

Jesuits in Dialogue

the interreligious dimension



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reports from Jesuits in:

Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Lebanon, Morocco, Spain, Syria, U.S.A., Zimbabwe

THE TRAVAILS OF DIALOGUE

The Dialogic Turn

Prior to the Second Vatican Council the Catholic Church had been polemically arrayed against other groups, including the non-Christian religions, non-Catholic Christianity, and the modern world. John XXIII deserves the credit for having seen that this posture was interfering with the mission of the Church. Following his lead, Vatican II renounced anathematization and espoused dialogue. The new stance of the Church was expressed during the Council by Paul VI's encyclical, *Ecclesiam suam* (1964). God, he maintained, initiated a dialogue of salvation by turning to the world in love, making himself accessible through revelation and appealing for the free response of faith. Imitating God's action in Christ, the Church must address the world in the spirit of dialogue. It should clearly proclaim the message of salvation as revealed truth, but should do so humbly, in a Spirit of trust and respect for the sensitivities of the hearers. Such a Church would listen before speaking and would be alert to discover the elements of truth in the opinions of others.

Paul VI in this encyclical spoke of three concentric circles of dialogue with those outside the Church - the world, the monotheistic religions, and the other Christian communities. Then, in a closing section, he spoke of the possibilities of dialogue within the Catholic Church itself - a dialogue predicated on the supposition that the members of the Church are bound by the word of God and are obedient to the authorities instituted by Christ. By setting evangelization within the context of dialogue, while continuing to insist on authority and submission, Paul VI made an important though cautious advance.

Pope John XXIII had founded the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in 1960. Paul VI, implementing his own vision of the three concentric circles that surrounded the Church of Rome, set up additional secretariats for Dialogue with Non-Christian Religions and with Non-Believers. The three secretariats corresponded to the documents of Vatican II on Ecumenism, on Non-Christian Religions, and on the Church in the Modern World.

John Paul II was an enthusiastic participant at the Second Vatican Council, and in his book *Sources of Renewal* he sought to explain for the people of his diocese of Krakow the importance of dialogue within the Church and with the three great sectors of humanity that lie beyond the visible limits of the Church. The concept of dialogue appeals to this pope because of his personalist orientation in philosophy. He pays tribute to philosophers of dialogue, such as Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, for having enriched human self-understanding. In his philosophical work *The Acting Person*, the future pope maintained that the principle of dialogue is very aptly suited to the structure of human communities insofar as it strengthens human solidarity and promotes constructive communal life.

As pope, John Paul II has continued to emphasize this theme in his great apostolic exhortations. In *Reconciliatio et poenitentia* (1984) he speaks of the importance of "permanent and renewed dialogue within the Catholic Church herself" and of the need to listen to others with respect, to refrain from all hasty judgements, and to subordinate personal opinions to matters of faith. In his encyclical on ecumenism, *Ut unum sint* (1995), he speaks at length of dialogue as a means for examining the disagreements that hinder full communion among Christians.

Love for the Truth, he says, is essential to dialogue, but it must be accompanied by charity toward one's partners in dialogue and humility with regard to the truth that comes to light, attitudes especially needed when the dialogue seems to call for a revision of one's own previous assertions and attitudes. In his encyclical on the Church's missionary activity, *Redemptoris Missio* (1990), the pope calls for dialogue with the followers of other religions, but he emphasizes that this does not take the place of missionary proclamation, which always remains necessary. Through dialogue, he says, the Church seeks to discover seeds of the Word and rays of truth in other religions. Dialogue also leads the Church to examine her own identity more deeply and to improve the quality of her own witness.

The strong approval given to dialogue by the recent popes puts the Catholic Church unequivocally on record as favoring this style of encounter. But dialogue, as the Church understands it, makes heavy demands that there are not always respected. The term is often used carelessly, deceptively, and abusively to mean something else than what the Church understands by dialogue.

Ambiguities of Dialogue

First of all, it should be said that dialogue, properly understood, is an excellent thing, whether carried on within the Church or between the different Christian churches or different religions. But it needs to be kept in mind that authentic dialogue is premised on truth and is directed to an increment of truth. Where the conditions are not met, true dialogue cannot occur. For example, if one of the parties is not interested in a serious search for consensus in the truth but only in gaining public recognition or in extorting concessions, dialogue would be a deception. Paul VI in *Ecclesiam suam* remarked that atheistic Communism was perverting discussion by using it not to seek

and express truth but to serve predetermined utilitarian ends, and this strategy, he said, "puts an end to dialogue" (ES107). Cardinal Ratzinger, recalling the student uprisings of 1968, declared that he then learned the lesson that there are times when dialogue would become a lie and would amount to collaboration with terrorism. To turn to a more classical example, Jesus evidently judged that on certain occasions excoriation rather than dialogue should be directed at the Pharisees. And when brought to trial before Herod, Jesus responded not with dialogue but with silence. In our day, groups that call for dialogue in order to confront the Church with inexorable demands must be met with a firm refusal.

In a number of the ecumenical dialogues carried on in recent years the question of truth has in fact been focal. Important and unexpected convergences have in some cases been achieved. But like anything human, ecumenical dialogue has its limits. If the aim is to bring the churches into closer harmony, the members of the dialogue teams will have to accept a certain discipline. They must adhere to the traditions of their respective communities and have a realistic sense of how far these communities can go without betraying their authentic heritage. If the dialogue produces ambiguous statements or agreements that will be repudiated by the communities, it could do positive harm to the ecumenical cause.

Dialogue is not a panacea. It does not automatically lead to full consensus. In all honesty, dialogue teams will sometimes have to declare that they cannot overcome certain hard-core differences on which the partner churches cannot both be right. Theologians do not have the authority to change the doctrines of their churches, and it is unfair to expect them to arrive at full agreement unless the churches are prepared to change their respective doctrines.

Interreligious dialogue can also be very productive if conducted without abandonment of principles and without false irenicism, according to the principles set forth in the encyclical *Redemptoris missio*. But the dialogue among the great religions has been recently plagued by a relativistic pluralism. If methodological rules are laid down that require the parties to renounce or conceal the points on which they disagree, dialogue can become inhibitive and impoverishing. The fault lies not with dialogue itself but with theorists who seek to evade the rigorous demands of dialogue.

Referring to interreligious relations, the Holy See published in 1991 an important document on "Dialogue and Proclamation." Dialogue, it declared, "does not mean that the partners should lay aside their respective religious convictions. The opposite is true.

The sincerity of interreligious dialogue requires that each enter into it with the integrity of his or her own faith. ... Interreligious dialogue and proclamation, though not on the same level, are both authentic elements of the Church's evangelizing mission. ... They are intimately related. ... True interreligious dialogue on the part of the Christian supposes the desire to make Jesus Christ better known, recognized and loved (DP 48, 77). As for dialogue within the Church, it is always in order if the purpose is to understand church teaching better, to present it more persuasively, and to implement it in a pastorally effective way. But the conditions laid down by Paul VI must be kept in mind. He made it clear that obedience to ecclesiastical authority, rather than independence and criticism, must prevail (*Ecclesiam suam* 1, 18-19).

The conditions for intraecclesial dialogue are not easy to realize today in a society such as our own. Open discussion may be

counterproductive if its purpose is to prolong debate on issues that are ripe for decision or to legitimize positions that the teaching authorities have decisively rejected. Far from achieving consensus, such dialogue would serve to build up mutually opposed constituencies and thus further polarize the Church. Under present conditions, any proposal for dialogue with the Church must be very carefully formulated if it is not to expand the zone of disagreement within the Church. An imprudent yielding to pleas for tolerance and diversity could easily weaken the Church as a community of faith and witness.

Polarization is not normally the result of clear and confident teaching of the Church's heritage of faith. It is more likely to arise when the true teaching is obscured by the indulgence of contrary opinions. The hierarchical magisterium must be vigilant to prevent and correct error in matters of doctrine. Pastoral authorities who are fully conscious of their responsibilities will not use dialogue as a subterfuge for avoiding the onerous tasks of their office. They will rise to the challenge of Paul's admonition to Timothy to "convince, rebuke, and exhort," and to be "unfailing in patience and in teaching" (2 *Tim* 4:2).

Authentic dialogue, even at its best, has limits. It cannot appropriately replace every other form of communication. Evangelization, as Paul VI and John Paul II have insisted, is a permanent priority of the Church. Dialogue, to be sure, has a legitimate place in all missionary witness, credal confession, dogmatic teaching, and catechetical instruction, but these proclamatory modes of discourse are not reducible to dialogue pure and simple. A paramount internal need for the Church today is the faithful transmission of the Catholic patrimony as embodied in works such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Christian proclamation, even when conducted within a context of dialogue, presupposes that there is a divine revelation, embodying the truth that leads to eternal life. All revelation, in the Christian understanding, comes from the divine Word, which is one and eternal. When Christians engage in dialogue, they do so with the hope of making that one Word better known. In a sense, therefore, Christianity is mono-logic. Authentic dialogue would be futile unless it helped us to hear the one divine Word. "This is my beloved Son; listen to him" (Mk 9:8).

Avery Dulles, S.J.

[These excerpts were taken from the Laurence J. McGinley Lecture delivered on 19.11.96. The full version of Fr. Dulles' paper can be obtained by writing our Secretariat.]

SAMSKRITI:

In Dialogue with Popular Culture

Samskriti is a cultural research institute operated by the Kerala Province under the direction of Joseph Pallathu, S.J. It is located in the Kannur district of Kerala state in India. The etymological meaning of Samskriti is 'culture of simple people,' that part of the environment which is made by the original humankind.



Christians, Hindus and Muslims lighting the lamp of harmony

SAMSKRITI - THE INSTITUTE

The world is in the grip of a dominant one-dimensional consumer culture which denies bio-cultural and technological diversity through the imposition of mono-technology. In the name of modernization we readily take to this technoculture, relinquishing the diversities of our original culture. Due to its peculiar geographic position and sociocultural history, Kerala has imbibed all the anomalies of modern culture in the name of development. Samskriti considers the anomalies of Kerala as a cultural problem which can be solved only through a cultural approach.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAMMES

1. To conduct ongoing analytical cultural research on the simple cultures (tribal, caste, peasant) to bring out its human values and to expose the dehumanizing influence of civilization (urban technoculture).
2. To conduct studies of culture, including a diploma course in folklore, culturology and traditional technology, in order to train the trainers of the modern generation to appreciate folk, ethnic and traditional ways.
3. To build up a resource centre for cultural studies with documents, reference books, audio-video cassettes, teaching/training aids etc. and to make it available to research investigators and also to the general public.
4. To promote traditional technology, introducing new designs to produce modern market-friendly products.
5. To establish a demonstration and production centre employing eco-friendly traditional technology to produce viable products in the modern market.
6. To develop cultural circles in various parts of Kerala intended to act as nuclei groups to

develop an alternative way of life which respects our original culture and nature.

7. To provide a natural space for individuals and groups, particularly the culturally alienated, to get an experience of an alternative life style based on indigenous world-view and development.
8. To develop a museum of folk and ethnic arts and a herbal research nursery together with a herbarium to promote and protect particularly those cultural elements and medicinal plants which are becoming extinct.
9. To create an alternative publishing initiative that would publish the ethnic and folk cultural research findings of Samskriti, as well as of like-minded organizations and individuals.
10. To conduct seminars, workshops, and training programmes to create an awareness of and a sensitivity to culture and cultural pluralism.

SAMSKRITI CULTURAL CIRCLES

Samskriti is building up 'cultural circles' all over Kerala. The main purpose is to create interest among the younger generation in an alternative understanding of development and a way of life based on an ethno-folk traditional world view. This, it is hoped, will serve as a counter-cultural movement against modern civilisations which deny myth, symbols and rituals, both secular and sacred. The cultural circles also use folk art forms for awareness-building towards people's organizations. One can learn more about Samskriti by writing to: Samskriti, Institute of Cultural Research and Action, Pariyaram P.O., Kannur 670 502, Kerala, India.

SCHOLASTICS' IMMERSION IN MUSLIM MAGHREB

In July 1997, the Maghreb region of the Society of Jesus organized a scholastics' meeting which brought together about twenty Jesuits. The composition of this group was diverse: mostly Spanish but also from Belgium, Italy, Malta, Rwanda, Poland, Mexico, Peru and Chile. Beyond our countries of origin, our various interests and backgrounds were also diverse. Some are destined for West Africa, others work

with emigrants, still others are concerned about Islamic or Mediterranean questions.

The meeting began in Granada, Spain, where the scholastics benefited from a reflection and exchange session on Muslim-Christian relations organized by the Faculty of Theology and the bishops of the Maghreb. This year, the specific subject was Islam as a religion. It was very interesting for us to meet people working in Islamic countries and others working with Muslim migrant workers in Spain. What we lacked in Granada, however, were representative Muslims.

Once in Morocco, the group joined Jesuits from the Maghreb region who finished their meeting in Rabat. History was made, for there has never been so many Jesuits gathering in Morocco (about forty). The Rabat session consisted of conferences given by various people: the Archbishop of Rabat, Moroccan teachers, an Austrian woman married to a Moroccan and, of course, Jesuits. They enabled us to gain insights on the history and political situation, the Moroccan way of living Islam, and how the Church is considered in the country. Beyond the conferences, we had opportunities to visit several works of the Church and the Society. Very interesting was the dispersal of the participants across the country in groups of two or three persons in order to get more familiar with the situation. During these travels and thanks to the Church people who received us, the group met Moroccans belonging to extremely diverse social classes: inhabitants of slums, married couples from the 'new Moroccan middle class', villagers, urban dwellers etc. The meeting succeeded in achieving a good rate of participation, with Jesuits of Granada and Morocco giving us a good reception, offering opportunities to get familiar with the country and Islam, and expressing their hopes and fears for the future. The visit followed the path opened

up by Hubert Hirien who made his regency in Oran, Algeria, four years ago. Now it is the turn of Jesus Leon who is doing regency in Temara, Morocco (address: B.P. 4148, 12000 Temara, Morocco). Many thanks to him, to Jean d'Ales, Regional Superior, and to all the priests in Morocco for their work. Now we are waiting for other scholastics who will carry on this tradition in the future.

Josep Buades Fuster, S.J.



European scholastics during their summer program in Morocco

ISLAM MADE ME REFLECT

When my studies in philosophy at De Nobili College, Pune, were coming to an end, I wondered where my provincial would send me for regency. I had already told him that I wanted to do at least part of my regency in a Muslim village in order to learn Urdu and get practical experience of Muslim life. I had also shared this concern with friends, some of whom voiced doubts and tried to dissuade and discourage me from pursuing this project. Far from discouraging me, however, their attitude forced me to fall back on previous personal experiences and prayer, and also to look for an opportunity to enter into the life of Muslims.

The opportunity came with Mr. Ifran Muhammad who made me aware of Muslims as a people of God. I was inspired, not only by his daily visits to the

mosque and his fervent prayer, but also by his ability to practice the faith he professed. I found him generous, truthful and God fearing. Ifran created a space within me for Muslims and for the Muslim faith, culture and tradition.

The language of any people is essential for appreciating their culture, faith and way of life, not only because language is the medium for recording and developing these aspects of a people, but also because it is

itself an expression of the traditions, culture, history, spirituality and emotions of a people. Hence, mastery of Urdu, the language of the Muslims, was essential for me. To my joy my provincial accepted my proposal. Bishop Patrick Nair of Meerut diocese and the parish priest of the Catholic Church in Rataul readily granted me permission to stay in the Church and learn Urdu in Rataul. Rataul is a typical North Indian Muslim village with many mosques and *madrassas*. A shrine of an unknown Sufi saint stands as a symbol of the spiritual nourishment that most Indian Muslims cherish and celebrate. The Catholic Church was founded by Italian Capuchins who, after experiencing rejection in many other villages, found themselves welcomed with open arms as People of the Book by the Muslims of Rataul. Mr. Noor-ud-din happily accepted to teach me Urdu after expressing surprise at my interest in Islam and Urdu. He asked me to come to his shop for the tuition. And in the course of

time his shop became the centre for happy meetings with many other Muslims of the village.

I give total credit to God's grace for giving me Mr. Noor-uddin as my teacher. We began meeting as student and teacher, but within a very short span of time we became, in his words, 'friends in Allah'. I found him very trustworthy, and a man of integrity. He not only taught me Urdu but also showed me through his example what it means to be a good Muslim today. I was deeply moved by the conviction with which he spoke about Allah, the one God and Creator. Like other Muslims, he greatly admired Jesus and his mother Mary, and the Christian Scriptures. He explained various aspects of early Islam and narrated with great reverence the life of the holy prophet, Muhammad. Even though I had read all he had to tell me in books, listening to him was an altogether new experience because it now became an invitation to share in his faith experience.

He was a pious Muslim, and it was spiritually enriching for me to watch him go to the mosque daily five times a day. As the days passed I came to realize that his going to the mosque to pray the *namaz* was more than just the fulfilling of an obligation. It was an expression of his love and submission to Allah, the Creator and Sustainer.

We also had many lively discussions on various social issues like the lack of modern education among Muslims in general, and Muslim women in particular. He firmly believed that education is not merely learning and mastering scientific principles. Education, he said, "is something from within which shapes the human person so that he can experience God and thus learn to love other people." He stressed the experiential aspect of one's relationship with God by saying, "Knowing God! Even Satan knows God. But he does not experience God." However, he could not really talk to me convincingly about the present day social evils women experience.

He knew this, but all he could do was to bring up the holy prophet's attitude to women. Never for a moment did I feel uncomfortable with him. Meeting him was an educating experience for I began to understand what a Muslim thinks about, and how he nourishes his spiritual life with the love of God. Right through my stay I found many people to converse with. To those who were largely uneducated, a Catholic learning Urdu and listening to their experiences was something new. They showed keen interest in listening to what I had to say, and they never brought up age old Christian-Muslim controversies and disputes.

Today, when I sit back and reflect on these experiences and try to integrate them into my life, I feel a strong moving silence overpowering me. I realize in the depth of my being that my exchanges with Noor-ud-din and the other Muslims has been a grace from God helping me to experience Islam as a great faith that is lived out by millions of my Muslim brethren.

Victor Edwin, S.J.

SHAMANISM: KOREAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION

Fr. Dan Kister, S.J. of Sogang University in Seoul has recently published *Korean Shamanist Ritual*, a new study of Korean Shamanism. Part One treats of the world of Korean Shamanist ritual, centering its attention on village rites, the realms of the sacred, the role of the *mudang* [medium], and rites of death. Part Two concentrates on the dynamics, the comedy, and aesthetics of Shamanist ritual drama. The work was published in Budapest by the International Society for Shamanistic Research.

Important New Books

We would like to announce the publication of two new books by Jesuits on interreligious themes that should be of interest to many Jesuits. Both works are magisterial treatments of their subjects and both have been highly acclaimed since their recent publication. We especially recommend these works for the libraries of our philosophates and theologates.

1. *Toward a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, by Jacques Dupuis, S.J., professor of theology at the Gregorian University in Rome. This work was published simultaneously in English (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997), in Italian, *Verso una Teologia Cristiana del Pluralismo Religioso* (Brescia: Ed. Queriniana, 1997), and in French, *Vers une théologie chrétienne de pluralisme religieux* (Paris. Ed. du Cerf, 1997). We can give an idea of the comprehensive scope of this work by listing the chapter titles:

Part One: An Overview of Christian Approaches to Religions

1. The Religions of the Nations in the Bible
2. The Cosmic Christ in the Early Fathers
3. No Salvation outside the Church?
4. The Substitutes for the Gospel
5. Theological Perspectives surrounding Vatican II
6. Vatican II and the Postconciliar Magisterium on Religions
7. The Debate over Theology of Religions

Part Two: One God - One Christ - Convergent Paths

8. History and Covenants: One and Many
9. Word of God - Single and Universal
10. Faces of the Divine Mystery
11. Jesus Christ - One and Universal
12. Paths to Salvation
13. The Reign of God, the Religions, and the Church
14. Interfaith Dialogue - Praxis and Theology

2. *Cominciando da Gerusalemme: La sorgente della fede e dell'esistenza cristiana* [Beginning from Jerusalem: the Font of Christian Faith and Existence], by Francesco Rossi de Gasperis, S.J., member of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Jerusalem. This work intends to respond to the question: How do we as Christians evaluate theologically the people of Israel in today's historical context? It treats the following topics:

Part One: The People of the Holy One

1. The Gospel always begins from Jerusalem
2. My nation is Israel
3. Israel: the holy root of our faith
4. Continuity and newness in the faith of the mother church of Jerusalem
5. A new Judeo-Christianity and its possible ecclesial relevance
6. The permanence of Israel: a meditation between Jerusalem and Rome

Part Two: The Scriptures of the Holy One

7. The prophecy of Jerusalem in the Hebrew and Christian Bible
8. The Biblical theme of Jerusalem, spouse of God, in the Two Testaments
9. The transference of worship and sacrifice from Mount Zion to Golgotha
10. Jewish and Christian readings of the *Old Testament*
11. A new Christian reading of the Bible after the *Sho'ah*?

Part Three: The Land and the City of the Holy One

12. Jews and Christians together in today's church in Jerusalem and in the Diaspora
13. Jesus Christ without Israel; Israel without Jesus: the Constantinian presumption and Jewish post-Christian sufficiency
14. Why return to Jerusalem?
15. The Promised Land, a gift to be shared
16. The meaning of Christian presence in Jerusalem
17. The Jerusalem of Above and that of Below: the pilgrimage from "earth" to "heaven"

We hope that this work will be eventually translated into other languages for the benefit of those who do not read Italian.

THE INSTITUTE OF ISLAMO-CHRISTIAN STUDIES (Beirut)

L'IEIC is an institute of the St. Joseph University of Beirut, located on the ground floor of the Oriental Library on the Achrafieh campus in Beirut. It was created in 1977 to help Christians and Muslims to come to a mutual understanding of their respective religious traditions in a spirit of respect and according to academic methods. During the war in Lebanon, the Institute continuously pursued its activities. Strong bonds have been built between IEIC and the Makassed Higher Institute of Higher Studies, signified by an agreement signed in 1996. The Institute is open to various currents of Christianity and Islam. It undertakes various activities:

I. TEACHING

- introductory and advanced courses in the two traditions
 - for the past two years, monthly conferences on bioethics
 - research seminars, for example, on *living together, medieval philosophical ethics, human relations in the period of the Crusades*.
- Every teaching activity is presented by two speakers, a Christian and a Muslim.

In the 1997/98 scholastic year, a **Diploma of Aptitude for Research in Islamo-Christian Studies (DARIC)** will offer formation at the level of the Diploma of Advanced Studies (DEA). To this end, agreements have been reached with French universities.

II. RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

The research seminars have resulted in publications. Moreover, three works have been published in recent years by Dar el Machreq: *Méthode rhétorique et*

herméneutique and *Déclarations communes islamo-chrétiennes* (in both Arabic and French versions). The Documentation Center has an extensive collection of publications on Islamo-Christian studies.

Should any of our readers desire further information on the Diploma of Aptitude for Research on Islamo-Christian Studies, the Jesuit Secretariat for Interreligious Dialogue in Rome will be happy to supply such information. One can also write directly to: Université Saint-Joseph, Institut d'Etudes Islamo-Chrétiennes, B.P. 166 778, Achrafieh, Beyrouth, Liban. Tél. (961-1) 202 906; 329 799; fax: (961-1) 200 297.

SOCIAL ANALYSIS WORKSHOPS FOR MUSLIMS

Indonesian Catholic social workers including four priests were involved in a pioneering social analysis workshop in central Java organized by a Muslim youth organization. "Most speakers in the workshop were Jesuit priests. We came to learn that they are qualified in social analysis with a touch of theology, especially that of liberation theology," said Yoshida Agus Ramadhan, chairman of the Semarang subdistrict of the Nahdlatul Ulama Youth Communication Forum (*Forum Komunikasi Generasi Muda Nahdlatul Ulama*).

His organization made a breakthrough in interreligious cooperation by requesting funds from the social research and development institute of the Bishops' Conference of Indonesia and by inviting priests as trainers in the nine-day workshop, said Ramadhan.

He explained that social analysis is much needed by Youth Forum members involved in animation and empowerment of poor Muslims at the grassroots level. "Our

activists need the knowledge to analyze the causes of poverty in their efforts to empower the little people. To combat poverty, we need to cooperate with others including Catholics," Ramadhan said.

Fr. Aloysius Suryawasita, S.J., was the single speaker-trainer for the first seven days of the workshop. The priest said he was happy to have the opportunity to train Muslims. "It has been my longtime dream to cooperate with Muslims in combating the poverty suffered by the majority of Muslims in Indonesia. This is a good opportunity to share with them about the causes of poverty and social disparities in our country," Fr Suryawasita said.

Fr. Redemptus Hardaputranta, S.J., director of the social institute of the Episcopal Conference, who made a workshop presentation on community empowerment programmes, affirmed that the institute welcomed the bold initiative of Nahdlatul Ulama Youth Communications Forum. Thirty members representing chapters from throughout Java attended the Aug 7 to 15 workshop in Salatiga, in Central Java.

"Our social fund is not only for Catholics. We serve people from all faiths. We welcome the initiative for cooperation from good-willed groups involved in the empowerment of the poor," Fr. Hardaputranta said. "If we are concerned with poverty in the country, then we should pay attention to poor Muslims, who are the majority of the poor nationwide." He added that organizing a social analysis workshop with funds and speakers from the Catholic Church showed the members of the Youth Forum that poverty and backwardness could be combated effectively through joint efforts. Further cooperation was proposed by

Fr. Johannes Pujasumarta, Director of Yayasan Garam (the Salt Foundation), a

Catholic social organization dealing with street children in Semarang, the capital of the province of Central Java. Fr. Pujasumarta told workshop participants that his organization needs Muslim social workers, because "all the children we serve are Muslims." He explained that many street children served by Garam asked Catholic volunteers to teach them Islamic prayer, "but we could not fulfill their request, because we have no Muslim social workers."

RELIGIONS AND ECOLOGY

A recent issue (no. 22) of *Future Generations Journal* published by the Foundation for International Studies of the University of Malta focuses on the question of religions and ecology. Articles treat of Jewish, Christian, Islamic, Bahai, and Buddhist approaches to the need to respect and protect the earth. The editorial sums up the intention of the university's Future Generations Programme: "Hand in hand, guided by a new common vision that is gradually taking shape through dialogue between the religions and the sincere efforts of all people of good will, we can re-member the earth and make it a welcoming home for present and future generations to live in." The subsequent issue (no. 23) presents Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam, an Israeli/Palestinian experiment in living together founded by the Egyptian Dominican, Fr. Bruno Hussar, O.P. Those interested in further information about the FGP can write to: Mr. Lionel Chircop, Project officer, "Future Generations Programme," University Building, St. Paul's Street, Valletta VLT 07, Malta. Fax: 356.230551.

Two Jesuit scholastics of the East Asian Assistancy, Christopher Soh (Malaysia) and Martin Carl (Micronesia) have produced a new video on the East Asian Scholastics/Brothers Circle seminar on "Jesuits and Interreligious Dialogue." The video includes encounters between the East Asian Jesuits and Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs in their places of worship.

Johnny Go (Philippines), professor of social communications at the Ateneo de Manila, describes the video as of 'high technical and artistic quality.' The video would be useful for initiating community discussions or province-wide reflection on the theme of "Our Mission and Interreligious Dialogue."

New Video "FRIENDS IN DIALOGUE" Jesuits in Dialogue with the Religious Traditions of Asia

The video is about 25 minutes in length and costs U.S. \$ 7.00 plus shipping. One can order the video from the Jesuit Communications Foundation, Ateneo de Manila, Loyola Heights, 1108 Quezon City, P.O. Box 154, Manila, Philippines. Be sure to indicate if you want the video in NTSC or PAL format.

High school and university teachers will also find it helpful both for stimulating discussion on the Christian commitment to interreligious dialogue and as a vocational tool to make better known this aspect of Jesuit mission.

DIALOGUE AMONG CHRISTIANS IN DIALOGUE WITH MUSLIMS

The dramatic nature of many situations of conflict, tension, oppression and backwardness suffered by Christian minorities in the Islamic world, together with tendencies or movements among Muslims towards anachronistic theocracies, make discussions among Catholic scholars on the subject of relations with Muslims so burdened with contingent historical implications that it is difficult to remain calm, open, and approachable amidst the

clash of views. The situation in Algeria is clearly not that of the Middle East nor that of Central Asia etc., and is obviously much different from Muslim-Christian relations in Europe or America.

Yet it seems possible to distinguish three basic approaches, admitting many subtle variations from one place to another. In describing these basic attitudes, we do not propose to choose one over against the others, but rather to understand the reasons for them. Obviously my effort here is not meant to exhaust the subject.

1) **Aversion to Islam.** Arguments are brought forward to show the error of that religion, the baseless nature of the pretensions of its prophet, its historical and social aberrations, its inbuilt anti-Christian attitude etc.

The consequence is to foresee an inevitable clash of civilizations and to put oneself on guard against naive and dialogical or irenic illusions. Here one places one's hope in the supremacy of the Church and the Christian world as a prelude to eschatological victory. The risk is that the failure of that hope to be realized can make one perceive Islam as a divine curse, thus placing worrisome questions about God, especially among Christian minorities spread throughout the Muslim world.

2) **Openness toward Islam.** Arguments are brought forward to show the presence of authentic human values in the Muslim world, the complexity of the personality of its prophet, the cultural richness of Islamic civilization, its ability to evolve in a modern sense etc.

The consequence is a readiness to seek peaceful sharing of life, friendship, evangelical service without proselytism, respect and reciprocal esteem, together with a strong claim to the values of justice, human rights - particularly those of women - and to values such as the secular nature of the state, equality, and national identity. Here the hope is that of a social harmony that would favor evolution in the Islamic vision of the world and, in eschatological perspective, a crisis that would permit even Muslims to accede to the manifestation of the truth of the Church and of Christ as Lord. The risk is that of remaining disappointed at fundamentalist developments in Islam rather than its modernization and evolution toward shared human values. Those having this attitude can be thus tempted to ally themselves with lay and anti-Islamic tendencies.

3) **Love for Islam.** Arguments are brought to show the transcendence of the Islamic spiritual and religious experience, the authenticity and sincerity of Muhammad's prophethood, the legitimacy of an Islamic project of social organization etc.

The consequence is dialogical interaction without apologetic intent, an interest in the Muslim vocation within the context of the history of salvation, an interpretative effort to overcome and give value to doctrinal difficulties and contradictions, and a concrete readiness to live as a minority in an "Islamic" society. Here the hope is that Islam will achieve its own proper vocation and that the Church can cooperate to the leavening of this dough, until Jesus come eschatologically to manifest the Reign, purifying and even perfecting all that pertains to him. The risk is one of obscuring the ecclesial and Christocentric identity and efficacy of Christian history, hence the danger of relativism and of dimming the Christian hermeneutical compass-point of history.

It is likely that most Christians working in this field will find themselves reflecting more or less one or another of these attitudes, but not exclusively so. In any case, they will find this schema inadequate. Nevertheless, it does serve to show the need for dialogue on evangelical grounds among those whom the Church and the Spirit have sent into "the world of Islam," as well as among those who have been called by birth to be Christians in predominantly Muslim societies.

On the methodological plane, we must accept graciously that to both charismatic pluralism and to that which results from various historical and geographical contingencies there pertains a certain legitimate theological and spiritual plurality. Each must strive to be faithful to the Spirit-driven aspect of one's choices and commitment without absolutizing their

form. Even more, each must be ready to purify these continually from any overly 'natural' elements.

To achieve this it is necessary that those involved in this field should be ready to confront together questions involving relations between the Church and Islam in a serious way and in a spirit of listening and seeking. No one has the right to drag the Church to one's side, but we all have the responsibility of putting at the disposition of others the fruits of our experiences of seeking the will of God. What must not happen, but which in fact happens too often, is to yield to the temptation to caricature the positions of others and to render them absurd and erroneous. It is not a matter of trying to

homogenize views, but rather of learning to esteem and appreciate each other in the functional diversity of our vocations. We have to be conscious of our doubts, embarrassments, and anxieties concerning positions taken by others and to communicate them - in order to go beyond them, not in order to sanctify them. The result might be to constitute a type of *common position or doctrine without pretending to have achieved any uniform policy*. The important thing is to avoid pigeon-holing, stamping, ridiculing, and pushing to extremes the views of others. It is to be hoped that such an effort would, in our relations with Islam, constitute a positive witness and an efficacious evangelization.

Paolo Dall'Oglio, S.J.

CULTURAL DIALOGUE: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The third Latin American meeting of Jesuits in pastoral work among indigenous peoples was held in Quito, Ecuador in July, 1997. Taking part were 27 Jesuits from 9 Latin American countries, almost one-third of the ±90 Jesuits in the two Latin American assistancies who are involved pastorally with indigenous peoples of the region. Some of the Jesuits taking part in the meeting themselves belong to indigenous peoples.

A theme which recurred repeatedly during the four days of discussions was that of dialogue with the faith and cultures of indigenous peoples. *Autonomy is not a question of the creation of independent political states but rather one of supporting their struggle to maintain and express their own cultural identity and forms of social organization. Through assimilation into national cultures, the indigenous identity could lose its cultural ability to unite and inspire people and gradually disappear. Jesuit efforts should therefore be directed toward the evolution of multicultural nations where indigenous cultures can play an effective role for social change.*

Religious faith is a key element in people's cultural identity. Approaches to the Divine, to nature, and to others shape people's understanding of themselves as individuals and in society. Assimilation to the dominant religious culture can be a compelling factor leading to the loss of cultural identity. The question for Christians is, "How can the Christian faith of indigenous peoples be expressed in ways that arise from a people's cultural categories, practices and world-view?"

One of the study groups at the Quito meeting reflected on "New Ways of Being Church in Each Culture." They focused on the issues of indigenous churches and inculturation. We present here a summary of their discussion.

GROUP II: FAITH AND INDIGENOUS CULTURES
"New Ways of Being Church in Each Culture"

1. Concerning indigenous churches (i.c.)

ASSERTIONS

a) It is not a question of creating i.c., because they already exist as an expression of people's own cultures.

b) The i.c. live distinctive experiences of faith which they manifest and transmit in various cultures. They achieve this through their liturgies and spiritualities because these too are paths of God compatible with the proclamation of Jesus.

c) There are disagreements between the church authorities and the i.c.

d) Some members of indigenous cultures choose not to participate in i.c., usually because of problems with others in the community.

e) Similar to the i.c., other religious movements are growing which share a common search for cultural roots.

QUESTIONS RAISED

a) What is our actual role in regard to i.c.? To what extent are they faithful expressions of faith in Jesus, or are they faithful to imposed structures? How far are they really indigenous or imposed by others?

b) How do we allow ourselves to be transformed by these new models? Confronted with these experiences of indigenous faith and the way it is lived, do we feel challenged as Jesuits in our own experience of Christian faith? Does our faith have a profound consistency or does it rest in mere externals? Can the values of the i.c. make a contribution to the culture and faith of the Westerner? What values do they offer and how do we go about recovering them?

c) Can the i.c. be led by an indigenous clergy? Who is responsible for the lack of legitimation of i.c.: the Pope, the bishops, or we ourselves because of our particular formation?

d) How do we strengthen the models of i.c.? Is it we who should say what must be done or isn't it better that the people on their own resolve the problem of flight towards the dominant cultures?

e) What should we do in the face of these new religious movements? Do we support them or oppose them? Should we not accompany people in discerning their faith experiences, even when these would seem to be in error?

COMMON AFFIRMATIONS

1. We believe that each indigenous church must be the expression of its faith, religiosity, and way of relating to God and others. That is to say, it ought to be a church in which God is seen with an indigenous face. However, we admit that it would be naive to pretend that any purely indigenous church - or purely Roman church - can exist as such. That which actually exists is an indigenous church with structures as native as they are Roman.

2. Whenever we go to indigenous peoples, we bring, consciously or not, our own ideas and our own agenda. We always say that we are accompanying and respecting them and learning from them but, above all, we should seek to be converted in this contact.

3. We Jesuits who have acknowledged our indigenous identity seek a local church where we can express with full liberty our faith experiences which are as indigenous as they are Christian. However, we ask whether such a church is possible. Are the institutional church and other ecclesial bodies willing to allow the creation of such a church?

2. Concerning inculturation
REFLECTIONS

1. We thank the Lord who has permitted us to feel and experience His love in the religious expressions and witness of indigenous peoples.

2. Inculturation of the faith ought to begin from the lived experience of indigenous culture.

3. We believe that a profound inculturation of Christ's Gospel in every culture should give birth to a local church which is an authentic expression of that culture.

4. If faith is expressed and transmitted by means of culture, any inculturation which responds to the needs of our time must take into account the biculturalism lived by indigenous peoples today.

5. We acknowledge that the Church with its duty of evangelization, as well as the signs of life which belong to indigenous peoples, can, when absolutized, become forms of idolatry. Therefore, it is necessary to have a deep awareness that the Church is a mediating agent to bring the Good News to indigenous peoples, and to acknowledge as well that the signs of life belonging to indigenous peoples are also mediating agents of the manifestations of the love of God.

6. It is necessary to favor the conditions necessary for interreligious dialogue.

7. A dialogue with cultures demands a discourse among equals where we humbly acknowledge our truth and fidelity to humanity and to the Lord.

QUESTIONS

1. How can the ethic of the Gospel, in its liturgy, beliefs, ministries and spirituality, be inculturated without denying the specificity of the Gospel?

2. Is it the ethic of the dominant culture or that of the Gospel that we have inculturated?

3. In the indigenous world there is a distinct ethic which has already incorporated Western values. Faced with this reality, we ask ourselves whether one can and ought to live fully that ethic.

PATHS TO BE FOLLOWED

1. We must take the experiences of inculturation originating in our pastoral work as our starting point

2. We must make a synthesis of our experiences of inculturation at the level of liturgy, theology, ministry, and spirituality.

3. We need formation for interreligious dialogue.

MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS AT PRAYER TOGETHER

Can Christians and Muslims pray to God together? Can they ever agree on a formula of worship that would be acceptable to both and compromise neither faith tradition? Some people are skeptical. Here we present an example of a prayer service prepared jointly by Muslims and Christians undertaken in the context of a Muslim-Christian dialogue held in October, 1997, in Indianapolis, U.S.A. Representatives of nine Catholic Dioceses in the Midwest region of the U.S.A., together with Muslims representing Islamic centers in the same regions, took part in a study session on "the Word of God in Islam and Christianity." The worship centered on readings from the Bible and the Qur'an and on prayers from the Islamic and Christian traditions.

CELEBRATION OF OTHERNESS THE PEOPLE CALLED TO WORSHIP AND PRAYER

1. **Invocation.** God, you have created all of us to live in this world in peace. We come to you from different paths and traditions and yet you are the same God. We come from different cultures and homes and yet you are the same Creator. We invoke your presence in this place that you may fill us with your spirit of unity and love that will open our eyes that we may seek a glimpse of your kingdom. As we come to worship you, the one who created us, empower us to bring down walls that divide us. Empower us to bring openness, where there is narrowness, healing where there is brokenness, hope where there is despair and love where there is hatred. Amen.

2. Praise.

Islam

All praises are due to God, Cherisher and Sustainer of the worlds, Most Compassionate, Most Merciful; Master of the Day of Judgment. You alone do we worship and serve, to You alone do we seek help. Show us the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed grace, those whose portion is not wrath, and who go not astray (Quran, 1:1-7).

It is God Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy. It is God who has formed you, making your shapes beautiful, and has provided for you sustenance of things pure and good. Such is God your Lord. So give glory to God, Lord of the worlds. He is the Living, there is none but He. Call upon Him, giving Him sincere devotion. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds (Qur'an 40: 64-65).

Christian

L: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty.

P: Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation!

L: O my soul, praise God, for He is thy health and salvation!

P: All ye who hear, Now to God's temple draw near; Join me in glad adoration!

L: Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me adore God!

P: All that hath life and breath, come now with praises before God.

L: Let the Amen sound from God's people again:

P: Gladly for aye we adore God. Amen. (Hymn text based on Psalms 103 & 150).

3. Scriptural Readings: Our Common Love for God

Islam

When my servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close. I listen to the prayer of every supplicant when he calls Me. Let them also listen to My call and believe in Me that they may walk in the right way (Qur'an 2:186).

I am as My servant thinks of Me. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw near to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I come to him running (A sacred saying of the Prophet).

Christian

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these'" (Mark 12:28-31).

4. Prayer

Surrendering to God (Islam)

Say (thus speaks you Lord): O my servants who believe, have God-consciousness of your Lord. Good is the reward for those who do good in this world. Wide is God's earth (for those who seek to do good). Those who are steadfast in adversity will truly receive their reward in full, beyond all measure. Say: Verily I am commanded to adore and serve God, sincere in my devotion to Him alone. And I am commanded to be foremost among those who surrender themselves to God (Qur'an 39: 10-12). Allahu akbar (God is the greatest). Glory to my Lord, the Majestic (recited in Arabic; this phrase is said when a Muslim bows in prayer). Glory to my Lord, the Most High (recited in Arabic; this phrase is said when a Muslim prostrates in prayer). O you who believe bow down, prostrate yourselves, adore your Lord, and do good that you may prosper (Qur'an 22: 77).

A Pastoral Prayer (Christian)

L: Eternal God, great Shepherd, you call us by name and we follow you, Because we know your voice, we trust you to lead your flock through the valley into green pastures. Shepherd, in your loving kindness,

P: Hear our prayer.

L: We carry the heavy weight of our sins for like sheep we have gone astray. We want to choose our own path, create our own oasis, and remain aloof from the needs of others. We listen to voices other than yours, and we are seduced by the promises of wealth, power, and prestige. Forgive us, dear God, for we are truly sorry. Speak your word of pardon, and restore us in heart, mind, and body to the place you have made for us. Shepherd, in your loving kindness,

P: Hear our prayer.

L: We give you thanks, good Shepherd, for the abundant gifts you give us, and especially for those who are here this evening who come seeking ways of peace and a common bond for humanity. Shepherd, in your loving kindness,

P: Hear our prayer.

L: Because you have many sheep who are not of our fold, we pray for those who come from other faith traditions who strive to serve you. Shepherd, in your loving kindness.

P: Hear our prayer.

L: Shepherd of love, you spread a table before us. Push us to the side so that there will be room for the hungry who stand in line, for those who are downtrodden, for the oppressed who are being persecuted. Shepherd, in your loving kindness,

P: Hear our prayer.

L: These and all our prayers, we offer to you our Creator, to whom be glory now and forever. Amen.

5. Scriptural Readings: Our Common Love for Humanity

Christian

Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; but if we love each other, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. (1 John 4:7,8,11,12)

Islam

O son of Adam, I fell ill and you visited Me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I visit You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you not know that My servant so-and-so had fallen ill and you visited him not? Did you not know that had you visited him you would have found Me with him? O son of Adam, I asked you for food and you fed me not. He will say: O Lord, and how should I feed You when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: Did you know that My servant so-and-so asked you for food and you fed him not? Did you not know that had you fed him you would surely have found that (good deed) with Me? O son of Adam, I asked you to give Me to drink and you gave Me not to drink. He will say: O Lord, how should I give You to drink when You are the Lord of the worlds? He will say: My servant so-and-so asked you to give him to drink and you gave him not to drink. Had you given him to drink you would have surely found that (good deed) with Me (Sacred saying of the Prophet).

6. Sending forth with Peace (Song: "Let There be Peace on Earth")

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.

With God our Creator, we are family.

Let me walk with my neighbor in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me; let this be the moment now.

With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment, and live each moment, in peace eternally!

Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON HINDU-CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

God's Saving Grace and Paths of Salvation

Let me begin with a question that has arisen from my own Hindu-Christian dialogue experience. My experience has been with a learned Hindu guru, Shri Shyam M. Goswamy of Bombay, first as his student, but for many years now as a friend and informal dialogue partner. Shri Shyam was teaching me the doctrines of Vallabhācārya (hereafter Vallabha), the theologian saint who founded the Hindu system of which Shri Shyam is a guru. When we came to the question of Krishna's saving grace (for Krishna is the Supreme God in this system), Shri Shyam portrayed the tradition's teaching as follows:

Krishna's Grace is unlimited, and occurs anywhere and everywhere as Krishna wishes. Saving Grace not only occurs outside our system as well as within it, but we may even expect to be able to see traces of Krishna's Grace in other religions and cultures. What Vallabha has taught us is a Path of Grace which we are *certain* will lead us to salvation. In the trackless vastness of Krishna's Grace therefore, Vallabha has demarcated this Path. It does not exhaust God's Grace, but it is our Path.

I have since often thought about this teaching of Vallabha's, especially when my reading touches upon the traditional dictum *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. After reading one such essay, the following line of questioning began to crystallize. Though the Christian faith can proclaim itself to be universal, and indeed potentially be so - i.e., God *can* save all through it - cannot another faith, say Hinduism or Buddhism, also proclaim that it can save all and will try to do so? The question is whether the further conclusion which Christians usually

make is justified: since all can be saved through faith in Christ, it is God's plan that salvation actually come to all people by this one path? Might this not be jumping to an unwarranted conclusion which would limit the scope of God's grace?

It is natural for a way of salvation to rejoice in itself and to spread itself by preaching and conversion. In fact, Buddhism and Vallabha's as well as other traditions of Hinduism, along with Christianity and Islam, have systematically done this. But does the joyful experience that here is an assured way of salvation automatically mean that God intends all to be saved by it? Certainly, many further questions are raised by this one - for example, the nature as well as the psychological, social and religious implications, of felt, intimately experienced salvation. There is also the question of New Testament passages which appear to teach that salvation comes through Jesus Christ alone. It would seem useful to me to highlight this question against a new background. I am reminded of Hans Kung's suggestion that we turn the negative dictum "Outside the Church no salvation" into a positive statement, making it read instead "Salvation inside the Church!" That this rightly joyful assurance also means that all must be saved in this way is questionable.

Renunciation and Inculturation

My second line of questioning relates more to the project of creating an Indian Christian theology than to Hindu-Christian dialogue, but the two endeavors are far from separate. My consideration involves the application of a Hindu doctrine and practice, *sannyāsa* (renunciation), to Christianity in India. Two of the great Christian *sannyāsis* of our times, Swami Abhishiktananda (Dom Henri le Saux) and Father Bede Griffiths, have participated prominently in Hindu-Christian dialogue and have written eloquently about *sannyāsa*. For our purposes, no more is needed than a statement of the essence of

sannyāsa, so that I can then make a suggestion about its role in inculturating the Christian churches of India.

Sannyāsa is the renunciation of all forms and formulations - social, cultural, religious - in order simply to "be" one with the Absolute. To this end the *sannyāsi* ritually (in his last ritual) interiorizes the sacrificial fires he had formerly fostered so carefully, dons the ochre robe, takes a new name (such as Abhishiktananda ("he whose Joy is the Anointed One")), leaves the caste system (and consequently, for example, is buried rather than cremated at death), wanders forth from home and family, etc. It is precisely his (or her, in some modern, and certainly in Christian, practice) essence to be bound by no rule, subject to no convention of this minutely ordered but provisional world. He is the preeminently free one - free to embody the Absolute, the Transcendent, the Beyond-free to be what we all are potentially and hope one day to be manifestly.

My line of questioning has to do with Christian *sannyāsis*: are they the most important people in the Indian Christian churches? This is badly expressed, but put thus for this reason: perhaps only the *sannyāsis* will renounce totally the Western-church basis of their Christianity. In the case of other Indian Christians, the Westernized Christian churches are still very much present, as a padding to fall back upon, as it were, if the attempts at inculturation do not work, become tedious, or frightening. What seems essential is so to commit oneself to inculturation that there is no other church to "come back to." In this context the *sannyāsis* may be the most important people, at least in terms of sign value, and perhaps also in fact. A Christian *sannyāsi* would take, in effect, two *sannyāsas*, one from Indian culture and convention (i.e., from his "world") and another from Western-church convention. This latter renunciation might be characterized (to modify slightly a famous

phrase from the Western tradition) as a life lived *etsi Roma non daretur* ("even if Rome" - by which I mean rhetorically to include all the Western churches - "were not assumed"). If some such thoroughness of commitment is not present in *sannyāsis*, with or without the ochre robe, to speak of genuine Indianization of the Church would seem unrealistic.

Christology Revisited

My third consideration takes us to what, for most Christian participants at least, is the heart of the dialogue: the person and nature of Jesus Christ and his relation to non-Christian religions. I do not intend to review the substantial and still growing literature which Hindu-Christian dialogue, not to mention other dialogues, has generated on this subject. Rather, I would like to note here a few ways in which Indian Christian theologians are speaking about Jesus Christ and then make a critical comment.

Veteran dialogue participant Ignatius Hirudayam, S.J., pursued an illuminating line of thought when I spoke with him at Aikiya Alayam, his beautiful dialogue center in Madras. He pointed out that we Christians would be presumptuous if we assumed we knew the face of the present and future Christ and could describe him completely. This is precisely what we cannot do, he continued, with the cosmic Christ, the Christ of faith (who, I reflected, is the only Christ). Christ is present and working, with his Spirit, in every faith. And, he concluded, all salvation is through this Christ.

Gispert-Sauch gives us valuable background on these questions. According to him, many Indian Christian theologians would not accept the statement "Jesus is really unique as Christ" without qualification. When I asked whether, in a contemplated theological conference which would have the question of the uniqueness of Christ as its focus, a uniqueness of Christ could not be taken for granted, while

the modes of that uniqueness would be the conference's subject matter, Gispert-Sauch said no. A uniqueness could not be presumed; the presumption or presupposition of uniqueness would definitely be questioned and made a subject.

Let me exemplify this tendency from an important Indian Christian theologian. Panikkar has found the distinction between "Jesus" and "Christ" fruitful for dialogue and for dialogue theology. The advantage of such a distinction can be seen in a passage where he asserts that the basis for the universalism of Christianity "lies in the Christian conception of Christ. He is not

only the historical redeemer, but also the unique Son of God... the only ontological... link between God and the World." But the disadvantage - which has sometimes led to

Panikkar's being criticized for paying too little attention to the human, historical Jesus - may perhaps be seen in another recent passage of his. As the first among a number of theses for dialogue, Panikkar says: "Christ is the Lord, but the Lord is neither only Jesus nor does my understanding exhaust the meaning of the word."

What occurs to me in this context is a criticism in the form of a caveat. I am in sympathy, indeed in solidarity, with the theological effort I have been describing. But occasionally a tendency shows itself to make Jesus the "Christ for Christians", as it

were, while making "the Christ" the embodiment of the Absolute's self-revelation in all religions. I ask whether this is the Christological counterpart of the ecclesiological move from "outside the Church there is no salvation" to our defining the Church as excluding no one? Together with Kung, I find untenable the notion that we must keep expanding the Church's walls so as to include all people, even those who quite consciously want no part of being called Christian.

Similarly, on the Christological level we may be attempting to redefine Christ so that he belongs to every faith. The question and caveat is then: "Are we expanding the

meaning of Christ beyond all meaningfulness?" It may be true that Christ is present in all religions, but let us not so drive a wedge between "Christ" and "Jesus of Nazareth"

that our dialogue theology will ring true neither to Christians nor to non-Christians. Perhaps it would be preferable to use other theological categories, either traditional, such as the *ecclesia ad Abel* or the notion of a "cosmic religion", or new. More likely it will prove best to continue delicately with the distinction-in-unity between Jesus and ("the") Christ.

To lose patience with the complexities would be a mistake, for to phrase the caveat in one final way, can anyone truly believe a "Christology" that does not have Jesus as its central exemplification?

The Interior Dialogue

Can we define the interior dimension of Hindu-Christian dialogue more clearly and consider some ways of going about it? "Interior dialogue" is a term I suggest as a substitute for the other two terms ("inner dialogue" and "interreligious dialogue") by which I have seen this phenomenon designated. Inner dialogue refers to the entire process and impulse which leads one to desire outer or interreligious dialogue. In addition, inner dialogue refers to the effects of outer dialogue on one's own faith - effects which take place before, during and after outer dialogue. Panikkar gives us a more complete explanation of the phenomenon, which he calls "intrareligious dialogue":

Interreligious dialogue is today unavoidable; it is a religious imperative and a historical duty for which we must suitably prepare. But we often hear more talk about interreligious dialogue than actual dialogue. In order to sidestep this pitfall, I would like to begin by stressing the often-neglected notion of an *intrareligious* dialogue, i.e., an inner dialogue within myself, an encounter in the depth of my personal religiousness, having met another religious experience on that very intimate level. In other words, if *interreligious* dialogue is to be real dialogue, an *intrareligious* dialogue must accompany it..."

Inner dialogue must accompany outer dialogue if the latter is to be substantial. What I propose is the expansion of the scope of this inner dialogue from those only who participate in interreligious dialogue to all searchers for the truth in this era of dialogue. Since usage is still fluid, I propose for this phenomenon the name "interior" dialogue. It is a word with more resonances in spiritual tradition than "inner," and simultaneously it is less complicated and clearer than "intrareligious." Interior dialogue is the

interaction, testing and, with the help of grace, reconciliation within one's personal faith of the beliefs, symbols, and values of the different faith system which one is deeply considering.

Dialogue theologian Ignatius Puthiadam sees a "complementarity" between Hindu and Christian truths. It is not new to see, for example, Hinduism as stressing the eternal while Christianity stresses the historical. But it is new to perceive that this complementarity can be expected and even described in a systematic way. Puthiadam sees such a complementarity both between the different moods he experiences while praying in a Hindu temple and a Christian church and between the major theological truths of the two religions. He perceives a "principle of complementarity" by which he discovers not only "the unknown Christ and Christianity of Hinduism and Jainism, but the unknown Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism of Christianity." Similarly, Ignatius Hirudayam sees, in grand historical perspective, the various world religions as mutually corrective thought systems and movements.

This must suffice for now. I hope that my suggestions concerning soteriology, the place of the *sannyāsi*, and the crucial relation of "Jesus" and "the Christ," will be found helpful by my colleagues in the Hindu-Christian dialogue. Further, I hope that those many inquirers engaged, all over the world, in what I have proposed to name the interior dialogue will find that these thoughts, enriched by appropriation through their own experience, can combine to form an incipient theology of that same interior dialogue.

James D. Reddington, S.J.

[Ed. note. These excerpts are taken from the article, "The Hindu-Christian Dialogue and the Interior Dialogue," published in *Theological Studies*. The full text can be obtained by writing to this Secretariat.]

New **PUBLICATION** New

P. Joao Pedro Cornado, S.J., informs us of a 4-page Bulletin called "A Caminho da Unidade", published in Portuguese by CONIC (National Council of Christian Churches). It concerns of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.

You can request it by writing to:
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