TENTATIVE REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY

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ETUDES

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L'apport des communautés chrétiennes en Afrique

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L'insécurité monte. Depuis David Riesman, (La solitude, 1950), elle ne fait même que monter. Anonymat des villes, massification des comportements, standardisation des modèles, effacement des frontières, dissolution des liens... Il n'y a plus qu'un homme quelconque, un homme sans qualité, uniformisé, noyé dans les grands ensembles qui le conditionnent. Deux accusés : la modernisation et la mondialisation.


Forme générale de la plainte : notre société a perdu ses repères. Diagnostic de David Riesman voici déjà un demi-siècle de cette société a trop privilégié l'homme extro-dirigé, de préférence à l'homme intro-dirigé (inner-directed). Il se déstructure d'autant plus facilement qu'il n'a jamais été intérieurement structuré : il n'était que porté par son milieu sans être préparé à sa transformation. Et si les identités nationales semblent mises à rude épreuve, que dire un peu partout en Europe, de l'identité chrétienne ? Catéchisme et chrétienté étaient ses deux piliers. Nécessaire et dramatiquement insuffisant, tel apparaît le récent Catéchisme de l'Eglise catholique (1992) au temps de ce que Pietro Scoppola a nommé «la chrétienté perdue».

Dans les sociétés traditionnelles, bien connues des anthropologues, chaque homme, chaque femme avait une place assignée et devait s'y tenir, sauf à en changer selon des règles connues de tous, notamment par le glissement
des générations (les enfants, à leur tour, deviennent des parents, puis des grands-parents) et par la transmission des pouvoirs. Certaines, par souci de stabilité, n’admettaient qu’un nombre fixe et limité de membres. À leur naissance, les enfants devaient attendre qu’une place soit disponible; l’imposition d’un nom marquait leur introduction dans le groupe et lui conférait son identité propre; l’équivalent de ce que les linguistes appellent la double articulation.

Il n’y a pas d’identité personnelle sans appartenance collective. En régime chrétien, on parlait d’états de vie: ils entraînaient des devoirs, on y voyait la main et la volonté de Dieu, et si conformer était la voie ordinaire du salut, il n’est par excellence qu’un vœu de vocation. Au XVIe siècle, cette vocation (Berti) commença à se séculariser; elle devint intransitable et prit la forme du métier. Tout l’Occident s’en trouva déstabilisé. Une autre aventure prit son départ et elle alla allant gagner l’entière humanité. Claude Lévi-Strauss y a vu l’avènement de sociétés chaudes, par opposition aux sociétés froides. Celles-ci n’ignorent pas le changement, mais elles s’efforcent de le tenir à distance suffisante pour en maîtriser les effets.

La force de ce changement est à l’œuvre dans l’humanité depuis les origines de l’homme et même avant, puisqu’il n’est pas connu a priori. Une force ambivalente - bénéfique, maléfique - qui a trouvé ses grands canaux: la religion, avec ses projets techniques depuis le paléolithique; l’agriculture, avec ses mouvements de population, invasion ou migration selon le point de vue; la violence, avec ses capacités destructrices. C’est à la fin du XVIIIe siècle qu’on a commencé à s’interroger sur les révolutions dans l’histoire humaine, et non plus seulement de la marche des planètes ou des époques de la terre. Il faudra un siècle encore pour que Friedrich Engels s’arrête devant Le rôle de la violence dans l’histoire (trois chapitres de la deuxième partie de l’Anti-Dühring). Que n’avons-nous pas vu depuis!

Le changement n’a pas perçu son ambivalence, mais nous avons changé d’attitude envers lui. Nous le cultivons, nous le célébrons, nous l’exportons et le propagons. Il est devenu, comme disait le vieux Kipling, le maître-mot de notre civilisation, et nous ses missionnaires. Nous nous laissons entraîner par lui sans trop savoir où il nous mène, ni même s’il mène quelque part et - plus redoutablement - sans être capables, voire simplement soucieux de le penser. Il est le grand mystère qui a remplacé tous les autres et qui attire des foules de serviteurs empierrés. Le feu eut jadis ce privilège.

On comprend pourquoi nos ancêtres s’en défendaient; il a véritablement révolutionné le cours de l’histoire, au-delà de tout projet révolutionnaire, par les voies de l’économie marchande et industrielle, ce nouveau moteur à diffusion universelle. Dorénavant, il n’y a plus de place assignée à l’individu, réservée d’avance, et même le modèle familial n’a pas résisté au choc. Toutes les places sont libres, même si elles ne le sont pas toutes également et si certaines sont plus difficilement gardées. A chacun de prendre celle dont il est capable et d’en chercher une meilleure encore. Il peut même en occuper une multitude, autant que de rôles dont notre société de masse prodigue. On sait, pourtant, comment à monter devant le chômage et la crise actuelle du travail: ces places sont-elles en nombre suffisant et les excès ne sont-ils pas le signe que revient le temps d’une société aux places limitées?

Quoi qu’il en soit, pour ceux qui ont trouvé place, le difficile est de ne pas se perdre soi-même dans cette complexité. Solution: l’identité reçue et intériorisée importe moins que la personnalité et sa force. On se préoccupe de son identité dans la mesure où l’on manque d’une personnalité assez forte pour s’affirmer, ou bien dans la mesure où l’environnement est favorable à fragiliser cette personnalité. Avoir une identité, c’est être identifiable - des papiers en règle, une photo, un acte d’état civil - mais cette identification n’est pas le signe que revient la personnalité du sujet. Le refus d’identité est le signe d’un repli, d’une faiblesse, d’une fragilité devant une menace extérieure intérieurement ressentie, un trouble de l’immunité.

Le souci de l’identité chrétienne dans notre monde qui la mine et la laminée - du dehors, aussi fautu du dedans - est le signe d’une perte de confiance et d’une détérioration de la conscience chrétienne. On ne parlerait pas d’un-identité européenne ni si l’Europe existait. On ne s’interrogerait pas sur Dieu et son existence dans l’univers médieval, et les peuples qu’on en donnait n’étaient qu’un exercice de la raison étranger au moindre doute. Et commençons expliquer aux États-Unis - cette étroite bande de l’Amérique entre les deux pôles - tout ce qui est visible de son sol?

Ce qui est à développer, ce n’est pas l’identité, mais la personnalité. L’individu a toujours eu une identité - personnelle au sein de son groupe, collective en tant que membre de ce groupe, mais sa personnalité ne s’est dévoilée que lentement. Au début, seul le chef ou le prince en avaient une, puis les grands, puis les notables, sans
parler du Dieu trinitaire de la théologie chrétienne, point de départ de ce développement. En Angleterre, le curé était le "parson", seul de son village. La réussite paradoxale de la Réforme protestante ce ne fut pas le sacerdoce universel (tous parson), mais, à travers les Lumières, la personnalité reconnue à tout homme avec la puissance des libertés publiques associées à cette prérogative inaliénable et im- prescriptible. Il en sortira, dans la foulée d’abord du néothomisme - Maritain -, le "persona- lisme chrétien".

S’interroger sur l’identité personnelle des chrétiens et sur les conditions de sa formation - de sa reformation - à l’aube du troisième millénaire de l’ère chrétienne apparaît comme un beau thème de réflexion prospective. Pourtant, il faut être lucide: force est d’y voir, au principe, l’indice d’un trouble, d’une inquiétude, d’un désarroi qui explique ce long processus nommé «déchristianisation»: un détachement auquel assiste et que tente de combattre le mouvement catholique construit à partir de Léon XIII. L’Action catholique affichait une volonté d’affirmation chrétienne imperméable au doute, et Vatican II fut vécu comme une nouvelle Pentecôte. Aujourd’hui, il est clair que nul ne peut plus faire l’économie de l’épreuve de l’identité chrétienne. Quel type, quels types de personnalité chrétienne avions-nous pour affronter cette épreuve et assurer ce passage?

**Christianity and the West: Ambiguous Past, Uncertain Future**

Wolfhart Pannenberg*

The importance of Christianity in the formation of Western civilization can hardly be denied. That importance is not simply a matter of the past. In the process of secularization Western culture did emancipate itself from its religious roots, but that emancipation was by no means complete. A complete break from Christianity was not intended in the seventeenth century by those who wanted to put the public culture on an anthropological rather than religious foundation. The issue at that time was not a revolt against the Christian religion, nor even against its influence on the culture. Rather, there was an urgently felt need to get beyond the confessional antagonisms and religious warfare that had disrupted the peace of Europe for more than a century. The turn away from Christianity as the basis of public culture was not, at least in the first instance, caused by alienation from the Christian religion, although that turn may have produced alienation in the long run. Beginning with the eighteenth century, however, the humanistic values associated with modernity were viewed as being completely independent from the Christian religion, and even antithetical to it. In our century the circumstance is again different. Today, familiarity with Christian faith has faded; biblical narratives and the vocabulary of Christian faith are no longer common cultural currency.

Christianity is not the only root of Western culture, of course. A similar importance must be accorded to Classical Antiquity, comprising Greek and Roman art, literature, and philosophy, as well as Roman law. In some ways the continuity of modern culture with Classical Antiquity might seem even stronger than with Christianity. Although its treasures had to be reappraised from time to time in movements of renaissance, there was never a definitive break with the classical tradition. Ideas of Greek and Roman origin, especially ideas associated with natural law, played a crucial part in the transition from a religious to an anthropological basis of public culture in early modernity. But the authority of the classical models in literature was challenged as early as the seventeenth century in the famous querelle des ancients et des modernes, when public opinion determined that contemporary French
writers were superior to their classical models. Our century has decisively shaken off the normative claim of classical architecture and sculpture, while in higher education the classical heritage is no longer viewed as authoritative.

On closer examination, then, classical antiquity has not fared much better than Christianity in the cultural climate of modernity. Moreover, the classical influence was very largely dependent upon Christianity. In late antiquity and throughout the medieval period, classical literature and philosophy were transmitted by monks and Christian schools. It is doubtful whether much of the classical culture would have survived, had it not been appropriated by Christianity. Not all parts of the heritage were equally well preserved, of course; classical sculpture and whatever was related to pagan religion did not fare well. Nonetheless, it is to the credit of Christianity that not only was so much of the classical legacy preserved but it was transfigured by a Christian spirit and disseminated throughout the world along with the faith of the Church.

The cultural tradition that developed under the influence of Christian faith is filled with complexities. These complexities issue in significant part from the distinction between religious and secular realms within a culture that as a whole was informed by the Christian faith. The secular was not outside the purview of Christian faith; Christian influence was not limited to what was viewed as religious. Rather, Christian faith informed the understanding of both the religious and secular realms. The very distinction between the religious and secular has its source in the Christian awareness that the ultimate reality of the kingdom of God is still future. That ultimate reality is present only available through individual faith and the sacramental life of the Church. In this understanding, the social order and public culture that exist short of the final coming of the kingdom are always provisional.

The resulting distinction between religious and secular realms, institutions, and patterns of authority sets Christianity apart from other religiously informed cultures. It is also very different from the relationship between religion and society in the pre-Christian Roman Empire. While all sorts of religious cults were tolerated in ancient Rome, there was no dualism in principle between religious and political institutions. The emperor was the high priest, pontifex maximus. The distinction between bishops and emperor that is so important in Byzantine history was unknown in the pre-Christian Roman Empire. While the Byzantine emperor was considered to be the temporal representative of the eternal rule of Christ the heavenly king, the bishops had the responsibility (and power) of judging the orthodoxy of the emperor. Such arrangements reflect the complexity and subtlety of the distinction between religious and secular that was introduced by Christianity.

With the Constantinian epoch, we are told, the Church of the martyrs was turned into a state agency for securing the spiritual unity of the empire. The conventional view is that with the Constantine settlement the Church sold its soul to Caesar in return for respectability and worldly influence. This, it is said, represents the great «fall» of the Church from its pristine spiritual purity. It is noteworthy that some of the harshest judgments of the Constantinian settlement are issued by those who otherwise insist upon the Church's political responsibility. This tends to bring about change on behalf of justice. In fact, the Constantinian settlement was one way in which the Church sought to exercise political responsibility, and to do so in a way that would not subordinate the Church to worldly purposes.

We need to recall that the emperors from the time of Theodosius were themselves professing Christians, and they sometimes did more for the Church than leading bishops and theologians to restore peace and provide for the flourishing of the Christian community. Moreover, the idea of empire as such is not intrinsically evil. Here one must take issue with Reinhold Niebuhr, who, it seems to me, exaggerated the merits of national rule while underestimating the dangers of nationalism. The Habsburg Empire, except for the persecution of Protestants in the early seventeenth century, provides an example of imperial rule that was largely beneficial to the nationalities that lived together under its authority.

The flaw of the Constantinian empire was not so much in its being an empire as in its inherited method of taxation and, most particularly, in its lack of toleration. After the Council of Chalcedon in 451, entire provinces inhabited by monophysite and nestorian Christians who would not accept the decision of Chalcedon were alienated from the imperial authority. In the seventh century these alienated provinces became vast areas within the empire, with the result that the bishops who had worked to mediate religious conflicts and prevent the alienation of so many Christians. Unfortunately, their efforts were not successful.

Intolerant dogmatism was probably the most disas-
trous sin of traditional Christianity from the early centuries up to the beginnings of modern times. Intolerance contributed more to the ambiguity of the Christian past than any other factor, and it is therefore necessary to understand the roots of the phenomenon. We must ask ourselves whether dogmatic intolerance, with all its ugly consequences, belongs to the essence of religious passion for truth, at least in its Christian form. If the answer is yes, the exclusion of religion from the arena of public culture - an exclusion introduced in early modernity after the confessional wars of the post-Reformation period - was justified then and is justified now. But the religious dogmatism that emerged as early as the Constantinian period can also be viewed as a distortion, even a disease, of the religious mind. If it is that, it can in principle be overcome without extinguishing the religious commitment to truth.

I suggest that the temptation to intolerance is indeed rooted in the Christian eschatological consciousness, but it is not an inevitable consequence of Christian eschatology. The Christian faith is based upon the conviction that the ultimate future and truth of God has become present reality in Jesus Christ. This consciousness of the presence of the eschaton, of the ultimate, easily leads to the conclusion that the teaching of the Church also has the status of ultimate truth, to the exclusion of alternative understandings of reality. Such reasoning, however, disregards the critical distinction first expressed by the Apostle Paul: while the truth of God's revelation is indeed ultimate, our understanding of that truth is always provisional and will remain so until the end of history (1 Corinthians 13:9-12). This distinction is of utmost importance because it yields the imperative of tolerance. While God's revelation is absolute truth, our understanding of it, also as reflected in ecclesiastical teaching, remains provisional and partial.

We do not possess the truth in the sense of owning it or having it at our service. It is precisely our commitment to the truth that is always beyond our secure apprehension that requires us to respect those who offer alternative accounts of the truth, both within the Church as well as outside. In other words, tolerance is not against the truth; it is the truth that makes tolerance imperative. When the distinction between the ultimate truth of God and our provisional understanding of that truth breaks down, intolerance seems to be the natural course for those who take truth claims seriously. This, then, is the disorder or disease of the Christian eschatological consciousness that has produced so much of the ambiguity in our culture's Christian past.

A first case in point was the dissociation of the Christians from the fate of the Jewish people after the destruction of Jerusalem and the second temple by Titus. In contrast to the argument advanced by the Apostle Paul in the Letter to the Romans, the Church of later centuries no longer understood itself to be involved with the Jews in a common history of election and salvation. Rather, the Church understood itself to be the final form of the people of God, to the exclusion of the Jews. The same exclusivism, arising from an unqualified sense of finality, is at the heart of Christian dogmatism and intolerance. In all these instances, Christians overlooked the provisional character of the believer's existence short of the final coming of the Kingdom.

This dogmatism became, time and again, the occasion for unnecessary divisions within the Christian community. It led to particularly disastrous consequences in the West where it was combined with the ambitions of the papacy to exercise power over all institutions of governance, both ecclesial and civil. The ambitions of the papacy contributed perhaps more than any other single factor to the tragic history of the Christian West. In the Middle Ages there was a loss of harmony between spiritual and civil authority, and later, at the time of the Reformation, the rupture of ecclesiastical unity led to the confessional wars that made necessary the emancipation of the social order from religious authority in order to reestablish social peace.

While I believe that a petrine office for furthering peace and unity in the communion of all Christians might be beneficial for all the churches, and might even be a requirement for their unity, this should not blind us to the historical record of the papacy. A self-critical appraisal of its role in past centuries could lead to the reforms by which the Roman papacy might fulfill its true vocation to help secure the peace and unity of all Christians. Until that happens, Protestantism continues to have the historical mission to remind Protestants and others of what the gospel requires in the Church's faith and life.

We move now from Christianity's ambiguous past to the contemporary ecumenical situation. My argument is that the renewal of Christian unity is absolutely mandatory not only for the authenticity of the churches in obeying the will and prayer of their Lord but also for the cultural plausibility of the Christian religion. Nothing in the past has been more detrimental to the plausibility of the Christian message than the destructively fanatical controversies among Christians. Perhaps the gospel of love cannot be
expected to change the basic conditions of life in this world before the final advent of God's kingdom, but that gospel should be powerful enough to enable Christians to keep peace among themselves and to present their communities to the world as models of reconciliation. To be sure, controversy and division cannot always be avoided so long as questions of doctrine, questions of truth, are taken seriously. But controversy should not be dominant in the picture that Christianity presents to the world, nor should Christians today remain divided simply because their ancestors were divided by controversies in centuries past.

Christian unity does not require that all the confession-al traditions except the Roman Catholic Church should disappear. On the contrary, the plurality of traditions in liturgy, ministry, ecclesial organization, and doctrinal expression - so long as they do not contradict one another - belongs to the abundance of Christian faith and life. The different churches will continue, but under conditions that allow for fuller ecclesial unity. Adaptations by all sides will have to be worked out in order to achieve minimal conditions for the mutual recognition that is expressed in sharing at the eucharistic table. As a consequence of such renewed communion, further changes would no doubt follow in due course.

Again, Christian unity is a prerequisite for any renaissance of Christianity's role in public culture. As the history of Christian divisions was the main factor in alienating Western society from its religious roots, so that alienation cannot be overcome without ecumenical reconciliation among the Christian churches. I do not say that such reconciliation is a sufficient condition for the renaissance I have in mind, but I am convinced that it is a necessary condition. At present, however, it must be admitted that ecumenical progress is slow and tedious. This despite a remarkable change of attitudes at the grassroots level and theological dialogues that have achieved greater clarity regarding the obstacles in our doctrinal traditions. As some old obstacles have been overcome, however, new obstacles have emerged. Here I need only mention as an illustration the question of women's ordination, which, contrary to the expectations of most, has become a formidable problem in ecumenical relations.

The ecumenical process is too important to allow it to slow down. As we have seen, it is important for the authenticity of the churches and for Western culture. It is also important for Christianity's relationship to other religions. Obviously, dialogue with other religions differs from ecumenical dialogue among Christians, for Christians encounter one another on the basis of the same faith in the same Lord Jesus Christ. At the same time, however, Christian attitudes towards persons of other religions cannot escape being profoundly influenced by the ecumenical spirit that is nurtured in intra-Christian ecumenical dialogue. Such ecumenical dialogue nurtures an awareness not of the relativity of our own faith but of the different ways in which that faith can be legitimately expressed. This awareness, this readiness to learn, indeed this eagerness to learn, carries over into our encounter with people of other religions. It is no little thing when a basic disposition of confrontation is replaced by that of mutual respect. Of course, situations of disagreement and conflict will still arise, but such situations are transformed when they arise within the framework of sympathetic perception of the other.

In this framework of Christian ecumenical consciousness, the relationship between Christians and Jews holds a particular, indeed a unique, place of importance. In past centuries Christian intolerance toward Jews was so severe because they - though heirs of the Old Testament - did not embrace the fulfillment of the promises in Jesus the Christ. Today the new ecumenical consciousness allows Christians to appreciate in more positive terms the presence of Jews as representatives of the biblical tradition that gave birth to the Christian faith. It is only with Jews that Christians can know for sure that they pray to the same God. Christians profess the one God of Israel in trinitarian form, but it is most certainly the one God of Israel whom they profess. They profess him in trinitarian form according to his final revelation in Jesus Christ, the Jew who by his testimony to the kingdom of the one God of Israel became the savior of the world.

The authentically Jewish character of the mission of Jesus, though provocative to his contemporaries (as were the prophets before him), will remain the focal point of Christian-Jewish dialogue in the future. But the controversy over Jesus loses much of its bitterness and poison when both sides look ahead to the kingdom of God, which Jesus proclaimed, and recognize their own provisional circumstances in their pilgrimage toward that future. In that light, what Christians have in common with Jews is allowed to stand out in its full importance. What they have in common is faith in the one God of Israel, the memory of God's ancient history with his people, and an understanding of
the dignity of each person as created by God and destined to share in his image. This conception of the dignity of the person is the basis of an understanding of human rights, an understanding that Christians and Jews share and that cannot be secured apart from such a religious basis. Wherever these convictions with their biblical background become the focus of cultural attention, it is appropriate to speak of a Jewish-Christian tradition that informs our cultural consciousness.

To be aware of the provisional character of Christian existence and of the provisional character of our knowledge of God in his revelation is to undergo a profound change in our consciousness of truth. It is a profound change from the dogmatic consciousness of earlier centuries but - and I must emphasize this point - it does not constitute a surrender to secularism. Awareness of the provisional nature of Christian existence and thought makes possible a more authentic appropriation of the way the believer relates to the absolute truth of God as revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Far from abandoning the Christian truth claim, it is a more self-conscious and therefore more plausible way of asserting that truth claim. Awareness of provisionality does not mean selling out Christian affirmation to the current mood of false modesty that abstains from truth claims in deference to what is falsely called pluralism. Pluralism can mean many things. Pluralism can refer to a cultural situation in which competing truth claims are to be treated with respect. Pluralism can also mean, and all too often it does mean, the assumption that truth claims are no longer meaningful because there is no one truth. That fits nicely the assumption of radical secularism that there can be individual religious preferences but no religious truth.

When in the seventeenth century the social and political system began to emancipate itself from its religious roots, there were compelling reasons for doing so; the mutual intolerance of confessional controversies had destroyed the social peace. Subsequent developments toward a completely secular self-understanding in the public culture of Western societies, however, produced the illusion that societies can survive in the long run without any common religious basis whatever. This is rightly called an illusion or self-delusion because without religion there is finally no limit to individual license except the coercive power of the law. It has been astutely observed by thinkers as various as Rousseau, Dostoyevsky, and, in our own time, Max Horkheimer that, if there is no God, anything is permitted.

In the course of our century evidence has multiplied that a morality based on reason alone, independent of any religious connection, is, to say the least, precarious. Without religion, liberty degenerates into license and coercion. Rousseau spoke of the need for a civil religion, a religion shared by all citizens as a source of adherence to their society. And of course there have been more recent discussions of civil religion, notably in America. Some Christians have expressed legitimate concern about the potentially idolatrous nature of a civil religion. Others have suggested that civil religion is not a religion in its own right but refers to a form of public piety that arises from the religious traditions and from interaction among religious traditions. I believe that suggestion is persuasive, but my immediate point is that a sustainable social morality requires a religious basis.

A political order may declare itself neutral toward differences of religious allegiance, but it cannot dissociate itself from religious affinity altogether. One might make the case that the toleration of different forms of religious allegiance is itself based in a particular form of religion. When, alternatively, toleration is based on indifference, and when religious indifference becomes a mark of the public culture, we should not be surprised by the steady increase of unbridled license, by the progressive loss of consensus regarding moral and cultural values, and by social disintegration, leading, more likely than not, to tyranny and the loss of freedom.

There are compelling reasons, then, for Western societies to try to recover their religious roots. The choice is not between religious neutrality and an identification with a particular form of religion at the price of intolerance. The real question is what form of religion a society will choose as the basis of its public culture. It could choose, as some societies have chosen, an idolatrous nationalism or a form of ideological utopianism. Or, with yet other societies, it may choose a form of "fundamentalism." Or - and this is obviously what one hopes for - it might choose a religious tradition that, as a matter of its own self-understanding and as a condition of its own authenticity, requires the idea of toleration. Such a tradition provides a religious basis for the institutionalizing of tolerance in, for example, the separation of church and state. The separation of church and state, it is perhaps not necessary to say in this company, must never mean the separation of religion from public life.

Given alternative religious possibilities, Western societies are well advised to recover their religious roots in a
cultural tradition informed by Jewish and Christian beliefs. Western ideas of human rights and especially the underlying conception of human freedom have their basis in these beliefs: in the Christian teaching that the individual person is the object of God's eternal love and that human freedom has its source in the individual's communion with God through faith, and in the Jewish understanding of the dignity of the human person as created in the image of God. In the light of these teachings, individual freedom cannot be unbridled license. Freedom is grounded in hope beyond this life, in the certitude of a communion with God that makes a person independent from the adversities and temptations of temporal life and issues in a sense of vocation to the service of others. The Christian idea of freedom is basic to the distinction between the secular and the religious, but does not permit that distinction to become a divorce. Rightly understood, the Christian idea of freedom entails toleration and respect for other persons and their ways of using their freedom. It encourages personal creativity while at the same time sharpening the sense of social responsibility.

Among the many contributions of Christianity to the development of culture, one is deserving of special mention - Christian teaching regarding the family. In current discussions it is often overlooked how much the role of women in the context of the family was greatly enhanced by the Christian faith. Christianity opposed divorce as a male prerogative because that violates the permanent bond between husband and wife, and apostolic teaching admonishes husband and wife to mutual love and devotion in place of a one-sided subordination of the woman to her husband. Though these principles were often neglected in the history of Christianity, they are a clear decision for the equal dignity of women in the life of the family. The emancipation of women in the context of the family was a first step toward the establishment of equal rights for women also in public life. Christian teaching regarding the dignity and rights of women is a great Christian asset in the worldwide competition between religious cultures, especially with respect to the missionary expansion of Islam.

The beginning of the third millennium may well witness the resurgence of a culture inspired by Christian values, a culture that may have a powerful appeal for people all over the world. The present impact of Western ideas about human rights provides a foretaste of such a possibility. It is not without reason that representatives of other cultures, especially in Islamic states, protest that the insistence on human rights is an imposition of Western cultural values rather than a reminder of what belongs to human nature universally. It was indeed from a Christian perspective that the idea of human rights and the various catalogues of human rights were developed - from the eleventh century to the eighteenth century American Revolution to the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

While Christian in origin, the idea of human rights has a powerful appeal also to individuals in cultures where the values of individual freedom are traditionally less celebrated than in the West. The argument against the Western notion of individual freedom is, of course, that it dissolves all forms of community, decency, and moral propriety. That is a more telling rebuke than many Westerners realize. It reflects more than merely a conservative reaction to change. The rebuke is part of a fundamental criticism of Western secular culture. If Western freedom in fact means no more than individual license, others do well to try to defend their communities and spiritual values against the encroachment of Western secularism. Beyond the defensive mode, Islamic missions in Western societies express a strong sense of missionary vocation aimed at liberating Western nations from the materialism and immorality associated with secularism. These Muslims view Christians as having failed in the task of the moral transformation and reconstruction of society. Such criticism is a serious challenge to traditional Christianity and to Western culture. A culture devoid of spiritual and moral values is not equipped to meet that challenge, and is bound for disintegration and decay.

And so, while we can envision a great resurgence of Christianity and Western culture in the third millennium, such a future is by no means certain. Western societies may ignore their need to recover the strength of their religious roots. They may continue headlong on a secularist course, unaware of its certain and dismal outcome. The end of Western culture, however, would not spell the end of Christianity. The Christian religion is not dependent upon the culture to which it gave birth. As it has in the past, the Church can survive and flourish in the context of other cultures.

In earlier periods of modernity, the prophets of secularism confidently expected the decline and final disappearance of Christianity. And secularism did in fact achieve an enormous erosion of popular commitment to the churches, especially in Protestantism. Secularism's greatest success, however, is in the widespread desecralization of the ranks of clergy and theologians who are supposed to
proclaim and interpret the truth of the gospel but delude themselves that they are achieving that purpose by adapting Christian faith and life to the demands of secularism. What the situation requires, I am convinced, is precisely the opposite of such uncritical adaptation.

The further secularism advances the more urgent it is that Christian faith and Christian life be seen in sharp contrast to the secularist culture. In posing such a contrast there is, to be sure, the risk of fundamentalism. Today the fundamentalist temptation is strongly felt in both Protestantism and the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant evangelicalism and the reassertion of the confessional tradition of Roman Catholicism are, in principle, more authentically Christian answers to the challenges of secularism than is the strategy of cultural adaptation and assimilation. That being said, however, there is a danger of fundamentalism on both sides. Fundamentalism of any kind forfeits the Christian claim to universal truth—a claim that is bound up with our culture’s understanding of critical rationality—and it loses its hold on the ecumenical opportunity and obligation of our moment in Christian history. What is needed is a strong reaffirmation of the central articles of Christian faith against the spirit of secularism, and then a joining of that to a renewed commitment to rationality and ecumenical openness. Needless to say, such a combination is not easy.

It is quite possible that in the early part of the third millennium only the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches, on the one hand, and evangelical Protestantism, on the other, will survive as ecclesial communities. What used to be called the Protestant mainline churches are in acute danger of disappearing. I expect they will disappear if they continue neither to resist the spirit of a progressively secularist culture nor to try to transform it. Since the time of the Reformation, Protestantism was closely associated with the general culture. At first, the price of independence from Rome was accepting the tutelage of the secular authorities. Later, Protestantism availed itself of the opportunity to present itself as the modern form of Christianity peculiarly attuned to modern culture. At times this was carried to the point that it was thought that ecclesial institutions should simply dissolve into the culture.

There was a kind of logic to this idea of “culture Protestantism” so long as the public consciousness was identified with the Christian heritage. But that period came to an end with the breakdown of traditional European culture in the First World War and the destruction wrought by idolatrous nationalisms. Since then, and as a result of disillusionment with the spiritual progress of Western culture, Protestants turned with new urgency to the central importance of the Church in the Christian faith. Also, and not by chance, the ecumenical movement toward ecclesial unity came to the fore, a movement greatly strengthened by the ecumenical engagement of the Roman Catholic Church following the Second Vatican Council.

Contrary to what some Protestants had thought, a Christian culture is not a plausible alternative to the ecclesial form of Christianity. If it ever was, it is no longer. There is no alternative to the Church. The further the secularist dominance of the general culture advances, the more clearly the Church, in clear distinction from that culture, emerges as the reference point of Christian existence. The Church takes the form of particular local congregations and of the universal communion of all Christians. These forms of ecclesial allegiance are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, only as they strengthen one another can the Christian community face with confidence the challenges that are ever more strongly posed by both the secular culture and the competing claim of other religions. Thus we have been brought by an ambiguous past to face with confidence an uncertain future.
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND HUMANITY: SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

Giancarlo Zizola

For the unity of the human species

The main theme for ecumenical reflection at the meeting in Assisi in May 1995 of the Central Committee of the Conference of European Churches - made up of 118 protestant and orthodox Churches and the Council of the European Episcopal Conferences, comprising the presidents of the thirty-three catholic episcopal conferences, was the fifty years since the end of the Second World War. They agreed that the political and economic divisions lacerating our society - including those of an ecological nature and damaging the creation, have an ecumenical significance because they harm the Body of Christ, considered the Body of crucified humanity. Thus the Shoah was also seen as a wound borne by humanity and the reuniting of Europe's opposed blocks was a long way off.

In the final document, the participants indicated the multiplicity of tasks to be carried out in the service of reconciliation. They did not limit themselves to the search for a visible unity between the Churches and dialogue with religions and cultures. One of the ecumenical questions was commitment towards social justice, above all for a solution to poverty, marginalisation and other forms of discrimination as well as particular efforts towards reconciling peoples and finding peaceful solutions to conflicts and a new sense of ecological responsibility, especially for the benefit of future generations.

We do not wish to keep quiet the document stated «about the fact that even the Churches have often been ambiguous witnesses to reconciliation and continue to be so. Mistrust and mutual fear upset the experience of unity in Christ and his liberating force. To our shame, we have to admit that even evangelisation is carried out partly by means of threats and the use of violence».

After the Basle Ecumenical Assembly in 1989, the controversy of the seventies which had led to attempts at degrading «secular» ecumenism, had run out of steam. One of the main conclusions of that event had been that the Christian cause was called upon to take human affairs into account. As Pope John XXIII said on his death-bed: «We

1 Notizie evangeliche, N. 20, 17.5.1995.

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had declared «Providence is leading us towards a new order of human relations which, by means of the works of man and beyond man’s own expectations, turns towards the achievement of its higher and unexpected goals (...)».

The unity of the human species is a necessary foundation for the terrestrial city to be established as similar to that heavenly city “in which truth reigns, charity is law, extension is eternity” (St Augustine).²

The Catholic Church and particularly the ministry of the bishop of Rome were thus involved in the struggle for a change in moral sensibility and culture in human society in view of the practical realisation of a world order, humanly founded. The ecumenical task - synthesised in the prayer of Christ at the Last Supper «so that they may be one thing» - began widening as the awareness in the Churches grew that what was needed was greater effort to interpret the task, no longer as merely interconfessional and ecclesiocentric but also transconfessional and humanistic.

This challenge had been perceived by Christian theology. Hans Küng had stressed that in the new planetary situation, theology cannot be at the service of planetary humanity. «But a theology at the service of humanity must be» the theologian from Tübingen had written «at the service of agreement and collaboration between religions and its aim is to found a world ethics».³

The Asian theologian Tissa Balasuriya had also pointed out that the Churches, as institutions with widespread influence and therefore powerful, would be able to help people transcend their restrictive points of view and the interests linked to skin colour, class, religion, ethnic group, every time the good of mankind required it. «In the past the Churches have legitimised more limited attitudes because it was necessary (...). A conversion that the Churches should attempt during our generation is a change of mentality of all the nations so that they can place the good of humanity before their own national interests. The Churches can and must now repair the damage of their past legitimations, educating their faithful to refuse national policies that are dangerous to other nations and nature».⁴

It is a frontal challenge for the Churches. Every «ministry of unity» must now be rethought in the light of planetary unity. Therefore, one of the papacy’s dilemmas today - and much more in the decades to come - concerns the spiritual contribution to collective consciousness in surmounting national states and in favour of the creation of a world democratic government which many consider to be the supreme task of this generation and the following ones.

All that which can help planetary democracy and the passage to a world authority, with the elaboration of a Constitution of the Earth, should obviously be part of the options of the Churches, in the sphere of their specific action. On the other hand, supporting nationalisms and encouraging aggression which could weaken the United Nations in its efforts to reduce the nuclear threat, the ecological risk, the growing disparity between rich and poor and subject the leaders of the economy, finance and information industry - the three main superpowers today - to restrictions, to the overall advantage of humanity, should at all costs be avoided by those responsible for the Church, if they are endowed with a disinterested spirit of service to the common - i.e. planetary - good, despite the often limited circle of their confession and tradition.

It is obvious that such pre-eminent human concerns are presented as those - good or which are reducible to goods - objective aims to strive for and which, according to the encyclical Pacem in terris by Pope John XXIII, justify collaboration between Catholics and non-believers. One of these pre-eminent human causes at the moment is the creation of a new world entity endowed with sufficient powers for controlling the new multinational and transnational tyrannies at work in the global market and inside state democratic societies.

If national states have become too obsolete and powerless to dictate effective norms to the great powers which act on the transnational market, merely in their own interest, we do not see any other alternative than to work for the historical decay of national states and the transference of sovereignty to a higher political order, the only recognisable way to promote normative values and a universal ethics in an interdependent world. As Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations, has said: «On the whole, the reality of world power escapes national states. This is so much so that globalisation implies the emergence of new powers which transcend statal structures. Faced with the power of these giants of finance and information, states can no longer do very much. They find themselves destabilised by speculators operating outside the social contract, without sanctions, without laws, apart from those established arbitrarily by themselves according to the highest profit for them. The interest for democracy, a livable environment, a supportive planetary economy and a moral order universally imposed do not represent values for these interpreters of the new economic rationality. Their procedures bring together attributes which have been classified as «in a sense, divine»: non-materialism,

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¹ Giovanni XXIII, Discorsi, Messaggi, Colloqui, IV, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1963, p. 583.
² Hans Küng, Progetti per un'etica mondiale, Rizzoli 1991.
immediacy, permanence and planetariness. «Logically, they provide a new cult, a new religion», Ignacio Ramonet has observed, «the religion of the market».

This is the background to the challenge to the Christian Churches: to become the seeds of hope for humanity in a globalised world. The definition of their historical role and mission cannot stand outside an analysis of the great powers whose real sovereignty is exercised in the cyber-space of global finance and planetarised media. Pope John Paul II had foreseen that this would have been the main problem for the Roman Church and its ministry, for its universal function. The signs of a rupture between market and moral imperatives has become frequent in recent decades. Despite the post-constantinian attempts at a compromise to reduce immanent tension - attempts which were not always successful, e.g. the encyclical Centesimus annus, the blood of the new christian martyrs in Central America, Africa and in Asia was a sign which left no doubts as to what was really at stake. Even the shots fired at the Pope on the 13th May 1981 in St Peter's Square led us to understand the extent of the challenge.

We might say that this strategic confrontation between the Church and the real powers of the world is the basic theme of the supreme decisions of the papacy in the post-communist situation in the world. Pope John Paul II had not hesitated, in the encyclical Ut unum sint, in stating that the service of unity, of the papal task itself, «can demand offering one’s own life». It is indeed part of the scheme of expectations that the Roman Church should return to the role of the early centuries, when many of its bishops died as martyrs, if the Church’s direction was that of the assumption of a critical-prophetic stance concerning the new situation in global power.

It would not be difficult to imagine this politico-religious knot as being the politico-religious keynote of the next conclave.

The Church, in view of the choice between the prophetic refusal and the neo-constantinian compromise with the dominant system, is called upon to wager its very identity in a world situation shaken by political crisis and economic laceration. A practical alternative to the martyrs and prophets option - as paradigms of the Church’s function today - is to come to terms with this system, to somehow jump on the winner’s bandwagon and moralise its behaviour, reducing the damage to the poorest.

This alternative is linked to a long-term evolution of papal politics in recent decades, in its approach to the problem of relations with the powers-that-be and the world political system. The contribution of the Church to the democratic evolution of political systems has not only been important for the crisis in the totalitarian system of central-eastern Europe; in the so-called western democracies - in which the forces of the transnational market often produce destabilising effects - the contribution made by spiritual forces is the object of a more realistic consideration than was the case in the past. However, it is here also that the problem of knowing if the role of the Churches and religious forces in general will be that of «first aid» for the victims of the social anarchy released by neoliberalist imperatives, or that of contributing to a radical questioning of that system which is at the root of world disequilibrium, refusing the compromises which link the Churches to such a system and to those who head it.

Within the Catholic Church certain voices have been heard encouraging the adoption of this second choice. In the letter Tertio Millennio Adveniente Pope John Paul II had brought up the question of the questionable attitude which indeed becomes at times a consent - of numerous Christians concerning the violation of fundamental human rights by totalitarian regimes - and deplored «the co-responsibility of many Christians as regards serious forms of social injustice and marginalisation». Christian Churches have certainly become more aware of the injustice in class mechanisms, but the problem for the future - much more severe than that which came into the limelight in the Catholic Church in the eighties and seemingly terminated with the condemnation of Liberation Theology - is that of the decision to take in favour of the masses impoverished by global neoliberalism in view of an actual transformation of world economic structures.

In a hard-hitting account by theologian Tissa Balasuriya, the situation is described as such: «The Christian Churches, regardless of the heroic efforts of individuals involved, have not yet been persuaded of the fact that the world system is barbarous; that the abundance of some is at the expense of the penury of others; that the escalation in armaments production is a crime against humanity; that masculine domination dehumanises both the woman and the man; that the waste of non-renewable resources is a grave crime against the human race. The Church’s objectives, at world level, still hinge above all on ecclesiastical interests. There is more concern with constructing and safeguarding the Church’s institutions than offering the Gospel of Jesus Christ and working for humanity in its desperate attempt to survive. The Churches have little awareness of the necessary strategies which actually help
humanity. They do not make serious use of their multinational presence to combat the structural evils of our times and construct mentalities and structures inspired by justice. Very little indeed is directly spent on critical consciousness-raising, the organisation of action on the part of the oppressed masses in poor countries, and even less on the consciousness-raising of Euro-American christians about their sinful situation and the need to find solutions at both national and world level.2

Despite the authority and the severity of these comments, it cannot be denied that the christian Churches constitute an enormous resource of spiritual energy and goodwill in the service of justice, peace and the safeguarding of human liberty and creation from all fundamentally totalitarian manipulation. They may have an even more important role in the decades to come when the game between the growing maturation of the human race into a democratic planetary community and the forces leading to division and destruction run into extra time and decision by penalty-kicks. Who then will be left to defend the world’s poor and their thirst for justice?

It is apparent that the great dramas of our epoch have shown that the principle of social solidarity might indeed be a certain detachment from material assets, consumerism and the egoistic search for profit at any. Eminent economists like John Kenneth Galbraith, John Rawls and Amartya Sen have done all in their power to persuade the economic powers-that-be in industrialised countries of the adoption of less protectionist and more solidarity-like policies. According to their scientific point of view the most suitable and realistic outlook concern the capacity of capitalist countries to attempt - within reasonable time limits - to arrive at serious economic policy measures of re-equilibrium between North and South so as to reduce step by step the disequilibrium which seriously threatens the political, economic and financial stability of the rich countries themselves.

It is obvious that this presupposes on the part of the world economic cyclopes the subjection of their interests to a system of universal ethical values, an operation of great vigour which requires the commitment of a great educative entity like the catholic Church, spread over the whole world, with the audacity and organisation a plan of this type requires. This project, in turn, postulates a decisive spiritual progress in those countries where the concentration of economic power implies greater responsibility as regards the vital destiny of vast masses of world population. The problem is to ask of those with most power over the market the spiritual qualities and indispensable solidarity for their own economic objectives to be paralleled by an interest in the world human family.

However, it would be difficult to deny that such an enterprise seems frankly utopian. In the midst of un-restrained world economic war resulting in tens of millions of victims, to talk of a process of long-term cultural and spiritual transformation, might seem cynical. What is more, without inverting the conceptual framework it will be difficult for this conservative revolution of a global nature, based on privatisation, to be brought within the confines of the social market economy and a world system of interdependence anchored to ethical values. However, this is the field in which the contribution of the Churches might be of use - that of the spirituality of common interdependence.

In the encyclical Sollicitudo rei socialis the christian Churches might find valid elements of inspiration for this enterprise. The document states that interdependence is not only a political and economic necessity but above all an ethical obligation, which is binding for universal conscience because of the rights of the people and human rights, and especially so for those who consider themselves and are christians. We must add that generally the existence in modern society of spiritual forces working towards a human horizon which transcends immediate material interests and disputing the economic onanism of the strong powers, might constitute a critical aspiration of great importance in the collective process of opening up to the interests of the human future and the planetary humanity and to the values of gratuitousness and solidarity.

It would be impossible in the world today to imagine a market culture or policy based on «global apartheid» evolving towards a culture and a structure of rigorous interdependence and social democracy without an ideal conviction and the commitment of universal and disinterested men and women, spiritually rich with the sense of donation of the self and the priority of the other; and convinced that the planetary right to life comes before the right to property.4

In this sphere, the Churches are able to provide an original contribution, for which they do not have to transform themselves into political entities but simply rediscover a closer faith with biblical inspiration and the patristic tradition at the basis of their pastoral activity. For example, the development with greater impetus than ever before of the principle of the universal destiny of the earth’s assets. Pope John Paul II has touched upon this issue more than once - even in Centesimus annus - stressing

2Theresa Balagurva, op. cit.
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the fact that the universal destiny of the earth's assets «comes before any concrete form of private property and must illuminate its true senses». In a message for Lent 1992 the same pontiff observed: «Even though these truths, clearly formulated, have been restated many times, it is painful to observe that the earth with all its assets - this sort of great banquet to which all the men and women who have existed and will exist are invited - unfortunately, in many ways, is in the hands of a minority (…). Participation in these assets is necessary so that every human being may arrive at his fulfillment. Therefore it is even more painful to observe how many millions of people remain excluded from the table of the creation».

Another biblical item which awaits adequate reconsideration is the planetary responsibility for the creation, in time and in space. The criticism of the conventional interpretation of God's command to man to «dominate» the earth allows us to see the ideological nature assumed by theology when using this stereotype of the book of Genesis to legitimate a monarchical anthropomorphism which in turn has been responsible for aggressively devastating policies to the detriment of the natural environment.

Thanks to the rhythms of an evolution never to be repeated, billions of years have been necessary to create the biological patrimony of a species. At the moment, human intervention is responsible for the disappearance of a living species every quarter of an hour. The destruction of nature goes hand in hand with the loss of human identity: one of the energy sources which is being exhausted is the psychic capacity of humans to resist the aggression of the objective forces in a world governed only by economic imperatives and Promethean technological developments. So as to avoid interior collapse and dehumanisation - a loss of sense which results in a loss of the senses -, one of the suggestions of the new philosophy of science is the recovery of a concept of fraternity, common species, so as to substitute the conventional and abusive concept of indiscriminate and uncontrolled dominion of nature.

It is only by means of a new culture that we can activate this conscience of species in common and consequently hope that human actions might tend towards a common goal of survival of the species. Religions and the Churches are called to the appointment with the growing necessity for symbolic, gratuitous values, natural sacramentality, especially in accordance with oriental re-

ligions which have maintained a special sensibility in this field.

The ecological problem is a necessary priority for the Christian Churches in consideration of the amenities they have to make for the complicity with the material forces of production in their exclusive appropriation of natural resources. We may foresee that - as presented on an ecumenical plane at the Basle and Seoul assemblies - the ecological question thus assumes a crucial prominence on the papacy's agenda if it aims at a planetary application of a «reconciliation ministry».

There is indeed nothing more important than the reconciliation between humanity and the environment, between man and nature, in a technologically advanced society in which the Baconian scheme has been relentlessly taken as far as to threaten mortal peril for the survival of man and nature. As Hans Jonas has clarified, «the danger of a catastrophe for the Baconian ideal of domination over nature by means of scientific technique is inherent in the excessive greatness of its success». Thus, the need to impose a maximum of social discipline by political means in order to subordinate the temporary advantage to the long-term needs of the future.

Jonas himself recognises the limited political means we have to transform the principles of a macroethics for a technological civilisation into real action. Faced with the «nudity of a nihilism in which the maximum power unites with the maximum emptiness, the maximum ability with the minimum of knowledge about aims», the German philosopher of The principle of responsibility has asked himself «if - without re-establishing the category of sacred which was destroyed in a most radical way by scientific enlightenment - we can find an ethics which is able to rein in the extreme forces which today we possess and almost coercively continue to acquire and exercise without rest». What is at stake in this technological tempest, Jonas adds, is a «metaphysical» fact, «an absolute, supreme and vulnerable asset, with which we are entrusted and which imposes on us the supreme duty of preservation».

To be more precise it is the recovery of biblical eschatology which increasingly comes to be seen as the virtual remedy for opening a breach in the culture of dominion. To found an ecological and adequate spirituality, of crucial importance is the reinterpretation of faith and its historical significance in the light of the resurrection of the flesh and the apocalypse. And in such a light the papacy's agenda in the future might find a cue in the teaching of Pope John Paul II. «Using natural resources as if they were infinite,
having over them an absolute dominion» says Sollicitudo
re socialis «puts them at risk not only for current gener-
tions but above all for future ones». What is stated in fact
is that «imposing limits on the use of visible nature» is a
moral necessity. «The dominion given to man by the
Creator» the encyclical specifies «is not an absolute power,
neither can we talk of freedom to use and abuse or dispo-
se of as man thinks best. The limitation imposed by the
Creator himself from the beginning and symbolically ex-
pressed in the prohibition “not to eat the fruit of the tree»
shows with sufficient clarity that compared with visible
nature we are subjected to laws which are not only biolo-

gical but also moral, which cannot be infringed with impu-

nity». Besides, the encyclical states prohibitions: «We

cannot use with impunity their various categories, living or

inanimate, animals, plants, natural elements, as we wish,

according to our own economic necessities. On the con-

trary we need to bear in mind the nature of being and their

mutual connection in an ordered system, which is precise-

ly that of the cosmos».

In the same encyclical Wojtyla did not exclude - and this

was 1981 - that the socialisation of production assets could

be a valid basis of economic organisation. There were

many christian theologians who hoped that the crisis in the

communist system in Europe would have removed the

timidity from pontifical teaching faced with the full turn-
ing to account of the biblical theme of distribution of assets
to all, i.e. sharing them out. Apart from its inherent valid-

ty, this principle has by now taken on a rational character
to make up for the distortions and disequilibrium of the
capitalist economy and its lethal effects for the ecosystem.
The road ahead seemed clear, it should have lead the

papacy - free from the fear of communism - to make an

announcement in favour of an exceptional spiritual re-

versal, such as to shake up the «glass of champagne»
society in which the 20% of humanity in the top half of the
glass controls 83% of the world's riches, while the 20% at
the bottom of the glass attempts to live with 1.4% of world
resources. This capacity of the authority of the Church to
repudiate private property and its socialisation, encour-
aged the commitment of those who were convinced that it
was necessary to go beyond communism and not to go
back to what had preceded it and therefore to elaborate
another social model that would take from communism
what was legitimate and avoid the defects.

Church teaching had the chance of such a turning-point
- the first draft of Centesimus annus -, but it preferred
the hope that the millionaires would have lead postcommu-

nist society nearer to a «social market economy»: possible
consequence of a democratic capitalism which was more
sensitive or at least less criminal than communism in its
treatment of the vital inalienable right of the human being
to accede to the goods originally belonging to all. At the
beginning of 1991 when the encyclical was being prepared
the «American party» prevailed in the Vatican; it favoured
burrowing the hatchet of the old conflict between the Church
and the liberal economy. Therefore an appeal was made to
the capitalist system which had only just won the struggle
with communism to really work for initiative, freedom,
property and profit not for a small minority of the rich
which was becoming increasingly richer, but for all.

Such a request might evoke the idea that the best policy for

Napoleon would have been waiting until the allies had
completely routed him so that he could then pray them to
hand the whole of Europe back to him. Recalling a thought of

Chesterton's we might have the same doubts about making

capitalists more powerful than all the ancient

everest of the earth and then asking them to give - of their

own free will - the same thing for whose conquest they had

accepted to lose their souls.32

However, the first draft of the encyclical counted on an

updating of information concerning Revelation, to appeal
to a radical transformation of spirit. The language was

prophetic and finally there was an example of what would

happen if the Church was afraid to face up to a prophetic
dimension. Extracts from the Bible were quoted on the
dominion of God upon the earth: «How far does your

avidity extend, rich ones?» read the encyclical quoting

Ambrogio of Milan. «Why do you exclude the co-owner of

nature?» The earth was created for all in common. Why do

you alone arrogate to yourselves the rights over it?» With

St Augustine of Ippona the moderns were exhorted to

«search for that which is sufficient and you will see how

little is required. All that is superfluous for you is neces-

sary for others. The superfluous things of the rich are those

which the poor are lacking. He who possesses superfluous

things possesses things which belong to others».

This was the premise on which the failed prophecy of

the stillborn encyclical based the obligation to share with

impeverished countries not only that which is superfluous

in rich countries but also what is necessary and defended

the necessity of an amount of austerity in daily life, for

the country as well for the people, in rich countries but also in

the rich sectors of the poor countries. «Faced with the

excesses of hyper-development and its accompanying

phenomenon, consumerism» added the draft «the only

32GILBERT K. CHESTERTON, The Com-

mon Man, Sheed & Ward, Lon-
don 1956.
remedy is - when we are aware of the price which is paid for one and the other by those who are near or those who are distant - to simplify our lifestyle. There is nothing more superfluous than luxury, above all when others are dying of hunger. The goods consumed in a luxurious way of life are the same as those of which the others are deprived. The universal distribution of goods requires today a revision of the personal and collective - of lifestyles. But what is necessary is a change in the very structures which impede or do not promote the actual arrival of the goods - intended by God for everyone - to everyone.  

As the world economic situation gradually worsened, the papacy must have kicked itself for having censured itself on that occasion. The pronouncements on the subject of *privata possessio* to God's dominion for a better use of terrestrial assets, the equal distribution of the same, and social peace, became once more current news, for the economic and demographic re-equilibrium of the planet: the need to transfer onto a macroethical plane the principles of the economic morals of St Thomas Aquinas was the basis on which the social teaching of the Roman Church was able to concur in a solidarity-like and community re-education of the west.  

All this stood out on the papacy's agenda for the future. It was obvious that however overcome might appear the Church's insistence on sex, the papacy had managed to accept the idea that incitements to the right to life and anti-abortion warnings would all have served little or nothing if they were not sustained by an overall economic vision founded on the recognition of the original rights of those populations with a high percentage of births to adequate volumes of natural and economic resources - in relation at least to their needs. Therefore, what was necessary was to find the audacity to declare that property is not a divine or natural right, but only an instrument justified by finalistic motivations and even when conceived as such, does not remove the duty to give to those in need. There was a need to recognize in the sacralization of private property the main culprit of the private appropriation of nature which is responsible for ecological disaster. The sacralization of property was in fact required to justify production and consumption methods such as to determine not only the desecration of nature but also its denaturalization: truly a structural abortion! What became consolidated in this manner was the ideology that from the sacralization of private property - albeit with certain correctives - one arrived at the sacralization of the confines of national states, obstructing a solution of the world demographic problem which also brought into play the right to territorial resources should they not adequately be occupied or exploited in other states for immigration from overpopulated countries with insufficient territory, according to an application of the law of the communicating vessels which regulates the biosphere.  

In the nineties, processes of this type were considered in certain world congresses, promoted in the Vatican by the pastoral Pontifical Council for migrants and itinerants. Organisations like this, in trying to come to terms with the most acute universal problems, questioned the interested and partial nature of the dependency of the Church's visions. The main condition for carrying out an ethicopolitical acceleration in this field was indicated in the commitment of the papacy to the adoption of the concept of "human family" as a political subject. Since a common patrimony of humanity exists, it should be recognised the rights it is worthy of: the seabed, space, the terrestrial ecosystem, self-determination, fundamental human rights and many other assets are its competence. This juridical recognition should in turn legitimate the world democratic government of the global economic system so as to adapt it to the needs of economic justice and assure the right to life of the whole human family in time and in space.  

Side by side with the universal destiny of assets the principle of the existence of the human family as primary regulator of economic activity awaited recognition as of importance to social theology and the preoccupations of the Church. Many theologians - once the neoliberal model was exhausted and had imploded - expected the world crisis to shift from the absolute urgencies and the claim to a restructuring of the world system of power, to a restriction of national sovereignty, as well as the redistribution of planetary resources and terrestrial surfaces among peoples in a more equal manner.  

The papacy itself had to react to the development of the personalistic revolution and of the planetary social revolution. An expectation was visible in those societies tyrannised by the totalitarian powers of commerce, of spiritual forces imposing themselves as an extreme barrier against the invasion of the demons of nihilism and the banalisation of life, offering adequate protection to the conscience from new mass-media manipulations. Many turned to the same catholic Church for reflection and generosity in the planetary battle for the preservation of faith in man, threatened by oppression, terror and exploitation.  

The warning goes way back to 1974, launched by Pier Paolo Pasolini to the Church to hurry up and jump off the
neoliberal bandwagon, which had planned its reduction to "pure folklore." The Italian poet exorted a renewal of "this new consumerist power, which is completely religious, tendentially totalitarian, violent, falsely tolerant, indeed more repressive than ever and corrupting, degrading." He pleaded with the Church not to waste the historical chance of becoming the great, non-authoritarian guide of all those who struggle against alienation; which take to heart the future of mankind, democracy and the environment and know that if man loses the chance of feeling rich without things, rich above all in his heart, he is lost, the human word is lost, sense is lost, and with him the world.11

If the unity of solutions is the only solution, is the Catholic Church capable of transforming its right to universality into actual universality, such as to offer the world the idea that it would be possible to struggle for a different unity to that organised by the global market? The questions were endless: what will be the role of the Church in the necessary work of saving the Earth? Will ecumenical unity only be a purely functional accessory and subordinate to the neoliberal economic unification of the planet?

It was obvious to everyone that the road to moralistic accusations was going nowhere. As Søren Kierkegaard had written: "The controversy of Christianity no longer be a controversy about Christianity as doctrine (this is the struggle between orthodoxy and heterodoxy) but as existence. Prompted also by social and communist movements the problem will become that of loving our neighbour. Attention will be concentrated also on the life of Christ and the aspect of Christianity that will be stressed is conformity with his life. The world has consumed little by little this mass of illusions and isolates, with which we assured ourselves that the question was only that of Christianity as doctrine. The world revolution shouts: "We want to see action.""12

The main fact about the world was the unity of the world. We needed to know if the Church would choose to reduce itself to a function of neoliberal unification of the planet and subject itself without reacting to the technical transformation of nature, mass-media manipulation of coincidences, the domination of commerce over the world society, accepting to be the sacred lubricant of universal homologation of the spirit, according to the axiom proposed by Marx for the end-result of capitalism: "The thing is the subject, man is the predicate.'

Facing this was a different - and more difficult - choice: that of recovering from the archives "the preferential option for the poor," but restoring to this formula a much deeper and universal rhetoric-prophetic significance - more so than that entangled in the politico-religious controversies of the eighties. The papacy had ahead of it the social developments in society which was opening up to a different quality of human existence, a life which no longer had to be earned throughout the entire span of existence, thanks to the reduction to an indispensable minimum of alienated work. As a corollary, new sensibilities emerged, a new morality, the rediscovery of the body and nature, feminine subjectivity and universality in history, the re-evaluation of subjects, the necessity for non-violence, the practice of planetary proximity.

The inchoative pieces of a society subjected to a new principle of reality were combined, a society heir to capitalism which would bring about its end. The real means for earning a qualitative jump ahead for liberty were available, the political necessity for a development of the symbolic and spiritual capacity of society: this type of revolution - the first of a planetary spiritual nature - excelling in importance the economic, political, technological and scientific revolutions of the "modern centuries" and which perhaps the "soft" landing of the totalitarian pyramid in Europe was nothing but one of the visible premonitory signs. Simply being able to foresee a society of "no work," in which free activities constitute a growing proportion of free time, offered such a concrete prospect of emancipation from the circuit of production and capitalist accumulation as to pose the spiritual, educative question (and therefore the question of the defense of the person from mass-media manipulations) as the very condition of human freedom, as the final game of the tournament.

Here is the decisive significance of the position of the papacy in the social sphere, influenced for good or for ill by the modern technological question at the end of the second millennium. Be it interference with the gene or the use of the atom, environmental interference or mass-media, psychic structures or economic ones, it was on spiritual incarnation that Christianity was challenged, on the threshold of a new phase of humanisation. The Church leaders were thus appealed to on their ground, i.e. on their capacity to assume decisions so comprehensive and universal as to help the "conversion of hearts" to a new phase of human liberty.

For the Catholic Church what was still left was to take seriously into consideration the contributions of the Marxist criticism of assets and psychoanalytical critique. Only a request for forgiveness addressed by the Pope to Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud would perhaps begin to make

credible the service of the Church to the liberation of man. However, in a world society in which material power could do nothing if not held up by the project of sense, it was easy to appreciate that the world would fall victim to its own technological victories if a spirit of solidarity and transcendent vision had not heated and transformed from within and if at least the catholic Church had not given the proof of the primacy of the spirit over the power of things.
Civilization of Solidarity

Ethical Problems of World Economic Order

Manfred Spieker*

Discussing ethical problems of the world economy requires the initial step of sketching the present situation of the world economy, realising its growing implications and imbalances, and enquiring about its most important factors (I). The guidelines of catholic social teaching for a world economic order which is guaranteeing the freedom just as guaranteed social justice are then to be portrayed in a second step (II).

I. The situation of the world economy

In a value-based economy, each individual is «dependent» on others. As producer as well as consumer he depends on the performance of others and on a free trade. Beyond that, as producer he also depends on the demands and the solvency of the customers. This mutual dependence goes beyond political, cultural and religious limits. With the beginning of industrialisation it tends to stretch itself towards global interdependence. The closed economy is abandoned, in order to overcome the scarcities of a less value-based economy or at least to make them moderate, to enhance the welfare and to increase the margins of freedom. This transition to a value-based economy fundamentally extends freedom and leads to dependences on anonymous markets - national as well as international.

The international division of labour and thereby the world trade has increased gradually after 1960. If the national product increased worldwide from 1960 to 1981 annually around 4.8%, the world trade increased by actual 6%. According to the annual report of World Trade Organisation, it augmented in 1994 about 9%, while the production increased only 3.5%: the first time the value of 4.06 trillion dollars exceeded the mark of 4 trillions1. In Germany the share of export-trade on gross national product increased from 19% in 1960 to more than 33% in 1994, in Belgium from 33% to 77%, in Japan from 11% to 15%, in the USA from 5% to 8%, in the developing countries with low income (= 270 US dollars in 1981) from 7% to 9% and in the developing countries with middle income (1.500 US dollars in 1981) from 17% to 25%. In 1991 the world trade

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1 Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 4.4.1995, p. 15.
reached a volume of 3.485 billion US dollars. This corresponds to a share of around 18% on the worldwide gross national product.

In these figures it is already clear that the world trade - as well as the prosperity - is unevenly divided: in 1991 71.1% of the share fell to the western industrial countries, 23.8% to the developing countries (among them OPEC states 4.6% and Asian tigers 8.8%) and 5% to the then still socialist countries or countries just shedding socialism. But the development of the past 30 years also shows clear fluctuations within the country groups.

Thus, within the market-economic industrial countries, the US percentage sank by one-third from 17% to 11%, the share of Japan tripled itself from 3 to 9%, while the German share has long held steady at a 10%. Within the developing countries the share of the growing countries (besides the four Asian tigers, Brazil and Argentina included) increased from 3 to 7%, while the share of the 33 African countries sank from 4.5 to 1.9% (end of the fifties, at the time of the independence of most of the states). It has continued to rest at 1.5% until the present.

During this time the world trade has experienced clear fluctuations in other sectors as well. From 1960 to 1983 the share of mineral fossil fuels and that of foodstuffs halved itself from 44% to 22% (fossil fuels 7%; foodstuffs 15%). The share of the fossil fuels doubled itself to 21% above all by the price-hike of oil. In about the same remained the share of the industrial goods, which amounted to 57% in 1983. Until 1994 the share of foodstuffs fell to about 10%. It is exceeded by the share of computers and instruments of communication increasing to 11%. Hand in hand with these fluctuations went the price changes, which in turn changed the Terms of Trade, thus the condition of the average value of the imports to the average value of the exports. While the industrial countries got for their export in 1985 only 83% of the import goods of 1970, the Terms of Trade of the oil-importing developing countries sank to 77%. Those of the oil-exporting developing countries, on the other hand, increased to 580%. The decline in price of raw materials - excluding oil - by around 30% in the eighties likewise contributed to the worsening of the situation of the developing countries. Simultaneously the share of services for world export increased, which were considered «non-tradeable» up to the middle of the eighties, and therefore did not play a role in the GATT-agreements reached by 1994 in the Uruguay-rounds, and are also not expressly shown in the above statistics. Even in the common market of the European Union, the freedom of the exchange of services has only been valid since 1.1.1993. The share of the services on world trade in the meantime is estimated at 30%.

The economic sciences explain the increase of the world trade and the international specialisation in the production with the comparative equipment- and cost-advantages. Capitalistic countries have a cost advantage in capital-intensive produced goods; countries rich in labour export work-intensive goods. Countries with a high technological standard export technologically intensive products. A large part of the world trade and above all its growth occurs within the industrial countries and, as the development of the European market shows, within the individual sectors - e.g. in the automobile industry. Thereby the production- and demand-conditions permanently fluctuate, as the above mentioned figures show. But the international division of labour is not as a rule a null set game, in which one country loses what the other wins. The export trade is worthwhile for all participating countries all the time, if goods can be imported more cost-productively than produced at home. Such fluctuations of comparative cost-advantages indeed include compulsions of adaptability mostly felt as unpleasant. But these compulsions of adaptability are the smaller evil against an expensive production, which is not only no longer exportable but also no longer marketable and in the long run leads to protectionism, stagnation and unemployment.

Changes in demand have various causes. Certainly prices play a central part. Thus the hike in the oil-prices in 1973 and 1978/79 has checked the demand and has expedited the search for alternative sources of energy and energy-saving technologies, e.g. in the automobile industry and in the construction of houses and heating systems. But even the technical advancements (e.g. fiber glass instead of copper-cable) and the resource-saving and waste-reducing environmental awareness (recycling of raw material) have caused changes in demand and, with that, even negative fluctuations of the Terms of Trade in the countries that export raw materials.

Not only the intensification of world trade but also the globalisation of production and the capital movements belongs to the development of the world economy in the past decades. The industrial production plants of big, but also smaller enterprises are being established increasingly in foreign countries. Various peripheral conditions with reference to labour costs (e.g. wage levels in the post-socialist countries), raw material sources, markets, training standards and legal regulations (e.g. permission for

genetic plants in the chemical and pharmaceutical industry) promote the globalisation of production, going hand in hand with the industrialisation of the financial markets. There is still only one stock-exchange in the world, and it is open the whole day; when trade begins in Tokyo, the closing prices have just been determined in Los Angeles.

The threatening growth of debts in the seventies and eighties belongs to the dark side of the world economic development. The foreign debts of the developing countries, which amounted to 334 billion US dollars in 1979 increased to around 1.630 billion by 1993. Around one third falls to 15 main debtor countries, among them 10 Latin-American countries (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Columbia, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela), 3 African countries (Ivory Coast, Morocco, Nigeria) as well as Yugoslavia and the Philippines. So complex are the causes of the debts - ranging from the worsening of the Terms of Trade of the raw material-exporting countries due to false predictions of growth, increase of interest rates, which last but not least, was caused by the borrowing practice of the USA, the biggest debtor of the world, by indiscriminate allocation of many commercial banks, which were looking for investments in petrodollars - so simply, although the consequences are grave. The developing countries must raise a considerable part of their export proceeds for interest and repayment; the developing countries of Africa in 1992 28.3%, those of Latin America 35.3%, those of Asia on the other hand only 7.7%. Since in not a few debtor countries the service share of the debits for exceeds the export proceeds, solvency can be maintained only with the help of the International Monetary Fund. But its credit facilities and debt conversion programs presuppose reforms of the order of economy and the society, which have the aim of continuously improving the economic situation, increasing the export proceeds and assuring solvency. The adaptability programs resulting from this often mean hard burdens for the population, especially at the poorer levels, such as the abolition of subsidies, reduction of social services or increases in taxes. A greater consideration of social goals through the implementation of structure-adjustment programs was resolved at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen from March 6-12, 1995.

The new protectionism particularly in the sectors coal, steel, textile, ship-building and agriculture also belongs to the dark side of the world economic development of the seventies and eighties. The difficult adaptations forced by the globalisation of the markets, often helped the enter-

prises and trade unions to recognise their common interests. They put pressure on their governments to protect the indigenous industry and the jobs - no longer by customs, but by new sublime instruments, «so-called» non-tariffable trade obstacles, like export subsidies, allocation of import quota, self restriction (limit) agreements, standardisation of goods, rate of exchange policies or administrative obstacles in the case of public allocation of business or the customs administration.4 What however appears from the point of view of the individual entrepreneur or worker as rational, burdens the global public welfare. It reduces the export chances of the developing countries and occasionally leads the industrial countries by means of sanctions contrary to the terms of agreement to the edge of economic warfares.

With the Uruguay-rounds of the GATT concluded on 15.4.1994 in Marrakesh, attempts were made to stop the trend to protectionism, and to improve the peripheral conditions for a liberal world trade further by means of three agreements: 1. through a revised customs- and trade agreement, the GATT 94, which is striving for a further reduction of customs and the non-tariffable trade obstacles and also includes the hitherto not discussed sectors of the textile and agricultural trade; 2. by the agreement about the international service trade GATS (General Agreement on Trade in Services), which binds the members to open the borders for the offer of services, e.g. of banks, insurances, construction, transport, travel and engineering enterprises and to guarantee the GATT-principles of preference and the native treatment; 3. by the agreement about the protection of intellectual property rights TRIPS (Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights), which regulates the patent-laws areshand stretches the protection of intellectual property beyond literary and artistic works to computer programs, databanks and the like.5

The OECD Report Cooperation for Development, about which the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of 9.2.1995 writes, mentions the «poor countries» in Africa that pay for interest and repayment almost four times what they receive from exportations: Der Zeit 16.2.1995 mentions 25 African countries that pay for interest and repayment more than they receive from the exportations.


5 The American industry estimates the damage by the Chinese pirate-copies of CD's and films at a billion dollars annually. 20 factories in China, which are not members of the WTO but would like to become, are illegally producing more than 25 million CD's annually. Chinese Ministries use pirate copies of American programs in their computers. USA introduced in February 1995 punitive customs of 100% on some Chinese imported goods. Compare Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 30.1.1995 and 6.2.1995.
ily increasing standard of actual income" and "increase of production and exchange of goods", also the goal "optimum use of the world resources", which modifies the old goal "full disclosure of world resources" in an ecological-oriented way and an inherent chapter on the special consideration of the economically weak countries.

Whether the GATT 94 improves the chance of all countries for a betterment of their economic situation, remains to be seen. The gains of the new agreement are the extension of the validity range of the world trade order, which must be recognized by every member of the WTO in its totality in the future, the integration of the agrarian and textile markets into the world trade order and the further reduction of tariffable and non tariffable trade obstacles. The problems lie in the numerous special conditions and exceptions, in the growing density of regulations and in the conversion of the agreement into national right in the 125 states which had participated in the negotiations of the Uruguay-rounds.

To the factors which determine the development of the world economy and which are to be considered in an ethics of the world economy order, belong, besides the GATT and the WTO, international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) established in 1944, the World Bank, likewise established in 1944, and the International Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD) established in 1964. The IMF serves to promote the international collaboration in currency matters, to enable the expansion of world trade, to prevent a crisis spiral through adaptability-credits in the case of external economic difficult developments and to assure liquidity. Not every country has a voice in decisions; the weight of the voice is governed primarily by the extent of the obligation to financial contribution. The World Bank, which originally served to promote the reconstruction of the economic order of industrial countries suffering from the Second World War is today the leading institute for multilaterally guaranteed development aid to governments or recipient-institutions, which have the guarantee of their governments. Principally, it guarantees credits through its own means of fund-raising in the international finance markets for the adaptability of economic and social structures of advanced developing countries, which can pay interest oriented to market rates. For the poorer developing countries, the personally identical with the World Bank, but legally and financially independent International Development Agency (IDA) was established, which guarantees credits with a long duration (50 years) without interest. Lastly the International Conference for Trade and Development, established above all as a result of the dissatisfaction of the developing countries with the GATT 47 and the IMF, envisages its most important goal in the full integration of the developing countries in the world economy. Once every four years it meets to discuss the problems and interests of the developing countries. As its decisions for the member states, however, only have the nature of recommendations, its interests are presumably better preserved in the new WTO of the GATT 1994.

To the economically relevant factors belong, besides these international institutions, the leading economic countries - at the moment USA, Japan and Germany, by whom together around a third of the world trade is determined - as well as the economically strong country groups like the EU and finally the multinational enterprises, which not only trade but also produce worldwide. Their business strategies, operations and culture can have considerable positive and negative influence on the economic development of individual countries. Even if the international institutions, the leading economic countries and the multinational concerns cannot here be adequately discussed, it is clear that they are all to be included in building an ethical world economic order. They can significantly influence the development of the world economy by promoting more social justice and global public welfare, but they can conversely threaten that development as well.

The global public welfare is endangered by the extreme inequality in the distribution of goods. The extreme disparities are reflected in the average per capita income, which is 50 times higher in the group of the richest countries than in the group of the poorest countries. In 1983 it ranged from 260 US dollars in countries with low incomes (amongst the Bangladesh 130 and India 260) to 1,310 dollars in countries with middle income, to 11,060 dollars in market-economy industrial countries (Italy 6,400, Japan 10,120, Germany 11,430, Switzerland 16,290) to 12,370 dollars in the oil-exporting arabian countries (Kuwait 17,880, UAE 22,870)². About half of the world population lives in a state of low income, about a billion people live in absolute poverty and about half a billion in continual hunger. Of the children who are born in these countries, 15% die before they are five years old. That the commodities of the earth are not only unequally distributed, but that some live in abundance and others do not even have a living wage and that the economic and social misery cries aloud to the heaven is the central challenge of politics as well as the Church.


* In the countries where in 1990 the socialist planned economy collapsed, the average per capita income amounted to 4,280 dollars. This amount nowadays should be much higher. H. Steffen, op. cit., p. 33, mentions the 150 dollars in the eighties for the Hungarian case. In Poland, the per capita income amounts to 2,438 dollars in 1994.

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II. Guidelines of Catholic Social Teaching for the World Economy

How should one assess the development of the world economy from the viewpoint of Catholic social teaching? It is well known that Catholic social teaching does not offer any technical solutions to the problems of international economic relations. It is comprised, however, of a series of norms and guidelines for a world economic system, which attempts to unite the freedom of international commerce with social justice. It is the Church's Gospel-based teaching on the humanizing of social relations on all levels: in management and business, in economic order and government, in international politics and the world economy. It examines the possible conditions for a social and economic order which respects human dignity, and it expects of those who labor in its spirit not only to be instructed in the faith, conscientious and devoted, but also competent in their field. It intends to prepare the way for a civilization of solidarity.

Well before the printing of the Encyclical Mater et Magistra in 1961, the Catholic Church has concerned itself with the economic and social misery in the many regions of the world. In her missionary endeavors this misery has always been a central concern of her pastoral care. The proclamation of the Gospel has generally gone hand in hand with the endeavor to nurture and educate the people, with the founding of schools, trade schools, colleges and universities as well as the establishment of facilities for social welfare. However, since the Encyclical Mater et Magistra, the problems of underdevelopment and the north/south conflict have been the concern of papal documents on the social order. The council document about the Church in today's world, Gaudium et Spes, the encyclicals Populum progressio and Sollicitudo Rei Socialis and the Instruction of the Congregation of the Faith about liberation theology Libertatis Conscientia of 1986 systematically address the problems of development, international relations and global common good. Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have repeatedly urged Christians to work for a civilization of love in cooperation with all men of goodwill and in reliance on the Holy Spirit, to exercise Christian virtues and conduct, as well as to develop corresponding structures and institutions which enable the global improvement of social justice, secure freedom and peace for all men and preserve the created realm.

The following guidelines of Catholic social teaching are important for a world economic order which unites free competition with social justice in accordance with a civilization of solidarity: 1. the safe-guarding of human dignity; 2. the universal distribution of wealth; 3. the unity of humanity.

1. The Safe-guarding of Human Dignity

Social ethics begins with the human person. His individuality and social behavior, his physical and spiritual nature, his freedom and responsibility as well as the frailty of his nature, which, however, does not affect his being created in God's image - these guide the ethical reflections on the conditions for the development of a governing and social system which respects human dignity. If, as continually described by Catholic social teaching, the human person is origin, bearer and goal of all social and economic structures, then this is also valid for the world economic order. All attempts at improving social and economic structures, the goals and means, the institutions and procedures as well as a dignified development of nations are only legitimate, if those structures begin with the human person and end with the human person. They must be anthropocentrically based.

Certainly, the elimination of poverty, hunger and misery must be considered from the beginning as a necessary, if not sufficient condition for the safe-guarding of human dignity. They must go hand in hand with the guarantee of human rights, especially political, economic and religious freedom, with the development of social security systems, with the establishment and stabilization of democracy towards participation in cultivating political consciousness and last but not least with the development of the human person. According to Pope Paul VI's Encyclical on the human progress Populum progressio from 1967: «Development is not simply the same as economic growth. True development must be complete, keeping in mind both the individual human and the whole of humanity». Every program intended to increase production is only justified in so far as it serves humanity. It should remove inequalities, eliminate discrimination, liberate the individual from slavery and thereby make him capable of responsibly attending to his material welfare, his moral progress and his spiritual development. Development purports an interest in social as well as economic progress. One could even say «that economic growth depends above all on social progress. Therefore, a basic education is the first stage in a plan of development».

Pope John Paul II continues the reflections of Paul VI...
regarding the conditions for human worth-based development, and in his Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, dedicated to the twentieth year anniversary of Populorum Progressio.

« True development, in keeping with the specific needs of the human being... implies... a lively awareness of the value of the rights of all and of each person. It likewise implies a lively awareness of the need to respect the right of every individual to the full use of the benefits offered by science and technology. On the internal level of every nation, respect for all rights taken on great importance, especially: the right to live at every stage of its existence; the rights of the family, as the basic social community;... justice in employment relationships; the rights inherent in the life of the political community as such; the rights based on the transcendent vocation of the human being, beginning with the right of freedom to profess and practise one's own religious belief.»

Catholic social teaching has always emphasized human responsibilities alongside human rights in this developmental process. To a dignity-based life belongs the individual responsibility for one's own livelihood, the willingness and ability to initiate, to enhance oneself and to work - for the family, the society, the State and the market. «Endowed with intellect and free will, each man is responsible for his self-fulfillment even as he is for his salvation. He is helped, and sometimes hindered, by his teachers and those around him; yet whatever be the outside influences exerted on him, he is the chief architect of his own success or failure. Utilizing only his talent and willpower, each man can grow in humanity, enhance his personal worth, and perfect himself.»

An observer of Indian economics and culture stated that the idea of being the architect of one's own happiness is a western idea which is «diametrically opposed» to Hindu karma, the seed of destiny. Hinduism encourages qualities such as sensibility and willingness to adapt but not those necessary values for a market economy - the will to succeed, the joy of innovation, the sense of community and solidarity, discipline and responsibility.

Paul VI's accentuation of individual responsibility for a successful life may sound harsh to many, but it corresponds to the anthropological recognition that successful living depends on the willingness and capability of the individual to initiate, to exert himself and to perform. At the same time one must keep in mind that Catholic social teaching never isolates the individual from his social relationships. The human person is certainly not the «ensemble of his social relationships» as Karl Marx in his sixth Feuerbach thesis claims, but is rather tied to the society and dependent on it, and yet capable of enriching its development. Therefore, Catholic social teaching never reduces itself to an ethic of virtues and duties. As a social ethic it has always reminded us that the common good, as the totality of the potential political and social conditions of personal development, not only depends on the behavior of the individual but also on social and political structures. Thus as human maturity and social progress mutually condition one another, so too can human beings in difficult circumstances «often be turned away from the good and urged to evil».

Therefore, the safe-guarding of human dignity in many countries also requires «the reform of unjust structures and especially native political institutions, in order to replace corrupt, dictatorial and authoritative regimes with democratic principles of self-determination». John Paul II expresses the desire in his Encyclical Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, that the process of democratization will spread and grow stronger. For the «health» of a political community - as expressed in the free and responsible participation of all citizens in public affairs, in the rule of law and in respect for and promotion of human rights - is the necessary condition and sure guarantee of the development of the whole individual and of all peoples.

2. The Universal Destination of Goods

Due to the suffering of people and nations in many developing countries, Catholic social teaching repeatedly reminds us of the universal distribution of wealth. From the very beginning it has emphasized the two-fold dimension of the ethic of private ownership. The right to private property is a human right, to be sure: «Private property or some form of ownership of external goods assures a person a highly necessary sphere for the exercise of his personal and family autonomy and ought to be considered as an extension of human freedom. Lastly, in stimulating exercise of responsibility, it constitutes one of the conditions for civil liberty. God destined the earth and all it contains for all men and all peoples so that all created things would be shared fairly by all mankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity. Therefore every man has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's goods for himself and his family.»

In his encyclicals and addresses John Paul II has constantly underscored the universal distribution of wealth with a dignified development of poor nations and the preferential option for the poor in accord with the demands of the Church's social teaching. He dedicates the
central chapter of Centesimus Annus to this option for the poor. The Symposium of the Papal Council on Justice and Peace likewise discussed this topic on the occasion of the Centenary of Rerum Novarum in May 1991. God has given the earth to the human race in order that it might sustain itself from her. This gift does not exclude or preclude anyone. «The earth, however, only yields its fruits to a conscious response of man to God’s gift, and that response entails work». The universal distribution of wealth and the preferential option for the poor are, therefore, not primarily a philanthropic concern but rather a responsibility of individual effort of personal acquisition through work, of economic systems and politics. Thus every charge that Catholic teaching on this and only itself with just distribution and not with the production of the fact to be distributed, that is it is not concerned with working conditions, is incorrect. In his encyclical Laborem Exercens, Solicitudo Rei Socialis and Centesimus Annus, John Paul II constantly stresses the significance of factors of production and the social and political framework of both the national and international common good. «Whereas at one time the decisive factor of production was the land and later capital – understood as a total complex of the instruments of production – today the decisive factor is increasingly man himself, that is to say, especially his scientific knowledge, his capacity for integrated and compact organization as well as his ability to perceive the needs of others and to satisfy them».46

Lastly, the recognition and cost-efficient fulfillment of the needs included in the virtues of the employer, to whom John Paul II dedicates several passages in Centesimus Annus. Already in Solicitudo Rei Socialis he demanded of developing nations that they protect the right to employer initiative «as an important right for the individual as well as for the common goods». By the individual as «production factor» is meant not only the employer, who certainly plays a prominent role, but also the «possession of knowledge, technical skills and ability» by each individual. To secure in developing nations this type of ownership, on which the wealth of industrialized nations is based, is the central prerequisite for making earthly goods available to everyone.

A further central prerequisite for the optimal allocation of resources and the fulfillment of needs on the national and international level is the free market.47 Catholic social teaching argues for free trade on the international level, but likewise emphasizes that free trade must be balanced by the demands of social justice. When industrialized nations subsidize non-competitive national firms or agricultural concerns through financial, taxation and social policies, then international protective measures in favour of exports from the poorest countries must be passed and enforced in spite of the lack of a global authority. «Now in this matter one standard should hold true for all. What applies to national economies and to highly developed nations must also apply to trade relations between rich and poor nations. Indeed, competition should not be eliminated from trade sanctions; but it must be kept within limits so that it operates justly and fairly, and thus becomes a truly human endeavor. Now in trade relations between the developing and the highly developed economies there is great disparity in their overall situation and their freedom of action. In order that international trade be human and moral, social justice requires that it restore to the participants a certain equality of opportunity».48

Catholic social teaching argues for the integration of all countries into the international division of labor and for agreements which preserve both free competition and the terms of development for especially weak national economies. It rejects the theory of dependence of liberation theology, which attempts to explain the misery of the Third World by the dependence of the developing nations on the industrialized nations, which themselves have become rich through the exploitation of the developing nations. The underlying logic of this approach would be the severance of the developing countries from the world market, thus the isolation of their national markets. In Centesimus Annus John Paul II rightly rejects this theory. «Even in recent years it was thought that the poorest countries would develop by isolating themselves from the world market and by depending only on their own resources. Recent experience has shown that countries which did this have suffered stagnation and recession, while the countries which experienced development were those which succeeded in taking part in the general interrelated economic activities at the international level».49 A GATT agreement, which simultaneously seeks to dismantle trade barriers in the international exchange of goods and services and to improve social justice, which belongs the protection of intellectual property rights as well as preferential treatment of extremely uncompetitive national economies, cannot therefore be denounced as «an instrument of neo-colonial, imperialist powers». This language from a declaration of the Conference of the Catholic Priests of India (CPCI) reminds me of one ideology of the cold war, which now belongs to the past. Although the Conference of
Priests confessed a lack of competence on this topic, it was not, however, reluctant to call GATT an important factor in the neo-colonial plundering and exploitation of nations and in the interference of national sovereignty.\textsuperscript{33}

The principles of universal distribution of wealth and the preferential option for the poor are confronted with two further problems, which play a central role in the ethics of the world economy and which are continually addressed by the Catholic social teaching: international debt and the dynamics of population development. In regards to international debt for the poorest countries, the problem is a long way from being solved. Although a remittance of debt for many of the poorest countries is morally acceptable, John Paul II in Centesimus Annus has stressed the principle, that the debts must be paid\textsuperscript{34}, and in Sollicitudo Rei Socialis he defends the incurrence of debts as a completely reasonable process which serves to support the development of the national economy. «The availability of capital and the fact of accepting it as a loan can be considered a contribution to development, something desirable and legitimate in itself, even though perhaps imprudent and occasionally hasty.\textsuperscript{35} But it is not right to demand or expect payment when the effect would be the imposition of political choices leading to hunger and despair for entire peoples. It cannot be expected that the debts which have been contracted should be paid at the price of unbearable sacrifices. In such cases it is necessary to find - as in fact is partly happening - ways to lighten, defer or even cancel the debt compatible with the fundamental rights of peoples to subsistence and progress.\textsuperscript{36,37}

Catholic social teaching has also determined that demographic development is a problem that «creates difficulties for development». However, it warns of blaming demographic developments as the cause of underdevelopment and of developing government programs with steps to make economic and social progress dependent on reducing the number of births and that interfere with the freedom of parents to responsibly determine the number of children they wish to have\textsuperscript{38}. «There is no doubt that public authorities can intervene in this matter, within the bounds of their competence. They can instruct citizens on this subject and adopt appropriate measures, so long as these are in conformity with the moral law and the rightful freedom of married couples is completely intact.\textsuperscript{39} A notably objective report of the German Protestant Church (EKD) on the «World Population Growth as a Challenge to the Churches» describes the position of the Catholic Church to these problems: «According to the conviction of John Paul II, the right to bodily, social, political and economic security holds claims; which society is forbidden to divest by a presumptuous and intolerable manipulation of sexual reproduction. One should not overlook the noteworthy scope and results of Catholic institutions in development assistance, which endeavor to initiate positive approaches within the framework of the Church’s teaching and in close cooperation with overseas partners. In the programs of Natural Family Planning (NFP), which, for example, is widely supported by Misereor, parents of particular people groups are motivated through family pastoral care, basic health services and educational facilities to regard the periodic physiological signs of fertility and to conscientiously and freely determine the size of the family.\textsuperscript{40}

As with the safe-guarding of human dignity, so too the universal destination of goods and the option for the poor cannot be realized without the creation of an appropriate social and political framework. Thus requires reforms of the caste system, fundamentalist systems of power and unjust political structures «in order to replace corrupt, dictatorial and authoritarian regimes with democratic structures of self-participation». They are a condicio sine qua non for a development worthy of human beings\textsuperscript{41}. Even a revolution would not be judged a priori by Catholic social teaching. «Lacking the bare necessities of life, whole nations are under the thumb of others; they cannot act on their own initiative; they cannot exercise personal responsibility; they cannot work toward a higher degree of cultural refinement or a greater participation in social and public life. They are sorely tempted to redress these insults to their human nature by violent means.» In this case «revolutionary uprisings - except where there is manifest long-standing tyranny which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country - engender new injustices, introduce new inequities and bring new disasters\textsuperscript{42}.»

Likewise, the one who is robbed of his rights is counted among the poor according to the Church’s social teaching. John Paul II himself begins from a broad concept of poverty, which is not simply based on income or consumer possibilities, but also includes many types of moral poverty\textsuperscript{43}.

3. The Unity of the Human Race

The Church considers its central duty to work for the unity of peoples and nations. In Lumen Gentium of the Second Vatican Council the Church is clearly defined as
the sacrament of unity: «...the Church, in Christ, is in the nature of sacrament – a sign and instrument, that is, of communion with God and of unity among all men...»

This charge motivates the Church to involve herself in the problems of development and to view a dignified development as an obligation of her pastoral work. If the resolution of the north/south conflict orients itself to achieving the unity of mankind, then for both sides, north and south, completely different approaches are necessary than those of the last 30 years, in which the gap between north and south has increased. Both sides have the responsibility to create a civilization of solidarity. «Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity, based upon the principle that the goods of creation are meant for all»

It follows, then, that the industrialized nations have the responsibility to explicitly increase their aid to developing nations. What is normal domestic policy for an industrialized society, that, for example, the wealthy are able to help the less well-off to achieve a dignified living standard through a progressive system of taxation, a responsible system of social services and works of charity, must be recognized on the international level.

The last few years, however, show a decrease rather than an increase in the development assistance of industrialized nations. In 1993, for example, the $56 billion of public assistance from the 25 OECD countries reached 0.3% of their social product. The year before the amount of $60 billion had reached 0.35%. Only Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the Netherlands reached the 0.7% recommended by the United Nations. The prosperous industrialized nations are required to provide development assistance - from emergency relief, literacy and agricultural programs, trade, credits and transfers of technologies to the reform of international institutions. Components of this responsibility are a reform of international trade centered on dismantling protectionism, a stabilization of the world currency system, a promotion of the transfer of technologies and a reform of international organizations which overcome thinking in terms of trading blocks. A respect for the cultures and religions of the developing countries is a further responsibility of the industrialized nations. The industrialized nations must gain knowledge of the cultures and religions before initiating development programs and they must also refrain from enforcing their own lifestyle on the recipients of their aid. This is especially important in the area of procreation of children. Respect for other cultures and religions, however, does not mean that one accepts violations of human rights such as the right to freedom of worship, the right to education, the right to participate in the political life of the country. The right to life is a basic right that is protected by international law.

If a civilization of solidarity is to develop out of this mutual dependency, then the developing nations also have a serious responsibility to perform dialogical social teaching constantly emphasizes that the developing nations are to perform the «bulk of the work» for their economic and social development, that they are the «chief architect of their own development» and therefore themselves «bear the burden and responsibility of this work». They must develop a spirit of enterprise and act responsibly, «without expecting everything from the more prosperous countries». Likewise, the principle of subsidiarity applies to the relationship of the developing nations to the industrialized ones. The ability and willingness of the developing nations to take the initiative, to exert themselves and to produce results is the prerequisite for effective development assistance. In order to encourage the necessary skills and willingness among its citizens, the indicated reform of undemocratic political systems must be taken seriously. Without the guarantee of justice, the safe-guarding of human rights and opportunities for democratic participation in political life, economic and social progress is unthinkable. In the end, developing nations must open their
borders or at least make them permeable, peacefully resolve their ethnic conflicts and practice solidarity among themselves as well as form regional communities of development.

When developing and industrialized countries fulfill their responsibilities and do not misuse international institutions to serve their own interests but rather develop them for the service of a world economy worthy of human beings, then they are supporting the transnational common good through their social partnership. The working model by which these endeavors can orient themselves is that of a world economy, which combines free competition with social stability. From the perspective of many representatives of Christian social ethics, this model is appropriate for the world economy.

At the international level it combines free trade and a global economy with the protection of the weak and distributive justice. It is a central building block for a civilization of solidarity. It is in accord with the economic system which the Pope recommends to Third World countries in Centesimus Annus. Social market economy denotes a concrete option for the poor.

A global political authority which strives for the realization of this world economic order is presently not at hand. But Christians, who work for this civilization of solidarity, can be found throughout the world. They are called to be active in economics and politics in industrialized countries, in developing countries and in international institutions. They have an obligation to cooperate not only with each other, but also with Christians of other confessions and with believers of other religions. Through their involvement for the unity of the world, for the universal destination of goods and for the safeguarding of human dignity, the civilization of solidarity can be made evident today.

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COMPTES RENDUS


Il faut espérer que le lecteur ne se décourage pas devant les 600 pages de ce livre sur un «moine de l'Église d'Orient» dont l'auteur, Madame Elisabeth Behr-Sigel, est une théologienne bien connue dans les milieux œcuméniques. Elle fait partie du groupe d'avant-garde des théologiens orthodoxes occidentaux dont le prof. Olivier Clément, qui a préfacé le livre, est le plus connu, tous en lien avec la Faculté de Théologie de l'Institut St. Sergue de Paris et avec la revue Contacts.


Vocation étrange que celle de ce moine, mais d'une logique bouleversante, celle même de Dieu qui se choisit des témoins exceptionnels pour «l'entreprise peu commune d'un prêtre hors du commun» (p. 315). Il prendra peu à peu conscience de ce que signifie «œcuménisme», le conduisant au-delà des limites traditionnelles pour embrasser toute l'humanité. «... il est sensible au mouvement de l'esprit invisiblement présent partout; sa foi lui fait discerner le christianisme laton et agissant dans les religions non-chrétiennes et même dans certaines formes d'athéisme qui sont en revolte contre les idoles que se donnent les croyants» (p. 515).

Sa vocation monastique est née en écoutant le sermon d'un pasteur protestant à Genève: «... si quelqu'un veut me suivre, qu'il renonce à lui-même et qu'il se charge de sa croix...» Il aura son «chemin de Damas» «événement inédit au bord du Lac de Tibériade» (p. 267): il va devenir le frère universel comme l'entendaient Charles de Foucauld (p. 134), un libre croyant universeliste et mystique (p. 467). Il affirme: «Je peux trouver le Christ dans les hommes, par les hommes, à travers les hommes» (p. 141), errant comme Benoît Labre et tant d'autres pauvres selon le cœur de Dieu (p. 373), prêchant à Hyde Park Corner: «...y rencontrer le Seigneur plus que dans les cathédrales» (p. 319). Il se sentira de plus en plus appelé à étendre son service de Jésus, au-delà du dialogue anglican-orthodoxe, aux relations avec des chrétiens appartenant aux autres églises et, au-delà encore, au dialogue avec les croyants d'autres religions et même des incroyants (p. 327); attiré depuis toujours vers la Russie, il y ira très peu et son apostolat se concentrera à Paris (fondation de la première paroisse orthodoxe de langue française), à Londres et au Liban; il sera actif et ouvert au dialogue judéo-chrétien et aux valeurs spirituelles juives (p. 284 ss.).

Mais dans tout cela, aucun syncrétisme. Devenu orthodoxe, on n'exigera de lui aucune formule d'abjuration: «Il ne va pas d'une foi et d'une Église à une autre foi et à une autre Église; il demeure dans l'Église...»

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une. C'est cette unité que l'encyclopédie Mortaiun animos lui a paru nier et c'est pour protéger contre cette négation, pour manifester cette unité que lutte seul - qu'il a du devoir de se poser, à la fois douloureusement et joyeusement, l'acte dont Dieu l'a fait ce qu'il veut donner une raison de son amour de nous" (p. 400). Lors de sa conversion en 1928, il n'est pas allé vers une autre lumière que celle qui brillait aussi dans l'Église catholique, mais vers la même lumière, «la lumière du Christ, discernée dans l'Église orthodoxe à un degré plus pur» (p. 138), dans cette Église d'Orient, gardienne de la tradition des premiers siècles; il a le sentiment de progresser, mais c'est à l'intérieur de la même Église... il se considère «un prêtre catholique romain en pleine communion avec l'Église orthodoxe» (p. 174). Mais il est «hors-cadre, libre de se consacrer à l'évangelisation de ceux ou celles - une multitude - que les Églises officielles n'atténuent pas ou n'atténuent plus» (p. 316).

Ce passage à l'orthodoxie a été provoqué principalement par le problème posé par la papauté et l'infallibilité. Pour lui «la conception centraliste romaine de l'autorité papale n'est qu'un produit de l'histoire. Comme tel dissociable de l'essence divine de l'Église» (p. 369). Ce monarquisme qui situe le pape comme un «démant» entre Dieu et l'Église, ayant un pouvoir ordinaire sur chaque évêque réparti dans le monde, «dit le moine de l'Église d'Orient - pour manifester un papisme arbitraire, absolu, violent qui aboutit finalement à révolter les hommes». Demandaient la solution non point au papisme, mais à la papauté. La vérité de la papauté il faut la chercher dans la triple question : «mi ne miasma» adressée par le Christ à Pierre (...), il faut donner une raison d'être au pouvoir du pape, au peuple privilégié, le dépositaire de l'amour du Christ pour l'universalité de l'Église, l'évêque de Rome - devenir le serviteur de tous les serviteurs de Dieu, parce qu'il porte la sollicitude de toutes les Églises. Le pouvoir universel du pape ne doit pas être défini en termes d'honneur et de domination, mais de communion; il faut le concevoir comme un service d'humilité et de charité» (p. 109).

Voilà qui est en synthèse avec ce qu'a dit le patriarche Bartholomé I de Constantinople, à St Pierre, à Rome, le 29 juin 1995: la primauté et l'infalïbilité n'appartiennent pas aux personnes, mais aux ministères, au moment où Jean-Paul II demande aux théologiens des autres confessions chrétiennes dans un dialogue ouvert à l'aider à corriger les modalités d'actualisation de son «privilège» (encyclic Urum sint, 25 mai 1995, n. 95).

En Occident, parmi les catholiques - même ceux qui se disent cultivés - l'Église d'Orient, sa spiritualité, est la plus riche du temps moderne. Ce livre peut aider à faire évoluer cette mentalité et faire découvrir toutes les richesses de cette étrange Église orthodoxe, si pauvre et si faible, qui n'a ni l'organisation, ni la culture de l'Occident et qui se maintient comme par miracle à travers tans de vicissitudes et de luttes. Église de contrastes, à la fois traditionnelle et si libre, si archaïque et si vivante, si ritualiste et si personnellement mystique, Église où la perle de grand prix de l'Évangile est précieusement conservée, parfois sous une couche de poussière: Église qui maintient au premier plan, dans l'ombre et le silence, les valeurs éternelles de virginité, de pauvreté, d'ascétisme, d'humilité et de pardon: Église qui souvent n'a pas su agir, mais qui sait chanter comme nulle autre la joie de Pâques...» (p. 173).

Jean-François Nauthomb


Il y a des mots dont le sens se démoussage et se dégrade. Nous sommes envahis d'un nombre étonnant de post, s'ajoutant les uns aux autres; ils sont bien la marque de notre désarrois profond. Sommes-nous au bord d'une crise de civilisation sans précédent? Probablement. Et nous sommes tous un peu perdu face à elle. Inutile de repasser les détails, il s'agit de voir que c'est vrai. C'est, je pense, du côté des pauvres et des marginaux de toutes sortes que nous verrons, dans une certaine mesure, des éléments de réponse, du moins de la part des «intellectuels» engagés qui, partant de la triste expérience de tous les démêlés de notre monde contemporain et bien qui, par choix, partagent leur existence, nous aideront à y voir clair.

Émile Poulat est un de ces intellectuels engagés et son livre L'ère postchrétienne en est un élément important, comme un jonc ou un souffleur qui pourrait être dénommé. Disons tout de suite - puisqu'on parle d'une époque postchrétienne - que l'Eglise, ou mieux, les Églises sont aussi dans le creux de la vague, et comment! Le récent Concile Vatican II, en ouvrant les fenêtres d'un catholicisme bourgeoise et tranquille, a permis de faire entrer l'air frais du dehors, mais cet air est celui de notre siècle et est donc fort contaminé. Pourtant c'est là, dans ce christianisme actuel - dans sa réalité occidentale et non plus seulement catholique - qu'il faut, avec patience et ardeur, chercher une des sources de solution. Non pas que depuis 50 ou 75 ans ce christianisme n'ait pas bougé, secoué par des témoins et des prophètes, tel Léon Bloy, ou plus proche de nous, Emmanuel Mounier, avec son Feu la chrétienté, ou les Montsclard, Chenu, Danilou, Congar et tant d'autres dans l'œuvre de la Jeunesse de l'Eglise... On n'en finira pas de citer les sources du renouveau d'entre lesquelles on se retrouve un peu partout dans les Églises des temps présents: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, S. Weil, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, les Catholick Workers de Dorothy Day et de Peter Maurin, Dom Helder Camara et les théologiens de la libération... C'est le fruit du travail caché de la graine incarnée dans un nombre infini d'inconscius, oeuvrant dans le secret au cœur des masses - titre d'un livre de René Vaillame qui a fait renaître l'esprit de Charles de Foucauld, si proche de celui de Benoît Labre; si proche aussi du Père Lev Gillet, ce bénédictin catholique devenu un moine orthodoxe dont Madame E. Behrsig, la théologienne orthodoxe française, est la consanguine, vient d'écrire une passionnante biographie, Un moine de l'Eglise d'Orient, que j'ai recherchée plus haut.

Tout ce que je viens de dire peut maladroûtement, Émile Poulat le dit de manière claire: «La crise, c'est la réalité qui se rappelle à celui qui a trop longtemps vécu à crédit. C'est l'échéance brutale, parfois sanglante, d'engagements inconsidérés. Les grands systèmes nous avaient tout promis: le paradis, le bonheur, le progrès, l'abondance et la paix, un avenir tantôt radieux tantôt glorieux. La crise actuelle n'est pas une banale histoire de fausses factures et de croyances mortes. Nous vons désormais dans un monde pris à la gorge, talonné par ses créanciers: sans rêves et sans repères, il n'a plus que des cauchemars "postchrétiens" et "postmodernes"» (page de garde 4).

Émile Poulat cite en exergue de son livre le court dialogue suivant, extrait de Pierre et le loup de Seiige Prokoviev: "Le moineau au canard: "Quel genre d'oiseau es-tu donc, si tu ne peux voler?" Le canard au moineau: "Quel genre d'oiseau es-tu donc, si tu ne peux nager?"" Ce petit texte ne laisse aucun doute. La réponse qu'il trouvera en lisant attentivement son livre, riche d'expériences vécues et de réflexions dont on découvre au fur et à mesure la valeur.

Après un «Liminaire», suit une première partie intitulée «Un métier» qui traite de l'amour du concret et des leçons et des temps de l'expérience. La deuxième partie, le plus importante, a pour titre «Les années cruciales», qu'on découvre tout le long d'un christianisme bourgeois. Écoummes Poulat: «Sans avoir à changer d'Église, j'ai fait mon expérience anglicane, ensuite

This volume, which is coming out at the same time in French - Editions du Seuil - is the first in a series called (rather pompously) "Annuario Filosofico Europeo," alongside the series edited for Laterza by Vattimo (from Filosofia 86 to Filosofia 94). The collaborators belong to the same circle, mostly Italian - that of "pensiero debole" (weak thought) (Vattimo, Gargani, Vitiello, Ferraris), together with certain foreign presence from the post-Heideggerian area (Derrida, Thrá, Gamar). The subject chosen for the first volume recalls in fact the centrality of the themes of secularisation and the "death of God." However, certain of the essays contained here seem to document a new phase in such an interpretative for "religion" - there is a serious attempt to rethink religion in a postmodern light.

The progression of this orientation of thought in relation to the consciousness of believers (and the theological and philosophical expressions of belief) is obvious: indeed, unknown possibilities and moral risks for "religion" itself are to be found here inextricably mixed.

It was the meeting at Capri at the beginning of 1994 which provided the theme of the "death of God" - this book is the documentation and development of the work carried out there. Vattimo and Derrida pose the question whether the "renunciation of religion," which is defined superficially, by more than one source, a characteristic of our time, is really anything else but the "death of God?" (p. VIII). Would it be possible to see in this renunciation, a subtle but entirely unequivocal expression of the "logic of secularisation"? This is certainly what Ferraris has to say: he sees the return of God as completely referable to use as a "secondary phenomenon of secularisation." (p. 17)

The postmodern embrace can thus be no less lethal for religion than the bitter conflicts experienced along the way with modernity. "Weak" and welcoming as the philosophy might be, it remains a dangerous companion for faith, as the essays of Vattimo and Gargani clearly show. If the fall of the philosophical prohibitions against religion (...) coincides with the dissolution of the great systems which have accompanied the development of modern science, technique and social organisation, it coincides also with the diminution of foundationalism - i.e. precisely that which, it seems, common conscience looks for in its return to religiosity (Vattimo, p. 77). The inevitable question appears to be thus - if religion is inseparable from metaphysics in the Heideggerian sense of the word; i.e. if one can think of God as an only immobile foundation, as a norm of which everything begins and to which everything will return (ibid). The return to a metaphysical religiosity seems to the theoretician of "weak thought" an illusionary escape from the problematic and chaotic nature of the late-modern world. The only way out, according to Vattimo, is by recognising the substantial affinity between hermeneutic philosophy and trinitarian theology, of which the Heideggerian idea of the eventuality of being is ultimately a derivation. The trinitarian God does not call for the return to the foundational metaphysical sense of the word but rather - according to evangelical expression - a reading of the signs of the times (pp. 86-87).

The recognition of a profound agreement of subject matter between hermeneutic philosophy and the Christian tradition should not surprise us if we only consider that hermeneutics would not have been possible outside history, which has been marked by Christianity. What confirms this, according to Vattimo, is also the "metaphysical relegation" in philosophies, such as that of Levinas, linked to a non-"trinitarian" religious vision: precisely because of

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this they have ended up reconsidering in an "essentialistic" light the same idea of the eventuality of being. The trinitarian point of arrival seems here to be the result of the effort - characteristic of recent Vattimo - not to reduce "weak thought" - as in the mere acceptance of the existent, to the mere historical and cultural relativism: this now appears possible only in an inarticulation perspective which confers on history the sense of a redemptive revelation and not only a confused accumulation of events which disturb the pure structural nature of the real being" (p. 88).

The explicit adhesion of these pages to a trinitary outlook should not induce anyone to think of cultivating apologetic illusions. It is Vattimo himself who clarifies the distance of his ideas from all those philosophies preoccupied with "making room also for the plurality of religion": the question is not that of a radical redefinition of the traditional figure of relation between philosophy and religion" (p. 86). Therefore Vattimo is ready to open the door to Christianity, which he indicates rather as a necessary fixed point from a hermeneutic point of view, as long as it happens in clearly non-foundationalist and post-metaphysical forms.

What price will religion have to pay? What will it have to renounce to end the millenary - albeit atomistic - cohabitation with metaphysics?

Such questions do not seem to be of interest to the inaccessible and "crude" discourse of Derrida aimed above all (as far as we are able to understand) at indicating the common source of religion and reason regardless of whatever opposition they are supposed to have and at pointing out how "the imperturbable and interminable development of critical and technoscientific reason, far from opposing religion, sustains it and presupposes it" (p. 31). However, Derrida too shares the idea that the resources of faith, in our times, are to be found in the direction of negative theology. Distinguishing between two sources in religion: "On the one hand, the trustfulness of confidence, reliability or trust (belief, faith, credit, etc.), on the other, indemnity for the unhurt (the safe and the saved, the immune, the saint, the sacred, healing, holy)" (p. 64), he states that the relation with the absolute other is possible to the believer only in the experience of the non-relation or absolute interruption" (p. 72). The religious interpretation (the "hypersanctification") of this non-relation or transcendence requires indeed, Derrida says, the filter of desacralisation and perhaps a sort of "atheism" too. In short, the radical utilisation goes beyond the traditional limits of the resources of "negative theology" (ibid.). Disenchantment seems in this sense the first and last resource of the religious person: however, this involves the definitive renunciation of every "guarantee", as well as necessitating an emphasis on the "trustfulness" which defines the religious person.

However, doesn't consigning (or re-consigning) religion to the abyss of the non-guaranteed, the un-founded, the gratuitous mean condemning ourselves to the arbitrariness and casualness of religious consumerism? The question is asked explicitly in Gargani's essay, in many ways parallel to that of Vattimo, even though it assumes as specific fixed point the heredity of Wittgenstein, rather than that of Heidegger. The contribution of Gargani is interesting moreover for its clarity (as well as its originality) and allows a clearer understanding of the risks and potentiality of a post-metaphysical religion. He argues that the worst danger religion has to face today is to remain tied to the concern - in common with both the metaphysical tradition and that of positivism - of ascertaining the reality and presence of the entities on which religious discourse centres and therefore make the significance and the value of the religious discourse depend on the inspection of the present and verifiable entities" (p. 109). Can we speak of religion "without committing ourselves in some way to some sort of thesis relative to the existence of God", Gargani asks? (p. 110).

He complains of the fact that in the religious sphere Wittgenstein's lesson on the variety of linguistic game has not yet received widespread recognition. This variety is not traceable to the referentialist outline of descriptive language. This means, according to Gargani, that we should by now be able to give up speaking of God as an 'idealised anthropomorphic entity which transcends the empirical, space-time world and exists in another ontological region'. By overcoming "the metaphysics of the presence of theological objects" it will be possible to trace back to that summit which coincides with the effective experience of the actuality of religion which consists in recognising "in religions discourse an hermeneutic outlook by means of which we should observe life" (p. 112).

Rereading religious experience as a particular manner of observing and living existence (as blick, Hare would say), Gargani proposes not to empty religion but on the contrary to incarnate it, or rather make transcendent immanent. This is to be conceived of in fact as "a difference which emerges from the current figures of our experience", as critical point of the interpreting activity in the bottom of the flux of phenomena of life and history. In the end religion will not be seen as the discourse which uncovers and shows us another Object, another Entity, but a term of comparison according to which situations, figures and processes of our lives are interpreted. Not an immense object to see, extraordinary because it is different to all the other objects of ordinary life, rather a non-object, a paradigm which makes the objects and the situations of our lives extraordinary; it makes them rise to the level of an extraordinary symbolic force" (p. 113).

What is more, Gargani seems aware of the risk involved in a radical non-referential rereading of religion, a risk which emerges often in the feelings of the speculative guilt of those who have "the impression of jumping into the unknown since they do not know how to find the semantic and epistemological road to God" (p. 110). We must ask ourselves in short - freeing ourselves of a "notion of rationality intended as state of constraint by rule" - if we are not condemning ourselves to chasing fantasies, immersing ourselves in a sphere where, so to speak, all is more or less allowed" (p. 109). The risk is even more apparent if one recognises - as Gargani himself honestly does - that most contemporary philosophy seems to have reduced the philosophical work to a self-referential exercise in which there is no room for differences or mystery. But Gargani can at most propose a "dream of homonymy" to the radical heteronomy of the plurality of languages and philosophical methods; a dream that cannot characterise itself positively unless as "every living man's nostalgia for God" which Chekov speaks of in a story. However, a literary quotation does not seem, either here or elsewhere, able to provide a way out of theoretical aporia.

The conviction that religion has always been faced with the alternative between "religion of presence" and "religion of alterity" runs through Vincenzo Vitelli's contribution too, in view of a "topology of the religious". By renewing a cliché - somewhat dated in fact - Vitelli sees this alternative as decisive over the whole history of Christianity, perennially split between the alterity of the original kerygma of Christ and the Pauline religion of the presence. St. Paul substitutes the oblique, parabolic language of Jesus (who knows "that which he has not seen is unutterable in the language of the world - in the only language there is") with the "religion of the word completely unveiled, the religion of Offenbarung" (p. 159). St. Paul thus transforms Christianity into an historical force, he secularises it: it is this version of Christianity which has in
actual fact marked the history of the west and found full expression, from a speculative point of view, in Hegel, «pagan and Christian philosopher at the same time, because he is the philosopher of the present, of presence, of the Parousia of the absolute» (p. 159). On the other hand the word of Jesus has found «the highest and most consistent interpretations» (p. 162) in Kantian philosophy, which represents for Vitiello the most rigorous foundation of apophatic theology. «There is nothing further from Kant than the Pauline auturvelamen. But it is not enough to say this. (...)» The negativity of the infinite indicates that there is no life for the finite except in the «conditionedness» and necessity of the world. (...) Because God reveals himself in abandonment, in the misery of the world, in the unhappiness of constriction» (p. 163).

It is this second figure of religion which seems to Vitiello able to oppose the reduction of reality to the absolute repetition of the truth set. The difference can only be preserved by a word which is aware that truth can be expressed solely by a lie: «oblique lying, by means of the parable, is lying in the highest and most noble sense, because covering the face of truth, it guards the awareness of that word of man, the finite world, is such only because of its negative relation with the Infinite, with Silence, with the most Simple and Perfect» (p. 165).

Necessity and precariousness seem therefore to characterize religious discourse, as this emerges from most of the contributions of this volume which well represent from this point of view the prevalent philosophical climate at this tail-end of the millennium. The reference to religion recurs significantly in many itineraries of post-modern thought which strive to avoid flattening out as a consolatory apology of the existent: but in any case these itineraries lead us inevitably to stress the groundlessness and the precariousness of religious discourse, with the risk of opening the door to a new type of fundamentalism or drying up the source at which one seeks refreshment. Moreover, the ambiguity of this religious reference acquires its most authentic significance precisely where it is thought of in relation to the tragedy of the human condition beyond all attempts at concealment or removal. This is what Derrida has to tell us: «The possibility of the radical evil destroys and at the same time institutes religion» (p. 73). Actually this is the tripping stone (but in itself the corner-stone) of every philosophy which - at least to speak - wishes to be faithful to the message of truth of Christianity. This is the unavoidable challenge both for those who intend following the slippery road to a post-metauhiesis religious, and for those who propose surrounding the aporia of theological and metaphysical modernity without ceding to regressive temptations, dipping into the unexplored potentiality of the metaphysical tradition itself.

Stefano Brogi


Aucun livre n'eut autant d'impact sur l'Eglise catholique américaine que Dorothy Day. Sielle connut des échecs, sa vie fut ponctuée par de nombreux succès que le monde scolaire reconnut sans hésitation; journaliste, écrivain, théoricienne de la société, éditeur, militante, elle crée et anime le Mouvement Catholique Ouvrier. Son itinéraire personnel, et le déroulement de son existence, rappellent ceux d'un saint Paul américain des temps modernes. A s'en tenir aux conventions morales et religieuses, son adolescence apparait au mieux comme scandaleuse, au pire comme amoral. En 1927, son insatisfaction la conduit au catholicisme.

La formation acquise par Dorothy Day au cours de ses jeunes années offrait un terrain fertile aux idées du catholicisme social défendues par Peter Maurin, un philosophe-ouvrier itinérant d'origine française connaissant bien la pensée sociale de l'Eglise et son enseignement, peu connus aux Etats-Unis. Ce fut sa deuxième conversion. Sa vie personnelle mie en ordre, Dorothy trouve des raisons morales et intellectuelles pour que sa pensée politique de gauche rejoint ses nouvelles valeurs religieuses qui devaient guider et expliquer sa vie, de 1932 jusqu'à sa mort en 1980.

Ce livre, traduit de l'anglais et adapté par George Joseph Henri, cherche à faire connaître cette expérience américaine converte au catholicisme, théoricienne de gauche, croyant fortement que l'enseignement social de l'Eglise avait quelque chose à apprendre à la société moderne et qui passa la plus grande partie de son existence à essayer de traduire cette croyance en action sociale concrète. Reconnaître enfin par l'Eglise américaine, Dorothy Day apparaît aujourd'hui comme la personnalité catholique la plus marquante de l'Amérique du XXe siècle.


Cet important volume, paru dans la collection du «Corpus Hispanorum de Facultad» et publié par le Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas de Madrid, est consacré à Alonso de la Pena Montegro (1596-1687) qui, après avoir enseigné la philosophie à l'Université de Santiago de Compostela, fut choisi comme évêque de Quito, Equateur, à partir de 1654. C'est là qu'il composa son itinéraire para párrocos de indios, qui eut une grande influence dans toute l'Amérique du Sud et également en Europe. Sa grande préoccupation était d'offrir aux prêtres et autresannonceurs de la Bonne Nouvelle une solide formation théologico-pastorale, en vue de les orienter par des critères sûrs et bien définis pour la pastorale des paroisses confiées à son zèle d'évêque. Alonso de la Pena Montegro est un fin connaisseur des problèmes religieux et humains, tant sociaux que politiques, des «colonisateurs» espagnols, ainsi que de ceux à qui ils doivent annoncer l'Evangile: les populations autochtones, les «indiens» comme on a coutume de les appeler. Pour tous ceux qui sont intéressés par les événements qui ont suivi la découverte ou la conquête du continent américain, nous conseillons vivement de lire ce
livre qui porte à réfléchir sur l'enseignement que nous donnent, dès le début de la domination espagnole en Amérique du Sud, celui qui en reste le témoin le plus dévoué: Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas.


Ce merveilleux album contenant de belles photographies de ceux qui meurent Les guerres amitiés a été présenté pour la première fois à Toulouse (France) du 15 avril au 30 mai 1993, à l'exposition organisée dans le cadre du vingtième anniversaire de la mort de Jacques Maritain, dans cette ville. Cette exposition a été présentée dans la suite en Italie, en Suisse et dans de nombreuses villes hongroises. L'album est préfacé par René Mougel qui dirige le Centre d'études de R. et M. Maritain à Kolombat.

Il s'agit d'un document illustré de grand valeur qui brèvement relate la vie de Jacques et Raïsa, à partir du livre dont le rendu célèbre celle qui a été l'amie «la plus grande» de Jacques Maritain : sa femme Raïsa. Comme le disait Jacques: «Nous amis font partie de notre vie, et notre vie explique nos amitiés».


Rien de plus actuel que ce livre du Père Sorel, jésuite bien connu en Italie, ancien directeur de la Cività Cattolica, fondateur et directeur depuis quelques années de l'Institut de Formation Politique «Pedro Arru- pa» de Palerme. Le livre est divisé en trois parties, à l'Observatoire politique de Palerme. La première est intitulée «Italie du passé et qui a cessé d'exister»; la deuxième «L'Italie qui est en train de naître» et la troisième «Le rôle des catholiques dans cette transformation». On doit reconnaître que le Père Sorel est un fin connaisseur de cette Italie en pleine évolution à la suite des crises que tout le monde connaît; mais l'Italie est aussi un pays de ressources innommables, spécialement dans ses habitants: on attend toujours que tout s'écoule et c'est à ce moment-là que tout repart. La conclusion du livre est claire et nette. «Nous, l'homme de la rue, sommes comme des flocons légers de neige par rapport aux problèmes innommés plus grand que nous et qui semblent des montagnes inaccessibles. Fournons-nous en creuser la roche? Il faut travailler de façon à ce que le flocon de neige s'annule à mille autres flocons pour arriver à former une boule de neige et faire ensuite rouler cette boule de neige si réduite jusqu’à la pente de la montagne, afin qu’elle devienne une avalanche. Et toi, trouvailles, si tu le peux, la force de la nature capable d’arrêter cette avalanche... Celle-ci changera les flancs rocheux de la montagne.». Les catholiques sont évidemment partis de cette avalanche et leur rôle est appelé à être plus important que jamais...


Ce petit volume, dont les chapitres V et VI sont consacrés à «La recherche des moyens non-violents» et «Maritain et Gandhi», met en exergue la capacité de comprendre la relation essentielle existante entre la recherche d’un projet de paius universelle et les principes théoriques de l’éthique et de la politique, en se basant sur des valeurs universellement reconnues, telles la sincérité et l’autenticité. Inutile de dire que le sujet est d’une telle grande actualité et nous devons en être reconnaissants à l’auteur de ce livre.


Le débat sur l'intelligence pratique, dont on parle beaucoup actuellement, en Amérique du Nord ainsi qu'en Europe, veut jeter les bases nécessaires pour répondre à la crise épistémologique causée par le manque de critères éthiques communs, mais d’un cadre intellectuel dans lequel il sera possible de dialoguer sur la validité de ces critères. La présente étude veut contribuer à ce cadre en présentant la proposition de J. Maritain qui a développé une théorie originale de la rationalité éthique, malheureusement peu étudiée à cause du manque de vision globale de son oeuvre sur ce point, dont les réflexions sont dispersées dans plusieurs endroits de son oeuvre.


«S’interroger sur la maternité est dénier creuser jusqu’aux racines des processus de la formation du “moi”, là où la différence entre les genres rencontre plus d’unie que de conflits. C’est à la mère que correspond le premier “tu” de la relation humaine, c’est elle qui transmet et enseigne le langage aux filles et aux garçons et leur donne, avec lui, une prospective, un code de lecture de la réalité avec lequel tous ceux qui viennent au monde et y croissent, devront se confronter. La figure “mère-fille” est le symbole d’une unité éclatée, dont la mémoire reste stratifiée dans la formation de la personnalité de base et revient tout au long de la vie des adultes comme une nostalgie profonde et conserve à ce mystère originaire de l’être personnel le message impitieux de l’interpréter et de développer une herméneutique de l’humanité à partir de cette vérité initiale (...) L’homme sera toujours un débiteur “essentiel” par rapport à la “mère-fille” qu’un programme de partage ne pourra jamais atteindre parce que le droit est totalement inopérable d’exprimer la logique surabondante de la gratuité inscrite dans le code.
maternel» (pp. 10-11).

Ce court texte donne bien le ton général de ce livre qui vient à point au moment de l'année internationale de la famille. On lira ce livre et on y cherchera toutes les implications et les interprétations du code maternel, en passant de la sphère biologique à la sphère sociale et culturelle, éthique et spirituelle.

En fermant ce livre on ne peut être persuadé que d'une chose, que les institutions à partir de la famille ne peuvent se limiter à rendre sociale l'individu mais doivent l'aider à découvrir ce qui lui permettra de réussir l'«ensemble» de sa vie en découvrant que la gratuité du don maternel dépassé de très loin tout ce qu'on peut concevoir.

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Emmanuel Mounier est le protagoniste de cette vaste recherche dans la France du XXe siècle qui commence lors de l'«affaire Dreyfus» pour se terminer au «désengagement» qui caractérise la littérature des dernières années du siècle, dont on peut considérer comme emblématique l'œuvre de Marguerite Yourcenar. Protagoniste non seulement parce que trois contributions spécifiques lui sont consacrées et parce que les références à sa pensée sont extrêmement nombreuses, mais surtout parce que c'est à son idée de l'«engagement», élaborée entre 1932 et 1935, que ces contributions ont été rédigées pour décrire le panorama intellectuel de la France de notre siècle.

Trois aspects particuliers de l'œuvre de Mounier sont analysés dans les contributions respectives correspondantes: ce sont la naissance d'Esprit comme «revue en situation» dans le contexte de la crise des années '30; les structures portantes du Manifeste de 1936, en tant que projet de société personnaliste et communautaire; le rapport controversé et difficile avec la tradition sociale-démocrate.

Les références à Mounier sont également fréquentes dans les travaux consacrés à Simone Weil et à Jacques Maritain, à Georges Bernanos et à Paul Ricoeur, en passant par Jean-Paul Sartre. Mais c'est avant tout l'optique générale du personnalisme qui est prise comme critère inspirateur de la longue introduction sur la réflexion de l'époque des années '30 et, à l'intérieur de celle-ci, la pensée de Mounier.

Pourvu d'un appareil critique très serré, ce travail fait prendre conscience de la littérature significative sur le thème étudié et des plus récentes études sur Mounier et le personnalisme en nous offrant en même temps une fresque complète du rapport complexe entre politique et culture connu par la France de notre siècle.
At the end of July 1995 Prof. Ramon Sugranes de Franch, President of the Jacques Maritain International Institute, was presented with the Luigi Sturzo International Prize, which is awarded each year to a leading figure who knew and collaborated with the Sicilian priest and politician. The decision of the Scientific Committee, chaired by Gabriele De Rosa, Professor of History at Rome’s First University and President of the Luigi Sturzo Institute, Rome, to award the Prize to Prof. Sugranes was unanimous.

Announcing the award, the Scientific Committee mentioned, amongst other things, that "Prof. Sugranes, man of letters and scholar of European renown, collaborated with Luigi Sturzo during the years of the Spanish Civil War. He has lectured at the University of Fribourg. Since 1933 he has been a corresponding member of the "Real Academia de bones Lletres" of Barcelona. He has always been deeply involved in international Catholic organisations, holding a number of positions, including, since 1979, that of President of the Jacques Maritain International Institute. A lay Auditor at the Second Vatican Council, he was a member of the commissions that drafted the Constitution Gaudium et Spes and the Decree Apostolicam Actuositatem."

He has written many works on the various fields in which he is particularly interested, including Iberian language, literature, culture and society, the Church and the lay apostolate.

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The meeting of the Institute’s Board of Governors and the Annual General Meet-
ing took place on 20 and 21 January respectively at the Borja Centre of the Jesuit Fathers at Sant Cugat del Vallès, Barcelona. The meetings were organised with the help of our associate, the «Centre d'Estudis Carles Cardó». A ceremony was also organised in the Catalan Governor's Palace on 19 January in honour of the Institute's President, Prof. Ramon Sagnez de Franch, a citizen of Catalonia.

During the meetings the balance sheet for 1994 was approved, as were the budget and programme of activities for 1995. The General Meeting admitted two new collaborating associations, the Australian Marxist Association of Sydney, Australia, and the Stichting Doorwerkchristelijke Sociaal Congres Foundation of Doorn, the Netherlands.

The membership of the new Executive Committee of the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albirizzi-Franchetti, which had been decided by the Board of Governors in October 1994, was also ratified. The members are: President: Prof. Giovanni Sarpelion; Director: Dr. Michele Zanette; members: Prof. Bruno Barel, Enrico Bert, Ferruccio Bresolin, Domenico Cococpalmento, Enzo De Mattei, Francesco Moschetti and Vittorio Possenti.

The Scientific Council of the research programme on the episcopal documents on ethics and economics met on 28 and 29 January 1995 at the Institute of Moral Theology of Fribourg University to discuss ways of completing the research. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ramon Sagnez de Franch and Father Roger Berthouzez o.p., Director of Research.

February 1 saw the start of the Institute's participation in the European Union's PHARE-Democracy Programme, with a project entitled East and West in European Local Democracy, in collaboration with the Fundación San Pablo-CEU, Madrid, and the Centre d'Estudis Carles Cardó, Barcelona, for Western Europe, and the following associations in Central Europe: Magyar Marjai Maritain Egyesület (Budapest), Fundacja Episcopaliana Grzegorek Leu (Bucharest), Societas Scientifica «Chika Maritain Stanislava» (Bucharest), Znak Christian Culture Foundation (Krakow), the Legal Information Centre of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Slovenia (Ljubljana) and Nova Renia (Ljubljana). This one-year programme provides for a series of initiatives, including seminars and publications, for fostering local democracy and mutual understanding between different ethnic groups in Central Europe.

Prof. Attilio Danese of Teramo University, who is in charge of co-ordinating the project, and Prof. Giulia Paola Di Nicola visited Budapest (21-23 April 1995) and various Russian cities (30 April-7 May 1995) to meet intellectuals, local government officials, journalists and representatives of cultural associations.

A seminar was also organised on National Minorities in Central Europe: A Challenge for Journalists, Held in Auschwitz, Poland, from 16-18 June, the seminar was promoted by the Jacques Maritain International Institute, the Auschwitz Dialogue Centre and the Znak Christian Culture Foundation. The proceedings opened with a lecture by Prof. Beata Klimek-Kazik, on «National, Ethnic and Religious Minorities in Polish Mass-media». During the seminar, journalists and experts from five Central European countries examined legislation guaranteeing the rights of minorities.

The project ends with a congress to be held in Madrid on 14-17 December 1995 on the topic of Local Democracy in Europe, organised in collaboration with the Fundación San Pablo-CEU.

le 17 juillet 1995 à Fribourg (Suisse): il s'agissait d'écouter les voix de jeunes journalistes et d'entendre leurs réflexions sur l'actualité. Les conférences ont été animées par le professeur Enrico Bert, qui a ouvert le congrès avec une présentation sur l'évolution des médias en Italie. Les participants ont pu discuter des thèmes les plus diversifiés, allant des défis de la démocratie locale aux enjeux de la diversité culturelle. Les travaux ont été résumés dans un rapport final qui a été présenté à la fin du congrès.

La participation du Centre de Recherches à l'Union Européenne a permis de renforcer les relations internationales et de favoriser la compréhension mutuelle entre différents groupes ethniques dans l'Europe centrale. Le projet a contribué à la promotion de la démocratie locale et à la valorisation des valeurs communautaires.


Le projet a permis de renforcer les liens entre les différents groupes ethniques et de favoriser la compréhension mutuelle. Il a également contribué à la promotion de la démocratie locale et à la valorisation des valeurs communautaires.
Le projet se termine à Madrid les 14-17 décembre 1995 par un congrès sur le thème La démocratie locale en Europe, organisé en collaboration avec la Fundación San Pablo-CIEU.

A conference was held on 24 February 1995 at the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti (Treviso) as part of the second edition of the Forum on autonomy for local democracy on the subject of A new financial and tax system for autonomous regions in Europe and in Italy. The introduction by Dr. Etore Beggiauto, Councillor responsible for local authorities in the Veneto Region, was followed by a report by Dr. Pietro Adonno, President of the International Fiscal Association, on The statute of local finance in Europe: post-Maastricht harmonisation. A debate then took place on Trends in local finance in Europe, with contributions by Dr. Heinrich A. Hoffschulte (Oberkreisdirektor, Steinfurt, Germany), Lucien Sergent (General Secretary of the AFCCRE, France), Alexander Sladkovsky (former mayor of Liptovsky, Slovakia), Lido Soscic (Mayor of Rovigno, Croatia) and Carles Ferré i Cusco (Mayor of Ripollet, Spain).

In the afternoon a round table took place on the problems of local finance in Italy. Taking part in the round table, which was introduced by Prof. Giancarlo Pola (Ferrara University, member of the Scientific Commission of the Forum on autonomy), were Profs. Federico Pica (Naples University) and Franco Osculati (Pavia University). The proceedings were brought to a close by Senator Franco Favilla, President of the Finance Commission of the Senate of the Italian Republic.

THE STUDY AND RESEARCH CENTRE, VILLA ALBRIZZI-FRANCHETTI (TREVISO)

Albrizzi-Franchetti (Treviso) organised a three-day study session from 28-30 March 1995 as part of a programme for providing information and stimulating debate on the legislation for local government reform in Italy (Law 142/1990). In the first session, which took place at Vicenza, an analysis was made of the basic design of Law 142, with a comparison between local powers in Italy and other countries. The opening address by Dr. Etore Beggiauto (Councillor for the Veneto Region with responsibility for local authorities, civil rights and emigration) was followed by reports by Prof. Feliciano Benvenuti (Venice University), Alessandro Merlin (President of the Venice section of the National Association of Italian Municipalities), Lorenzo Caranda (Secretary General of the Treviso Province), Giuseppe Carrao (legal advisor of the Veneto Region) and Nadyr Peruffo (Mayor of Verano, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil).

The second session was held in Venice, and examined the theme of Safeguarding the environment: From the Rio Conference to the current role of local authorities. After the welcoming address by Dr. Etore Beggiauto and the introduction by Dr. Renzo Marangone (Veneto Regional Councillor with responsibility for the Environment, Public Works and Quarries), reports were presented by Prof. Gabriele Zanetto (Venice University, Venice City Councillor with responsibility for the environment), Sergio Trevisanato (Veneto Regional Planning Department), Paolo Ossia (Ecology Department, City of Venice), Sergio A. Massolini (Mayor of Serafin Correa, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil). Also taking part, amongst others, was Oscar De bona, President of the Regional Council for Emigration.

In the third session, at the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti (Treviso), dealt with Land management: the role and power of the municipalities. After the welcoming address by Dr. Etore Beggiauto and the introduction by Dr. Tullio vulgation and d'un débat sur la loi de réforme des gouvernements locaux en Italie (Loi 142/1990), le Centre d'études et de recherches de la Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti a organisé trois journées d'étude qui ont eu lieu les 28-30 mars 1995.

La première journée s'est déroulée à Vicenza ; elle s'est intéressée au sens général de cette loi, en comparant les bases des pouvoirs locaux en Italie avec celles d'autres pays. Après l'introduction de M. Etore Beggiauto, conseiller de la Région de la Vénétie pour les pouvoirs locaux, les droits civils et l'émigration, ont été présentés les rapports du prof. Feliciano Benvenuti, de l'Université de Venise, et du MM. Aleandro Merlin, président de la section vénitienne de l'Association Nationale des Communes italiennes: Lorenzo Caranda, secrétaire général de la Province de Trévise; Giuseppe Carrao, expert juridique de la Région de la Vénétie, et Nadyr Peruffo, maire de Verano, Rio Grande du Sud, Brésil.

La deuxième journée s'est déroulée à Venise et a eu comme thème Protection de l'environnement: de la Conférence de Rio au rôle actuel des pouvoirs locaux. Après un salut de bienvenue de M. Etore Beggiauto et l'introduction de M. Renzo Marangone, conseiller de la Région de la Vénétie pour l'environnement, les travaux publics et les carrières, divers rapports ont été présentés au public. En voici la liste détaillée: ceux du prof. Gabriele Zanetto, de l'Université de Venise, conseiller pour l'environnement de la municipalité de Venise; des MM. Sergio Trevisanato, secrétaire général de la Région de la Vénétie; Paolo Ossia, département de l'éco-

\[\text{INFORMATIONS} / \text{janvier - août 1995} \]
Guadagnin (Veneto Region Councillor with responsibility for town planning and the environment), reports were read by Prof. Bruno Dolcetta (University Institute of Architecture, Venice), Franco Bosocco (Veneto Regional Planning Secretariat), Guglielmo Monti (Superintendent for the Monuments of the Veneto Region) and Renato Cavagnoli (Mayor of Florence da Cunha, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil).

The sessions ended with an address by Giampaolo Gobbo, Vice-President of the Veneto Regional Council.

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A meeting organised by the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti (Treviso) was held on 2 June 1995 at Conegliano Veneto (Treviso) on The actuality of the Second Vatican Council. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ramon Sugranes de Franx, President of the Jacques Maritain International Institute.

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Le 2 juin 1995 à Conegliano Veneto (Treviso) s'est tenue une réunion qui a eu pour objet L'actualité du Concile Vatican II. Cette rencontre organisée par le Centre d'études et de recherches de la Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti a vu la participation de notre président, Ramon Sugranes de Franx, qui y a présenté un rapport.

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A meeting organised by the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti (Treviso) took place on 23 June at Treviso on National insurance and social security reform. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Giovanni Sarpellon of Udine University, Vice-President of the Study and Research Centre of Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti.

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Le même Centre d'études et de recherches de la Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti a organisé à Trèves le 23 juin 1995 une rencontre sur le thème Prévoyance et réforme de l'assistance. Le prof. Giovanni Sarpellon de l'Université d'Udine et président délégué du Centre d'études et de recherches de la Villa Albrizzi-Franchetti, a participé à la rencontre en y présentant un rapport.

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The proceedings of a conference organised by the Jacques Maritain International Institute in conjunction with the Commission for Social and Labour Problems of the Italian Bishops Conference was published in June 1995. Entitled Une démocratie qui se transforma, the book was edited by Giampaolo Crepaldi and Salvatore Vassallo and published by Rubbettino Editore.

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Miscellaneous

The papers presented at the International Conference on «Economic Policy, Social Justice and Society in Central Europe» were published in the fifth issue, 1995, of the Journal of the Budapest University of Economic Science. The conference took place in Budapest in September 1994 under the patronage of the Jacques Maritain International Institute, Mr. Daniel Tarschys (General Secretary of the Council of Europe), the «Renovabis» Foundation (Domborg, Germany), the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (Budapest) and the Budapest University of Economic Science.

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Number 36/37 (July-December 1994) of Notes y documentos, the Latin-American edition of Notes et documents, was published in the early part of 1995. It contained a special section on «Democracy - a life-

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Dans les premiers mois de 1995 a été publié le fascicule 36/37 (juillet-décembre 1994) de Notes et documents, édition latino-américaine de Notes y documentos, contenant un dossier sur «Démocratie: un style
For some time now the Jacques Maritain International Institute has been trying to enlarge the personalist library at the Study and Research Centre, Villa Albizzini-Fanchetti (Trevise). Friends of the Institute and readers of Notes et Documents who would like to make a contribution are invited to send copies of their own works or other books to the following address:

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In memoriam

The International Jacques Maritain Institute and AMA members will miss Professor Donald A. Gallagher (1914-1995).

Born on November 9, 1914, he received his BA at St. Louis, his MA and Ph.D. at Marquette and had received a number of honorary doctorates. He taught at Marquette from 39-58, was chairman of the philosophy department at Villanova University from 58-62, taught at Boston College and at the University of Ottawa. Upon request of the past President of the International Jacques Maritain Institute, Olivier Lacombe, and of the Secretary General, Roberto Pazini, he was the great founding and a continuing force behind the American Maritain Association and was its first president in 1977.

He was also the Vice-president of the De Rance Foundation in Milwaukee. He published many edited editions on Maritain as well as authorized the definitive Maritain bibliography entitled Achievement of Jacques and Raisa Maritain (1962). He and his wife Idella were both long time supporters of the AMA and Maritain’s thought.

L’Institut International Jacques Maritain fait actuellement un grand effort - commence il y a longtemps deja - pour amplifier la Bibliothèque personnaliste du Centre d’études et de recherches de la Villa Albizzini-Fanchetti à Trevise. Les amis de l’Institut et les lecteurs de Notes et Documents qui désirent nous venir en aide pour cette initiative, sont invités à envoyer une copie de leurs écrits sur ce sujet ou tout autre volume s’intéressant au personnalisme à l’adresse suivante:

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In memoriam


Donald A. Gallagher a été également Vice-Président de la De Rance Foundation at Milwaukee. Il publie de nombreuses publications sur Jacques Maritain, en particulier une bibliographie détaillée de ses œuvres, sous le titre Achievement of Jacques and Raisa Maritain (1962). Ensemble avec son épouse Idella, il a été un des plus grands défenseurs de la pensée de Maritain.
In "The Degrees of Knowledge," Jacques Maritain provides a panorama of human intellectual activity, first distinguishing philosophy of nature and experimental science, making clear the distinctiveness of metaphysics, writing with authority of the mystical life as different from all of the above, and, in the very course of making these distinctions, showing how they are hierarchically related and united. It is a magnificent and sagacious achievement. It has rightly been called Maritain's Summa.

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