis of growth, rather the dusk of an era.

## 2. The decline of Western modernity

In order to identify the causes of the decline of modernism, one must examine the roots of its dynamism and its creativity, and explain why these no longer work. Among the reasons that contributed to the birth of modernism we will consider two: the cosmology of Newton and the status of reason, arguing the fact that a view of the universe and an understanding of the human being lead to a particular view of society.

The Renaissance, reconnecting with Greco-Latin roots in European culture, developed humanism; the travels of the great explorers<sup>9</sup> widened the world’s

---

International Criminal Court of The Hague. Regarding civil security: the refusal to sign the Ottawa Convention forbidding land mines (1997); the refusal to sign the Dublin Treaty on the ban of cluster bombs (2008). Regarding environmental protection: the refusal to ratify the Rio Convention on Environment and Development (Agenda 21) (1992); and the refusal to sign the Kyoto Protocol on the reduction of greenhouse gas (1997), etc.

<sup>7</sup>We may refer to the advice given by Jesus in Mt. 6: 33.

<sup>8</sup>In his *Course of Positive Philosophy*, Auguste Comte formulates his theory of scientific positivism.

<sup>9</sup>Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Vasco de Gama, Ferdinand Magellan, etc.

horizon to the dimensions of the globe, while the Copernican revolution changed the perception that the human being had of his/her place in the cosmos and led to Newton's cosmology,<sup>10</sup> that of an infinite and intelligible universe, obeying unchangeable laws (Voltaire's famous clock). The unprecedented success of sciences reinforced the role of reason in all areas of knowledge (Blaise Pascal's famous thinking reed), the ability of the human being to act in a rational and predictable world, and to organize society. The role given to reason by modern anthropology freed the operating power of human beings. Then followed systematic developments of technology, economics, and artistic creation reaching new heights. The introduction of democratic principles in the political organization of societies<sup>11</sup> contributed to the dynamism and luminosity of modern culture as well.

However, one must admit that modernism has today reached its limits. It is the case, for example, in the economic field, dominated by the neo-liberal paradigm of globalization. Intensive use of natural resources has two limitations: the resources get exhausted, and the environment is unable to absorb the amount of pollution produced. Sometimes, these two limitations cross, as in the case of oil, with its reserves being depleted, while the production of greenhouse gas is not tenable anymore. Not only is the global economy under stress, but the economic development of emerging countries forces developed countries to reduce their living standard. However, such an evolutionary turn is not part of the scheme of modern economy which, moved by the ideology of infinite progress, is forced to grow. In other words, the neo-liberal workings of the economy and the Anglo-Saxon understanding of globalization have no future. The recent financial crisis and its economic and social consequences due to a speculation that takes money without creating value calls for reforms more fundamental than a better regulation of financial markets. It calls for reforms that aim at a post-modern redefinition of the standing and the role of the economy in the lives of societies.

These considerations lead one to think that modernism's inability to resolve the problems that its successes generate comes from the very causes that had ensured its success, in particular of the role given to reason in the organization and workings of societies, in the sense that the excess of rationality then appears unreasonable. Following the Renaissance's humanism, and strengthened by its scientific successes, a newborn modernity magnified human reason, which did not go without a movement of the idea of God that Blaise Pascal had indeed perceived in his *Memorial* where he refers to the "God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, and not of the philosophers and the wise." In opposition to the Church's control over society, modernity developed a kind of theism, then a form of deism, and celebrated the cult of reason

---

<sup>10</sup>In 1687 publication of the *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica*.

<sup>11</sup>American Declaration of Independence in 1776; French declaration of human rights in 1789 and French Revolution.

and the cult of the Supreme Being<sup>12</sup> during the French Revolution. Going from theism to atheism, modernism followed a secularization process that one could interpret as the inverse of the Christianization of the Roman Empire. The modern endeavour to separate the Judeo-Christian revelation from the Greco-Latin tradition in order to keep only the latter,<sup>13</sup> appears in fact as an inverted process from that of the Fathers of the Church who had implemented the inculturation of the Christian Faith into the Greek and Latin cultures in the first centuries of our era.<sup>14</sup> Three major stages can be distinguished in the process: the secularization of ideas in the Century of the Lights or the Enlightenment of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; the secularisation of institutions starting at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and the secularisation of society starting in the cities and now generalized, the latter being itself comprising three phases: virulent anticlericalism, religious indifference, and religious ignorance.

The most efficient lever of this secularization is anthropological in that modernity substituted reason for the human heart, negating the obscurity that separates one from the other. Blaise Pascal clearly perceived this obscurity: 'the heart has reasons that reason does not know,'<sup>15</sup> adding: "it is the heart that feels God, and not reason."<sup>16</sup> The narrative that can best help us understand the consequences of this substitution between heart and reason is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Creation narrative (Gen 2:4 – 3:23). What is the tree in the middle of the garden? Is it the tree of life, as created by God in Genesis 2:9? Or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as affirmed by Eve tempted by the snake in Genesis 3:2? The difference between Judeo-Christian anthropology, which values the human heart, and modern anthropology, which defines humans by their reason, is at the source of many misunderstandings in the conflict-ridden relationship between the Church and modernism. However, after the Copernican revolution that pushed the earth out of the centre of the universe, and Charles Darwin's theory of evolution that displaced the human from its central spot in the natural selection process, the philosophical anthropology from the work of Sigmund Freud<sup>17</sup> and his successors dislodges reason from the human heart and makes nonsense of the modern pretence of a complete knowledge of oneself and of the world.<sup>18</sup> Socrates' "know thy self" remains

<sup>12</sup>During the French Revolution, worship was rendered to Reason in the churches transformed into temples of Reason after the massacres of September 2<sup>nd</sup> 1792. Similarly, worship was rendered to the Supreme Being from 1792 to 1794.

<sup>13</sup>One must note that modernity borrowed from Christianity many values that it secularized.

<sup>14</sup>One must remember that Christianity, as witnessed by the New Testament (Mt 15:11, Mk 7:19; Rm 14:14) stepped aside from the distinction of the profane and the religious common to the religions of the time.

<sup>15</sup>Blaise Pascal: *Les Pensées*, Jacques Chevalier, Gallimard, Paris, page 1221

<sup>16</sup>Blaise Pascal: *Les Pensées*, Jacques Chevalier, Gallimard, Paris, page 1222

<sup>17</sup>In particular his work on denegation.

<sup>18</sup>In this way, it is not realistic to consider the realization of "absolute knowledge" to which G.W.F. Hegel comes at the end of his *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, as a historical event. The reconciliation that he operates within knowledge under the guide of reason, is conditioned by that more fundamental one between heart and reason, which is itself conditioned by the reconciliation between the human being and her neighbour, and between the human being and God. This is an eschatological perspective.

more relevant than ever as a task always unaccomplished. The Promethean view of modernity is here fought, since the knowledge of the world is not detached from the knowledge of oneself.

One must note that Immanuel Kant had indeed distinguished the three levels of sensitivity, understanding, and reason, but in distinguishing between concepts and ideas he ascribes understanding and reason as two levels of knowledge, with only the former coming from experience. This distinction is not the same as that between heart and reason mentioned above, because the intelligence of the heart comes from an experience of interpersonal relationships, and leads to another type of knowledge than that of the phenomenal reality discussed by modern philosophy. This distinction between heart and reason, in which reason proceeds from love, is also found in the ethical realm. Following St. Augustine's distinction between "*libertas*" at the level of the heart, and free will at the level of reason, "*justicia*" is distinct from distributive justice, "*veritas*" from scientific truth, etc. Ignoring this articulated distinction leads to distorted ethical debates such as that between "pro-life" and "pro-choice" regarding abortion, because the two positions are not at the same level, the first one being at the level of the tree of life, to come back to the categories from Genesis, and the second at the level of the tree of knowledge. Similarly, the dialogue between the Christian faith, which is an opening of the heart engaging in an interpersonal relationship, and modern reason, becomes an ideological confrontation when the faith is held down as knowledge stemming from reason.

How does the substitution of the heart by reason, of love by thought, weaken modernism to the point of coming to an end? It is love that gives life and creates, and not modern reason which knows only of phenomena of reality and not of reality itself, and which acts from the outside, as a user. To put reason in the place of the heart is to negate the division which separates them, and more fundamentally the otherness of our origin.<sup>19</sup> Hence the ephemeral outcome of modern ideologies that rest on nothing other than the abstraction of a shared utopia.<sup>20</sup> The movement of ideology towards totalitarianism is a further step in the same direction, consisting in giving oneself one's own origin. The history of the 20<sup>th</sup> century has taught us how devastating the effects of such a denial of the real origin and an abstraction from the reality could be, while the addition of the predicate "scientific" to ideologies<sup>21</sup> or totalitarianisms<sup>22</sup> has in no way improved the inefficiency of their pretension to fulfill their goals. Reason, which develops its reasoning from the unity of the concept and aims at the unity of the totality, never

---

<sup>19</sup>The debate on the Christian roots of Europe and the refusal to mention them in the introductory words of the project of the European Constitution are a nice example of this denial.

<sup>20</sup>Who negates his/her origin, has no future.

<sup>21</sup>For example scientific positivism.

<sup>22</sup>For example scientific socialism.

arrives there, because the duality that characterizes it is the reflection, at the level of reason, of the dichotomy between heart and reason, which is the mark of our human condition here on earth.

### 3. From modernism to postmodernism

Sociological studies on the passing of a modern culture to a postmodern culture, make it clear that the movement of contemporary ideas and social behaviours stems from either an exacerbated modernism such as the absolute nature of individual rights at the expense of the common good, or the neo-liberal understanding of the global economy... or from an emerging postmodernism such as the ecological concern for the conservation of the natural and biological environment, or the promoting of organic agriculture and the appearance of an economy of solidarity...

At the time of the emergence of modernism, Immanuel Kant could write "What is the Enlightenment? The coming of man out of the minority for which he himself is responsible."<sup>23</sup> Today, the period of adolescence is over and postmodernism is about entering into adulthood. In spite of the resistance on the part of some threatened ideologies,<sup>24</sup> modern reason is called to come down from its pinnacle and to take its place, its proper place, but only its place, in an anthropological, ethical, and social balance, which gives back to the human heart, with its affective and relational abilities, its rightful central place. The sentence attributed to André Malraux: "The 21<sup>st</sup> century will be spiritual or will not be" marks indeed the challenge of the entry into postmodernism, to the extent that one understands 'spiritual' in its most noble acceptance of a spirit moved by unselfish love for the other.

The entrance into postmodernism can be considered, in a Teilhardian perspective, as a qualitative jump to a higher level of complexity, a passing from the "always more" to the "always better." It is an invitation to appreciate the relevancy of the dichotomy between heart and reason that is obscure from the perspective of reason but provides structure from a spiritual perspective; an invitation to create new relationships with nature, and new ways to weave the social web without rejecting the positive progress from modernism; an invitation to more personal responsibility in a softened legislative environment functioning more by motivation than by coercion. The assets of modernism will be all the better preserved as postmodern reason can

<sup>23</sup>Immanuel Kant: *The Philosophy of History*. In answer to the question: "What is the Enlightenment?" Original reference by the author of this article is "*Emmanuel Kant: La Philosophie de l'Histoire*. Trad. Stéphanie Piobetta, Paris, France: Opuscles. 1947: p. 83."

<sup>24</sup>In particular the free thought that (in France, in Belgium...) forgets that freedom of thought is, like all other freedoms, a freedom received and conditioned. Or, neo-liberalism that (in the United States, in England, etc.) makes individual rights absolute, for example in the economic realm, at the expense of common good (for example, the 'think tanks' rejecting the conclusions of experts on global warming).

renounce the central position that modern reason had taken, in order to adopt a position centred on the primacy of the heart.

Just as contemporary anthropology is not the same as that of the modern era, today's cosmology is not that of Newton. Albert Einstein's theory of relativity,<sup>25</sup> the cosmology of the Big Bang,<sup>26</sup> Max Planck's quantum mechanics,<sup>27</sup> and chaos theory<sup>28</sup> have changed our view of the universe. While Newton's universe was infinite, continuous, and foreseeable, the contemporary universe is finite, extends itself and has history. Chance is here next to necessity,<sup>29</sup> and the real, in the scientific sense, shies away from researchers' investigations.<sup>30</sup> Scientific discoveries in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in anthropology and cosmology have radically changed the self-understanding of human beings and their view of the world. If it is legitimate to think that a new self-understanding of the human being and a new view of the world triggered a new view of the society, just as in the birth of modernism, one may surmise that the scientific discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century will fashion a postmodern culture, all the while knowing that such a paradigm shift will require many years. And, thus, scientific discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provide interesting clues to sketch the shape of postmodern culture. Below are some that seem significant.

After the stability of medieval society, modern society perpetuated the movement that saw its birth. Darwin's theory of evolution and the cosmology of the Big Bang mean one step forward in reinforcing the idea of evolving humankind and of a world in movement. Once again, one's relation to time changes in that it validates Heraclites to whom we attribute the "Πάντα ῥεῖ." Movement takes over the space-time continuum, the speed of light being promoted to the rank of universal constant by Albert Einstein. The universe and humankind not only have a history, but a history that is oriented to increasing complexity, and sees the emergence of new realities that are more than the sum of their parts, giving credit to the idea of ongoing creation.

<sup>25</sup>Special theory of relativity in 1905 and general theory of relativity in 1915.

<sup>26</sup>Flowing from the general theory of relativity, the Big Bang theory has been comforted by the formulation of the law of the recession of galaxies (expansion of the universe) by Edwin Hubble in 1929, and the discovery of cosmic microwave background radiation by Arno A. Penzias and Robert W. Wilson in 1964.

<sup>27</sup>The discovery of quantum by Max Planck in 1900, and the theories of Werner Heisenberg, Erwin Schrödinger, and Paul Dirac in 1925 set the stage for quantum mechanics. Werner Heisenberg is also the author of the uncertainty principle discovered in 1927.

<sup>28</sup>From 1960 on, Edward Lorenz developed chaos theory with the help of computer simulations of non linear phenomena (for example weather-related) very sensitive to their initial condition. Benoît Mandelbrot represented this graphically under the name "fractals."

<sup>29</sup>Jacques Monod: *Le hasard et la nécessité*. Paris, France: Seuil, 1970.

<sup>30</sup>Nick Herbert: *Quantum Reality*. New York, NY: Anchor Books, Random House, 1985. (see Chapter 2 "Physicists Losing Their Grip."). Bernard d'Espagnat: *Le réel voilé: analyse des concepts quantiques*. Paris, France: Le temps des sciences, Fayard, 1994.

The relationship to nature should also change with the change in the status of reason that must no more posit itself in a user/tool relationship to nature, but rather as a partner of a nature that has resolved most of its issues without the help of human beings, such as in the case of waste management. The relationship to nature would thus go from modern usage to postmodern cooperation. In this perspective, which takes into consideration the fact that human beings are a product of nature and belong to it, economic exploitation of natural resources would be adjusted to the satisfaction of limited needs, and no longer based on the bulimic appetite of obese societies. At this economic level, the need to shift from quantitative growth to qualitative progress clearly appears. Nature offers us much more than natural resources for health, aesthetics, or way of life. The historical dimension of the universe that once knew its youth, knows its maturity, and will know ageing, and the unfathomable variety of the shapes it developed during its already long history invite us to welcome diversity as a treasure. Protection of biodiversity goes in this direction, safeguarding the fragile balances among the biotope without which we could not live.

The continuity between the view of the world and the view of the society is clear when one considers the level of exploitation that shaped labour relationships and the degree of rationality that characterized the organization of modern economy.<sup>31</sup> The cultural revolution at the end of the 1960s protested against a certain way of exercising authority and a certain form of institutional organization, thereby announcing a postmodern view in interpersonal and social relationships. The general relativity theory, which describes a universe without any particular centre and without a system of fixed references, shows a society with hierarchical structures that would leave the place to more systemic relationships, a bit like the Internet's web. A resolved implementation of the principle of subsidiarity, bringing forth a better participation from the agents and helping them to assume responsibilities, would be an intermediary stage in this process. On the other hand, the acknowledgement of the equal dignity of all human beings and their right to difference should lead to a postmodern rehabilitation of complementarities, as against the drift to uniformity from the modern principle of equality. Such a move would favour the emergence of a unity rich in its diversity, be it in relationships between man and woman, in corporate life, or in social relationships... Indeed, it seems difficult to imagine that the protection of biodiversity does not go hand in hand with the respect of cultural diversity and the respect of local identities.

Unlike the entry into modern society, which occurred as part of Western civilization, the entry into postmodernism should gather all civilizations with respect for the values, traditions, and richness of each. One can then hope that the respect of diversity of large cultural groups would lead to a multipolar

---

<sup>31</sup>Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* in 1936.

world architecture, cooperating together under the guidance of the world institutions. In this perspective, the development of organizations of cooperation and of government at the world level would go hand in hand with reinforcement of local roots and an increasing feeling of multi-belonging.<sup>32</sup> Thus, postmodernism should promote a kind of globalization which respects diversity, very different from the Anglo-Saxon neo-liberal globalization by way of the economy, which attempts the levelling and the blending of cultures. Nonetheless, as underscored above, the entry into postmodernism should first be made manifest through an exacerbation of the close of modernism. Its end is visible, for example, in an intensification of secularization encouraged by circles of free thinkers, and of the consumerist materialism of the neo-liberal ideology.<sup>33</sup> The main obstacles to the entrance into postmodernism are also manifest in the debate on ethics,<sup>34</sup> where modern ideological circles defend positions that ignore the link between heart and reason described above.

#### 4. New perspectives for evangelization

In accordance with its mission to proclaim the Reign of God and to participate in its elaboration, the Church is invited by the Second Vatican Council to “recognize the signs of the time” that bear witness to the creative work of God in history. In the 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century before the common era, a spirit of wisdom blew over the earth and inspired the founders of the great philosophical and religious traditions upon which humankind still lives today: Buddha (624 B.C. – 544 B.C.),<sup>35</sup> Lao-Tseu (570 B.C. – 490 B.C.) Confucius (551 B.C. – 479 B.C.) Socrates (470 B.C. – 399 B.C.)... “When the times were accomplished, God sent his son” (Gal. 4:4) to a place at the crossroads of Africa, Asia, and Europe. From this time forward, the ebb and flow of history well served the spread of the Gospel. The Roman Empire was its receptacle until Christianity became the empire’s religion under Theodosius the 1<sup>st</sup> in 395. The final fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 eased the spread of Christianity all through Europe where the Church provided the matrix for European culture. The travels of the great explorers of the Renaissance opened the way to missionaries who spread Christianity to the far reaches of the earth. A new stage now begins with the blooming and the developing of local Churches all over the world, secularized Europe bearing the risk of appearing like a dead flower having released its pollen. Each time, Christian faith acts like yeast transform-

---

<sup>32</sup>Family, business, neighbourhood... But also at the local, regional, national... global level.

<sup>33</sup>Ideology with a totalitarian view in the meaning given by Hanna Arendt in the third volume of her work *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, called *The Totalitarian system: Le système totalitaire*, traduction par Jean-Louis Bourget, Robert Davreu et Patrick Levy (1972), révisée par Hélène Frappat (2002) Paris, France: Le Seuil, collection “Points / essais” n. 307, 2005.

<sup>34</sup>In particular, bioethics.

<sup>35</sup>Dates are approximate.

ing cultures from within,<sup>36</sup> be it Roman culture, European culture, and now world cultures.<sup>37</sup> One can thus distinguish several eras in this historical process that we just described: Roman infancy, medieval youth, modern adolescence, and postmodern maturity... At each stage, initiatives are born within the Church to respond to new challenges: the Eastern monasticism of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, at the end of the great persecutions, when Christianity acquired the right to exist in the empire; at the beginning of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, Western monasticism that played an essential role in European evangelization and the formation of a medieval Christianity; Franciscan spirituality in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, insisting on evangelical poverty at a time when the merchant economy was thriving with the bourgeoisie; Ignatian spirituality in the 16<sup>th</sup> century offering the experience of a personal relationship with God, at the threshold of modernism;<sup>38</sup> the devotion to the Heart of Jesus Christ after the apparitions of 1673 and 1675 to Saint Marie Alacoque, counterpoint to the modern worship of reason, less than thirty years after the famous "I think therefore I am" of René Descartes in 1647. It is also not difficult to see the hand of God in events such as the vocation of Joan of Arc, whose intervention led to the end of the Hundred Years War between England and France. Such events, mediated by people of faith<sup>39</sup> and re-opening a future that seemed closed, have also happened more recently: the Franco-German reconciliation launching of the process of European integration following the Second World War; the Second Vatican Council and its opening up to ecumenism and to the world; the implosion of the Soviet empire without bloodshed. However, these unfolding events did not live up to the level of hope they had created. The initial dynamics of European integration around a political project rooted in common values<sup>40</sup> and set in a European legislative body made of multilateral conventions fell short when the treaties of Rome in 1957 founded the European project on economic cooperation, which was until then only a support to the political integration. The inversion of the end, the political project, and the means, economic cooperation, created the European Union, and this explains in part the gap between a large agreement on the idea of European integration, and a

<sup>36</sup>Modernism, that arose in opposition to the Church and negates its own Christian roots, would probably never have existed without the Christian contribution to the Greco-Latin tradition. Indeed, almost all of the great names of modernism in the scientific and philosophic realms stem from the Judeo-Christian tradition.

<sup>37</sup>One can guess, in a postmodern perspective, at the role Christianity can play in other cultures, in following the example of a pioneer like Matteo Ricci.

<sup>38</sup>Kant's three *critiques* resonate, as if they were echoes, terms such as *contemplation in action*, and *discernment* that characterize Ignatian spirituality.

<sup>39</sup>European integration: Robert Schuman, with the contribution of Konrad Adenauer, Jean Monet, Alcide de Gasperi.... Second Vatican Council: Pope John XXIII, with the contribution of Cardinal Suenens, Döfner, Bea...and the theologians Congar, Rahner, Murray.... Fall of communism: Pope John Paul II, with the contribution of Lech Walesa, Andrei Zhakarov, Mikhail Gorbachov...

<sup>40</sup>European Convention on Human Rights, and more than 200 subsequent conventions.

<sup>41</sup>The project of European integration has nonetheless been emulated around the world: ASEAN, Mercosur, African Union...

much lower support to the European Union.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, the Second Vatican Council had created great hopes through its indwelling spirit of openness, and coherent body of documents adopted by overwhelming majorities<sup>42</sup> well received in the ecclesial body. But even before the end of the Council, some topics were taken out of the discussion and assigned to specialized commissions whose decisions are still subject to public debate. After promising beginnings, the implementation of the Second Vatican Council has slowed down, and then stopped, before it could produce all the fruits that were expected from it. Nowadays, the Church is rather set in a withdrawal into its own identity, turning its back on the Council. And regarding the fall of the communist regimes, we have shown above how much the Western world has missed the opportunity of a significant improvement toward an international democratic order based on mutual respect and the idea of what is right.

It is in this historical context that one must reflect on the postmodern perspectives for evangelization, recognizing that the role of the Church is at the service of the Creator's action in history, and cannot be a substitute for it. As already previously indicated, the postmodern factor most favourable to evangelization is the abandonment of the Promethean status of modern reason and the adoption of a more realistic approach based on the complexity of the real. The anthropological reconciliation between the postmodern understanding of the human being and the Christian discourse about the human being should favour a lessening of modern secularization.

The spiritual experience pertains to the affect before, at the second step, it becomes intelligible. It is the experience of the companions on the road to Emmaus who discover only after they recognized Jesus<sup>43</sup> that their hearts were burning. It is also the experience of St. Augustine at the time of his conversion, when he discovers God present in depths of his heart, while he looked everywhere else,<sup>44</sup> to no avail! Similarly, spiritual progress, as described by mystics such as St. John of the Cross, goes through a purification of sensitivity, and then of intelligibility, before coming to a unifying phase, thus indicating that reason is not the ultimate destination of the journey. From a theological perspective, the dichotomy between heart and reason is linked to the sinful nature of the forgiven, but not yet saved, human being. This dichotomy is also found in Christianity between the order of law, sign of the renewal of God's Covenant with a human being that rejected him, and the order of faith. This asymmetric relationship between the tree of knowledge and the tree of life expresses the tension between the "already" and the "not yet" of the Kingdom of God, between a Kingdom of God present in the world, otherwise the world would not exist, and a Kingdom of God that is not of this world, otherwise the world would be perfect. The Church, whose mission it is to announce the

---

<sup>42</sup>John O'Malley: *What Happened at Vatican II?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008.

<sup>43</sup>Lk 24:32

<sup>44</sup>St. Augustine: *The Confessions*.

Kingdom of God, must place itself in a just relationship with society, especially in its political dimension, and not regard itself as an institution above others. To do this, the Church must articulate this structuring asymmetric relationship within herself, and give it an institutional visibility. The proclamation of God's Kingdom will be credible to the ears of our postmodern contemporaries if the institutional dimension of the Church does not hide its sacramental reality.

The historical dimension of the postmodern understanding of the world and of society and the continuation of the creative action<sup>45</sup> of God in history question the ability of the Church to discern the "signs of the times" and to identify the working presence of the Risen,<sup>46</sup> in order to collaborate with his work. However, the history of the Church shows an institution that undergoes, rather than announces or anticipates, cultural changes. This was dramatically true at the time of the Renaissance and of the Reformation. This seems still true today and creates fears of the tearing apart of the ecclesial fabric at the continental scale of a multipolar world. The cultural withdrawal perceived in the Catholic Church for several years was due, for example, to a nostalgia for the pre-conciliar Church that did not believe in the action of the Spirit in the Church, notably during the Council, and considered as sacred vestments and issues of language... Such an attachment to human traditions,<sup>47</sup> while the entire law is summed up by charity<sup>48</sup> as Pope Benedict XVI wrote in the encyclical *Deus caritas est*, turns its back on the Church, the people of God, and on its future. This lack of faith is a hindrance to evangelization since, even more than in modern culture, the proclamation of the Gospel to a postmodern society will not be credible if the Church gives a pre-modern view of herself. Indeed, the visibility of the Church bears its own witness. When Jesus speaks about visibility, he is unequivocal: "This is how all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."<sup>49</sup>

As postmodernism approaches, it is imperative that we trust the Holy Spirit present in the Church and finish implementing the decrees of the Second Vatican Council. This is not only about the Church's credibility, but also about her unity. Therein lays a major challenge for evangelization: "that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me."<sup>50</sup> Ecumenical dialogue, which made enormous progress in the theological realm and in the lives of Christian communities, stumbles upon institutional rigidities. Within the Catholic Church, the gap has increased between the Church as people of God (*sensus fidelium*) and the institutional Church (magisterium), while lay people,

---

<sup>45</sup>JN 5:17

<sup>46</sup>MT 28:20

<sup>47</sup>This has not changed since the time of Jesus: MT 15:3-9, MT 23:2-12...

<sup>48</sup>MT 22:36-39

<sup>49</sup>JN 13:35

<sup>50</sup>JN 17:21

re-acknowledged by the Council, are the main actors of an evangelization of proximity. The centralisation and the uniformity of the Latin Church create fears of schisms along cultural lines (Africa, Latin America, China, India...) in the context of a multipolar globalization where the great regional identities will affirm themselves. The anthropology at the basis of a postmodern society invites us to consider the unity of the Church as a unity of hearts, in union with the One who is perfectly united with the Father in the Spirit. The institutional unity that flows from this cannot be realized under an authority that sets its actions in a power setting in the political sense. That would be authority working in an ideological fashion that, in its essence, divides by excluding. The institutional unity of the Church seems possible only around an institutional configuration that articulates in an adjusted way the asymmetric relationship between 'tree of life' and 'tree of knowledge' indicated above.

There still exists a spiritual thirst, for instance, in Western countries. The Church's answer cannot continue to be a ceaseless restating of apodictic principles that set an ideal of perfection, which appears to be a wall impossible to climb to people of good will. It must instead open paths accessible to the spiritual experience of those who wish it, offer a meeting with God that takes place within a personal story each time different. In order to facilitate as much participation as possible in the life of the Church, and to increase the vitality of the ecclesial body, some dispositions can be made at the level of the institutional workings of the Church according to perspectives opened by the Second Vatican Council. For example, the liturgy, as a celebration of faith in one's culture, would gain in being administered by the Bishops' Conferences according to major cultural areas. Or still, bishops' nominations would be better perceived as ecclesial events if the concerned Christian communities were consulted, and the Bishops' conference to which the diocese belongs was associated with the appointment process.

To conclude, the possibly most favourable perspectives that postmodernism offers evangelization challenge the evangelizing ability of the Church. Our discussion has mostly tried to show that in a postmodern context, when the level of education and the ability to form a judgment by oneself are high, the proclamation of the faith is not just about an explicit discourse, nor only about generosity with charities or people, but, more so than in the past, about the witness of a type of organization and of institutional workings.

Hugues Delétraz SJ  
Curia Generalizia  
Italy

*Original French  
Translation by Quentin Dupont SJ*

## **Ecofarming and Green Commerce: A Jesuit Agricultural Training Centre in Indonesia**

### **Greg Soetomo SJ<sup>1</sup>**

**T**he greenhouse effect is globally recognized as a leading factor affecting climate change and the environmental crisis. The gases responsible for the greenhouse effect are chiefly carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) and methane (CH<sub>4</sub>). These gases have varying global warming potentials. The escalation of greenhouse gases is caused by humans and human activity. The responsibility for damage caused must be placed at the door of agriculture (15%), depleted rain forests (15%), activity in the fields of chemistry and physics (20%), and energy use and traffic (50%).

CO<sub>2</sub> is the most significant gas relating directly to climate, and as such it has 22% responsibility for the greenhouse effect. Agriculture's CO<sub>2</sub> emission comes from both direct consumption of oil and fuel and indirect consumption of energy (e.g. fertilizers, and pesticides). On the basis of gross emission estimates, most studies find a lower CO<sub>2</sub> emission in organic systems on a per hectare scale.

In the light of this is there any reason to dream of so-called ecological farming? We believe there is.

### **Ecofarming**

Generally speaking, agriculture has had constructive effects as well as harmful effects on the ecosystem in terms of wildlife management and landscaping. The role played by ecofarming on wildlife maintenance is however only positive, and indeed very promising.

Ecological farming, which is also called organic farming, may be characterized as a system of managing agricultural holdings without the use of fertilizers and chemical pesticides. A farming system based on the exclusion of these harmful inputs claims to be environmentally sensitive and less damaging than conventional farming.

Ecofarming systems rely, to the maximum extent feasible, on crop rotations, crop residues, animal manure, legumes, green manure, off-farm organic wastes, and measures of biological pest control to maintain soil productivity, to supply plant nutrients and to control insects, weeds and other pests. Organic farming, deriving from its ideological background, may be defined as farming based on the concept of the farm as an organism in which all components – soil, plant and animal – interact to maintain a stable system.

---

<sup>1</sup>Greg Soetomo, SJ Editor of Jakarta-based Catholic Weekly Magazine HIDUP and communicator among Jesuit social-apostolates in Indonesia.

A comparative study assessing the environmental and resource use impacts of ecofarming and conventional farming system shows that organic farming performs better than conventional farming according to a majority of the environmental indicators.

## **New Power**

Seven hundred years ago religion exercised far more authority than any other force on the planet. Its place was taken two hundred years ago by the state or government. Today the most powerful and influential force is business or commerce. Business is arming itself to lead society towards global oneness. At the same time capitalism is indeed at a crossroads as it faces worldwide environmental change and a growing backlash against globalization. Companies are at a crossroads too: finding new strategies for profitable growth is now more challenging than it has ever been. Both sets of problems are intimately linked.

In this global situation a few multinational corporations (MNCs) are also engaged in finding solutions to social and environmental problems. More sustainable technologies are being developed to support these efforts. Despite all these innovations, however, about four billion people have been left behind by globalization.

Our centre, Kursus Pertanian Taman Tani (KPTT ), has a dream of sustainable products and technologies to drive new growth and at the same time help solve today's most crucial social and environmental problems.

## **A Response by KPTT**

Kursus Pertanian Taman Tani (KPTT Agricultural Training Center) is a Jesuit-run Agricultural Training Centre with a vision of imparting an integrated organic farming-based training that can sustain entrepreneurial society. Founded in 1965, and located in Salatiga, Central Java, Indonesia, this boarding school, of which Fr. Y Wartaya Winangun, SJ, has been director since 2004, has produced thousands of graduates: 1116 (one-year course); 2399 (3 months course); 269 (short course; 2006 - 2009); 9116 (pre-school and elementary school students' exposure (2004 - 2009).

The declining interest in agriculture among students is not peculiar to Indonesia; it is worldwide. Why? How can students be made to take an interest in agriculture?

A case from the Netherlands seems very interesting. The former Agricultural University of Wageningen removes "agriculture" from its name, a decision taken by the board when the number of students enrolling for the

university kept declining year after year. It was noted that this was not the case with the Dutch technical universities. Once the name was changed, the number of students seeking admission increased. Should KPTT (Agricultural Training Course) transform itself to KATT (Agribusiness Training Course)? Change of name is certainly not enough; it should be followed by system, fresh institutional mindset, and transformation of the whole staff. As a matter of fact, KPTT, according to its vision and mission statements, has been trying through its training curriculum to educate young people to be agri-entrepreneurs as well as organic farmers.

If the environmental problems of the earth are to be solved, harmonizing profit-seeking and sustainability need to go hand in hand. We are convinced that environmental concerns can be alleviated while spreading prosperity to those at the base of the pyramid, the four billion poor thus far ignored by the global market. Our concern is to discover how the poor can also participate, through small to medium agri-commercial enterprises, in environmental-based agricultural business.

KPTT's *raison d'être* is to provide an agenda for farming entrepreneurs to harmonize concerns for our planet with moneymaking and it does this by clearly highlighting the connection between the two. This is a turning point in the debate about the emerging role and responsibility of business in society.

## Curriculum

KPTT's curriculum for ecological-based agricultural training in relation with business skill has four bases:

1. *Emphasizing the Practical Basis*: KPTT provides a strong emphasis on practicalities. The weakness is lack of the theoretical understanding behind the practices.
2. *Offering Sustainable Agriculture Principles*: The contemporary idea of Indonesian agriculture is "how to create true sustainable agriculture in this country".
3. *Stressing the Local Context*: The participants, who come from all over Indonesia, learn the local challenges of Indonesian agriculture. This is important in a huge country like Indonesia with its with three time zones and distinct soil types, crops, nature, climates, cultures.
4. *Providing a Strategic Focus*: KPTT focuses on two training skills : 1. Technical Farming skills; 2. Business Skills

**Contents:**

1. Knowledge of Organic Farming
2. Soil Fertility
3. Designing an Organic Farming Project
4. Producing Organic Pesticide
5. Managing and Maintaining Organic Farming
6. Husbandry
7. Biogas: Alternative Energy
8. Organic-processed Agricultural Products
9. Understanding Nutrition in the Products of Organic Farming
10. Agribusiness Management.
11. Leadership
12. Communication skills

**KPTT's Dream: Beyond Greening**

A genuine concern about environmental-friendly agriculture is widely prevalent among Indonesian farmers. 'Greening' is the important first step. But this incremental development will only reduce the speed of environmental damage. The nature of business, however small it might be, invents new forms of 'natural capitalism'. If we want business and environment to go hand in hand, we need something "beyond", something that it is culturally appropriate, environmentally sustainable and economically profitable. We are required to turn eco-efficient in order to be eco-effective. We must go beyond greening.

By moving beyond greening, communities engaged in agribusinesses hope not only to concentrate on de-escalating social and environmental alarms, but also to underpin processes of innovation and growth in the coming decades. This can be done, first, by inventing new and clean technologies that use renewable energy or biomaterials; and second, by chasing and bringing the benefits of capitalism not only to privileged communities at the top but to all human beings, including the four billion people who have been bypassed by market fundamentalism.

**Can innovative technologies become available to the poor?**

Considering the demand for new technologies and markets, the concept of "beyond greening" offers great opportunities, but is also attended by high risks. If that is the case, it is usually the poor who will suffer the most.

The case of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, however, shows how a dream for a better life is possible for those who have lost out in a market-

oriented world. Muhammad Yunus has for decades been driven by the dream of a bank for the poorest of the poor. After many talks with them, he sensed that the poor are tireless workers who know where to go. But they simply don't have any access to funds to better their quality of life. He founded the Grameen Bank to meet that need.

A similar motivation lies behind KPTT's effort to re-design its course curriculum on ecological agriculture by concentrating on "the production of healthy food without damaging nature and environment for the everyday market and not just for the happy view of those who can afford it".

That curriculum must train students to use their own imagination concerning green food production. The curriculum will have four dimensions:

1. Offering in-depth knowledge about organic food production.
2. Learning how to make innovative ideas a reality.
3. Forming attitudes of practical respect and love for nature and agriculture
4. Imparting communication skills (written and spoken)

### **What we can hope for International Jesuit Networking**

1. With its focus on marketing and business skills is there any comparable Jesuit institution that KPTT might learn from? Networking with Jesuit schools of business and commerce would be very helpful.
2. Making 'natural capitalism' workable in an effective and progressive way, a centre like KPTT should work together with other Jesuit technical schools that produce green and clean technologies.
3. In the area of human resources management, how can we transform the skills and knowledge of our staff as well as their way of thinking to be in line with our new vision and mission, helping to integrate agricultural training and 'beyond green' commerce? So far, KPTT has developed its staff policy according to good social labour standards. Now KPTT wants to work according to human resource management (HRM) principles. That means that KPTT does not see employees merely as costs but as a source of knowledge and as a resource for permanent innovation.
4. Develop possibilities for retraining courses for the staffs and graduates.

Greg Soetomo SJ  
Indonesia

## Christology and Prophetic Witness in *CARITAS IN VERITATE*

Christopher S. Collins<sup>1</sup> SJ

*“The human community that we build by ourselves can never, purely by its own strength, be a fully fraternal community, nor can it overcome every division and become a truly universal community.”*<sup>2</sup>

**T**he Christology of Pope Benedict XVI is not especially formulated in any one of his works. Rather, it is to be found in every one of them. The consistent interweaving of a vision of the figure of Christ, the one through whom we discover “the Christian God with a heart of flesh,” provides the foundation for the whole of his theological vision and shapes how it is that he sees God and the world and the mission of the Church in that world.

In his most recent encyclical, *Caritas in Veritate*, we see his most comprehensive and detailed approach to the practical demands of the life of the Church in the modern world, as she faces the social concerns of development of peoples, the degradation of the environment and the responsible use of technology. The grounding for these detailed practical solutions certainly stems from his theological vision. Specifically, his Christology serves as the grounding for the conclusions he makes, not just as a theologian, but now as universal pastor of the Church and a uniquely listened-to moral leader on the global scene in the midst of an economic and environmental crisis which affects people in every corner of the earth.

In this paper I propose to look at the contours of Pope Benedict’s Christology in order to shed light on his practical vision offered in his first explicitly “social encyclical.” I will examine, in particular, one theme of *Caritas in Veritate* wherein he develops the notion of “fraternity” as a bedrock principle for the establishment of social justice and authentic development of peoples.

Secondly, I will offer a perspective on how it is that elsewhere in Benedict’s theological project, his Christology that serves as a basis for fraternity among peoples, is formulated and shaped in the context of the celebration of the liturgy. This sacramental and liturgical hermeneutic then becomes a place of enrichment of theological vision not for a merely privatized devotional faith, but for an outward-looking sense of being-sent-into-the-world to work for peace and justice and the development and progress of all peoples.

### **Ratzinger’s Christological Anthropology**

In Benedict’s thought, God has a plan for the world and the people who populate the world are created for cooperation with this plan of love. The full

<sup>1</sup>The author is a student of Theology in the Boston College School of Theology and Ministry.

<sup>2</sup>Catholic Church and Benedict, *Charity in Truth : Caritas in Veritate : Encyclical Letter* (Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009), #34.

flourishing of people comes about only when there is recognition of the *truth* of who they are as those made *from* and *for* God who is love. The discovery of this end is made possible by the divine initiative of self-communication when God sends his Eternal Son to initiate a plan of solidarity of humanity with God and within itself. Such is the heart of the body of the Church's social teaching from which Pope Benedict proceeds in his own theological reflection and later magisterial teaching. This is the grounding of the vision articulated in *Caritas in Veritate*.

Drawing on his predecessor's teaching in *Populorum Progressio* from 1967, he recalls the importance of a basis of a transcendent vision of man that serves as the foundation for authentic human development.<sup>3</sup> From within the Christian horizon, then, the development of all peoples becomes an integral aspect of the Christian identity and mission. Contributing toward this development is not merely an option for those who happen to feel moved to do so. It is an obligation of all those who claim the identity of Christian. To regard *development as a vocation* is to recognize, on the one hand, that it derives from a transcendent call, and on the other hand that it is incapable, within a merely secular horizon, of supplying its ultimate meaning on its own. Neither in a utopian return to primitive, "pristine" culture nor in the false promise of technological fulfillment of a materialist end, is real human and social development to be found; rather, only in openness to the Absolute is true humanism made possible.<sup>4</sup>

But this openness to the Absolute is not simply a matter of theoretical speculation. Benedict highlights in *Caritas in Veritate* how it is that this body of social teaching does not derive simply from the natural law but is ultimately discovered in the Gospel, in the person of Jesus Christ, who simultaneously reveals God to man and man to himself.<sup>5</sup> The natural law tradition, if unhinged from this biblical vision can become a mere abstraction according to Benedict and it is for this reason that it is important to see more clearly how it is that he recapitulates this social vision for the world in light of biblical and ecclesial faith, centered on the person of Jesus Christ and the fraternity that he makes possible in the world.

While certainly encouraging the full resources of the secular sphere of influence in order to address the problems of poverty and injustice in our time, Benedict also operates from a rather sober posture toward the ability of this

---

<sup>3</sup>Benedict explains, "Paul VI clearly understood that the social question had become worldwide and he grasped the interconnection between the impetus towards the unification of humanity and the Christian ideal of a single family of peoples in solidarity and fraternity. *In the notion of development, understood in human and Christian terms, he identified the heart of the Christian social message, and he proposed Christian charity as the principal force at the service of development.*" *Ibid.*, #13.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, #16.

<sup>5</sup>"*Gaudium et Spes*," #22 in *Vatican Council II Constitutions and Decrees*. Edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996.

merely secular *modus operandi* to deliver on its promises.<sup>6</sup> Anthropology is to be understood Christologically in Benedict's thought and it is necessary to explore the texture of this Christology in order to see how it shapes the vision for the social development of peoples in *Caritas in Veritate*. Above all, for Benedict, the figure of Jesus Christ is to be understood always in the context of relationship—never as an isolated individual. Christ is *from the Father and for humanity*.<sup>7</sup> Only from within this two-fold relational dynamic can we come to know Christ and therefore come to know the truth of the human person and the true ground of development of persons among the nations. Only in relationship with God and with the rest of humanity is the fullness of the person discovered and supported. Mere assertions and moralizing about social development and politics are of little use. In his "portrait" of Jesus, Benedict puts it very simply: "In the Son of Man, man is revealed as he ought to be."<sup>8</sup> And what man "ought to be" is made possible not by man's own striving but by the union made possible of divine and human in the Incarnation. The full dignity and flourishing of humanity then is grounded ultimately in what is opened up in the horizon of Chalcedonian faith.

Grounded very much in the biblical vision from which the figure Jesus of Nazareth emerges, Benedict understands Christ according to the categories established earlier in the biblical witness, namely, that of the People of God, Israel. Indeed, in bringing to fulfillment the "true Israel" Benedict sees Christ as fulfilling the height of Sonship of the Divine which was anticipated in Old Testament faith. Further, as he explains in *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, Jesus "does not regard his divine sonship as something reserved only for himself: the meaning of the Incarnation is rather to make what is his available to all."<sup>9</sup>

It is at this point that we come closer to the notion of Christian brotherhood that makes possible human fraternity grounded in Christ's identity as Eternal Son of God the Father. It is also at this juncture wherein we come to a sense of what is at stake in the question of the progress of peoples.<sup>10</sup> His answer to this question of course is in the negative and he thus uncovers the need to examine

---

<sup>6</sup>He writes: "Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is." *Caritas in Veritate*, #19, citing *Populorum Progressio* #21.

<sup>7</sup>Benedict, *Introduction to Christianity* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004), 184ff.

<sup>8</sup>Benedict, *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration* (New York: Doubleday, 2007), 325.

<sup>9</sup>Benedict, *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 49. This work is significant in the broader landscape of Ratzinger's thought as it stands out, according to Aidan Nichols as his "first widely disseminated essay treating of a doctrinal topic in propria persona, rather than by way of exposition of some earlier father or doctor." See Nichols chapter "Christian Brotherhood" in *The Thought of Benedict XVI*. (London: Burns and Oates, 2007).

Benedict writes, "Underdevelopment has an even more important cause than lack of deep thought: it is 'the lack of brotherhood among individuals and peoples.' Will it ever be possible to obtain this brotherhood by human effort alone?" *Caritas in Veritate*, #19, citing *Populorum Progressio* #66.

how it is that this brotherhood might be cultivated in an ever new way which is always harkening back to the original vision for brotherhood given in the encounter with the person of Jesus of Nazareth, the account of which is given in the biblical witness of the New Testament. The Gospel is fundamental for development because in the Gospel we encounter the One who is the “Yes” of God to man and “precisely because God gives a resounding “yes” to man, man cannot fail to open himself to the divine vocation to pursue his own development.<sup>11</sup>

### Brotherhood in the Christian Vision

In *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*, Benedict examines the uniquely Christian dimension of human “fraternity”. Starting with the ancient pagan world and then moving to the context of Hebrew scripture, he indicates how the notion of brotherhood has always been essential in the attempt to establish human society and order among peoples. The bond is always recognized, but to differing degrees and with a varying scope of influence. From Plato’s use of the term brother to connote those who comprise the *polis* to the more religious context within which it was used in Mithran and other mystery cults of the Hellenistic world, the term would always simultaneously connote a sense of unity among those comprising one group, while also designating separation from those outside that same group.<sup>12</sup>

In the Old Testament, this dual usage of the term continued but now, in certain instances, the term began to be able to be applied to the whole of the human family. The notion of “universal brotherhood” then began to emerge. As the notion of the national God, Yahweh, came to be simultaneously recognized as the God of the whole universe, those “children” of that universal God came to be considered in universal terms even if a special designation continued for those who belonged to the unique relationship of the covenant. This biblical justification for a universal brotherhood provided the foundation in the history of ideas for the Enlightenment and Marxist ideals of *fraternite’* and *comrade* even if, inevitably, all of these modern aspirations toward equality and brotherhood ended in sharp divides between those who recognize the universal brotherhood and those who do not and who must, consequently, be overthrown for the sake of the ideal.

Ratzinger explicates this dynamic of the simultaneity of a universal brotherhood on one hand and the need for a kind of dialectic between true brotherhood and those not yet incorporated into it as he turns his attention to the Church. In the New Testament witness, he examines how it is that in the words of Jesus in the Gospels and in the description of the building up of the

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, #18.

<sup>12</sup>Christian Brotherhood, 5-14.

early Church in the *Acts of the Apostles*, there are numerous instances of the use of the term “brother” to indicate relationality within the national identity of Judaism. Only in Paul, however, does the term come to be used more decisively in relationship of those united to Christ.<sup>13</sup>

Recalling a centerpiece of the Pauline vision of brotherhood taken from *Romans* 8:14-17, 29, Ratzinger draws close to the Christian mystery which makes possible the unique vision of brotherhood at the heart of his thesis: “When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’ it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.” Only in the context of this Trinitarian dynamic of being led by the Spirit to call God Father and in so doing, establish our identity as brothers and sisters and fellow heirs of the Son who has taken the initiative to unite himself to us, do we fulfill our true end and destiny as human persons. Only in this setting does true and lasting human development begin to be possible. As he would later pose the possibility, Pope Benedict asserts in the opening lines of *Caritas in Veritate* that only the force of love compels people to work for true justice and not just ideological purposes. Christ is that force of love. “In Christ, *charity in truth* becomes the ‘Face of his Person.’”<sup>14</sup>

Encountering Christ, then, is to encounter love itself and the inner dynamic of the truth of every human person. This love is that which joins us together in union with the One who is Love only because He has loved us first. He explains that as objects of God’s love, we become, in turn, subjects of charity in our earthly relationships. Insofar as we are able to receive that love, we become disposed to acting outwardly according to that love in the world for the sake of others, especially those most in need. Being drawn up into that divine dynamic of Trinitarian love which gives and receives, which pours out without hesitation and without limit- this is the basis for a lasting and efficacious progress of peoples.<sup>15</sup>

Fraternity, then becomes the basis for a vision of human solidarity and development grounded in and ultimately ordered toward *charity* which goes beyond even the demands of justice. As he explains in *Caritas in Veritate*, “*Charity goes beyond justice*, because to love is to give, to offer what is “mine” to the other; but it never lacks justice, which prompts us to give the other what is “his”, what is due to him by reason of his being or his acting.”<sup>16</sup> What Benedict proposes then, is a vision of development that runs deeper than many other forms of calls for social justice. Indeed, this vision of what is possible and what is called for according to true Christian identity opens up the way in the

---

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 21ff.

<sup>14</sup>*Caritas in Veritate*, #1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., #5.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., #6.

community of nations, to a more robust and radical vision of solidarity and unity precisely because of the union of brotherhood with Christ that precedes it.<sup>17</sup> The texture of this call to go even beyond justice is an urgent one. There is no setting of leisure at work here from which these matters can become a matter for mere academic speculation. The matter of development becomes urgent precisely because of the personal dimension of what is unfolding. Again, recalling Paul VI's foundational shaping of the question, he explains: *This urgency is also a consequence of charity in truth.*<sup>18</sup>

How then, is this sense of urgency to be cultivated? One must indeed keep up with the "rapid succession of events and problems" and do the hard and careful work of social analysis and activism. But these alone may well end only in exhaustion and cynicism if engaged in within the limited horizon of the secular sphere. One's vision and spirit must be ever renewed and revived if one is to engage in this demanding call to work for true and lasting development. From within the horizon of Christian brotherhood, it is in the context of the Church, then, that one's vision of fraternity with others is cultivated. More specifically, it is in the context of the liturgical encounter, with one's brothers and sisters in Christ, meeting the one in whom they are united in brotherhood and sonship of the Eternal Father- only here is that infinite and ever new horizon opened up. Only from here does the possibility of efficacious engagement with the modern world become reality.

### Fraternity Established in the Liturgical Encounter

Following the liturgical pattern and framework for "doing Christology" sets a trajectory oriented toward a robust "prophetic witness" and a movement toward solidarity with and "progress" of the least in society. The source and centre of Christian fraternity is the Eucharist. It is important, though, that this formation of a people through the action of the liturgy, not result in simply another circle of spiritually inclined people closed in on itself and set off against the surrounding culture. Rather, in authentically following the Eucharistic pattern, it becomes clear that this brotherhood formed by the Eucharist "does not stand against, but for the whole" of the world.<sup>19</sup> The dynamic of inner transformation in the liturgy which gives way to an outward mission into the

<sup>17</sup>As he explains in *Caritas in Veritate*, "The Council probed more deeply what had always belonged to the truth of the faith, namely that the Church, being at God's service, is at the service of the world in terms of love and truth...the whole Church, in all her being and acting – when she proclaims, when she celebrates, when she performs works of charity – is engaged in promoting integral human development." Ibid., #11.

<sup>18</sup>"*Populorum Progressio* repeatedly underlines the urgent need for reform, and in the face of great problems of injustice in the development of peoples, it calls for courageous action to be taken without delay. This urgency is also a consequence of charity in truth. It is Christ's charity that drives us on: "*caritas Christi urget nos*" (2 Cor 5:14). The urgency is inscribed not only in things, it is not derived solely from the rapid succession of events and problems, but also from the very matter that is at stake: the establishment of authentic fraternity." Ibid., #20.

<sup>19</sup>*Christian Brotherhood*, 75.

world- *ite missa est*- is essential for this vision of Christian brotherhood which can be transformative of and for the world.

Benedict's Christological pattern of Jesus being *from* the Father and *for* humanity is extended to the Church, the mystical body of Christ, in the context of the liturgical encounter. The inner dynamic of the mystery of the Eucharist has its pattern established in that of the Passover. Drawing upon the Hebrew understanding of this mystery of the Pasch, Ratzinger recalls how there is a double dynamic at play in the liturgy that involves both a "sharing out" and "sharing in" among those gathered in worship.<sup>20</sup> What is given away in the course of the meal has the power to draw those participating into the very same salvific mystery that is commemorated in the being led out of slavery into new freedom.

For Ratzinger there is something similar at work in the course of the Eucharist that fulfills the Passover. In this Christian vision, the "Eucharistic communion is aimed at a complete reshaping of my own life. It breaks up man's entire self and creates a new 'we.'" And even further, the restoration of man is achieved in this Eucharistic context wherein "I myself become a part of the new bread that he is creating by the resubstantiation of the whole of earthly reality."<sup>21</sup> Here we find in a most concrete mode, the foundation for a reordering of the social dimension of the world community according to divine initiative toward a new creation. The new "we" that is created around the person of Christ becomes a people formed for mission according to the same inner Christological principles at work in Jesus and in the dynamic of the liturgy. It is a two-fold conversion that begins to unfold in the course of the liturgy, and those drawn in are soon to be poured out according to the pattern set by the person who calls them together in the first place.

Pope Benedict expounded this dynamic powerfully, appropriately enough, in the context of the liturgy when he preached a homily to the hundreds of thousands of young people gathered from around the globe at World Youth Day in Cologne in the first year of his pontificate. Leading these young people to see the mystery of the Eucharist with new eyes, he explained the inner connection of Christ's act of love in the course of his own Passover and how it is that the whole Church is drawn into the same dynamic for the sake of the world marred and broken by sin and darkness.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Benedict, Stephan Otto Horn, and Vinzenz Pfnür, *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion* (San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 2005), 73.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>22</sup>*What on the outside is simply brutal violence - the Crucifixion - from within becomes an act of total self-giving love. This is the substantial transformation which was accomplished at the Last Supper and was destined to set in motion a series of transformations leading ultimately to the transformation of the world when God will be all in all (cf. 1 Cor 15: 28). In their hearts, people always and everywhere have somehow expected a change, a transformation of the world. Here now is the central act of transformation that alone can truly renew the world: violence is transformed into love, and death into life. Since this act transmutes death into love, death as such is already conquered from within, the Resurrection is already present in it. Death is, so to speak, mortally wounded, so that it can no longer have the last word. To use an image well known to us today, this is like inducing nuclear fission*

This radical vision of the Paschal Mystery, of the power of the liturgy and the path set before those who partake in this mystery points to the possibility of a new creation that is once and for all transformed by love. For Benedict this must be the aim of true and lasting progress of peoples and social development. This is the aim of *Caritas in Veritate*.

### Fraternity and Eschatology

By way of an attempt to bring to a close some of these reflections on true development being grounded in human relationship with Christ, we do well to turn to a mystery in the life of Christ which sums up the final vision for the human person centered on union with Christ. In the Transfiguration of the Lord, the path is laid out before the faithful as to what their true destiny is. It is a glimpse of what it means to be in union with the Father by the power of the Holy Spirit, and this glimpse is given in continuity with the whole plan of salvation from the giving of the Law and the summation of the message of the Prophets up to the contemporary union with the apostles, the foundation of the Church. Here, in the vision of the Transfiguration, the destiny of the Church for Trinitarian communion and the ecclesiological identity and mission is given. Here, the shape of the life of the Church on earth is illuminated. What is possible, what love looks like when illuminated by the truth of our identity- this is given in the moment wherein we can gaze upon the Transfigured Christ atop the mountain.

In a commentary on a particular icon of the Transfiguration, a figure close to home helps to illuminate this vision by drawing on a mosaic depiction of this mystery of the life of Christ. This icon of the Transfiguration of Jesus can serve, he says, as a key to interpreting *Caritas in Veritate*, specifically with respect to the true end of man and therefore the shape of authentic human development on earth. Our commentator reminds us of St. Mark's account: "After six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them" (9:2).<sup>23</sup>

This is the vision of Pope Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate*. The fullness of what it means to be a human person is illuminated in this scene of the

---

*in the very heart of being - the victory of love over hatred, the victory of love over death. Only this intimate explosion of good conquering evil can then trigger off the series of transformations that little by little will change the world. All other changes remain superficial and cannot save.* Homily, World Youth Day Eucharistic Liturgy, Cologne-Marienfeld 21 August, 2005.

<sup>23</sup>He goes on to indicate how some of the Christian tradition has situated this testimony in the larger scope of the biblical witness. "Some Fathers of the Church," he explains "have understood the words 'after six days' as an announcement of the fulfillment of creation. That is, the creation of Adam and Eve by God is fulfilled in the revelation of the true man, the new Adam, Jesus Christ, in whom the glory of God dwells bodily. In this light, therefore, the Transfiguration can be celebrated as the feast in which the Church proclaims its vision of comprehensive humanism. Contemplating the beauty of the transfigured Christ makes the disciples desire that the entire world be enveloped by the transfigured light, and act boldly according to this holy desire." Robert Imbelli, "L'Osservatore Romano", Aug 5, 2009.

Transfiguration. It is in communion with God and with fellow human persons that a true humanism becomes possible. This divinely illuminated humanism is the foundation and the true end of all efforts toward justice and human development. As Benedict explained earlier in his career in reflecting on the “last things”, he explains the anthropology at work in this vision that orients the human person outwardly, beyond him or herself. This true human is fulfilled having been conformed to the figure of the God who became a person and the fulfillment is accomplished only in heaven. It is in this perspective that we come to know “the individual’s salvation is whole and entire only when the salvation of the cosmos and all the elect has come to full fruition. For the redeemed are not simply adjacent to each other in heaven. Rather, in their being together as the one [body of] Christ, they *are* heaven.”<sup>24</sup>

## Bibliography

Benedict. *Eschatology, Death and Eternal Life*. Eschatologie, Tod Und Ewiges Leben. English. 1988. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1988.

---- *Introduction to Christianity*. Einführung in Das Christentum. English. 2004. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2004.

---- and Adrian J. Walker. *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*. Jesus Von Nazareth. English. New York: Doubleday, 2007.

---- *The Meaning of Christian Brotherhood*. Christliche Brüderlichkeit. English. 1993. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993.

---- Stephan Otto Horn, and Vinzenz Pfnür. *Pilgrim Fellowship of Faith: The Church as Communion*. Weg Gemeinschaft Des Glaubens. English. 2005. San Francisco, Calif.: Ignatius Press, 2005.

Catholic Church and Benedict. *Charity in Truth: Caritas in Veritate: Encyclical Letter*. Caritas in Veritate; Encyclical Letter Caritas in Veritate of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, the Lay Faithful, and all People of Good Will on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth; Caritas in Veritate. English. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2009.

Catholic Church. *Vatican Council II Constitutions and Decrees*. Edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. Northport, NY: Costello Publishing Company, 1996.

Christopher S. Collins SJ  
USA

<sup>24</sup>*Ibid.*, 238.

## In search of fuel for the fire in our hearts

### Jinhyuk Park SJ

**T**wo contrasting images<sup>1</sup> commonly seen in the state of Jharkand in central India are cow dung and coal carriers. It is very common to see cow dung being dried in the rural areas in India. Usually women collect cow dung, pat them into round shapes like pancakes, which are then dried. These cow dung cakes are natural, ecological, and economical resources for burning and cooking. They are even currently used as an alternative fuel for cremating the dead.<sup>2</sup> It has been proved that cow dung has the added capacity to kill germs and bacteria and heal wounds.

At the same time, we frequently see people laboriously dragging bicycles overloaded with coal and hear the loud horns of huge TATA trucks overloaded with coal. The abundant natural and mineral resources in the state of Jharkand have brought many industries to the state, but paradoxically, this rich resource has resulted in the displacement of many indigenous people who are dispossessed of their land and culture. Poverty has been created by denying these people of their human rights of. Hence the paradox of the state of Jharkand: one of the richest in terms of the natural and mineral resources, and one of the poorest in terms of peoples' livelihoods.

The fact that natural resources are concentrated in places inhabited by poor and indigenous people is a painful clue to how these people and the natural environment have been treated thus far by the blindness of human greed, not only in India but everywhere in the world. Although these resources are entirely gifts of God for every being, the inordinate attachment of mining companies and governments to money and power has hardened their hearts to the plight of the people. These companies and governments have disregarded the people whose identities are connected with land and have destroyed their inherited and preserved lands, forests, water, and the air upon which people and all creatures are dependent. I think that the two images of this reality portray the Two Standards (136) in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius: Lucifer's standard leading people to all vices through riches, honour and pride, and Jesus' standard leading us to all virtues through poverty and humility.

Awareness of this reality of the Two Standards and the desire to be grounded in the perspectives of the oppressed enabled 36 Jesuits and collaborators from the *Africa-Madagascar*, *Asia-Pacific* and *South-Asia* conferences and the Social Justice Secretariat to gather together for the international advocacy workshop. We learned about the experiences of advocating for people in their struggle and reflected on our understanding of Governance of Natural

<sup>1</sup>This imagery is indebted to a sharing of Fernando Franco SJ, the director of Social Justice Secretariat.

<sup>2</sup>Cf. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8269289.stm>

and Mineral Resources (GNMR) and its impact on the vulnerable people and environment, our strengths and weaknesses in advocacy works, and the needs of the future. Given the urgency and nature of interconnectedness of GNMR with environment, justice, and peace, we discerned concrete ways to enhance our advocacy through collaborating and networking in intra-conference levels.

What struck me most during the workshop was the simple fact that the advocacy begins with feeling the pain of people in reality. The highlight for me was to witness the reality through the field trip led by Tony Herbert SJ from Hazaribagh Province. Tony, a missionary from Australia, took us to places where mining has affected the villages and lives of many indigenous communities. As we moved along the mining area, I was left speechless and shocked. A tall pipal tree, sacred for Indians, was scooped out and stood alone, disconnected with its surroundings. It was clear to anyone who looked that this tree was gradually dying. It seemed to represent the sad reality of the tribal peoples who are dispossessed of their ancestral lands while their culture is left to die. When we reached one barren place near one of the coalfields, Tony told us that only a month ago, there were houses there. All I could see were uprooted and fallen trees, a shoe and a schoolbag, smashed bricks, and a huge drilling machine. For some reason, I began to imagine people's laughter, cheerful sounds of children playing, the smell of a mother's cooking and the cries of a hungry baby.

### **All are gone! Where are they now? Who has taken away all the life from here?**

A poignant and deep sadness pierced my heart and tears gathered in my eyes. I sensed the cries of the people, of the land, trees, water, and all creatures echoing from the ruins of this destroyed village. Like Mary Magdalene before the empty tomb (Jn 20:11), I wanted to remain there with a deep sense of powerlessness.

Then we were brought to a village where the displaced tribal peoples from that area now live and welcomed to one house. We listened to their difficulties and asked whether they find anything positive about this new place. With a sad smile, they said that the only positive thing was electricity. How they cope with their deprivation, the loss of their culture and identity, their unexpressed resentment and anxiety, is more than I can imagine. While finding little that is positive in the new reality forced upon them, I found their genuine hospitality towards us and the incredible richness of their humanity amazing.

This richness of the impoverished people was manifested in their ongoing struggles of life. I cannot forget a group of tribal peoples from Netarhat who shared their stories of struggle with us. The Indian Army had come to take over the land of more than 200,000 tribal peoples from 245 villages as a place for their firing exercises. This outrageous infringement of the rights of tribal people for almost 30 years has led to the killing of several people including girls. At last, in

1993, after long years of suffering, people started to make a protest against the forced displacement as a united community. A huge crowd of 5,000 women and men sat together to resist the military forces armed with weapons and trucks. Although they were beaten and threatened, they were not crushed by fear. Women were often in the front line to fight back in a non-violent way against this army force. The army could not oppress the spirit of solidarity of these invincible people. Rather, the dignity radiating through their shared spirit of trust and courage shone in transforming the evil standards of the powerful. When, again, in 2004, the army came back, the communities sat together on the road and prevented them entering the firing place. Their struggles have no end because bauxite-mining companies are now threatening the livelihood of these people and the affected people and creatures are groaning in continuous pain. It was very hard for me not to sigh in sadness. Nevertheless, I was greatly encouraged by the incredible Spirit in their hearts. While they told their stories their faces glowed, revealing the vivid presence of Christ who sat together with them in their midst. I wish I could be baptized with their spirit of courage and trust through sitting there with them!

Throughout the workshop, one question kept recurring in the depths of my heart: Do I really want to be with the poor? I was grateful that these people have rekindled a flame in my heart. Then, how can I keep this flame burning continuously? How can I let the spirit of the Paschal mystery speak to the core of my being? What I can confess is that these 'small', displaced, wounded yet spirited people and creatures have awakened me to a deeper realization of the utter preciousness and sacredness of the weak and the marginalized. In order to let this truth permeate my life, and hopefully, to become '*a fire that kindles other fires*,'<sup>3</sup> all I need to do is to ruminate on a word of Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, the Superior General: 'If the Society loses the umbilical cord with the small people, the Society will lose its identity.'

As long as we choose to remain connected to 'the ultimate source of the fire' that we have experienced through the small people, our shared sense of powerlessness will enable us to see a ray of light from the empty tombs of this world. To reflect this light together, we are invited to choose a *fuel for the fire* in our hearts, something that will shape our way of living and affect the small people and other living beings. So, which one would we like to choose: the wisdom of appreciating the value and origin of 'cow dung', or the skills needed to treat 'others' – people and nature – as a means for the few?

Jinhyuk Park SJ  
Australia

<sup>3</sup>GC 35, D 2.

<sup>4</sup>Fernando Franco SJ shared this word of Fr. General with us during our workshop.

# FATHER JEAN-YVES CALVEZ SJ

## 1927 - 2010



### Homily

Jean-Yves Calvez, our companion, our near, dear friend, has now closed his eyes to the sights of our planet, this human world over which he traveled. We feel sad because he knew how, without imposing himself on others, to be close, to be a friend. But we are joyful that we can grasp in a single figure a life given for the glory of God and the salvation of men, to recall that flow of gifts which he never kept for himself but spent generously for the service of the Church, in the Society of Jesus. How can I convey the simplicity with which he welcomed everyone, refusing to cloak himself in the power of the offices he held or was associated with throughout the years? How can I not try and evoke his way of being at the outposts of humanity, in the midst of a colourful mix, never ceasing to look out for a new dawn?

His apostolic life has a Pauline colouring that strikes the eyes when one sees, as in an instant, the scene of Paul speaking in front of the Areopagus, to announce to the pagans the "God who made the world and all things in it", the God that everyone must "grope for", for he is not conceived according to human models. Yet the Kingdom is very close to man since "we are of his offspring", the offspring of him who "gives to all life and breath, and all things". In order to reveal that God to remote cultures, one must follow Paul's example, seek support, familiarize ourselves with different ways of life, learn new languages, discover works of human genius, read poets from those

cultures, in a word, plunge into those remote areas in search of the "Unknown God". One must go before the thinkers, engage with the skeptics, spend time with those who talk a lot. And not give up when faced with scoffers and cynics. There is no doubt that, in his Jesuit life, Jean-Yves got to meet such Areopagites.

Evangelizing otherness in depth involves heavy risks, tireless work that is never satisfied, courage and patience. That is the law of all serious inculturation which dares to engage with the strangeness of the other without using useless, pious words, and never giving up a favourable predisposition towards the other and his right to be himself. "God can only divinize what man has first humanized" warns Father François Varillon. Echoing those words, Adolfo Nicolas, our new General Superior reflecting on the most urgent needs of the Church today, is not afraid to say: "With easy access to information, our risk is to remain on the surface and thus never be able to make good assessments, or carry out an in-depth reflection, which allows us to reach the sources of hope, meaning and salvation".

Such a vigilant attitude, such high standards only find their roots in faith in the risen Christ who, for the Greeks, was as hard to conceive as he is in the public fora of our societies. Yet "he who believes in me, the works I do shall he do, and greater works than these shall he do". Personal itineraries are as varied as people's faces. For each person is unique. That is why places in the Father's house are also many. Every life is meant to find one day a welcoming home that is especially suitable. "I am the way, the truth and the life". It is within that triangle that we are to grow. Not the truth alone, nor self-proclaimed life, but a way between the two. The truth does not impose itself, it penetrates in us in the depths of silence; it is recognized through the extra life it engenders. God frees our life so that it becomes the way to truth. Welcoming Christ is welcoming the Trinitarian mystery, it is asking everything in his name. By becoming a man, God passed over the impassable. Master of the impossible, the one who is "more intimate to me than myself" is, at the same time, transcendence beyond grasp.

Today, we receive in hope the inheritance of eternal life and, with him who brings us together, we say the prayer that Saint Ignatius left us: "Take and receive, O Lord, all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. You have given all to me. To you, O Lord, I return it. All is yours, dispose of it wholly according to your will. Give me your love and your grace, for this is sufficient for me."

Henri Madelin, SJ

## Tireless! Bertrand Cassaigne SJ

**Tireless and faithful. Faithful to the many bonds, nourished by all the encounters made in a life – “a crossing” – dedicated to the “social question” for nearly 60 years.**

**F**aithful to a rigorous dialogue, initiated very early, with proponents of Marxist socialism. (His first book, as early as 1953, is a study on Law in USSR, published by Armand Colin).

Consistent in his questioning of liberalism ( which for some has become the only way) he contributed to the reflection of American bishops on the economy, a contribution he later made available in a French translation – published by Castella-Cerf, in 1988. Fairly recently, in seminars he gave at the Centre Sèvres, he proposed simultaneously a reflection on Marxism after Marx and an approach of liberalism and the crisis.

Faithful to a discernment of emergencies and aspirations on development, employment, and the impact of globalization and careful to take into account the reality of situations, he drew on research and proposals inspired by the Gospel and by the Church’s discourse which, throughout history, has generated initiatives and commitments. The result was “Christian Social Thinkers “ in 3 volumes published by Cerf.

As early as 1961, he published with Jacques Perrin a big book, *The Church and the Economic Society: The Social Teaching of the Popes* (ed.Montaigne). At the end of 2009, he supervised for the CERAS the last edition of “The Church’s Social Discourse” (ed.Bayard): “A tall tree that we watch grow and expand... which grows further through our discernment and our commitments”, he wrote.

Combining intellectual rigour and dialogue with people driven by a genuine concern for humanity that went beyond their differences and sometimes contradictions, he never ceased to listen to researchers, to scholars and also to committed Christians: in Latin America, in the USA, in Asia, in Russia...

Many of his books reflect that concern. I mention only two of them: “The Church and Society: Dialogue between Russian Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism” (Cerf, 1998) or “The New Century Horizon”, a dialogue with an Argentine scholar which was published in Buenos Aires in 2004).

His outreach was large. He benefited from the innumerable contacts made through the countless debates he was invited to – whether in China, Rome, or Saint-Jacut in Brittany... or contacts developed during the ten-plus years of his term as Assistant of the General Superior of the Jesuits. During

that period in Rome, he played a different role, less of scholarly work, but active, together with Father Arrupe, in concretely inviting all Jesuits worldwide to develop the link between “living one’s faith and the promotion of justice”. Such is the title of a decree promulgated by the 32<sup>nd</sup> Jesuit General Congregation which he actively helped to prepare.

Tireless till the last days, he never ceased to travel all over the world, responding to numerous invitations, giving conferences to groups, parishes, high schools...

He never stopped teaching: since 1973 at the Jesuit Faculty of Philosophy, then at the Institute of Social Studies (the FASSE, which is now part of the Catholic Institute of Paris), at the Institute of Political Studies of Paris, at the Centre Sèvres... He never ceased to provide advice or take initiatives... He was part of the team that restarted the Social Seminars of France, of the First Council of the Jean Rodhain Foundation. In the 90s, he presided over a research team on “Religion and Politics” in the International Association of Political Sciences... He helped set up social centres similar to CERAS on several continents: in Peru, Argentina, Africa (the Inades in Abidjan)...

And of course, he never stopped writing. From his first books in 1953 and 1955 on the Soviet Union and his 1956 best-seller, “Karl Marx’s Thought”, reprinted several times, to the three volumes of “Christian Social Thinkers” and the “80 Words on Globalization” (DDB, 2008).

Throughout the “crossing” that was his life, the CERAS was for Jean-Yves Calvez a stable reference point, his point of departure and a platform from which he never stopped opening up horizons to the larger world while being all the while attentive to the original inspiration (anthropological and theological), as well as the evolutions brought about by today’s changes, both positive and negative. A member of the CERAS team in Vanves from 1959 to 1966, and from 1984 to 1989 (at 14 rue d’Assas), he also served as its director for several years. Nominated to the *Etudes* journal, he remained a member of the steering committee of *Projet*. In September 2003 he joined its editors’ team.

Until the end, he remained for us an advisor, with a great grasp of situations, sharing with us his worldwide experience and his skills for synthesis. He passed on to us his love for the Church at the service of the world.

Bertrand Cassaigne SJ

## Jean-Yves Calvez SJ Pierre de Charentenay SJ

**F**ather Jean-Yves Calvez, editor of the journal *Etudes* from 1989 to 1996, passed away on the night of January 10-11, stricken by a heart attack. He was aged 82. Every reader of *Etudes* remembers his contributions to the journal he ran for six years. His sense of curiosity and his wide knowledge allowed him to engage in diverse fields such as philosophy, social sciences, international issues, but also in religious issues, theology and the Church's social teaching. He had a special concern for justice in the world.

After serving as Jesuit Provincial for France, he was called for a period of fifteen years to Rome, to be Assistant of Father Arrupe, General Superior of the Society of Jesus. As part of his job, he travelled throughout the world to visit Jesuit communities. He met civil and religious authorities from a hundred countries. Back in Paris, he ran the CERAS (Center for Research and Social Action), and after that, the journal *Etudes* starting from September 1989. Very early, he became known as a scholar of worldwide repute thanks to his impressive work on Karl Marx's Thought, published in 1956, at the age of 29. From then on, he wrote more than ten books on economics, development, the Church's social teaching, capitalism and Christian social thinkers. He had a long-standing interest in Russia and in Latin American countries to which he travelled every year.

He wrote benchmark papers for *Etudes* and kept up a fraternal friendship with the journal, advising its editors with rare generosity and availability.

In the name of *Etudes* which owes him so much, I thank you for your condolences and your prayers.

### Biography

Born in Saint-Brieuc on February 3, 1927, Jean-Yves Calvez joined the Society very young, at the age of 16. Ordained priest on July 31, 1957, he took his final vows on February 2, 1961. He passed away in the morning of January 11, 2010, in Paris, victim to a pulmonary oedema with cardiac complications.

Father Calvez is one of the greatest Jesuit figures of the XXnd century. Here is how he presented himself in a brief foreword to his book *Compagnons de Jésus: Un itinéraire*, published in 2000 by Desclée de Brouwer: "I am known to many people for having written, in 1956, a sort of best-seller on Karl Marx,

entitled *Karl Marx's Thought*; for having dedicated my work within the Church on social, economical and political issues; for having studied 'the social doctrine of the Church' and issues related to development; for having served for thirteen years as General Assistant for the Society of Jesus, as a close companion of Father Pedro Arrupe, then General Superior, one of the great figures of revival within the Church after Vatican II".

It is during his theology studies in Chantilly, before he was ordained priest, that Jean-Yves Calvez published his 1956 best-seller on *Karl Marx's Thought*. The book, innovative in many ways, was quickly reprinted in paperback format, which is still in print. It is said to have been recommended within the Soviet communist Party. A fine connoisseur of Marxism and of the USSR – his first book is entitled *Constitutional Law and Sovereignty in the USSR* – he developed many contacts with the Soviet world, together with Father Chambre, another Jesuit expert of the USSR. He prepared a doctoral thesis on XIXth century German philosophers, which he never found time to defend.

Passionate about social, economic and political issues, a perfect polyglot (he spoke Russian, Spanish, English, German, Italian... fluently, passing very easily from one language to another), Father Calvez lectured at the Fontaines Faculty of Philosophy in Chantilly. He was director of *Action Populaire* (that gave birth to CERAS of which he remained a member), the founder of the INADES in Africa, director of the Institute of Social Studies (IES), and lecturer at the Institute of Political Sciences in Paris. He travelled a lot during those years, notably to Latin American countries, with which he had very strong ties of friendship and respect all his life.

In 1967, he was made first President of French Provincials (there were four of them back then) with the mission of unifying the four Provinces in a single Province of France. He was noticed at the 31st General Congregation of the Society of Jesus (1967-1968) and called to assist Father General in 1971. At the 32nd General Congregation, he was made General Assistant which he remained until the 33rd General Congregation in 1983 (when Father Kolvenbach was chosen as the new General Superior).

Father Calvez was a close collaborator and esteemed advisor of Father Arrupe. He played an active role in the preparation of the 32nd General Congregation (1974-1975) which promulgated the decree entitled "Our Mission Today: Service of Faith and Promotion of Justice". He worked hard with Father Arrupe to have the decrees of the General Congregation welcomed in the Society of Jesus, facing with great courage all the challenges that came along. When Father Arrupe suffered a thrombosis which left him unable to govern (1981), Father Calvez remained at the side of Father Paolo Dezza, named by Pope John Paul II as "Pontifical Delegate for the Society of

Jesus". He then worked to prepare a new General Congregation in order to elect a successor to Father Arrupe.

Father Calvez dedicated much effort to spread Father Arrupe's writings. He helped bring out an excellent collection of Father Arrupe's texts under the title *Writings for Evangelization*, published in 1985 by Desclée de Brouwer Bellarmin. Most recently, he contributed to the publication by Lessius Pbsch of *Pedro Arrupe, General Superior of the Jesuits (1965-1983): Government by a Prophet*.

When he came back to France, Father Calvez ran the CERAS from 1984 to 1989, before serving as Editor of the journal *Etudes* from 1989 to 1995 and teaching at the Public Ethics Department of the Jesuit Faculties of Paris, Centre Sèvres, which he ran from 2002 to 2006. At Cardinal Lustiger's request, he gave the Lent Conferences at Notre-Dame. During all those years, Father Calvez developed a great many contacts throughout the world, notably in Argentina where he went regularly to deliver summer lectures. He was a member of Georgetown University's Board of Directors.

Father Calvez had a large role in spreading the social teaching of the Catholic Church through his greatest works, which retraced its history through the great figures of Christian social thinkers (two books published by Cerf). He had begun working on those issues in a 1961 treatise entitled *The Church and the Economic Society*.

For knowing more [link](#)

Note: We are grateful to Fr. Thierry Lamboley SJ, responsible of the [site internet](#) of France Province for allowing the publication of these texts.

**Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat**

**Borgo S. Spirito 4 – 00193 ROMA – ITALY**

**+39 06689 77380 (fax)**

**[sjs@sjcuria.org](mailto:sjs@sjcuria.org)**