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pastoral care
and counselling

Workbook
on
Intercultural
Pastoral Care and Counselling

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Editorial

One of the prominent activities of the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling (SIPCC) is to "provide written materials through magazines and books to enlighten current understanding, practice and research in pastoral care and counselling" (mission statement).

Therefore the SIPCC, soon after its founding in 1996, started publishing the magazine „Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling" (ISSN 1431-8962; German version "Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung" ISSN 1431-8954). In seminars, consultations and during study trips material was produced, worth being presented to a wider audience. Until 2004, we were able to hand out 11 issues of our magazine – most of them in English and German, some only in a German version:

Nr. 1
Human Images and Life Stories in a Multicultural World. Papers of the 9th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, Mülheim/Ruhr, 15 - 20 October 1995
German edition: Menschenbilder und Lebensgeschichten in der Vielfalt der Kulturen. Materialien vom 9. Internationalen Seminar 1995 in Mülheim

Nr. 2
Traditions: Shadows of the Past - Sources of the Future. Papers of the 10th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling
Ustron, Poland, 13 - 19 October 1996
German edition: Traditionen – Schatten der Vergangenheit – Quellen der Zukunft. Materialien vom 10. Internationalen Seminar 1996 in Ustron/Polen

Nr. 3 (in German only)
Helmut Weiss: Vielfalt und Anpassung. *Beobachtungen zum religiösen Leben in Singapur*

Nr. 4
Violence and Sacrifice. Cultural, anthropological and theological aspects taken from five continents
German edition: Gewalt und Opfer. Kulturanthropologische und theologische Aspekte aus fünf Kontinenten

Nr. 5 (in German only)
Ingo Neumann: "Bitte nach Ihnen". *Der Vorrang des Anderen in der Ethik von Emmanuel Lévinas als Herausforderung für Seelsorge und Beratung*

Nr. 6
"Reading the City". Perceiving life-spaces for diversity and community
German edition: "Stadt lesen". Lebensräume für Vielfalt und Gemeinschaft

Nr. 7
Towards Solidarity. Pastoral Challenges and Actions in the Context of Brazil – Documents of a SIPCC study trip to Sao Paulo
German edition: Solidarität üben. Herausforderungen für seelsorgliches Handeln im Kontext Brasiliens – Dokumente einer SIPCC-Studienreise nach Sao Paulo

Nr. 8
Stories of Human Dignity. Opportunities for pastoral care and counselling
German edition: Geschichten von Menschenwürde. Chancen von Seelsorge und Beratung

Nr. 9 (in German only)
Den Menschen dienen. *Tagebuchnotizen einer Studienreise Madurai – Vellore – Bangalore im Süden Indiens*

Nr. 10 (in German only)
Helmut Weiss: Seelsorgeausbildung im Kontext von Indonesien. *Bericht von einem Seelsorgekurs in der Evangelischen Kirche der Simalungun (GKPS), Februar 2002*

Nr. 11 (English version only as CD E-Book available, German in printed form):
Crossing the Lines. Pastoral Care between Globalisation and Every Day Life – Papers of the 15th International Seminar in Wuppertal, Germany 2001
German edition: „Seelsorge im Spannungsfeld von globaler Wirtschaft und Alltagsleben". Materialien vom 15. Internationalen Seminar in Wuppertal 2001

Again and again, participants of our International Seminars asked us to produce a workbook on intercultural implications in care and counselling. They told us, that there is a need for essays and case studies, students and teachers can work with. The editorial committee of the SIPCC was deliberating this demand for a longer time and finally decided to create a workbook with reprints of articles which were published before in our magazine.

The most important point was, to produce the workbook for a reasonable price. A printed book would have been too expensive for students especially in countries of the Southern hemisphere. So we decided to create an E-Book on CD. Now you can take home to your computer a book of more than 500 pages and can work with it in the way you want to choose.

The material is arranged in five parts – more details can be found in the Contents and on the first page of each part, chapter, and article:

Part 1 The purpose and story of the SIPCC

Part 2 Intercultural pastoral care and counselling from various perspectives

- Chapter A The meaning of intercultural pastoral care and counselling
- Chapter B Theological and religious reflections
- Chapter C Methodological reflections
- Chapter D Feminist aspects

Chapter E pastoral care and counselling to families

Part 3 Care and counselling in various cultures

Chapter A Africa

Chapter B Asia

Chapter C Latin America

Chapter D Europe

Chapter E Melanesia

Part 4 Issues connected with Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling

Chapter A Understanding and overcoming violence

Chapter B Living in urban contexts

Chapter C Economy and globalisation

Chapter D Dignity and health

Part 5 Case studies

To the headlines of each article, we added some key words ("topics") to give you a first idea of its content. It may help you to find an essay to a certain question or issue. We also have included many verbatims and cases (especially in Part 5) to give you material for practical work.

You may read in the book, you may copy articles to distribute them to students, and you may find other ways to use this workbook. You are allowed to use and copy the material – but only for private and for study purposes, and with a quotation of the original source. The copyright of all articles remains alone with the SIPCC, the original source is noted at the beginning of each article.

The editorial committee has put a lot of work into this book to make it useful to you. But if you have ideas to improve it, please let us know. We would be happy about reactions and feedback – please email us under info@sipcc.org !

If you have material to intercultural pastoral care and counselling, feel free to contact us. We can consider to publish it.

Let us stay in touch to discuss the interesting and important field of pastoral care and counselling in an intercultural and interfaith context in our globalizing world.

Helmut Weiss,

chairperson of the SIPCC

Part 1

The purpose and story of the SIPCC

contents of this part:

Mission statement of the SIPCC **12**
Adopted by the founding assembly in 1995

The Pastoral Care and Counselling Seminars 1986-2003 **14**
Themes, places and main-speakers

Reviewing the journey **17**
The "Intercultural Seminars" 1986 to 1995. A dialogue between Klaus Temme and Helmut Weiß

Mission statement of the SIPCC

Adopted by the founding assembly in 1995

Identity and purpose

The "Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling" (SIPCC) is a community of counsellors, pastors, supervisors, teachers, scholars, and other pastoral caregivers committed to enrich the field of pastoral studies and pastoral practices. The purpose of the Society is to equip persons for pastoral care and counselling in the midst of diverse cultural contexts. Coming from a Christian background the SIPCC engages in dialogue with other faiths and religions aiming at justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

International Seminars on Pastoral Care and Counselling started in 1986, from which roots the SIPCC was founded as a registered tax free association in 1995 to provide a forum for the voices of women and men from different cultures and ethnic backgrounds in order to foster intercultural understanding of issues related to contemporary ways of doing pastoral care and counselling in practice and theory.

Members come from many different countries, religious backgrounds and cultures. Membership is open to all persons and institutions sharing similar concerns and goals which are mentioned below.

Our concerns and goals

1. We dedicate ourselves to the creation of a mutually respectful and inclusive community in which we engage in conversation and activities which contribute to overcome historical barriers such as religion, race, class, gender and sexual orientation. We strive to overcome discrimination against economically and politically deprived as well as differently abled persons.

2. We dedicate ourselves to offer opportunities for concerned persons, associations and institutions to explore the meaning, purposes and methods of pastoral care and counselling from the perspectives of different cultures, religions and worldviews.

3. We commit ourselves to honour, understand and critically develop traditions of doing pastoral care and pastoral action in the midst of interfaith and ecumenical dialogue. We strive to be open to different practices of care which come from a variety of religious and non-religious traditions.

4. We commit ourselves to work for the development and implementation of liberative and transformative methods of care in ecclesiastical and social structures, public policy and interpersonal relationships.

5. We commit ourselves to create a forum for conversation between theology and other fields of knowledge concerned with critical reflection on the relationship between practice and theory in pastoral care and counselling.

6. We seek to learn from pastoral-theological dialogue and to enhance the practice of ministry in congregations, groups and specialised settings.

Our activities

1. We conduct an annual international seminar on intercultural pastoral care and counselling for a large audience in various countries and cities. The seminar offers formal presentations, workshops, case studies, small groups, intercultural forums and other opportunities for exchange and dialogue between the participants.

2. We conduct an annual consultation for theory building.

3. We provide written materials through magazines and books to enlighten current understanding, practice and research in pastoral care and counselling.

4. We organise special study trips to various countries to experience different cultures, religions and their way of caring for people and learn from them.

Our structure

The General Assembly meets each year to be informed, to discuss and to decide on the activities, finances, elections and other issues of the Society.

The Executive Committee with seven international members elected by the general assembly co-ordinates the duties and tasks of the Society. The Executive Committee appoints various committees such as

- the Seminar Planning Committee, which prepares and co-ordinates the annual International Seminars,
- the International Editorial Committee, which is responsible for publications of the Society,
- and others as the need arises.

The Pastoral Care and Counselling Seminars 1986-2003

Themes, places and main-speakers

1986 (Kaiserswerth, Germany)

Hope and wholeness in a threatened world

Prof. Dr. Howard Clinebell, USA

1988 (Kaiserswerth, Germany)

Pastoral care and liberation

Dr. Masamba ma Mpolo, Zaire; Dr. Lothar Hoch, Brazil; Dr. Salim Sharif, India; Reinhard Miethner, Germany

1989 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

Healing and healing community

Dr. Emmanuel Lartey, Ghana; Dr. Flora Wuellner, USA; Prof. Genadios Limouris, Switzerland; Prof. Dr. Walter Hollenweger, Great Britain

1990 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

Justice, peace and integrity of creation – a challenge for pastoral care

Dr. Matthew Fox, USA; Mary Thomas, India; Joseph Walk, Israel

1991 (Groß-Dölln, Germany)

The individual and the community – the process of adjustment and change

Christel Hanewinckel, Germany; Dr. Jürgen Ziemer, Germany; Dr. Daisy Nwachuku, Nigeria; Dr. Karel Schwarz, CSR; Prof. Dr. Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel, Germany

1992 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

"A time to love and a time to hate." An intercultural dialogue on marriage, gender issues and sexuality

Prof. Dr. Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa, Brazil; Dr. Wilhelmina Kalu, Nigeria; Dr. Gnana Robinson, India; Susanna Schmotz, Germany

1993 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

Economy and violence – a challenge for pastoral care

Dr. Michael Chang, Malaysia; Prof. Dr. Archie Smith, USA; Olgierd Benedyktowicz, Poland; George Euling, Papua New Guinea

1994 (Prague, Czech Republic)

"Everything is breaking down – can you help me?" Pastoral care and counselling as response to value-changes of society and culture

Jan Urban, Czech Rep.; Dr. Karel Schwarz, Czech Rep.; Dr. Dick Tielemann, Netherlands; Tomas Jezek, Czech Rep.

1995 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

Pastoral care and counselling in "post-modern time". Human images and life-stories in various cultures and religions

Dr. Nalini Arles, India; Prof. Dr. Edwin. Decenteceo, Philippines; Charles Konadu, Ghana; Dr. Robert. Solomon, Singapore; Phra Prachan Somniuk Natho, Thailand; Lee Sung-Soo, Korea

1996 (Ustron, Poland)

Traditions – shadows of the past, sources of the future

Professor Dr. Jozef Tischner, Professor Dr. Zdzislaw Mach, Professor Dr. Janusz Maciuszko, Jacek Leociak,

1997 (Mülheim/R., Germany)

The emergence and pacification of violence. The multiple meaning of sacrifice

Prof. Dr. Raymund Schwager, Prof. Dr. Hans-Martin Gutmann, Prof. Dr. Ronaldo Sathler Rosa, Professor Dr. James Newton Poling, Dr. Nalini Arles, Prof. Dr. Ursula Pfäfflin, Rev. George Euling, Dr. Nieke Atmadja, Dr. Rose Zoe-Obianga, Pracha Hutanuwatr

1998 (Lakitelek, Hungary)

Stories of hope

Prof. Dr. László Tökéczki, Prof. Dr. Bela Buda

1999 (Berlin, Germany)

Cities – fragmentations of human life?
Community life in the fragmentations of urban societies

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Grünberg, Prof. Dr. Michael Mata, Dr. Nalini Arles, Prof. Dr. Ronaldo Sathler, Prof. Dr. James Farris, Dr. Daisy Nwachuku,

2000 (London Colney, St. Albans, Great Britain)

Human dignity, culture and health. Opportunities for pastoral care and counselling

Canon Paul Oestreicher, Prof. Sheila Hollins, Prof. Kathleen Greider, Stuart Bell, Rev. Dr. Malcolm Brown, Dr. Frances Ward, Prof. Julian Müller,

2001 (Wuppertal, Germany)

Global economy and every-day life

Rev. Septemmy E. Lakawa, Dr. Thomas Köster, Dr. Helmut Henschel, Dr. Manfred Linz.

2002 (Basel, Switzerland)

Why do we serve others? The ethics of caring: multifaith perspectives

Professor Dr. Christoph Morgenthaler, Dr. Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Rabbi Marcel Ebel, Dr. Shekar Seshadri, Ron Maddox, Dr. phil. Carola Meier-Seethaler.

2003 (Cluj-Napoca, Romania)

Where is your neighbour? Overcoming violence in families, churches and societies through pastoral care, counselling and supervision.

D. Dr. theol. Kálmán Csiha, Istvan Gyalai

Klaus Temme / Helmut Weiß *Germany, 1996*

Reviewing the journey

The "Intercultural Seminars" 1986 to 1995. A dialogue between Klaus Temme and Helmut Weiß

topics:

- *discovery of "intercultural factors" in pastoral care and counselling*
- *pastoral care in the context of political changes*
- *difficulties of intercultural communication*
- *founding of the SIPCC*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp. 6-12

Klaus Temme: *The first seminar in the year 1986 which was held in Kaiserswerth is still vividly in my mind. How did you get the idea of starting this type of seminar? What was your motive?*

Helmut Weiß: In 1978, when I was called to take over the "Zentrum für Klinische Seelsorgeausbildung" (Centre for Clinical Pastoral Education) in Kaiserswerth I intended to try and make contacts abroad right from the start. My aim was for the work done in Germany to receive some critical feedback "from outside". In 1983, I made it a point to have our Dutch neighbours invited to the meeting of the section Clinical Pastoral Care Training of the German Society for Pastoral Psychology, among others Wiebe Zijlstra and Heije Faber.

But right from the beginning, there was also another thought in my mind: Everybody engaged in teaching has the possibility to participate in international conferences. But how about those engaged in pastoral care? Where do they have the possibility to exchange their views of and experience in pastoral care with others working in the same field? Wouldn't an international seminar held now and then offer such possibilities?

While preparing the 150th anniversary of the 'Diakonissenanstalt Kaiserswerth' (Deaconesses Home Kaiserswerth), its then director, Ferdinand Schlingensiepen, suggested that every field of work should organise an event focusing on a particular subject. It was quite clear: If I was going to do anything special, it was going to be something international.

So I invited Howard Clinebell from California. At the back of my mind, I had the idea that he would attract many people to come to Kaiserswerth because his books were widely read across Germany and Europe. I spread the news of his impending visit especially in Germany and the Netherlands, but I invited colleagues from Eastern Europe, too. The seminar was successful to some extent. There was an

international crowd. There happened exchange between people from different countries, there was mutual learning.

But right from the start, there were also difficulties, for instance with regard to language and understanding. There had been an agreement with Clinebell: He would send us his papers so that we could have them translated. While he was giving his lectures everybody who did not know English should be able to follow the translated version of it. But Clinebell sent only short summaries. During his lectures he frequently improvised. We were not prepared for the amount of interpreting that was required. It was only under great difficulties and with little effect that we could change this by the end of the seminar.

Another difficulty came up during the seminar: Tension arose because there were various incidents of the audience and the lecturer not understanding what the other person wanted to say. Understanding was a problem, both on a contextual and on an interpersonal level. For instance, the lecturer did not pay much attention to the worries among his listeners relating to the Chernobyl disaster. This was hardly of interest to him. But this incident had occurred only a few weeks back and was a matter of great concern for the participants. They had hoped that this issue would be worked on, especially since the theme of the seminar was "Hope and Wholeness in a Threatened World"!

Tension reached a peak when participants declared that this could not continue. A steering committee was set up - ad hoc. There were violent quarrels which showed the different expectations and backgrounds.

Then and there, already during the first days, 'intercultural tension' emerged, without us being able to name it or even being conscious of it as such. But it was expressed in the words of some of the participants who repeatedly said "What he is doing is very American!", while Clinebell considered himself very 'un-American' in the US spectrum.

Further tension developed when he started out on a discourse on the theme 'Peace'. He made some suggestions for peace work which were long outdated in Europe. Obviously, he had not bothered to get himself informed on the status of peace work in Europe, and the audience was not able to attune itself to him.

Once again: Already at the initial stage, the question of different cultural backgrounds and how to deal with it emerged, but none of us was ready to address it in the right way. Our aim was to be international, but intercultural exchange had not yet come into focus.

K. T.: *Looking at the list of participants and lecturers of the seminar in 1988 which was held in Kaiserswerth under the theme "Pastoral Care and Liberation", it is obvious that we had become much more international than at the first seminar. But even then, we had not started to address the intercultural aspect consciously.*

H. W.: The focus at this seminar anyhow was not really on the question of being international or of gaining intercultural awareness, but to come to terms with the changed situation after the closure of the Training Centre for Clinical Pastoral Care. I felt as if all energy for any future seminar had been withdrawn. Some of my roots had been cut off and at first it looked as though the seminar had lost its roots, too, because it had been deprived of its place.

If you are so intensely involved with the survival of your work, you don't have the energy to look around at what others might need and what you might be able to

learn from them. On the other hand, at that very moment it was extremely important for me to receive international encouragement. People told me: "Your work is very important. There is no such international opportunity anywhere else!" It wasn't just a few friends who said this. It became evident how important it was that pastoral care was further developed on a world-wide scale. And the seminars were necessary to ensure that this particular type of exchange could continue. On account of this wide support, I was able to plan further seminars even if they could not be held at the place where it all began, but had to be held at a different place, the Protestant Academy in Mülheim (Ruhr).

For me personally, the result of that seminar was: The contacts and relationships between us made it possible to share energies and encouragement. I will never forget how we formed a circle at the end of the closing worship, holding each other by our hands and sang. At that particular moment, I felt power and courage.

K. T.: *It is becoming very clear that 'encouragement' has been a general feature throughout the seminars, and it is necessary that this remains so! George Euling comes to my mind, our friend from Papua New-Guinea. During the seminar in 1993, he had presented his situation and he had received much encouragement from the group. The following year, 1994, he reported how he had meanwhile launched many projects. May be, this sharing of energies was also one of the motives to move East?*

H. W.: Well, when we held our seminars in Eastern Germany, in Groß-Dölln, and in Prague, in the Czech Republic, later on, our motive was to familiarise ourselves with the situation there and to see for ourselves how the people lived there and what their concerns were. The other motive was to offer encouragement through our being there, through our reflections, through our collaboration.

K. T.: *Especially the participants from the East and the South have repeatedly and in more than one way expressed, even demanded that 'give and take' was exercised more widely. During our seminar in Prague, it was Biul from Papua New-Guinea who presented this point when he requested us to support him in his struggle against the destruction of his people and the destruction of their natural life resources!*

H. W.: That means that intercultural argument both questions you and at the same time gives you enormous support. And I also believe: If we hadn't experienced both in our seminars, to be challenged and to be encouraged, we would have long given up!

K. T.: *In our last seminar, the same point was made again, when Edwin Decenteceo from the Philippines spoke of the sharing of burdens.*

Regarding the seminar in 1988, I would like to mention one further point, i.e. the concept of "intercultural and ecumenical pastoral care" which was brought forward by Peter Hawkins from England in one of the workshops. When he spoke of "intercultural pastoral care" he was thinking of pastoral care administered to people from a different cultural background, i.e. the Pakistani people in England.

H. W.: With hindsight, you could make some critical comments on this: We invite an English pastor to Germany to talk about the work with foreigners in his congregation. He was prepared and qualified for this work through his long stay in the country where these people came from. That means: We invite a foreigner to talk about this issue and neglect our own intercultural and multi-cultural situation in Germany! This proves how ill-prepared we were to tackle the intercultural conditions in our own society, instead we externalised this issue! We have people fly

in so that they tell us something about this issue while we fail to visit the people who come from abroad and live in our own country.

It was to take another couple of years before we became aware of this and began to integrate into our seminars foreigners who lived and worked in Germany and in Europe.

Intercultural pastoral care in our own country definitely is an important challenge. Much more reflection is necessary. We would need to find a good combination of working more intensely than before with people from different cultural backgrounds living in Germany and Europe on the one hand, and on the other hand to offer pastoral care to people who have just arrived here from foreign countries.

Certain difficulties arise at this point, since the aspect of pastoral care does not really find consideration in the work with foreigners. Church-related as well as public groups put a strong emphasis on political work, also charitable help is given. But pastoral care and psychological assistance has had little room so far. By now, the psychological needs of these people are seen, but in my view they are not being acknowledged enough.

Meanwhile some beginnings have been made in this respect: Counselling offices attend to the needs of foreigners and refugees. I do hope that church congregations will offer more pastoral care in future, too.

K. T.: *I think what further aggravates this situation is the fact that after these people have finally arrived here, they fight for their survival and are incapable of verbalising their difficulties. They are not in a position to express the psychological needs they have. For us, it may be easier to do something, to act 'charitably', than to face the abyss of their inner selves.*

H. W.: A prerequisite of intercultural pastoral care - like any other pastoral care - is that you get involved. Schemes can be carried out, you can *do* something *for* others. In pastoral care, this is impossible.

K. T.: *The move from Kaiserswerth to the Protestant Academy in Mülheim (Ruhr) took place In 1989. The atmosphere there was very different. You could clearly feel that the place, that is to say the rooms of a villa which had been built at the beginning of this century to serve the representation purposes of a dynasty of industrialists influenced the atmosphere and communication. Can you tell us something about how you see this?*

H. W.: Kaiserswerth was more provisional and open at the same time. Compared to other places, the Academy villa has an adverse effect on communication, a more stunting effect. When we reflected on this at that time, I realised the strong effect places can have on communication. What is the influence then on a group, especially if this is made up of representatives from very different cultures? Which places intimidate people, which encourage them to be open? The buildings of the Academy were just not build to promote communal life.

K. T.: *To me, that seems to be only one factor among others, the original function of the villa vis-à-vis its present function. The second factor, as I see it, is the following: The villa is so very distinctly and strongly an expression of a very different culture, i.e. that of the top-level Prussian elite towards the end of the German empire that no other culture can bring itself to bear in its presence.*

H. W.: In Groß-Dölln, in that holiday camp of the former State Security Police, and in Prague, in that typical hotel of Socialist times, there were much more 'open' possibilities. We never allowed those places to have such a grip on us as

has the 'villa'. With regard to Prague, what came to bear is that it is a great metropolitan city which fascinated all of us.

The situation in Mülheim is that the atmosphere as we described it is 'built-in', this is true for the architecture, the administration, the whole style. From my point of view, the Academy's main intention is to *pass on information* and to *engage in matter-of-fact, political communication* and not *to promote inter-personal communication or interaction on a personal level* as in pastoral care. Isn't it surprising that the issue of the extent to which place and communication are inter-related came to the fore just when we met under the theme "Healing and Healing Community"?

K. T.: *Soon after the seminar in autumn 1989, the Wall fell in Germany. There had been visitors from the GDR and Eastern European countries right from the start. There had been many contacts. So it was natural that these issues were made the topics of the seminar in the following year. Was this the reason to link pastoral care and the conciliar process? The team then - Brigitte Hiddemann of the Academy, Klaus Cyranka from Halle (Saale), and you - formulated the theme as follows "Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation - A Challenge for Pastoral Care".*

H. W.: The conciliar process had received a lot of stimulation from the churches in the GDR and the experience there of living under an authoritarian regime. We wanted to draw from this experience. But there was another reason. The World Council of Churches had held a meeting in Seoul in Korea in March 1990 on the conciliar process. We wanted to show those engaged in pastoral care that it was also important for them to get involved with this process - to address the political and social questions of our time still more intensely. But we also wanted to show that the conciliar process is a movement of the people, i.e. if you ask what is justice, peace or integrity of creation you have to start off from the people. It is here that pastoral care can make a major contribution.

K. T.: *Through the theme as such and particularly through the introduction in the afternoon of the first day, a further issue came to the fore: the question of political events and their 'conveyance'!*

H. W.: I remember this afternoon very well: There were six people from the GDR, women and men, sitting in the centre of the plenum who recalled their experiences before and after the 'Turn' - among them, by the way, Joachim Gauck who was to become the director of the agency to deal with the State Security Police files later on. They conveyed political processes and spoke of their very personal experiences - but they were only partly understood. So the question was unavoidable: What is it like to have a part in political events, and how can such experiences be conveyed to other people who are little involved or not involved at all? Who has got the right understanding of what is being said? Which attitude is needed to understand? How do individuals come to terms with political events, radical changes, upheavals? From that time onwards, we have put our minds to such questions and will continue to do so in future. To this day, understanding between East and West is still a difficult matter in many ways.

K. T.: *This is not only a problem of East and West, but also a difficulty between North and South. This became repeatedly obvious in later seminars, for instance in summer 1991 when a participant from Zaïre heard about riots back home and was deeply alarmed - while we looked on, helpless. And again, during the last seminar with regard to the situation in the Philippines!*

H. W.: The question comes up here, how does the person concerned react when the others *fail* to understand? People come to us and talk about their situation. They do this in a very committed way because they are personally involved. Then there may be some who *will not understand*, some who put questions, some who are sceptical about the story. This will evoke a lot of different reactions in the narrator! Sometimes we could see how those who had told their story and were put back by others' reactions had difficulties to make a fresh start or to ask clarifying questions themselves.

What is needed is a two-way motion: getting involved in order to understand, and, at the same time, keeping some distance in order not to get too engrossed, not to get submerged. Without involvement on the one hand, and a certain amount of disassociation on the other, no exchange, no dialogue is possible. Fortunately, however, exchange does take place – and if it does, it is experienced as encouraging and strengthening.

K. T.: *I would like to go back to 1990 again. At that seminar, the issue of interpretation stood out again clearly. One of the lecturers, bilingual himself, used interpretation as a sort of a power struggle. He continually corrected the woman interpreter. It seemed he didn't really want to be interpreted!*

H. W.: Just looking at the language side, interpreting already is extremely complicated. But what is really difficult is to find the right interpretation of what is *meant* by what is said. In intercultural dialogue, many things cannot be conveyed using the words of a different language. Sometimes there is a lack of words, sometimes a lack of information about the background which would make the words at all comprehensible. We often experienced that the act of doing interpretation is an excessive demand which could lead to physical exhaustion.

K. T.: *There is another aspect of this seminar, I would like to just mention. Involving the Duesseldorf artist Hubert Begasse and arranging an exhibition of some of his paintings as well as a creative workshop with him, we tried to introduce another kind of 'culture' alongside the cultural medium of language.*

H. W.: Both, the workshop and the exhibition of paintings, were an experiment whether exchange was possible through other media since we had experienced how difficult language can and could be. But what we found was that exchange through paintings, through art is still more difficult! It had also been an experiment of being creative beyond the limitation of words. The workshop, however, was not attended by any 'foreigners', there were only creativity-obsessed Germans in it!

We had hoped that the paintings and looking at them might turn out as a new medium of intercultural exchange, but we had to concede that this was not the case. Our culture of painting is not on a level with other cultures of painting! The offered activity of painting did not hold the least bit of attraction for the participants from Africa or Asia. May be we should be on the lookout for other media, music for instance.

K. T.: *I am not sure at all! Just imagine, you are confronted with paintings or music from another culture without any 'mediation'. Would that get any exchange underway?*

H. W.: We haven't yet tried it all out! Most probably, in the case of other media, understanding would be limited or difficult, too! To me this means, that in the context of our seminars, concentration on the word, on using language is the appropriate thing.

K. T.: *In 1991, the seminar was held in the small village Groß-Doelln, about 80 km north east of Berlin on the territory of the former GDR. Meanwhile, the organising team had decided to express the intercultural aspect by naming the plenary assembly "intercultural forum" and by giving each workshop a team of two leaders from different cultures. In doing so, you had made steps in the right direction which were to prove very important for the future.*

H. W.: The plenary sessions have always been a great problem with lots of tension. We constantly discussed how we could handle the open situation in the plenum so that processes of understanding would happen at different levels, the cognitive, the emotional and the communal levels.

We had started out from the model of clinical pastoral care training with its open group sessions! We thought that in a plenum of 100 people similar processes would take place as in a small group and that the group as a whole would develop its own structures. But we were quite mistaken. It was only after some time that we realised that large groups needed other structures than small groups. And we had not realised either that such an 'open' kind of communication is something we are a little accustomed to in our particular cultural context, but which others could not handle, would even be frightened. So we reflected on the purpose of the plenary assemblies and how we could make good use of them. Finally, we decided that we wanted the plenum to be the place where people moved *in public* ! Which was the way to *make public* what concerned people deeply personally?

In Groß-Doelln, the following idea emerged for the first time: We came to realise that there was no reason why the organising team for the whole seminar should also preside over the plenary sessions. This could be done with the help of an extended team. So we selected a few people and with them we discussed what was to be 'the order of the day'.

K. T.: *What did you call that group at that time, 'observation group'?*

H. W.: It was called 'process observation group'. Their task was to observe processes that were underway in the plenum and in the seminar as a whole and to report them back to the organising team. It proved to be painful sometimes to identify and agree on what was going on and how to continue any given process. Then we had the idea whether it would not be better if members of the observation group would chair the plenary sessions shortly, for instance Immanuel Lartey, a distinguished and clear-headed African. The approach was good basically, but we had not yet developed enough tools to make the whole thing meaningful. It was especially after Groß-Doelln that we extensively discussed the question of what it needed to chair a plenary assembly in the context of a large multi-cultural group.

One major aspect that we understood was that of *vulnerability* in such a public situation. The plenum feels hurt and so does the organising team. In 1991, vulnerability was discussed more frequently than at any other seminar. We then agreed: In intercultural dialogue, especially if it takes on a public character, people will be hurt and hurt others. This is inevitable, but the question arises of how to deal with it.

At that time, there were massive reproaches, for instance that the organising team had degraded people to mere objects, that in certain situations it had showed lack of sensitivity. We were said to have humiliated people from overseas. There were reproaches that we failed to see our own situation in Germany. Reproaches were whizzing back and forth.

Many must have left the seminar frustrated on account of these occurrences. We as the organising team neither had nor saw any means of avoiding these frustrations. That was not easy for us.

K. T.: *This is something that will occur again and again: You endeavour on something new - and that very moment you realise that you are entering virgin territory! This cannot be avoided through careful planning. You cannot tread on sure ground when you decide to plan the next seminar. There will always be new situations which could neither be foreseen nor planned ahead!*

H. W.: What has to be said about Groß-Doelln is that at that seminar, the idea of meeting with people from different backgrounds, cultures and attitudes and of expecting that this meeting would go off without a hitch, without a 'lame hip', was proved an illusion.

K. T.: *When you were looking for the themes for the 1992 seminar, you adopted a new procedure.*

H. W.: Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel suggested to ask the overseas participants for *their* ideas of which topics to choose. This was a further experiment of intercultural exchange. At the occasion of the international conference on pastoral care in Amsterdam, a small group of interested people from Africa, Asia and America got together with Liesel-Lotte and myself. There, the suggestion was made to hold a seminar on marriage. From the point of view of the members of the above group, this topic was a 'necessity' and it was presented in a very committed way. Back in Germany, however, while proceeding with the necessary preparations, we realised that although this topic hit a problematic area it did not arouse our inspiration. So there was stress formulating a suitable theme. We also felt we should incorporate some other aspects which would appeal to us. Finally we agreed on the theme "'...A Time to Love and a Time to Hate' - Intercultural Dialogue on Marriage, Gender Issues and Sexuality."

We had embarked on something new and we landed ourselves in a fine 'mess'. Not only were there problems during the preparation of the seminar, they really started when the seminar was underway. In my eyes, this was the most difficult seminar of all. There was so much tension as never before or afterwards.

The number of participants was small, the disparity between the groups wide due to the eventual mixture of sub-themes.

The missionary concern our African friends had had while accentuating the theme with a view to our Western and Westernised world, i.e. to acknowledge marriage as a Christian life-form, was 'countered'.

The people from the 'West' had difficulties showing esteem for others. This could be experienced in several workshops and individual encounters and went to the extreme of women being jeered at for defining their role as a married woman differently from some other participants. In some of the workshops, some extreme forms of 'deposal' of the group leadership through German participants occurred.

Our quest for dignity and esteem that has been running through all our seminars was abandoned at quite a few instances.

K. T.: *I would like to shortly mention the closing worship which ended in a debacle.*

H. W.: After the rather 'explosive' seminar, we intended the closing worship to be a sort of a conciliatory ending hoping that it would bring together again the

women and men who had participated in the seminar. Symbols were chosen as a means to come together again. We hoped that processes of the seminar might be picked up again and fresh contacts made. A certain group had prepared a liturgy centring round four elements which Jeremias, a marriage counsellor from Bethlehem, had brought with him: soil from Bethlehem, water from the Jordan river, oil and rose petals from the Holy Land.

During the service, people were given the chance to take from these symbols and hand them over to others with a word of blessing. Most of the people were familiar with such a ritual and had no difficulty accepting it. But to our great surprise, a young couple from England, both pastors, the wife having Caribbean ancestors, and a woman from Africa found the situation extremely difficult, panicked and left the chapel. When talking to them later we were told that some of these elements are attributed a totally different effect. In tears, the young woman told us, deeply shocked: "In the Caribbean, if we get involved with soil, we get involved with the evil - if someone puts soil into our hand, the evil is present!"

No solution of this conflict was possible. But it was apparent that these three people - and most probably quite a few others who did not show it openly - understood service as a time to preach the 'word of God' and not a time of appropriation of symbols. Faiths of people were worlds apart and the gulf could not be bridged.

K. T.: *Often, such unpleasant surprises occur when you don't not 'know' enough about the others.*

H. W.: Right now, I have no idea of how to go about such surprises and eruptive situations.

May be, we should explain things beforehand so that people know what to expect, especially if rituals are used that some people might not be familiar with. It may not be a question of gathering more 'knowledge', but of saying and making more transparent what we are intending to do. This would give people a chance to react, even to stay away. Transparency is a demand which has been repeatedly made from out of the plenum and which is very important - it is a must for all sectors of intercultural dialogue.

In intercultural exchange, you cannot rely on anything - you cannot rely on anything being clear! So we will have to try again and again and explain what is to be expected next, so that we may not overrun others or get them caught in a situation in which they can only react with fear. It is important that we try to avoid anybody feeling compromised - it may still happen any time.

K. T.: *What I would also like to go into is the question of 'mother tongues'. Mother tongues in their original voices have found a place in our worships and prayers even if the official languages at the seminars remained German and English. Somehow it appeared to me as if mother tongues had found their little extra 'place' here in the framework of the seminars.*

H. W.: Well, I think, this topic would have better be dealt with in the discussion about 'language and communication', a subject that has been mentioned at various stages already.

At the same time, your question is important: Where is 'room' for mother tongues in intercultural dialogue? Does it have a place? Is it not that you always speak a foreign language when you meet people on an intercultural level? I mean, in practical terms. It is simply not possible to communicate in your mother tongue when

people from different cultural backgrounds meet. As Germans, we may not have any idea what it means to have to talk to other people in your own country in another language which is not your mother tongue - like, for instance, in Ghana or in India. Leaving your mother tongue behind means leaving a certain security behind. You are confronted with something strange. Your mother tongue is an integral part of your own culture - this element has to be left behind when meeting others.

Perhaps we ought to look at the interplay of language and culture more closely. Moreover, we might also have to explore more thoroughly which aspects constitute 'culture'.

More than language, I think, it is history which is part of what moulds people culturally. We can again take the above mentioned service as an example. Part of the culture of this woman whose ancestors came to England from the Caribbean is a certain history, not a particular language! She does no longer know the language of her ancestors. But history which was handed down by her family and which she had not even experienced herself became immediately effective! History had immense power in that situation!

K. T.: *At this stage, you could even make a comparison between you and me. In your life, your 'history', your ancestors from Transylvania, the war and your flight, is always by your side. One can feel how German history has left its impression on you. With me, there are other aspects of 'war' that left an impression. This personal moulding determines our 'existence' in the seminars in many situations!*

H. W.: Our history accompanies us - we cannot leave it behind. Each single year, our violent German history, especially the two world wars, played its part in the seminars. When the Wall had fallen in 1990 and we listened to the reports of our colleagues from the East, we knew the war and its consequences manifested in the divided Germany had once again caught up with us. While we met in Groß-Doelln, right-wing extremists set fire to a home of asylum seekers - again the past became present. In 1993, when me met under the theme "Economy and Violence - A Challenge for Pastoral Care", one participant from Papua New-Guinea told us that also German firms were among those who were mining ore and gold in his country and destroying the environment. As a matter of fact, New Guinea had been a German colony before the first world war!

I am also much concerned about the question of how to meet others with a history of ours as it is. This will certainly become a focal issue when we visit Auschwitz in 1996.

I am sure, other cultures and other nations have their own ways of knowing and dealing with their own history and that of others. It would be good to explore this further.

K. T.: *With regard to the theme of the seminar in 1993 "Economy and Violence", mention should also be made of the excursions which were part of the programme.*

H. W.: Excursions as contextual and methodical new arrivals! The idea was to take participants out into a 'different' world, a different culture *in situ*, to give them an opportunity to have a common experience in a group of very different people and to reflect upon this from the different background of each individual person. This was an important step to achieve another level of contact between people. It was also important that we entered into realms that were no common

ground in pastoral care: factories, mines, jobless initiatives, etc. We confronted ourselves with such places and that set forth a lot.

The question remains why we began to do this so late. Perhaps it was not possible earlier. We had confronted ourselves with the intercultural issue earlier on, in direct confrontation, so to say, - and only after we had made certain experiences, had become more assured, could we embark on something new. This was a constructive step after the previous difficult seminar. The attempted discussion of "economy" from a theological or pastoral-care point of view, however, was achieved in a very rudimentary way only. But it was meaningful that we attempted to consider economy and integrate economic conditions as part of pastoral care.

This is typical: As long as we dealt with methods of doing our work or with ourselves (for instance "my gender-determined role in the church") we could remain among ourselves. If we wanted to address economy issues we had to look around. A second seminar on economy would certainly be a good idea.

K. T.: *The seminar in 1994 near Prague definitely was a very impressive one. I could go on talking about it. I would like to underline but one aspect of it, i.e. being in a country where 'my own' language was not spoken! To a certain extent, this is what we discussed earlier on, that you had to expose yourself in another new way.*

H. W.: I could support what you are saying by what went on during the period of preparation. What we experienced then was to feel exposed over and over again. All those concerned repeatedly asked themselves whether this seminar could be a success. Would we succeed in exposing ourselves to the new and strange *and* still survive? Was it right to endeavour on moving into a foreign country with a different language and history? Would the seminar be a success with the limited funds that were available? Would the collaboration with the Prague friends be a good one? Never before had we entered into collaboration at such a distance. All these were open questions. During the months before Prague, we sometimes were under such pressure that it was doubtful whether we would be able to continue. That was a very, very critical stage.

K. T.: *And what was it that helped?*

H. W.: I would rather choose a different word: what 'solved' things? What solved our problems and 'dissolved' the pressure? And the answer is easy: To experience this city and the people in it, the people who had helped prepare the seminar. These people had been through much bigger and more serious problems - they managed their situation after the oppressive communist times with admirable energy. What eventually made the burden lighter was the experience that when one works through difficulties there will be survival at the end - not just as a promise, but as a matter of fact!

There was a second discovery we made. We had chosen the right theme together with Karel Schwarz and Jindra Schwarzova: Change of Values. So people who had registered for the seminar, came in order to get to know the Czech friends and the situation in that country, they wanted so see the golden city of Prague and they wanted to reflect on the change of values. After the seminar in Prague and the many experiences we were blessed with there, I was sure: Now, nothing can stop the seminars and the intercultural work in pastoral care any more!

K. T.: *'Survival' and 'support' - these two have always been crucial issues at many seminars and in our intercultural contacts, not only below the surface but*

addressed openly, as for instance in a role play during the plenary session in 1995.

H. W.: In the first years, I started off having the naïve idea that international encounter was simple and nice, just like travelling as a tourist and discovering new things. Meanwhile, there has been the painful, but blessed experience that intercultural encounter means 'exposure'. The person as a whole is exposed to very high demands. The person as a whole is questioned - and that is beneficial. Nothing can be taken for granted any longer. But this opens new avenues. The other side of the experience is just as important: If I expose myself, I will receive support. The more I open up, the more open others meet me. The more I accept others and the strange, the lesser need my worries be about myself. In intercultural pastoral, care we are in the centre of pastoral care as such - in the centre of what pastoral means!

K. T.: *Questioning and giving support: That is what pastoral care is about!*

H. W.: In working on an intercultural level what we also learn is: faith. Here we can experience what faith means: To leave behind what is familiar and start off into a 'land that God will show us'. God created many variations of humankind. He suggested many different cultural possibilities - in our intercultural work we can witness variations of his creativity and experience the challenge to look for him and get to know him in new forms.

K. T.: *The seminar in Prague offered many stimuli. Was one of the impulses to establish a society or has this idea lain dormant already earlier on?*

H. W.: Prague had given the impetus to continue and to re-concentrate on what we were doing. But the decision to establish the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling had gradually taken shape since after the seminar in 1994. The work we were doing was to have its own structures - a 'tent'. Finally, in October 1995, we carried it out.

During the founding assembly there was much consent from various sides and much readiness to participate. I was quite overwhelmed. When I went to bed late that night, I thought I was one of the most blessed people on earth.

When I think back to our intercultural activities I remember many women and men I feel greatly attached to through our encounters. To me they seem like a cloud of witnesses as is mentioned in the epistle to the Hebrews. To be able to live in community with them and to have them as my companions on my way is a great encouragement and gives me hope in good days and difficult ones.

K. T.: *By now, we have mentioned several stages of the journey of the international seminars and touched some contextual questions. In my opinion, we should also discuss how we arrived at certain structures and methods, for instance how the "Intercultural Circle", the place to discuss life stories, or the "Intercultural Plenum" came into existence. I am sure it would be important to describe 'Intercultural Pastoral Care' and intercultural communication in a more detailed way.*

H. W.: You are right, there are many more issues that would need to be discussed.

K. T.: *But I think this will have to do for today. Our dialogue as a documentary of the 1995 seminar will certainly help us in our further discussions. What is more, the future theory conferences and consultations can take up some of the issues. Since the 'Society' exists, there is a platform for these things.*

H. W.: At the last seminar, Roy Woodruff, our colleague and friend from the USA, said that at certain stages he had felt like being in the "Orient Express". May be, intercultural pastoral care and counselling is like building a new railway line extending into not so well explored territory. But one thing is certain: There are many who wish to join in.

K. T.: *Let us see where the future will lead us and what course the journey will take. Thank you very much for this journey into to the past.*

H. W.: Well, you have been the engine driver and I have been the one to shovel the coal.

Part 2

Intercultural pastoral care and counselling from various perspectives

chapters of this part:

CHAPTER A	**THE MEANING OF INTERCULTURAL PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING**
CHAPTER B	**THEOLOGICAL AND RELIGIOUS REFLECTIONS**
CHAPTER C	**METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS**
CHAPTER D	**FEMINIST ASPECTS**
CHAPTER E	**PASTORAL CARE AND COUNSELLING TO FAMILIES**

Part 2, Chapter A

The meaning of intercultural pastoral care and counselling

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Introduction

to the first volume of "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling"

topics:

- *a definition of "intercultural pastoral care and counselling"*
- *methodological questions*
- *intercultural communication*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp. 3-5

Purpose and theme of this documentation [1]

The documentation follows a double purpose: Firstly we want to offer some insight into the structure, the content, the atmosphere and the many ways of communication applied at the 9th Intercultural Seminar for Pastoral Care and Counselling, which was held in Mülheim a.d. Ruhr from October 15th to 20th, 1995. Secondly we would like to give account for the general intercultural learning process, to which this seminar was only a stepping stone. For it stands in the Tradition of a whole series of International Pastoral Care Seminars. Initiated by the centre of CPE in Düsseldorf-Kaiserswerth, they have been conducted on an annual basis since 1986. Since the first seminars, not only have there been some changes with regard to the organising groups, more importantly, the international encounter gradually led to a more conscious awareness of the importance of the cultural dimension of Pastoral Care and Counselling *(see the report K. Temme / H.Weiß)*[2]. The active exchange with colleagues from abroad led to an understanding of the content and importance of one's own pastoral actions, as well as of one's own spiritual and biographical ramifications. Any kind of Pastoral Care and Counselling takes place in a specific setting and at a specific point of time. Often it is not easy to "export" its value into another, international setting. We, as Western Europeans, more than once had the distinct feeling that we could benefit greatly from our Asian and African colleagues for whom the intercultural dialogue has long been a vital part of their pastoral actions.

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1 This text is the opening article to the first volume of the then newly established magazine *Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling*, containing a documentation of the 9th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling. References in the text point to articles in that magazine.

2 Reprinted in this workbook, p. 17.

Pastoral Care and Counselling in 'Postmodern Times': Human Images and Life-Stories in Various Cultures and Religions – was the topic of the 1995 seminar. With "postmodern time" a key word was thrown into the discussion which more than once led to controversies, since its meaning is often arguable. We would like to stress that as the seminar's working title the expression "postmodern" was meant to be less analytical than guiding. Thus, the expression "postmodern" should signify that today Pastoral Care and Counselling takes place predominantly within a specific context. A context, which is marked by an increasing degree of cultural variety – a plurality which implies possibilities and chances, as well as the possibility of a loss of identity.

Towards a definition of "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling"

Since this documentation repeatedly deals with the expression "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling", the attempt of a definition is required. It is our wish that the expression is not to be understood in a rigid way, rather it should reflect a certain approach within the pastoral work, i.e. a hermeneutics, marked by the specific love and interest for another culture. To define Intercultural Care and Counselling *via negationis*, that is to simply separate it from the common kerygmatic, clinical or therapeutic ways of Pastoral Care would be all too easy and oversimplifying the issue. Indeed, there are modes within the movement of Intercultural Pastoral Care that readily apply to one or more of the more traditional ways of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Thus, the intercultural form of Pastoral Care refers to a sort of inquisitive approach. Its hermeneutics is marked by the main desire to consciously reflect on all cultural aspects, which might emerge in any given pastoral encounter. This reflection is not mainly fostered by theory, but rather through the actual practical experience which each and every encounter provides.

In doing so, the Intercultural Pastoral Care approach goes beyond the traditional concentration on the individual and his or her unique biography. Rather - as all of the contributions to this documentation prove - a multitude of aspects, such as the political, the societal, or the religious, are fostered and dealt with in the pastoral encounter.

For several years already, there exists an ongoing discussion about the meaning and the importance of the cultural aspects of the pastoral relationship. In the English speaking context this issue has been summarized under the expressions "cross-cultural counselling" and "multicultural counselling", and primarily deals with the counsellor's and the counsellee's differing social, cultural, or ethnic background. However, when we refer to the "Intercultural" aspect of Pastoral Care and Counselling it is our desire to enlighten not only one's cultural background in such a professional situation, but to become aware of the general, lifelong and progressing contextuality of all of one's action. To a great extend this demands a willingness to freely deal with the "Other", with his/her possibilities or limitations, and his/her choices and actions. Furthermore, it implies a readiness to incorporate this new frame of reference into my *own* pastoral work, so that there might be an increased awareness of the cultural rifts - the different "cultural dialects" within one's own culture.

Our 'postmodern times' are marked by plurality and a fragmentation of life styles – a fact which implies that new cultures emerge *within* the existing cultural framework of any given country. Similar to the different dialects of a country's language, various "cultural dialects" emerge along the lines of age, education and

gender. It is the people who have to begin translating, interpreting and practising the new "dialects", the new modes of meaning and action. This might lead to an enhancement of the individual's frame of reference - and perhaps to a conscious change in his/her actions.

Methodological perspectives

As we described above, the concept of Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling should not be understood as a new model of counselling. Nevertheless, it might lead to new approaches and open windows of opportunity within the more traditional movements of Pastoral Care and Counselling. Here are some suggestions:

- Any pastoral encounter dominated by an empathic approach, traditionally aims to overcome feelings of distance and estrangement. Intercultural Pastoral Care on the other hand, stresses the continuous difference to the other, and looks for ways how to authentically encounter it. The basis hereby being the ongoing attempt to carefully listen to the language and the "stories" of the other person.

The problems arising from the different languages spoken at the seminars, the difficult work of the interpreters, and the angry impatience which more than once erupted in the plenary sessions, signify how difficult it is to really listen to another person's story. All too often this can only be done fragmentarily.

- "Therapeutic" Pastoral Care concerns itself with the healing progress of the client, with his/her emotional integrity and the maturity of the personality. Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling reminds us how problematic this allegedly clear distinction between sickness and health really is *(see articles on Buddhism)*. As individuals of any given society we forever live in a state of cultural constraints, in demanding emotional and societal relations - literally with a baggage full of "burdens" *(see E. Decenteceo)*. Pastoral Care and Counselling therefore should not attempt to try and radically eliminate these "burdens", but rather to make them more bearable for the "burden bearer", through gaining new insights and lending more meaning to life in general.
- Although the modern movements of Pastoral Care and Counselling have long since been concerned with changing the image of the traditionally more patriarchal relationship between counsellor and counsellee, there remains an incline between the role of the professionally trained counsellor or pastor and the client, seeking help. Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling aims to enlighten the counsellor's own limitations, his/her particular, cultural way of understanding. At the same time the intercultural dimension aims at investigating in and acknowledging the genuine, vital resources of the other's personality and culture. Pastoral Care and Counselling thus advances into a dialogue, marked by solidarity and mutuality, which if successful, bears the chance of positively affecting *both* partners. In other words, from the start, Intercultural Pastoral Care is a correlative endeavour to bear the "burdens of life" together and, by doing so, discovering the manifestation of the life-giving God in our lives.

The intercultural way of communication: A circular motion

At this point we have to ask ourselves whether Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling involves a new way of communication. Generally speaking one might say that each story telling process sets off a circular movement: In the story telling-process the story teller gradually moves away from his/her individual experience, while at the same time opening him/ herself and approaching the listener. A new, original relationship emerges. Through the encounter with the other, through participating, and through relating to a new context, a new form of believing, and a new history, the listener learns something essential about the other person; and what is far more important here, he/she learns something about him/herself, his/ her limitations and possibilities. Through encountering another culture, one learns more about one's perception of one's own culture. At the same time the exchange of practical, cultural experiences steadily enlarges the circular movement of story telling and listening. The circles become bigger, link into each other and may gradually build a chain of understanding. What remains is a linear movement between the original experience of the story teller and the process of understanding.

It is important to point out that intercultural communication, probably more than any other way of communication is determined by its setting, time, context and its chosen language. And it has been our experience at the seminars that language difficulties do not only represent an obstacle in the line of communication, rather they bear the potential to reveal new ways to fully relate with one another. New modes of listening arise, and old structures outlive themselves. While this insight bears great potential for the pastoral crosscultural encounter, it also proves to be helpful when dealing with a new, "other" culture within the context of the old, well known one.

In preparing the structure of the seminar's study groups it has been our intention to work also with a kind of circle. That is, the abundance of issues which arise in and around any kind of communication were structured into the three realms of the *interpersonal communication*, the *personal context*, and the *religious and spiritual forces* (for an example, see the case study presented by Hilary Johnson[3]).

It was our intention to introduce these areas of reflection not only through the various case studies, but also within the work of the study groups, i.e. to observe the relationship among the group members, as well as their individual relation to the presented case.

At this point we are aware of the fact that it will be a future task to further develop a concept and a methodology of intercultural communication. However, it remains a fact that Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling does and should not depend on a rigid methodological structure. Rather, it thrives on movement and on change. It is for this reason that the definition of Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling has to retain a certain extend of vagueness. Its tradition needs movement and continuation.

Working structure of the seminar and the papers of this documentation

Lectures, study groups, and intercultural plenary sessions are the key elements of the seminars. Most of the lectures have been included in this documentation. The study groups were structured according to a certain theme, a specific case study represented the working frame of any study group. However, it proved to be difficult to give a full account of the seminar's group processes and individual learning processes. Some impressions are being included in part 4 and 5 and reveal a personal insight into the seminar's work.

Some of this documentation's contributions had to be shortened. In doing so we tried to withstand subjective assessment. We think, that each contribution reveals its own character, and speaks in its own "dialect". But all the dialects put together, created a new "language", if not a new "mother tongue", which best describes what Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling is all about: The interceding of one individual for another, across all cultural borders.

[3] Reprinted in this workbook, p. 485.

Karl H. Federschmidt *Germany, 1997*

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling

Reflections on the background of the Intercultural Seminars in 1995 and 1996

topics:

- *experiences with "intercultural pastoral care and counselling"*
- *methodological questions*
- *the hermeneutics of intercultural pastoral care*
- *cultural concepts of person – the individual and society*
- *the issue of religion in intercultural care*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 8-12

I.

Looking back on her experience in the realm of international conferences on pastoral care, Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel who has done a lot by way of interconnecting various international pastoral care movements writes the following: "...when members from different systems try in earnest to reach mutual understanding it is inevitable that they hurt each other's feelings...; and naturally clashes between very close systems hurt the most". One feels so. because it is from closer systems where one would expect it the least and because the sudden experience of non-understanding and of being like strangers is most painful and irritating and particularly disconcerting. According to Herkenrath-Püschel "such offences are almost typical of intercultural dialogue and occur when the concerned suddenly become aware of a deep rift between their cultures".[1]

The above words could be taken as a commentary on the meanwhile ten "International Seminars on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling" the last of which was held in Ustron/Poland. The above-mentioned experience seems to have been made many times and in different ways over and over again. And it was exactly this experience of feeling hurt and not understood which led us to explore deeper the cultural dimension of pastoral care and counselling and which – at least in relation to the pastoral care movement in Germany – awakened our interest in the issue of "intercultural pastoral care" as such.[2] This is not at all surprising. As a matter of fact, culture normally envelops us like the air we breathe but take no notice of until something disturbing happens – shortness of fresh air or sudden changes. We become aware of the existence of air for instance if there is a draft, so it causes a twinge – and the same can be said of our culture.

It is also very interesting that – at least with us – the question of culture did not emerge at first from dealing with multicultural settings in practice, but rather from "within": from experiences of being different within our (supposedly) own and secure environment, among ourselves as women and men working in pastoral care and counselling, among ourselves who believe to have so much in common, even as far as having equal standards of training. I think this is a very important point. It makes me realise that that which is strange and of different culture need not necessarily be exotic, it may wait for me just across my own garden fence. Even in the closest area of my own tradition I have to be prepared for the different and for culturally based alienness – for difficulties in understanding and acts of offence which do not result from malevolence or an unwillingness to understand each other, but are rooted in the variations of cultural colouring which distinguish me from my neighbour.

As for the specific elements which the intercultural aspect adds to our practical work – once we have become aware of it – the first realisation simply is that once again things have become a little more complicated than expected. With encounters in the field of intercultural pastoral care still more aspects and factors have to be taken into consideration and paid attention to as having an effect on the encounter. It is no longer enough to concentrate on the encounter on a personal level, in fact, the social, political, and even spiritual backgrounds of the people gain importance;[3] group processes become increasingly more complex – and in the end, there will be even more things of which I must admit that I did not understand these. So I simply carry on alongside the things I understood as well as those I did not, and try to deal with both in the most sensible manner (both as a human being and as someone engaged in pastoral care).

Again, let us listen to Liesel-Lotte Herkenrath-Püschel: "Only if we acknowledge the limitations of understanding between members of different cultures can we succeed to some extent. This also means to refrain from over-expectations on both sides".[4]

II.

Possible forms of encountering the alien

In the last decades, the context in which pastoral care and counselling occur in Western Europe has changed considerably. Cultural diversity has become a visible aspect of our everyday life, manifest in the changed streetscape of our towns and cities. How do I meet people from different environments, different cultures, in a world that has turned multicultural? Which is the attitude to be adopted towards them?

There are many destructive forms of dealing with people. If we leave those aside and concentrate on a more positive approach, we will discover a multiplicity of other possibilities. Below, I would like to try and outline a few possible attitudes – "ideal type" ones and not by any means exhaustive:

1. A supposed world citizen

I can choose to meet the alien with a universalistic attitude, the attitude of a world citizen. In that case I accept the differences as a given fact, as something that might make an encounter more difficult at first, but – in principle – could be over-

come by increased background knowledge, through studies and more contacts. This is partly what I have experienced myself: Things which felt alien to me first grew more familiar once I got to know these better. However, if the fact that something is "alien" is basically something temporal, something that has to be overcome – then this approach results in the end in a negation of the alien within the alien. Viewed from a higher plane, there is no such thing as "being alien" at all; and if something feels alien to me, this only gives proof of my own limited horizon. I think that the conception of pastoral care within the church is still predominantly based on this universalistic ideal. Our demand reads: Closeness and understanding are always possible, in principle, and therefore have to be striven for. However, reality often draws a different picture. Even some optimistic models of a multicultural society are based on this conception: To overcome "being alien" is only a question of learning. And often this learning programme is coupled with considerable moral pretensions.

2. The alien as a foil to set off myself

Negating the alien: this can happen in a much more subtle way. Many of the fashionable things which come under the name "postmodern" even seem to search for what is alien or different, demonstrate and emphasise it. But this is done in such a way as to "alienate" the alien elements from their contexts. To me this seems like turning the whole world into a collage or a museum in which I can experience myself. The alien detached from its hereditary context becomes a projection area for myself, the alien is made into something exotic which stimulates me but has stopped to stir me. The corresponding pastoral-care model would be an attitude of arbitrariness which prefers to let all forms of verbal expression, all forms of religion or culture exist amicably side by side.

A variation of this can be found in the role the culturally alien played in the art of painting in the first decades of this century. Among expressionists for instance, African sculptures were *en vogue* for quite some time. Even Picasso collected such items. Gauguin went to live on Tahiti – but not with an idea to share the existence of the people there! The alien was experienced as a counter-image and was interesting because it reflected experiences of alienation, differences and rifts in one's own society.[5] This, I feel, is along the lines of pastoral-care models or therapy approaches which reduce the issue of "feeling alien" to the problem of the "alien within myself". The alien which irritates me is thus reduced to an expression of the unconscious, the suppressed parts of myself. Such models of interpretation are well known from analytically-oriented psychological definitions. I should think that these explanations offer many valuable insights, but they do not suffice as a sole pattern of interpretation.

3. Hermeneutics of the alien

It may sound old-fashioned: But I feel that the classical approach of hermeneutics is more helpful here than all the above models. The point is to try to "understand" the alien without eliminating its being alien or different. The point is not to give in to generalisation too quickly, but to perceive my vis-à-vis in her/his singularity and within their particular context - while at the same time hoping (and to a certain extent expecting) that understanding is possible even across borders.

I am in no way concerned with the high standards of hermeneutic virtuosi who claimed that by proceeding methodically they could understand an author better than he or she could themselves. What I have in mind is to remind us that our occidental hermeneutics originates from the exegesis of the Holy Bible and there-

fore, at least in its origins, is committed to certain theological fundamentals. Exegesis must be seen as an attempt to understand a vis-à-vis which I know I will never have understood fully, which will always remain one step ahead since it confronts me with words of divine revelation unfathomable to me. As a matter of fact, hermeneutics, viewed from the point of exegesis, does not start from the assumption that 'only like knows like', as Aristotle and the classical philosophers have put it. On the contrary, confronted with a biblical text I always discover things unsuspected, new things which are nevertheless important for myself and for my conception of myself as well as for my life. Significantly enough, the founding father of the pastoral care movement, A. Boisen, developed the theory of encounter in pastoral care along the lines of an exegesis: he describes the vis-à-vis as "a living human document" which deserves to be read applying the same methods as when reading the Holy Bible. This means: Boisen must have been consciously aware of this tension existent also in pastoral care work: A successful encounter holds something divinatory, can be characterised as a kind of revelation to me - and it may happen without ever totally removing any last trace of feeling alien towards my vis-à-vis. This illustrates how my own conception of a God-human relationship determines the options I have in my relationships to other people.

What matters to me in these reflections is the following: An encounter must include both, becoming closer as well as reserving the alien. And another point: Successful understanding sets off a process and changes occur, in fact on both sides. The issue is to get involved in an encounter as a never-ending process.

III.

In concrete terms: Problematic areas in intercultural pastoral care and counselling

Is there anything like a basic "inter-cultural" attitude in pastoral care? David Augsburger whose book *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (1986) is still a standard work with regard to our topic distinguishes between three different positive attitudes in an encounter: [6]

- "Sympathy" as a spontaneous and in most cases unreflected way of feeling with the vis-à-vis, which means that I simply project my own feelings upon the other person or recognise these in her or him.
- "Empathy" (in the way this term is known from client-centred therapy and from pastoral care training): Feeling with the other person as a conscious and affective attitude towards my vis-à-vis, an emphatic understanding, as "active imagination" of her or his emotions – making a distinction between my own emotions and those of the other person.
- Thirdly: "Interpathy" which D. Augsburger understands as a form of conscious empathy, too, but making an effort to let oneself in for the emotions, standards of values and mentality of the other person all of which are different from mine so that my own beliefs will somehow be temporarily ignored and shoved to the background. What we talk about here is something more than empathy; for if I acknowledge the existence of dif-

ferent values and standards, the question arises anew of what is normal, what is the aberration? What is healthy, what is sick?

Some issues which came up during the last Intercultural Seminars may point to what is at stake here, and may show how great the differences possibly are:[7]

1. The question of our world view

Which is the world view, the cosmology I assume? Not reflecting on it philosophically or theologically, but in my everyday talking and doing? At the seminar two years ago, Robert Solomon from Singapore illustrated the great importance attached to a peculiar area of experience in his country, placed somewhere between the given and the transcendent: An "in-between sphere" which on the one hand is fully present in the everyday doing and on the other hand is not subjected to the law of nature; an area having religious aspects and at the same time being independent of concrete images of God and a particular religion and which is therefore experienced as real by many Buddhists, Muslims and Christians alike. In this sphere, spirits for instance play a big role. According to him, it is from this area where most of the questions that come up in pastoral care originate from – and those involved in pastoral care should take this seriously if they did not want to miss the people concerned. I have also come across such questions working as a pastor in pastoral care – may be this "in-between sphere" plays a much bigger role with us than we generally assume.

Looking at the question of cosmology (of a world view), we must also take into consideration that there are cultures and religions which are not theistic, i. e. do not have a personal God. This is particularly true of Buddhism. Studies about dying processes in Japan show that mourning phases are experienced there, too, similar to those described by Kübler-Ross. But the phase of "bargaining" as part of the dying process seems not to occur there.[8] If no personal vis-à-vis exists, no God or any kind of personal fateful power, who is there to bargain with? This difference is all the more interesting in so far as we often find that (in the West) even such people who view themselves as irreligious, as agnostics, start to "quarrel with their fate" once they are confronted with severe strokes of fate – as if there did exist some sort of a vis-à-vis, however vague it might be. Obviously these are cultural characteristics which lie much deeper than any conscious profession of religion!

2. The concept of person

A different cosmology also means: a different concept of person. In certain respects, the relationship between the individual and society is of a totally different nature in other cultures. At our last seminar, Nalini Arles from India explained how difficult it was to transfer fundamental conceptions of client-centred therapy to her country. Therapeutic goals such as "strengthening of the ego" or "development of the Self" will catch only in a very limited way; the only "Self" existent in the cultural tradition of India is "jiva", the individual soul, which incidentally happens to be regarded as something temporary, something which needs to be overcome in order to reach identification with the "atman" or world soul. Of course, cosmological axioms will not be found in a philosophically perfected form with most people there either; and still they have a very subtle bearing on the thinking and feeling of the people.

3. The individual and society

On the societal level, a difference is made between "individual-centred" and "community-centred" societies. Most of the non-Western societies are much less individual-oriented than ours. Guidance by traditions, the individual embedded in the extended family, all these play a much bigger role – with the result that the pastoral care worker or counsellor must take on a different role, too. Our Indian colleague told us that while it is common practice in the psychological therapy setting in the West to limit the establishment of a relationship to the counselling set-up, this pattern will hardly work in India. When she builds up a relationship in pastoral care, for instance to a student (she works at a Christian college), it will naturally be expected of her to accompany and encourage the student during exam times, to attend family events etc. It would be regarded as a breach of confidence if she did not do so; she would create the impression that her "acceptance" of her vis-à-vis was not really worth that much. As counsellor she is also given the role of a personal mentor – and she is expected to fill this role even to the extent of placing her client in a job. This certainly is a very holistic model of pastoral care as compared to the professionally set-up therapy (in the West). On the other hand, it is much less emancipative as regards the individual. However, the textbook model of a client-centred counsellor who develops action models together with the client and in doing so remains deliberately non-directive, leaving the part of decision-taking totally to the client – this is a model hardly conceivable in an Indian context; there, a counsellor, as the mentor, also gives advice, even to the extent of direct instructions.

In this context, many questions arise with regard to the goal which is to be achieved by pastoral care or therapy. For instance: Given a certain conflict situation, is it my aim to strengthen the individual in her/his independence as against their community (family) - or do I try to help her/him adapt themselves?

If inclusion within a group – and acceptance via the role the group assigns to an individual – plays such a dominant part, this will also bring up methodical questions. While we prefer to use role-play, even bibliodrama, in order to help the individual experience various possibilities of action, understand and live through them, this method might not have a liberating effect on people who are anyway strongly governed by the expectations towards them from their society, and might rather have a restricting effect on them.[9]

4. The issue of religion

"Interpathy" as a means of letting myself in for the standards and world view of a different culture - this will inevitably take me to the area of religiousness. Issues like cosmology or the concept of person, all these have a religious aspect, too. Drawing a clear line between culture and religion as we often do is quite impossible with regard to Asia or Africa. Even with us, there is a closer connection between the two than we like to admit. I first realised this when colleagues from Eastern Europe happened to ask me at some of our seminars: In your work, how does your faith, your religion come to the fore? – In part, I felt this was a justified question to ask. On the other hand: In the environment in which we work as pastors (or as counsellors in church institutions) we can afford to leave questions of faith unmentioned; this is to say that in our work we quietly feed on the set-up of the ambient church life and of the Christian faith. It is self-evident that a pastor belongs to the Church, this needs no particular mentioning. God's name may re-

main unmentioned, because in a certain way God is implicit in our thinking. However, the situation is quite different in many other countries.

When I meet somebody from a different culture, of a different faith – how about my own faith? How far am I prepared or able to let myself in for the other person's faith if I try to let myself in for her/his culture? I think each of us will have to find their own distinct and theologically founded positions. In intercultural pastoral care, in fact, the inter-religious issue always arises; and inter-religious dialogue – not on an abstract academic level, but embedded in the facts of everyday life - certainly is at the core of intercultural pastoral care. There are still many unsettled points with all of us in this field.

When founding our "Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling", there was a strong controversy about a certain formulation in our statutes. How important is the fact that we are rooted in a Christian tradition if we want to encourage intercultural pastoral care and counselling? Obviously, we want cooperation with people coming from other religious traditions. But how important is the fact that the majority of us administer pastoral care as Christians and that this is where our motivation comes from? If we show our own identity, this may cause friction – but it can also produce more clarity.

Two years ago, a Buddhist monk came to our seminar as a speaker. It was extremely interesting to listen to his discourse on his pastoral care work in Thailand. One evening, he offered to hold a meditation, just to give a first impression. Of course, we Western Europeans took part – where else could we learn about something like that in a more authentic way? However, the reaction of some of our Asian and African colleagues I happened to talk to was quite different. They were aware of the fact that Buddhist meditation was not just another cultural phenomenon, but quite a determined form of religious practice – a kind of religious practice which was not theirs (and as a matter of fact neither mine). Certainly, I do not wish to put up dividing lines, but I think each of us will have to find their own position here, a position which is clear and responsible in its theological consequences. For naive openness would mean that I do not take the other person seriously in just her/his separate religiousness.

5. The issue of politics

In the same way as intercultural encounters touch on the issue of religion they also lead to the issue of politics. This became quite obvious in many workshops in Ustron. As some of the contributions from there are part of this documentation it must be enough to just mention this here. Let me only say the following: When, as it happens, traditional social structures collapse in Papua New-Guinea eventually resulting in the destruction of families as a consequence of accelerated modernisation, then there emerges a task for pastoral care which cannot be tackled on an individual level but only on a political one. And what is more, this is not a question of government politics in Papua New-Guinea only, but rather of developments in world economy.

The political dimension of pastoral care – what do we make of it?

IV.

Some strategies to reduce complexity

Realising that in intercultural pastoral care so many factors come into play and everything is so much more complex, the question arises: Are encounters and understanding at all possible? It is simply impossible to have in mind all the various aspects however relevant they may be. Fortunately, experience tells us that this is not necessary. Deep encounters across cultural barriers are possible (and have been so during our seminars). Building up a contact to another human being can succeed – and, thank God, has been doing so again and again, even though one might not have fully understood all the aspects of the other person's culture.

Cross-cultural fundamental experiences

In my everyday practice I am forced to somehow diminish intercultural complexity. Most of the time this will happen unconsciously, which is good. However, some methodical proposals can be made. Quite obviously, one can draw on fundamental human experience which is cross-cultural. I take John Foskett's considerations on "the unknown in intercultural communication", mainly his recourse to our individual birth experiences, as an important suggestion in this context.[10] Experiences of one's own birth, of joy or death are essentially human in such an elementary way that it will certainly be impossible to ever "pin them down" to one single culture. Taking in a glimpse of the horrors of Oswiecim /Auschwitz was such an elementary experience which had its own effects, however complex they were. It united – and divided.

In a well-known German-language journal of the pastoral care movement, Albrecht Grözinger recently suggested to draw on human "fundamental symbols" and basic "gestures".[11] Among others he mentions the symbol of water to which is attributed a sense of being threatening as well as healing in many religions and cultures – even in modern literature. Can we use such fundamental symbols in a cross-cultural context?

I think we had better not be over-enthusiastic in this regard. I would like to recall the unexpected effect the uniting symbol of "soil from the Holy Land" had on one of the participants during the closing service at a former seminar. A woman, wife of a pastor, whose ancestors came from the Carribean left the service crying. Later she explained: "In the Caribbean, if we get involved with soil, we get involved with the evil – if someone puts soil into our hand, the evil is present".[12]

With regard to basic gestures – as for instance the gesture of blessing – the situation may not be any different. How much physical closeness or distance does the other person need or can she/he take without feeling embarrassed? That is very different from one culture to the next. Our body language, mostly uncontrolled by ourselves, is strongly influenced by our culture. Does it make any difference which of my two hands I use to welcome an African? Yes, it does – there have been interesting encounters at seminars also in this respect!

Tolerance

We have to admit that it is impossible to fully avoid offence to occur in intercultural encounters. To see this matter-of-factly can also be a relief. We need to practise enduring such acts of offence, which means: practise tolerance (*tolerare* in

Latin means to stand or endure something). Hence, two things are needed to make intercultural encounter a success: On the one hand, to practise tolerance with regard to others and to ourselves; and on the other of course, to find ways to keep these offences small.

With regard to the latter, I have learned to appreciate anew the importance of social manners through our intercultural seminars. Among those engaged in pastoral care, frankness and directness during arguments as well as a preparedness to quarrel are considered high objectives in dealing with one another. The way Germans or Britons for instance tended to act out their individual tensions or frustrations during intercultural seminars was very impressive. It used to leave Asians, Africans, and even Eastern Europeans perplexed: "Is this the way you treat each other?" they asked.

In Chinese culture, in all my dealings with other people, I must be very careful not to let the other person lose face. Save my face, allow the other person to save face – in dealing with one another this is very important. In Ustron, a colleague from Ghana said: In a conflict situation, we would always put the interest of the group above our personal interest. None of the two are ideals I should like to follow. But what I found worth thinking about was the sensitivity of my colleague from Ghana when he commented on social manners in his tradition, as for instance the different meanings given to one's right or left hand, respect of old age and similar things (matters which, as far as I could see, were immediately understood and acknowledged by the people present from Asia) – and above all the complexity of his sensitivity in these issues. And I realised: Social manners are not always mere symbols of social repression. They are also a high cultural good – and a great help when dealing with anything alien.

Notes

[1] L.-L. Herkenrath-Püschel: Kulturelle Faktoren im seelsorgerlichen Dialog, in: *Wege zum Menschen 40* (1988) p. 50-64 (quotation p. 54).

[2] Cf. H. Weiß. / K. Temme: Reviewing the journey. The 'Intercultural Seminars' 1986 to 1995, in: *Human Images and Life-Stories in a Multicultural World*, ed. by U. Atkins / K. Federschmidt, Düsseldorf 1996, p. 6-12 *(reprinted in this workbook, p. 17)*.

[3] In our seminars, we tried to dispose the relevant aspects under tree headlines, which then formed a kind of "circle" to be worked through when analysing a situation of intercultural pastoral care and counselling:
– Interpersonal Communication: biographical situation, biographical processes, emotional links, roles, etc.
– Personal Context: historic conditions, economic factors, social and political conditions, cultural values, etc.
– Experiences of Faith: religious symbols, religious and church traditions, life schemes and faith statements, religious and spiritual forces, etc.

[4] L. Herkenrath-Püschel, *op. cit.* p. 56.

[5] Cf. Th. Sundermeier*, Den Fremden verstehen. Eine praktische Hermeneutik*, Göttingen 1996, p. 40-42.

[6] David W. Augsburger: *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, Philadelphia 1986. For the following cf. p. 27-32.

[7] For some of the following examples cf. *Human Images and Life-Stories in a Multicultural World* (op. cit.), there especially: R. Solomon: Pastoral counselling in Asian contexts (p. 22-25) and N. Arles: Counselling in the Indian context (p. 26-28) *(both articles are reprinted in this workbook: Arles p. 111; Solomon p. 239)*

[8] Cf. D. Augsburger (*op. cit.*), p. 66.

[9] Cf. L. Herkenrath-Püschel (*op. cit.*), p. 61.
[10] J. Foskett, The 'Unknown' in Intercultural Communication, in: *Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, No. 2*, p. 13-15.
[11] A. Grözinger, Seelsorge im multikulturellen Krankenhaus, in*: Wege zum Menschen 47* (1995), p. 389-400.
[12] Quoted from: H.Weiß / K.Temme (*op. cit.*), p. 10.

Part 2, Chapter B

Theological and religious reflections

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Buddhism, illness, and healing

A comparative review of textual and popular Buddhism

topics:

- *cultural concept of illness and healing*
- *miracle and healing*
- *popular religiosity*
- *Buddhism*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp. 31-34

The relationship between religion and medicine has long been the subject of academic inquiry. Both religion and medicine aim primarily at solving human suffering. Indeed, in religions around the world, illnesses are used metaphorically as the prototypical suffering experiences. In a very real sense, illness is the suffering experience par excellence in human existence. It imposes the immediacy of suffering upon us in the most palpable way.

In the Christian tradition, for instance, a great number of books have been written about Christianity and healing. But the relationship of Buddhism to healing has, by and large, been less thoroughly explored. In fact, Buddhism and healing have an intimate relation. Since its inception, the sight of a sick man was one of the events that awakened the young prince Sidhattha (the later Buddha) to the problem of human suffering and inspired him to begin his spiritual search. Also, illness is an important constitution of *Samsara*, the Circle of Rebirth which consists of birth, ageing, illness, and death. Furthermore, the Buddha's Four Noble Truths illustrate the fundamental significance of healing in Buddhism. They indicate that he who is not enlightened is by definition "ill".

In this paper I will discuss different aspects and different views regarding the relationship of Buddhism, illness, and healing. Particularly, I will compare the description of illness and healing in Buddhist texts and the observation of anthropologists regarding the relationship between Buddhism, illness, and healing. I will focus on Theravada societies, and particularly, on the ethnographies of Thailand.

Means of healing permitted in the monastery

According to some Buddhist texts, certain healing agents, surgical methods, and other physical means of curing, were permitted by the Buddha for use in the Bud-

dhist monastery. Also, certain behaviours were advocated by the Buddha for the purpose of health and healing. Birnbaum (1979, 4) reveals that the Buddha sanctioned five principal medicines to be used by monks. These were all common dietary elements including ghee (butterfat), fresh butter, oil, honey, and molasses. In addition to these basic medicines, several other substances were allowed. Note that in the illness situation certain substances normally forbidden for use by monks are permitted. Oil decoction mixed with strong alcoholic drink is allowed for wind afflictions. More interestingly, under the special circumstances of possession by a non-human spirit being, the *Vinaya-pitaka, Mahavagga*, permits the use of raw flesh and raw blood as medicine. Birnbaum (1979, 221) suggests that such substances are permitted presumably because the non-human being is the one who actually eats these substances.

In present-day Buddhist society, these Buddhist texts are not the major references for medical knowledge and practices. Anthropological studies show that medical practices within the monastery extend far beyond those described in these ancient religious texts. Tambiah (1970, 257) observes that Buddhist monastery functions, in a way, as the library of ancient Thai literati, and its monks as the copyists. Such a function isn't limited to religious knowledge but extends to other realms of indigenous knowledge systems.

Also, Louis Golomb (1985, 85) notes that in Thailand some of the highly popular traditional herbal medical texts were produced and distributed by various Buddhist temples - usually upon the deaths of famous monk-practitioners. These texts are far more extensive and sophisticated than medical practices advocated by earlier Buddhist texts. Nowadays, Buddhist religious texts are not so much the sources of medical knowledge and practices as they are the sources of verses to be recited to ward off evil affliction (Golomb 1985, 62-64).

Miracle and healing

Healing miracles by saints are more prominent in other religions, for instance, Christian and Islam. But there are several descriptions of the miraculous curing by the Buddha in Buddhist texts. Though the Buddha is said to have promulgated a rule prohibiting exhibition of miraculous power by monks, his miraculous performances were explicitly described in several texts and sutras.

Buddhist notion of supranormal powers, or the "*iddhi*", as described in the *Visuddhimaga*, differs from the miraculous power of God in Christian religion. The *Visuddhimaga* suggests that *iddhi* are special powers available to Buddhist monks during the course of meditative practices. Tambiah (1987, 115) notes that Buddhist concept of *iddhi* cannot be simply associated with "miracle" as the term is understood in Christianity: "Miracles are a function of God's sovereignty, providence, and omnipotence; in a miracle God suspends the normal physical laws that govern nature. Buddhist *iddhis*, by contrast, are special powers that become available to the adept who attains to higher meditative levels because he is able to transcend and therefore encompass the lower realms of materiality and causality."

Note that Buddhist *iddhi* consists of six supranormal powers: *iddhi-vidha* (psychokinetic ability), *dibba sota* (divine ear), *ceto-pariya-nana* (ability to penetrate and discern the mind of other people), *pubbe-nivasanussati* (knowledge of one's own previous existences), *dibba cakkhu* (divine eye), and the knowledge of the destruction of *asavas*. Thus, these Buddhist supranormal powers as described in

the text diverge from what is understood as miracle not only that they are available through achievement in meditation, but also that only certain kinds of supranormal powers are procured.

In ethnographic account, Tambiah's study of a Buddhist meditation cult examines the notion of Buddhist *iddhi* as the power of healing illness. The master of the cult claims that through the practice of meditation, he has access to the benefit of *iddhi*, to mystical power. Although illness and suffering are interpreted in this meditation cult as resulting from "karmic retribution", the master claims to provide relief for their dependents by employing mystical powers of *iddhi* (Tambiah 1977, 100 and 123).

Louis Golomb, in his work *An Anthropology of Curing in Multiethnic Thailand*, describes several Buddhist monk healers in Thailand. According to Golomb's observation, Thai Buddhist mystical power derives mainly from the use of verses from Buddhist texts and Buddhist symbols.

Another source of Buddhist healing power can be observed in a case of a Buddhist monk who devoted his career to the treatment of drug addicts in Thailand. The healing method doesn't evoke supernormal power. Rather Phra Chamroon's healing hermitage at Tam Krabawk emphasizes Buddhist vow and commitment in addition to the use of some sort of herbal medicine.

Thus, although the life of the Buddha is paradigmatic for contemporary Buddhist monk in many aspects, mystical healing power in Buddhist tradition doesn't derive strongly from the example of the Buddha. Rather, what is crucial for the understanding of the role of Buddhist monks in healing is the understanding of the charismatic characteristics of the healers.

The objectification of charisma

In this regard, Tambiah in his study of the cult of amulets (1984), reveals an important mean by which the charismatic power of the Buddhist monk can be transferred and deposited in object.

Buddhist amulets became popular late in the history of Buddhism. Amulets are treated with respect by Buddhist Thais. Amulets with the image of the Buddha or that of famous forest monks are usually hung on a necklace and are worn around the neck. The amulets are mainly for protection or good fortune. There is a variety of protective amulets with specific powers: some protect wearers from danger - for example, it makes the bullet, intended to harm the wearer, swerve away and not hit him; some guarantee good luck; some assure wealth and / or health; and others have the power to ward off evil affliction.

The making of amulets is worth noting. Amulets are sacralized by the transferring of supranormal power, or *iddhi*. It is believed that by the recitation of sacred verses and sitting in meditation, monks are able to concentrate power and transfer it to the amulets. However, the reason of why and how amulets are efficacious is a matter of personal belief: "Some people would say that the '*teja*' inherent in the image transmits itself to the wearer and makes him immune from harm; other might argue that by reminding the wearer of the Doctrine, and particularly that part of it that counsels constant alertness, it enables him to keep out of harm's way" (Coomaraswamy, quoted in Tambiah 1984, 204).

Charisma of sacred place

"Sacred place" also has a crucial role in healing in Buddhist society. As a matter of fact, the importance of "place" has its root in Buddhist text. Tambiah (1984, 200) notes that the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta* presents the norms the community of monks should observe. These include the "entrusting ... to laymen of the Buddha's relics, which were enshrined in dagoba: the sanctioning of merit-making pilgrimages to these monuments." The dagoba, accordingly, have become over time "field of merit", in which devotees can reap certain harvests.

It is noteworthy that, in northeastern Thailand, there is a Buddhist shrine in Nakorn Panom Province where persons who are accused of being the originating hosts of *"phii phob"* seek exorcism (Suwanlert 1978). It is held that Phra Thad Panom, the famous stupa at that temple, has sacred power and can eliminate "phii phob" out from its host.

Healing power of "paritta"

A special method of curing disease, called "*paritta*", is described in the Milindapanha, the dialogue between the Buddhist sage Nagasena and the Greek king Menander, ruler of a part of Northwest India (reigned 163-159 B.C.E.). Nagasena claims the method to have been permitted by the Buddha himself. *Paritta* magically dispels the disease through the recitations of various verses and texts. According to Nagasena the protective strength of these invocatory formulae is enormous: "And when, O king, the voice of those who are repeating *partitta* is heard, the tongue may be dried up, and the heart beat but faintly, and the throat be hoarse, but by that repetition all diseases are allayed, all calamities depart." Nagasena further discussed the ability *paritta* has to repel calamities: "And when *paritta* has been said over a man, a snake ready to bite will not bite him but will close his jaws - the club which robber hold aloft to strike him with will never strike; they will let it drop and treat him kindly - ... the burning fiery conflagration surging towards him will die out - the malignant poison he has eaten will become harmless, and turn to food..." (transl. Davids 1963, 215-216).

In discussing how *paritta* can cure diseases, Nagasena touched an important principle in Buddhist medicine: though various means can be used to subdue disease, when the affliction is due to deeply-rooted karmic causes, it will take its determined toll: "There is no ceremony or artificial means, no medicine and no *paritta*, which can prolong the life of one whose allotted period has come to an end. All the medicines in the world are useless, O king, to such a one, but *paritta* is a protection and an assistance to those who have a period yet to live, who are full of life, and restrain themselves from the evil of Karma. And it is for that use that *paritta* was appointed by the Blessed One." (op. cit. 217)

Also, one may note that there are several sutras that claim to be protective verses. An example of these sutras is *Atanatiya Sutra* which describes the protective verses suggested to the Buddha by King Vessavana. King Vessavana is the king of demons. He is concerned with the safety of the disciples of the Buddha who dwell in remote forest areas where the *yakkhas* (demons) are also dwelling. These *yakkhas* have no faith in the words of the Blessed Lord since the Buddha teaches a code of refraining from taking life, from taking what is not given, from sexual misconduct, etc., from which the majority of the *yakkhas* do not refrain. " 'In order to give these folk confidence, may the Blessed Lord learn the *Atanatiya* pro-

tective verses, by means of which monks and nuns, male and female lay-followers may dwell guarded, protected, unharmed and at their ease?' And the Lord consented by silence" (transl. Walshe 1987, 471-472).

Tambiah points out that the sutra doesn't contain words directly affecting misfortune or warding off evil affliction. For instance, the Atanatiya sutra describes the superiority of the Buddha over the *yakkhas* so that the *yakkhas*, although they could not be converted, were overpowered structurally.

Tambiah notes that the reality on the empirical ground is full of tension between the lay orientation and doctrinal position of virtuous monks in the use of mystical power by reciting the *paritta*. A virtuous monk doesn't advocate such a mystical power of *paritta* as the mean of salvation. But the laymen regard such a method as an efficacious mean of protection. In viewing such a tension, Tambiah suggests that "from a sociological point of view our interest lies in the duality of orientation and the attempt of both laymen and monks to use their religion to state and solve existential problems" (Tambiah 1970, 211).

According to Spiro's observations, in his work Buddhism and Society (1982), Burmese explain the efficacy of protection rituals in several ways. They claim that the protection rituals work because of power associated with the Buddha - His own power, the power of the physical objects (images and relics) which represent Him, the power of the words spoken by Him, or the psychic power which is created in those who recite them. Another explanation cited by Spiro is that when a Buddhist text - any word related to the Buddha, the Law, or the Order - is recited, the *samma deva*, or the Buddhist gods, the guardians of Buddhism, will watch over and protect those who recite them. Another explanation does not invoke notions of power, rather it is believed that since the ritual includes offering to the Buddha, or to the monks, they create merit which creates an immediate change in his/ her Karmic balance. This in turn has the effect of averring the impending danger, or (if it has already occurred) of bringing it to an end.

The role of the monk in healing

Buddhist canonical texts also discuss the role of monks in healing. Birnbaum (1979, 7) argues that some monk-healers employed their healing abilities as a means for spreading the *dharma* (the Buddhist teachings) and converting non-believers. In the Theravada tradition the habitual practice of medicine by monks in order to cure laymen is prohibited. Demieville points out that among the sutras, the early *Dirghagama* considers medicine to be a technical trade that other religions use to exploit believers, but which the Buddha forbids. This is interpreted as a warning against becoming a doctor rather than devoting time to the study of *dharma* (the Buddhist teaching) and spiritual pursuit. This strongly contrasts with the Mahayanist tradition. Mahayanist Buddhists claim that the Bodhisattva - who may be lay or monastic - should cultivate the perfections (*paramita*), one of which is the perfections of giving. He should vow unbiased compassion for all sentient beings. His obligation to heal the sick, whoever they may be, is expressly stipulated in the disciplinary codes. The Dighanikaya lists various occupations forbidden by the Buddha as unacceptable means of earning livelihood. Among these occupations are quite a few pertaining to healing. Zysk (1991, 27) argues that such condemnation was against accepting payment for performing any of the services.

Although it is prohibited both by the *Vinaya* and by the law, monks in Thailand, as in Buddhist societies elsewhere, still practice a variety of medical practices. Louis Golomb, in his studies of healers in Malaysia and Thailand (1978; 1985) shows that Buddhist monks employ various kinds of healing including animistic, love charm magic, astrology and herbal medicine to cure people. Gosling (1985) argues that the role of monk as healer is the rediscovery of the ancient role, and constitutes an example of Tambiah's "continuities and transformations" between the past and the present.

Buddhist ideology and the theory of illness

Samyutta Nikaya explains the cause of human suffering as eight-fold: bile (*pitta*), phlegm (*semha*), wind (*vata*), and their combination (*sannibata*), change of seasons (*utu*), stress of unusual activities (*visamaparihara*), external agency (*opakamika*), and the result of previous actions (*kamavipaka*) (Zysk 1991, 30). Note that the first four are the identical to the three humours in Ayurvedic medicine. Birnbaum (1979, 11) points out that these *tridosa* or "exterior poisons" - bile, phlegm, and wind - also relate to "the interior poisons", that is, lust, anger, and delusion. Lust generates too much wind (*vata*); anger produces excess bile (*pitta*); and delusion yields an overabundance of phlegm (*semha*). The *Ekottaragama* also metaphorically compares the corporeal affections of wind, phlegm, and bile to the three moral affections. The metonymic and metaphoric associations between physiological and spiritual causes of diseases can be viewed as an effort to create a totalizing Buddhist theory of illness. In this regard, the inclusion of past actions (karma) as a category of medical aetiology, deserves special attention. Zysk (1991, 31) notes that the incorporation of karma into medical theory occurred purely on the theoretical level.

The doctrine of karma has been an important debate in anthropology. Spiro argues, soteriological Buddhism is unable to satisfy completely the universal psychological need to cope with suffering. Under the press of this worldly need, various of the doctrines of normative Buddhism have been modified or reinterpreted, and a Buddhist technology for satisfying it has been developed. The result is a modified version of Buddhist doctrine: Apotopaic Buddhism. Thus, immediate concerns such as health and illness, drought and rain, calamity and tranquillity are the subjects of Apotopaic Buddhism. Tambiah, in his work on Buddhism and the Spirit Cult in Northeast Thailand (1970), notes that Spiro's argument overstates the dichotomy this world/other world, and associating Buddhism with the second. Other-worldly sacred values are by no means values of the beyond. "Psychologically considered, man in quest of salvation has been primarily occupied by attitudes of the here and now, for the devout the sacred value, first and above all, has been a psychological state in the here and now" (1970, 55).

A related point is the consideration that Buddhism is primarily fatalism; that lived and to be lived has already been predetermined by previous conducts in the former lives. This point is well discussed in Keyes' article on popular interpretations of Karmic theory (1983). He states that villagers evoke the karmic concepts for explaining the unfortunate events which they cannot do any thing to change the situation, but in the meantime, if there is any possible way to effect the undesired situation, villagers unquestionably employ such methods to resolve their life problems. Tambiah argues that one should see ritual and textual traditions not as belonging to different levels of reality but as coexisting and interdependent within a

single tradition. In this regard, further investigation regarding the implication of Karmic theory on the perception and behaviour toward illness and healing is of interest. It seems, particularly in the real situation of ailment, that the experiential reality of illness as suffering can serve as a mediator of the other worldly/this worldly; textual/ritual; and doctrinal/popular dichotomy.

Conclusion

Above, I have reviewed the relation of Buddhism to illness and healing and tried to compare the literary Buddhist tradition and the observations by anthropologists. Relatedly, there is a rapid spreading of the dreadful disease as AIDS in Thailand. One wonder how Buddhism contributes to such a situation. In fact, the main route of HIV infection in Thailand now is through hetero-sexual contract. Does Buddhist morality as opposition to adultery have any significant effect on this issue? How does the Buddhist view of suffering and salvation shape the local experience of AIDS? How does the *Sangha* adjust its role to the tremendous suffering of this AIDS situation? These questions not only have theoretical significance but are also crucial to the practical solution of the AIDS problem if one believes that religion and medicine both aim at solving the suffering of existential human experiences.

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Raymund Schwager *Austria, 1998*

The role of sacrifice in a violent world

Insights into the concepts of sacrifice in the religions and in christology according to René Girard

topics:

- *rites of sacrifice in religions*
- *religious sacrifice and human violence*
- *Christianity and sacrifice/violence*
- *sacrifice vs. offering*
- *the theory of Rene Girard*

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part I: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp. 7-12
part II: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp. 23-25

Part I: Deity/God and Sacrifice. Religious history and the theory of René Girard

Ritual sacrifices are to be found among all peoples and in all cultures. Only in modern world sacrifices do not play an official role any more. Nevertheless – the word "victim" kept a certain meaning[1] in most branches of today's civilisation and points towards the importance of experiences once connected with sacrifice.

The variety of rites regarding sacrifice

There were many religions – there was a wide variety of sacrifices. Ethnology and religious science thus have had a hard time describing the very centre of sacrifice. A frequent explanation sees the sacrifice as a gift to a higher being (deity, demons, ancestors etc.) by violent destruction in order to gain a mutual gift (a good, a defence of disaster).[2] This perception should be similar to the very experience of those, who worshipped by offering; regarding the fact, that in archaic societies the offering and the received blessing were of central importance.[3] It does not give all aspects of ritual sacrifice though; the following aspects should be considered here:

(1) *Sacrifices were surrounded by a holy shiver*. They were anticipated through ecstatic dances, intensified by masks and mind-altering substances. During a rite

those *taboos could be broken*, which otherwise were strictly preserved – often by religious means. According to M. Eliade all archaic religious festivals had a tendency towards altering the present order into a dangerous chaos: "Each 'festival' obtains an orgiastic tendency within its structure".[4] If sacrifice is a donation to a deity, why are experiences of shiver and horror together with disintegration of order necessary at all?

(2) Sacrifices not only included the destruction of material goods (burning of food) but animals and even human beings were slaughtered as well. *The killing was the rite's climax and the centre of the sacred shiver*. Studying Greek religions, W. Burkert (Zürich) judges: "Not only in a devoted lifestyle, not only in prayer, song, or dance the deity is experienced as most powerful, but in the deadly stroke of the axe, in the running blood and in the burning of the extremities. The divine sphere is holy, but the 'holy' act, performed at 'holy' time at a 'holy' place by the actor of the 'healing', is the slaughter of the victims – 'hiereuein' of the 'hiera' (...). The basic experience of the holy is the killing of the victim, the *homo religiosus* acts and becomes self-conscious as *homo necans*."[5]

The killing of victims was not only performed in ancient Greece. All ancient cultures knew bloody rites, frequently human beings were the "chosen" for the high ceremony. At the temple in Jerusalem animals were sacrificed in high numbers, and there were kings, who used human sacrifices in times of crisis (2 Kings 23:10; Jer 7:31; Jer 32:35). Why was such violence important in the offering for a deity?

(3) *The sacrificed animals or human beings no longer belonged to the daily or profane reality*. During the rite they were identified with a deity or with a hero within the cult and sacrificed as such – this is reported through many myths. Ad. E. Jensen, who studied archaic agricultural societies in various parts of the globe describes a unifying and central element in all cultures: "In the middle of the religious festivals there always stands the repetition of the ancient myth; it becomes obvious, that all sacrifices (human or animal sacrifices, rites of maturity or fertility, other ceremonies and ritual customs) are no single elements of culture, but are derived from the central idea of a killed deity, which by her own death sets the present order into being."[6]

The fact that originally a deity was killed is mentioned by other scientists as well. N. Davies points at the relation between this original event and the witnessed sacrifice of a king: "The story of a creator often ends in a very basic deed of violence, which again caused the most widespread, but not common – deed of killing the king himself. After a certain time he, as a descendent of the god once sacrificed, had to die himself. Those new and altered forms of sacrifice were a reinstallation, a going back to the beginning of time and the gods' first deeds. Their rites, which found their climax in re-birth or resurrection, were connected with consuming the god, in the person of his victim or his representative. The myth of the dying god thus became the base for human sacrifice.[7]

According to Mircea Eliade many minor rites of sacrifice (connected with the shaping of metals or harvesting for example) are to be understood through the myth of the killed deity: "Those myths, rites and customs probably refer to an initial mythical event, which came first and justifies it. Metals evolved from the body of a sacrificed god or a supernatural being. (...) After all, what we have said about the cosmogonic myth (the world, the human being or the plants, which once evolved from the body of giant), the imagination of the metals evolving from the body of one divine being seems to be only one reading of the same basic motive. As the offerings at harvest time repeat the symbolic sacrifice of the first highest

being, which, *ab origine*, made the appearance of seeds possible, also the human sacrifice on the occasion of a metallic artefact is an enactment of the mythical example given."[8] According to the myth of the killed deity not the sacrifice is an offering for the deity, but vice versa: the given order of life evolved from a sacrificed deity.

(4) Especially in Hinduism this understanding of sacrifice as the origin of all things is systemically unfolded and broadened to a cosmic perspective. In Hinduism, sacrifice is "the power of creation itself, the primal cause."[9] The poets of the Vedic hymns praised creation distinctively as the fruit of sacrifice, and consequently – as K. Klostermeier states – they put "first the sacrifice of the victim for the victim."[10] Not merely an offering for the deity, but an absolute and primal happening, from which all other realities – gods, human beings and the cosmos itself – gain their origin.

Recapitulation

Facing the various and even contradictory images connected with sacrifices, many authors deny the possibility a systematic explanation. Single voices even hold the word sacrifice as treacherous. Rites would be combined under one title, which had nothing in common. In science, therefore, the term sacrifice should be deleted. As opponents to Burkert, J.-L. Detienne and J.-P. Vernant state, that the only real thing in ancient Greek rites of sacrifice would be the preparation of food for the meal.[11] This type of criticism had no break through, though; still it is attractive – despite the various aspects within – how the phenomenon of a rite (again: among various cultures) in which something is destroyed made the participating members of the cult – under holy shiver and horror – trust in something good, which was to be gained by the sacrifice, as blessing by a higher power, prevention of disaster, founding of life-order, recapitulation of creation. To understand and to interpret this phenomenon remains the given task.

Today the only working theory of sacrifice that is paying attention to the different interpretations seems to be the theory of René Girard. He does not suppose only one single definition of sacrifice, but understands the offering-rites in the context of a primal event with paradox meaning and, moreover, expects a most complex further development.[12] His anthropology accordingly, does not expect peaceful coexistence as matter of course. Girard does not believe in an instinct of aggression but shows, how human beings easily get lost in rivalry by imitation (*mimesis*), which extends to conflict and aggression. Ratio cannot control these tendencies. In archaic society without a legal system of justice controlling most of the threatening conflicts as a neutral third, only violence could embank itself. Girard's interpretation: on the climax of confused aggression mutual aggression could evolve into a common deed against one. One is found guilty and is sacrificed, so that the others restore their peace (the mechanism of 'scapegoating'). This does not only include physical violence. Rage is blind, as a saying states, and in an archaic society human passion was far more elementary. Greek tragedies reveal heroes blind of rage, loosing their distinction between human being and animal. The original collective aggression must have been of enormous agitation and blindness. Realistic self-perception was no longer available, and opponents grew into monstrous entities. When a victim was covered by this collective aggression, it was covered by collective projection as well. To the crowd it had become an incarnation of the evil. The same crowd, though, made the puzzling experience that

the killing of the victim gave back peace. The monster changed its face into the one of a supernatural and wonderful messenger of healing. It was both: frightening and fascinating, a *tremendum et fascinosum.* It was experienced as sacred. Ethnology has stated long ago, that in the archaic 'sacred' both sides are comprised: the condemned and the healing, the frightening and the fascinating, the good and the evil. The theory of the collective thrusting out and killing explains, how such diverse experiences could be made on one spot: In a blind and instinctive manner the victim had to carry all the guilt for the deadly crisis, but at the same time, through concentrating all against one, peace was restored unconsciously. The hidden collective mechanism which enabled human communities, and the first appearance of archaic religious characters are, according to Girard, aspects of one single happening. In ritual sacrifice he then sees a controlled enactment of the (formerly only instinctive) self-embankment of violence, in order to renew its healing purpose for the community. In the preparing rites (masks, dances) the latent aggression was exposed – to be once again turned off and alienated from the community by the act of killing the victim. All religious, cultural and political institutions then would evolve from the sphere of peace, gained in this way.

Girard's theory is able to explain different phenomena in the wide world of sacrifice: the meaning of killing, human sacrifices and their later change into animal sacrifices, sacred shiver and horror, tendency towards chaos and orgiastic rites with renewal of order and mythical reflex to a secret beginning. This theory also explains the strange though widespread myth of the killed deity, which provides life-order, in a stunning simply manner. If the primal victim in its empirical reality was covered totally with projections, it had to appear to the crowd as a supernatural being, and because the killing caused a sphere of peace for the others, the sacrifice really appeared to create the given life-order. The myth therefore offers the perception of an actual happening – distorted by rage and blindness.

Girard's theory was criticised widely. One critique was, for example, that it would retract everything to violence. Here is a clear misunderstanding, since not violence but self-embankment is vital for the theory. The participants find the scapegoat-mechanism fascinating, because they are given – in a wonderful manner – a gift, they could not reach out of own effort: peace. Sacred violence brings life and healing, because it suppresses evil and self-destructive violence. But how about the gift to the deity, which, as we have seen, plays an important role in the world of sacrifice? Does this theory not speak against an explanation of sacrifice in the context of the scapegoat-mechanism?

Girard states clearly, that human beings are oriented towards a realistic transcendence. But as long as their realm of living is not in peace, their real vision of the infinite is imprisoned by passion,[13] with which they fight for survival; and all of their judgements will be distorted accordingly.[14] Once the traditions and patterns of behaviour, which evolved from the collective mechanism of violence-embankment, grew strong enough to guarantee for a stable order, religious sensibility can follow – step by step – its own intuition. Girard points to the far-reaching consequences of the development of a legal system on a national level where the State holds the monopoly of power. Since it became its task to guarantee for a more or less peaceful life within its borders, religiosity had the possibility to develop on its own. This happened slowly and differently in each culture, and some connection to the roots remained. In this way, says Girard, from the same starting point various and partly different ideas of sacrifice could develop on a rational religious level; they overlaid the unconscious realm.

The religious worlds and their sacrifices

The archaic sacred figure which evolved from the primal collective projection, could develop into a belief in a deity, which shared the life of a human community and was responsible for good and evil. In this context the myth of the killed deity got less important and gave way to sacrifices, which were to soften the threatening rage of the deity and beg for peace – by the sacrifice of a valuable gift as a first-born animal or even firstborn son. Such a development probably took place in Israel.

By new religious experiences the belief into a highest deity differed from the belief into minor sacred characters as ghosts and demons in the development of the archaic religious world. This was true for many areas in Africa. The highest god was relatively far away in daily life. Under such circumstances the rites had a satisfactory social function, as Girard describes, even if the religious community believed in soothing ancestors or ghosts and to prevent magicians from doing harm to the community.[15] Still, the religious sensibility knew about a higher being, but the relation was not clear.

Another possibility was, that sacrifices – even those of human beings – remained in the cult, even though the political structures were stable – as in the culture of the Aztecs and other natives in Middle- and South-America. Myths of the killed deity survived indirectly; in part they transformed into the understanding that the victim itself would stabilise the whole present order – both political and cosmic. As the Aztecs believed: "The sun depended on nurture and strengthening by human blood and human hearts to leave the underworld and reach her place in the skies".[16]

India went a different way. Sacrifices here were spiritualised in a very own way. Not only human sacrifices but also animal sacrifices disappeared. Their place was taken by gifts of nature; on the other hand the archaic experience of sacrifice was maintained and transformed into the cosmic. Still, it was believed, that all deities and all worlds were created by one primordial sacrifice. “Everything was expressed in a terminology of sacrifice theology, each act of life, every single move of a star was sacrifice itself or vital part of one.”[17] Even contradictory aspects could coexist in this context. The archaic myth of the killed deity lived on (transformed) and at the same time got connected with religious-philosophical ideas of new spiritual energy. Out of the belief into a primordial sacrifice as the first truth, from which even the gods evolved, the understanding of one unity as the true reality, which comes before all differences, which after all only exist at the level of mere appearance. Hinduism though still held the Vedic fire rites highly – especially in the spiritual life of the Brahman. On their way to redemption and unity with the primordial sacrifice the human being was to be cleaned from guilt;[18] their effect though was not related to the called god but to the sacrifice itself – “the god is only necessary as a technical term *ad quem* of the sacrifice – as part of the Yajna. The effect came *ex opere operato*, as an unpersonal effect of rite and mantra.”[19]

Another way was taken by Buddhism – to neglect sacrifice as such and to only keep a spiritual way of sacrificing. Only the idea of renunciation was kept – sacrifice was neglected as it destroyed something valuable. Renunciation as liberation became the proper way to enter the divine unity (Nirwana) – only by the means of meditation and renunciation of all desire. Also Zarathustra and the great prophets

of Israel criticised the sacrifice, but out of inspiration. In Persia as well as in Israel the image of god was cleansed by prophetic inspiration, in the name of a newly given ethical system. The old world of rite and sacred tradition was questioned.

These short and summarising notes cannot give an overview of the complex world of religions and their sacrifices. On the background of Girard's theory they try to draw, how the images of sacrifice can be seen in one and still be true to their various phenomena. A very actual problem is mentioned here. To see the connection with today, the Christian understanding of sacrifice will have to be described first.

Christianity and sacrifice

In Christian teaching Christ brought the ever sufficient sacrifice on the cross. In Hebrews, which unfolds this understanding very much, the death of Christ stands on the opposite to the Old Testament's sacrifices. Back then animals were slaughtered daily, Christ offered himself to God once and for all. The priests of the old order carried foreign blood to the sanctuary, blood of kettle; Christ though stood before God with his own blood. With Christ the old sacrifices lost their value. But the 'Letter to the Hebrews' also names various Old Testament texts and so maintains a continuity to earlier days of Jewish religion. As seen, sacrifices were common in the early phase of Israel, also in the time of the kings (1020 to 586 B.C.) they were offered in many places even for different deities. King Josia favoured a religious renewal only accepting the cult of Jahve and destroyed all sanctuaries in the country leaving only the temple in Jerusalem. Before him the prophets began to criticise both priests and sacrifices in the name of Jahve and a new ethics, which focused on justice and attendance to the poor. The prophet Amos (around 750 B.C.): *The offerings of well-being of your fatted animals I will not look upon. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not listen to the melody of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream!* (Amos 5:22f.).

And prophet Hosea with a similar tone at almost the same time: *For I desire steadfast love an not sacrifice, the knowledge of Got rather than burnt offerings.* (Hosea 6:6).

The prophet Jeremiah, around 150 years later, went as far as questioning, if Jahve ever did give the order for offerings (Jer 7:21ff.; cf. Amos 5:25). When Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed shortly after that (587 B.C.) and the wealthy part of the population went into the exile to Babylon, the belief in Jahve survived the time in between without sacrifices because of the prophetic criticism before pretty well. But when the temple was rebuilt (the Persians allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem 540 B.C.) the old cult with sacrifices at the temple was restored. Why so many bloody rites in a time, which also knew a harsh criticism against such practices? Old Testament scriptures do not give many answers. The well-known Old Testament scientist G. v. Rad says: "The Old Testament is full of divine event, when it becomes evident among God's people, full of intensive address, but there is no 'revelation' when it comes to what God allows with sacrifices, here is silence and secret."[20] The belief in Jahve seems not to have had a clear understanding, what the sacrifices were to cause. In the post-exile time the obedience to God's order and his word was emphasised above all. Probably, the cult was reinstalled because of God's order to Moses. Obedience for tradition, not the belief in the inner value of the sacrifice, was important. This shows, how deeply the cult of sacrifice must have anchored in the religious tradition of Israel.

Although Jesus stood in this tradition, bloody offerings had no role in his teachings. He did not oppose them directly, but did not give them any importance either. The faith in a near and caring God and the change towards a new behaviour (charity and love of the enemy) was crucial to him. Because of this message he was prosecuted collectively and trialed and executed.

After Easter the Christian community understood his death as a sacrifice, as shown in Hebrews. The understanding of sacrifice was changed in a radical way, became opposite to all former images. All ritual sacrifices had been offered in the temple or in another sacred space, the death of Christ took place, where criminals were to be executed. In the ritual sacrifice the killing are the offering and the priests at the same time, in the crucifixion of Christ the killing were only part of sinful mankind, Christ himself as the killed became priest in a radical new way.

If Girard's theory is reliable, continuity and radical change between old sacred sacrifices[21] and the sacrifice on the cross can be edged out more visibly.

On the one hand a crowd is acting against an individual. In the foreground the crowd, which covers the victim with their projections, condemn it to total silence and believe their deed is a God-given act. Such a crowd is acting at Christ's death, too. But their motivation is not in control. Jesus as the One has challenged the crowd before with his message. At his trial he stayed silent and his disciples were carried away for a short time by the crowd. But through their experiences at Easter and Pentecost they converted and began to teach the message of their master, the single one, to the whole world. Sacrifice is not anymore the collective deed but vice versa: the deed of one for the many. Christ is not reacting with counter-violence (anathema) but answers the evil done to him – listening to his heavenly father – with forgiveness (Lk 23:34), devotion and love (Lk 22:14-23; Rom 5:6-8).

The new meaning of sacrifice brought a radical change and was challenging, as much as the believers in Christ themselves were overcharged with the task to hold the new sight and integrate it into their lives. The world the new Christians lived in was still controlled by the suction of the sacred sacrifice and also their Christian thinking was diluted instinctively, to understand the death of Christ in direct analogy to those bloody offerings. Because he was killed like animals are slaughtered – in a ritual sacrifice – the idea spread, that God must have offered his own son (by the means of sinful human beings) to soothe His rage. This idea spread first of all in piety, sermons and in popular theologies. Offering, even in a Christian way of thinking, was understood as killing and destruction to calm down God Himself.

Most works of theologians were critical against such views. But they had a strong influence on Christian life in general. But since the enlightenment more voices rose, who spoke with passion against a god, who would offer his own son. Many Christian authors though kept teaching the offering of the son by the heavenly father. So the question of how to understand sacrifice remains central in the Christian debate. Some state that the problem could be solved most easily by not mentioning the word sacrifice anymore. But this proposal might be too superficial. Sacrifice is rooted deeply in the world of violence. As long as there is violence in this world, the problem of sacrifice stays with us in one or the other way. As with the death of Christ the task to be performed will be to reverse the archaic meaning of sacrifice.[22] Those who kill cannot be, by any means, those who offer. But those, who offer themselves in a very new and healing sense by not reacting to

violence with counter-violence. This way the old world of sacred violence can at least be altered in the realm of their own existence.

Places of sacrifice and relics

Bloody sacrifices stirred a sacred shiver and horror, a dark fascination. Sacrifices took place in spots aside from daily life. In temples, on mountains, in caves, in sacred woods. The act was performed on an altar, which was prepared and consecrated in a special manner. The flesh was partly consumed, partly burned. Bones could be kept as sacred objects. The dark fascination was very powerful, it seemed to stick like a substance at the spot, where the sacrifice took place. Places of sacrifices and relics of sacrifices therefore were worshipped and visited with the intention to find healing.

Christian sacrifice, as we have seen, had a very different meaning. The first covenants of believers, who remembered the death on the cross, did not need temples nor altars. They came together in their homes, sitting around ordinary tables (Eucharist). But as soon as old sacred images re-entered the understanding of Christ's death on the cross, they began to influence the understanding of the Eucharist. It was said, the priest would perform a slaughter in a symbolic way,[23] and that one could only come close to the offering with a sacred shiver.

As soon as those ideas spread, distinctive places for the sacrifice appeared again with regard to the Eucharist. Christians began to build their houses for prayer and community in analogy to the temples of the gentiles, the Eucharistic table became an altar and the altar was set aside from the ordinary people. The offering again became an act performed by priests, by distinguished personnel.

Similar things happened with the martyrs. They gave their lives following Christ not acting violent. But it became neighbouring, that they were to be remembered in the Eucharist. Interest changed in the cause and the bones of the martyrs (and the bones of other saints) were worshipped. It was believed they held a certain power bringing help and healing. Because of this belief relics were installed in every altar and places, where the bones of outstanding martyrs and saints were kept, developed into big places of pilgrimage.

A comparison with the bones of criminals shows that in the cult of relics old sacred ideas came into play among Christian impulses. M. Herzog brought together a good deal of historic material showing how executed criminals were worshipped as saints, even as "guardian gods", even in Christian countries.[24] Their bones were held as valuable as the bones of saints. A similar sacred ambiguity belonged to the executioner, as Herzog shows in another study.[25] The executioner was approached with horrified fascination and numinous awe. As hangman he could be doctor at the same time and use the relics of criminals for pharmaceutical purposes. Herzog shows a clear connection between execution and victim: "As in no other part of common belief in the drama of execution the alteration from the profane to the sacred by a ritual act of killing can be grasped that easily. Despite the fact, that the criminals die for their own misdeeds, their execution in popular piety is experienced as a salvation bringing sacrifice and a sacrifice of a substitute."[26] Such a connection will be hard to understand for modern thinking. But as with sacrifices, the latent collective violence is deflected and a peaceful and "healing" space is created. The conclusion could be drawn, that archaic images, as long as violence rules the world, cannot be exterminated and will keep showing up in one way or

the other. In Christian popular piety but also in the esoteric and the world of sects these phenomena should be observed carefully. The Christian belief tries – in its deepest aims – to enlighten the dark background of the sacred and not to embank violence by collective gathering for substitutional sacrifices, but to overcome violence with love and freedom of violence. This is not an easy way. Also in the world of Christianity there will appear mixed forms – as in the cult of relics or in the theories of mystical slaughter within the mass. They must be examined in a critical way, for even today, sacred violence is able to veil and justify physical violence.

References to Part I

[1] Cf. *Zur Theorie des Opfers*, ed. by R. Schenk, Stuttgart 1995; *A quoi bon (se) sacrifier?* (La revue du M.A.U.S.S., No. 5), Paris 1995 (Paris). While most Roman languages distinguish between *"vittima"* (the thing or person to be sacrificed) and *"sacrificio"* (the act of sacrificing), in German the word *"Opfer"* comprehends the whole rite with all its different aspects

[2] Cf. A.Caillé, Sacrifice, don et utilitarisme, p. 265. In: *A quoi bon (se) sacrifier?* (s. note 2) pp. 248-292.

[3] Cf. M. Mauss, *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, London / New York: Routledge, 1989.

[4] M. Eliade, *Die Religionen und das Heilige*. Salzburg 1954, p.413.

[5] W. Burkert, *Homo necans,* Berlin 1972, p.9.

[6] Ad. E. Jensen, *Die getötete Gottheit,* Stuttgart 1966, p.78.

[7] N. Davies*, Opfertod und Menschenopfer*. Frankfurt a. M. 1983, p.344.

[8] M. Eliade, *Schmiede und Alchemisten*, Stuttgart, 1980, p.72f.

[9] K. Klostermeier, *Hinduismus*. Köln 1965, p.78.

[10] *Ibid*. p.111.

[11] J.- L. Detienne / J.- P. Vernant*, La cuisine du sacrifice en pays grec*. Paris 1979.

[12] Important books by R. Girard: *Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1977; *Das Ende der Gewalt.* Freiburg i. Br. 1983; *Der Sündenbock*, Zürich 1990.

[13] From a Christian perspective Girard's theory is close to a theology of original sin.

[14] Even in today's complex world, there are certain arguments for this way of thinking. In Bosnia all involved parties – according to a long tradition – believe in one transcendent god, but still their private perception of the conflict itself are totally on the opposite and each party blames the guilt on the enemy. – In the novel *Medea* by Christa Wolf (Darmstadt 1996) Girard's theory finds an indirect application to today's Germany.

[15] Cf. E. de Rosny, *Les yeux de ma chèvre. Sur les pas des maitres de la nuit en pays Doula*. Paris 1981

[16] W. Krickenberg, et al., *Die Religionen des alten Amerika*. Stuttgart 1961, p.50.

[17] Klostermeier, *Hinduismus*, (see note 9) p. 111.

[18] "...the five great sacrifices had the purpose to clean the 'five sins', which were committed daily in the house. Hurting or killing of living beings: in the oven, in the mill, by sweeping the floor, in the water-pitcher or by the use of mortar and pestle." *Ibid*. p. 111.

[19] *Ibid*. p.125

[20] G. v. Rad*, Theologie des Alten Testamentes* (Vol. 1). München 1957, p.273.

[21] I distinguish between *sacred* and *holy* and understand the term *sacred* close to primordial religious experiences, for which condemned and blessed, tremendum et fascinosum where one; with the word *holy* I mean the Christian God of love and everything connected to him, directly or indirectly.

[22] Cf. R.Schwager: *Jesus im Heilsdrama*. Innsbruck 2nd edition 1996; J. Niewiadomski (editor), *Vom Fluch und Segen der Sündenböcke*. Thaur 1996.

[23] The Patriarch Nestorius for instance taught that within the Eucharist "Christ was crucified in a symbolic way, slaughtered by the sword of the priestly word." (cf. Loofs, *Nestoriana (1905) 241*, p. 24ff.)

[24] M. Herzog, Hingerichtete Verbrecher als Gegenstand der Heiligenverehrung. In: *Geist und Leben 65* (1992) pp.367-386.
[25] M. Herzog, Scharfrichterliche Medizin. In*: Medizinhistorisches Journal 29:4* (1994) pp.309-331.
[26] *Ibid*., p.382.

Part II:
The Sacrifice of Christ. New Christological insights on account of the studies of René Girard

The story of the sacrifice of Isaac, or rather of his "binding" (*Akeidah*, as it is called in the Jewish world), evoked a certain spirituality of surrendering to the will of God. It also sparked numerous discussions – in the era of the rabbis as well as in the modern days of information systems. More to the point, the story had an impact, reaching beyond the mere theological realm, playing an important role in the literary and philosophical works the Jewish[1] and the non-Jewish[2] world alike. All this proves how deeply rooted the notion of the sacrificial offering is in both, the rational and emotional sphere of the modern person.

But the biblical story may also serve the means of a harsh criticism of modern day historic events. The English poet Wilfred Owen for example, who died as a front-line soldier in First World War, left us with numerous poems that speak against the senseless killings of the war. In his "Parable of the Old Man and the Young" he follows the story of Abraham and Isaac, having the angel stop Abraham by saying:

> *Behold!*
> *A ram, caught in a thicket by its horns,*
> *Offer the Ram of Pride instead of him.*
> *But the old man would not so, but slew his son*
> *And half the seed of Europe, one by one.* [3]

In the story of the sacrificing of Isaac, Christian theology often saw an announcement of the death of Christ. With reference to this narration, Paul says about God: "He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, will he not also give all things with him?" (Rom 8:32) In connection to this and similar Pauline statements, and based on the explicit theology of sacrifice which we find that in the letter to the Hebrews, Christian theology was often led to state that humankind deserves death since through their sins they have evoked the wrath of God. Although God's great love proved itself in the fact that he did not destroy the sinners, his wrath, however, was satisfied by the fact that he did not spare his own son by sacrificing him on the cross in place of all worldly sinners. Such is the opinion not only with popular theology, but also with great and famous authors. Karl Barth, for example taught that Jesus was being struck by the wrath of God on the cross. Thus, the people were mere "instruments in the hand of God, agents and executioners of his steadfast judgement and intend." [4]

In a meditative piece about the sacrifice of Isaac the Jewish author Elie Wiesel writes against the teaching of 'salvation through the cross', that "for a Jewish per-

son truth comes from life and not from death. Therefore, for us, the crucifixion does not represent progress but regression. At the zenith of the Morija the living remains alive and thereby marks the end of an era of ritual killing."[5] In modern Christian theologians we sometimes find equally disapproving verdicts of a theology of the cross. A feminist voice may say that "to give one's own son, to surrender him to the cross, to leave him there and to kill him, is (...) the absolute perversion of what love stands for. It is a patriarchal act of perversion; to interpret a murder as an act of love, may be reserved to men only, or rather, to people blinded in the patriarchal fashion."[6]

The drama of Jesus and the role of humankind

Although Rene Girard is not a theologian he deals with the above mentioned matter extensively. He even dares to enter the often complex and confusing discussion and proposes a new interpretation. In difference to Karl Barth he does not see Jesus' executioners as instruments and agents of a divine will, but rather as instruments of those forces that have repeatedly exerted power over the human race since its early beginning i.e. the forces of lying and of violence. This is the reason why in his interpretation of the fate of Jesus he does not refer to the narration of Isaac, but rather he refers to a different motif of the OT the violent fate of the prophets.[7]

Based on this idea, Girard can propose the following dramatic interpretation of Jesus' public appearance: With his message of the coming kingdom of God, Jesus initially intended to create a kingdom of peace and justice. Had the people answered his calling, had they showed any willingness to be converted to unlimited forgiveness, to love for the enemy and to the principle of non-violence, then the kingdom of God would have begun here on earth and the cross would not have been necessary.

In reality however, Jesus' message was met with a rejection to which Girard applies a systematic meaning. He writes: "The failure of the kingdom, from the viewpoint of the Gospels, does not amount to the failure of the mission Jesus undertakes; but it does amount to the inevitable abandonment of the direct and easy way, which would be for all to accept the principles of conduct that he has stated. It is now necessary to turn to the indirect way, the one that has to by pass the consent of all mankind and instead pass through the crucifixion and the apocalypse".[8] Girard emphasises, that it is the Gospel of Matthew that most clearly distinguishes between the coming kingdom of God and the proclamation of judgement and the suffering of Jesus. Between those two elements of distinction one finds the "momentous event" of rejection. We have to ask ourselves, what consequences did this moment rejection have? Girard now sees Jesus' words of judgement and his apocalyptic preaching not as the response of an angry God acting upon the resistance to his message. Rather he interprets them as a proclamation of what will come gradually if the people continue to reject the offer of the coming kingdom of God. In other words, Jesus' work unveiled the violent mechanisms which to this day stabilise many human cultures and societies.

Consequently humankind is faced with a more radical alternative: to either repent and to reconcile, or to destroy one another.

In this light Girard understands judgement as a collective judgement of and done by the human race. Through the proclamation of judgement, the people could

have awakened, but the opposite occurred: the moment of rejection grew into violent abolishment. Various Jewish groups normally hostile with one another (Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians and Zelots) unified in the name of opposition, and (for a short period of time) even collaborated with the Romans. This alliance was so strong, that it even affected the disciples who in turn betrayed him – or they even fled from him. For one moment the many (all) stood united against one. Thus, what Jesus had unveiled in the soul of the human beings was thrown back at him. He uncovered violence, and in turn was violently killed. He diagnosed a deceitful and satanic spirit in the minds of his opponents (Matth 12:22-45, 23:13-39; John 8:44), and in turn was convicted as a blasphemist (Matth 26:65). The full force of violence erupted, making him the victim.

However, due to the experiences of Easter and Pentecost those disciples who had betrayed him earlier converted and found a way back to their Lord. They now identified him as the stone which was cast away by the builders of the old world, and who was reinstalled by God as the corner stone of the new community (Mark 10:12; Apoc 4:9-12; 1. Peter 2:4-8). They identified him as the innocent victim of collective violence, as the sacrificial lamb (John 1:29; 1. Peter 2:22-25), or as the scapegoat (2. Cor 5:21; Gal 3:13), who carried the evil and the sins of many. Based on their pre- and post-Easter experiences, Jesus did not remain to be one prophet out of many. But for the disciples he was the true messenger, the Son of God, whose crucifixion was not a random killing caused by a few evil people, but a fundamental act of all mankind.

In the NT Girard is able to find clues that place the rejection of Jesus in the context of world history. In this light the parable of the evil vineyard owners is to be understood. It shows the fate of the beloved son Jesus to be purely in succession of that of many prophets. With regard to the exclamations in Matth 23:34-36 – referring to Abel and all the innocent blood that has been shed here on earth – Girard writes: "Here one can detect the whole of the mimetic system. I believe that the gospels reveal it, since they let Jesus predict he will die like a prophet; and the exemplary prophet chosen is Abel – proving that he is not in line with Jewish prophets only, but with all religious killings since the creation of the world. Killings that are similar to Jesus' suffering, in that they all are 'foundational murders' (*Gründungsmorde*) of the scapegoat." [9]

We find the first Christian community being even more to the point, when in light of their own and the prophet's experience of persecution they pray: "Lord, Sovereign Lord, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and everything in them, who by the mouth of our father David, your servant, said by the Holy Spirit, 'why did the Gentiles rage, and the peoples imagine vain things?' The kings of the earth set themselves in array and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord and against his anointed – for truly in this city there were gathered together your holy servant Jesus whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate with the gentiles and the people of Israel to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place." (Acts 4:24-28) It is a fact that at the time of Jesus most of the twelve tribes of Israel had ceased to exist, and heathens only sporadically came in touch with the fate of Jesus. As shown in Acts (and John 1:9-11), the praying community of Christians nevertheless feels the need to think of the killing as an act of alliance and of mobbing.[10] For Girard however, the importance of this text lies in the fact that "all cultures – without exception – have proved themselves to be murderous in the face of the true God."[11] Time and again humans have allied against victims, blaming them for all sorts of evil deeds. In unveiling the innocence of that one exemplary victim, that had been sent by God and was convicted

as a blasphemist by the people, it becomes apparent, that all those victims were not guilty in the sense of the prosecution – or at least no more guilty than those who convicted them.

The cross as an offering

Can we now conclude from the above analysis that although Christ became a victim of violence, on the cross itself he did not make a sacrifice? Let us turn to the book *Des choses Cachees depuis la fondation du monde*,[12] in which Girard is dealing extensively with the Bible for the first time. Here he is mostly concerned with analysing the difference between the archaic sacrifices and the death of Christ. In light of this dichotomy, Girard very clearly refuses to interpret the death of Christ as a sacrifice moreover, he harshly criticises the letter to the Hebrews [13]. In his later works, however, Girard has modified this position and lately he has even retracted it.[14] Although he is holding on to the radical difference between the archaic sacrifices and the death of Christ, through many discussions he was forced to see how the notion of the sacrifice had been reinterpreted repeatedly in the times of early Christianity. The ideas of the offering or the surrendering of the self do not have to be interpreted how Girard first saw them (under the influence of the anti-Christian attacks that he has experienced). They are not a form of aggression to the self. On the contrary: To the violence he encountered he reacted with exactly the same spirit that he had preached about in his sermons. He did not retaliate, but excused his enemies, and prayed for their forgiveness (Luke 23:34). Moreover, he could identify with them, since he saw that they themselves had become victims of violence (see Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 9:4; Mark 14:22-24). Consequently, Jesus' offering of the self may very well be the most radical form of non-violence and love of the enemy. And with this act Jesus – as the good shepherd – manages to reach even the most deserted people, all those who themselves have became the victims of violence and evil. Thanks to Jesus' surrendering and his offering of the self – clearly his loving answer to all the violence he suffered – there now exists an Archimedic point in the history of humankind, a point where all evil has already been overcome. This point in history is near us, since through the osmotic kind of mimesis, or rather the act of imitation, all humans are closely connected with one another – more closely than the enlightening idea of the autonomous individual would have one to believe.

Coming from God – what does all this mean? Girard points out that "the crucifixion shows how the people reject God's truth. Moreover, since God does not want to win in a forceful way, which would not make sense, God made it possible to reveal himself in a way that does not violate the freedom of humankind. With this goal in mind God accepts his role as scapegoat".[15] God did not want the death of his son to happen; but he did want Jesus to ultimately follow the forlorn people – thereby risking his own life. [16]

References to Part II

1 Cf. P. Tschuggnall, "Der gebundene Isaak", in: *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie 114* (1992) p. 304-316.

2 Cf. P.Tschuggnall, "Abrahams Opfer", in: *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte 46* (1994) p. 289-318.

4 K. Barth, *Kirchliche Dogmatik* (Church Dogmatics), *Vol.4/1*, Zollikon-Zürich, 1953ff, p. 262.

[5] E. Wiesel, *Adam oder das Geheimnis des Anfangs,* Freiburg i.Br. 1987, p. 81.
[6] R. Strobel, "Feministische Kritik an traditionellen Kreuzestheologien", in: *Vom Verlangen nach Heilwerden*, ed. D. Strahn / R. Strobel, Fribourg 1991, p. 53; cf. Elga Sorge, "Wer leiden will, muß lieben", in: *Feministische Studien*, Beltz Mai 1983, p. 54-69.
[7] Cf. O.H. Steck, *Israel und das gewaltsame Geschick der Propheten*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1967.
[8] R. Girard, *Das Ende der Gewalt,* Freiburg 1983, p. 211.
[9] R. Girard, *Wenn all das beginnt... Ein Gespräch mit M. Treguer*, Münster 1997, p. 53f. (original title: Quand ces choses commenceront... entretiens avec Michel Treguer, 1994)
[10] The prologue of the Gospel according to John describes this: "The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." (John 1:9-11).
[11] R. Girard, *Wenn all das beginnt...* (op. cit.), p. 112.
[12] Paris 1978.
[13] R. Girard, *Das Ende der Gewalt* (op. cit.) p. 251-254.
[14] R. Girard, *Vom Fluch und Segen der Sündenböcke*, Thaur 1995, p 24-29; Girard, *Wenn all das beginnt...* (op. cit.) p. 161.
[15] Girard, *Wenn all das beginnt...* (op. cit.) p. 140.
[16] For a more thorough theological discussion cf. R. Schwager, *Jesus im Heilsdrama. Entwurf einer biblischen Erlösungslehre*, Innsbruck 1996, and J.Niewiadomski / W.Palaver (eds.), *Dramatische Erlösungslehre. Ein Symposion*, Innsbruck 1992.

James R. Farris *Brazil, 2000*

Faith and community

Reflections on fragmentation, suffering, and Gospel

topics:

- *creating community through pastoral care*
- *church as divided community*
- *theology of liberation – political theology*
- *the human experience of suffering*

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Introduction

During the past sixteen years, I have lived in two of the largest cities in the world. For seven years I lived in Los Angeles, with a population of approximately 12 million in the greater metropolitan area. For the past six years, I have lived in Sao Paulo, Brazil that has a population of approximately 16 million in the greater metropolitan area. For the past six years, I have lived in Sao Paulo, Brazil, that has a population of approximately 19 million in the greater metropolitan area. Sao Paulo is what I would call an almost unlivable city. It has an average of 65 violent deaths every weekend, is incredibly polluted, measures traffic jams in kilometers, has incredible poverty and incredible wealth and is deeply fragmented in terms of its identity. It is also incredibly alive, but alive in the same way that some adolescents are alive. It has incredible energy and resources, but little or no direction or guiding center.

Yet, the more I think about it, I do not live in Sao Paulo. I actually live in a series of small communities that sustain and help me find meaning, orientation and a sense of identity. I live in the communities of my house, my street, my neighborhood, the university, my friends and colleagues and the community of the church. I do not think I could endure to literally live in Sao Paulo. It is too large, too complex, too violent, too unjust, and too fragmented. I can only live in the midst of this fragmentation because of my communities. However, each these communities exists in the midst of Sao Paulo. They are affected by the reality in which they exist, and this is a reality of work, concrete, poverty and fragmentation. They exist in the midst of and are affected by a context that is often dominated by lack of meaning, uncertainty and, sometimes, despair. This holds true for the Church. It is deeply affected by the surrounding environment, by the fragmentation and diversity of the city. It reflects, directly and indirectly, the fragmentation and, sometimes, despair of the city.

It is from this perspective that I approach the theme of this Seminar, "Cities - Fragmentation of Human Life" and my specific topic, "Creating Communities Through Pastoral Care" in the midst of this reality. My central question is: How can the Church build and maintain community in the midst of the fragmentation of human life, and how is it affected by this fragmentation? Another way of asking this question is: How can the Church be a community of faith in a context where deep and sustaining faith seems to be almost unimaginable, or, worse, where faith is put to the use of almost every imaginable ideology? The words that keep appearing are Community and Faith, or Community and Gospel.

Community and Gospel

The word "community" refers to the obligations, gifts, presence, identity and meaning that persons bring to one another, offer one another or hold in common.[1] The opposite of community is immunity. To be immune is to be without, obligation, shared meaning or identity or common ground. Community supports connections and relationships. Immunity fosters fragmentation and isolation. If I live in community, I am open to or a part of shared experiences. If I am immune, I am not open to or part of shared experiences. In this sense, community is very similar to the idea of covenant. A covenant is a shared vision or identity that gives a group of people a sense of shared direction.[2] Community and covenant give birth to fellowship, or mutual caring and sharing. The Church seeks to be a community in covenant and fellowship. But what is it that creates this covenant, fellowship and community?

The Church is, or seeks to be, a community of faith. It is, or seeks to be, a community in the sense of being in covenant and fellowship with one another in the midst of a shared faith. The focus of this community of faith has traditionally been understood in terms of the "Gospel". While there are innumerable interpretations of the central message and meaning of the Gospel, the elements that historically bind the Christian community together in faith appear in the classic Apostles' and Nicene creeds. Both creeds treat the three baptismal questions that appear in the primitive Church: God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Thus, in the broadest possible terms, it can be said that the Gospel, or the Christian community of faith, relates to a set of fundamental beliefs in the existence and activity of One God, the redeeming action of Jesus Christ as God's Son, and the Holy Spirit as God's continuing presence and activity in the world. A fundamental tenet behind this Trinitarian formula is that God is loving and actively working for the transformation or salvation of the world, praxis, and that the defining historical moment of this loving work is Jesus Christ. The fundamental ethical norm or mandate of the Gospel can be described as love of neighbor. In this sense, the Gospel is about building communities of shared faith and action in loving response to the love, the praxis, of God.

The question at hand, however, is: How? How do we build communities of faith in the midst of such seemingly overwhelming fragmentation both within the Church and around the church, in urban societies? Or, put another way, what does it mean to be deeply and truly pastoral in the midst of the realities in which we

1 "Community, Fellowship, and Care", J.R. Buruck, *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling,* Rodney J. Hunter, ed., Abingdon Press, Nashville, p. 202-203, 1990.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 202.

live? I would like to offer a theological response to these questions. More specifically, I want to examine the theological, or ideological, fragmentation within the Church, how this fragmentation reflects the Church, and offer a possible way to build bridges across the chasms that divide us.

The Church: A community divided

Theologically, the Church is divided in terms of how to respond to modern culture and its post-modern relativism of values. I believe that these theological responses can be divided into two broad groups or categories. Both are responses to the fragmentation of the modern world and post-modern understandings of values, truths and universals, and both offer pastoral responses regarding how to live, bring to life or construct the Gospel.

Two broad coalitions of religious, political and theological groups within the modern Christian Church have created moral and value positions that are deeply divided and divisive. Whether the issue is abortion, art, pornography, women's rights, women in the ordained ministry, prayer in public settings, homosexuality, Biblical interpretation, economic policy, the family, the relation of the church to government, refugee or the basic identity and function of the Church these two theological groups appear to dominate theological discussion. James Davison Hunter has proposed the names "Orthodox" and "Progressive" to describe these two opposing theological positions.[3]

"Orthodox" and "Progressive" are not well defined groups or movements, and they do not always agree on every issue. They are, instead, broad movements within both popular and academic Christian theology and culture. Each claims ownership of the ideals of justice and freedom, the meaning of religion and morality, the place of scripture and how the Church should define itself in relationship to culture. Both positions also support specific pastoral beliefs and practices regarding how the Church should respond to our fragmented and fragmenting urban life.

The Orthodox group honors external sources of authority that are located in holy scriptures, received traditions and in authorized interpretations of these sources. These authorized interpretations are seen in legal terms. Authority, as such, has a fixed and unchanging quality that is anchored in beliefs in "laws of nature" or "laws of God". As such, the orthodox group appeals to universally binding moral rules and religious beliefs that are found in their traditions.

This group tends to understand freedom in economic terms, and not in the context of freedom of human action or personal choice. Freedom generally means freedom to pursue economic goals, commitment to the global market, or free market systems, and capitalism without the restraint of government. As such, this theological vision generally supports governments that are supportive of free market capitalism and the maintenance of what may be called "traditional Christian values".

From this point of view, justice is seen as adherence to the laws of God. A just society, then, is one in which persons follow traditional standards, or the laws of God, and thus create a lawful and moral society.[4] In many ways, traditional under-

[3] James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars,* Basic Books, New York, 1991.
[4] Hunter (*op.cit*), p. 112.

standings of Christian righteousness are seen as almost indistinguishable from God's justice and Gospel.

Pastoral action is generally seen in moral or ethical terms. The world is seen as sinful and chaotic and the Church as a protective and sustaining community in the midst of temptation and loss of values. Marital problems, divorce, emotional or spiritual problems, anxiety or lack of personal goals and direction are seenless as results of living in a complex and fragmented world and more as the result of personal sin or moral weakness which is due to a lack of conformity to the "laws of God". This pastoral vision could be described, metaphorically, as "A Mighty Fortress is Our God". Within the fortress of faith, the world should be a relatively stable and understandable place. An extension of this general belief is that economic stability and success are fruits of righteousness. Right behavior, our righteousness, is frequently associated with economic gains.

The role of the pastor, or of pastoral agents, is that of authoritative agent. To pastor means to orient the person, family and community in terms of how to live in accordance to the law's of God as presented in the scriptures and traditions of the group. Authoritative preaching and teaching are the primary pastoral roles. Pastoral counseling is frequently based in educational or Biblical counseling. The primary pastoral metaphor is how to resist the chaos, fragmentation and temptation of the world, and dwell in the Mighty Fortress of righteousness. This includes pastoral support for cultural, economic and political institutions and actions that are seen as supportive of God's righteousness.

The Progressive group tends to reject orthodox beliefs in any specific scriptures or traditions as sources of authority. Instead of belief in specific external sources of authority, this group believes in the centrality of broad ethical principles that are frequently a synthesis of broad Christian beliefs and humanist, or enlightenment, traditions. The individual, family, group and culture must be guided by principles and traditions, but these are seen as broad guidelines which the person uses as sources for creating internal, or personal, values. Instead of seeing scriptures, traditions and moralities as fixed sources of external authority, this group believes that values are always in the process of evolution.

Freedom is understood as the protection of the personal, social and political rights of the individual in the sense of avoiding interference of personal actualization. This interference may come from social, political or religious forces. Justice means equal rights for all persons and groups, and overcoming all forms of oppression. Oppression, in this sense, means limitations to personal and group actualization. Freedom, then, is understood socially, as individual rights, while justice is seen in terms of establishing equality. The specific content of freedom and justice is not defined by appealing exclusively to scripture or tradition, but by interpreting these in broad ways in light of humanistic values and beliefs, particularly in terms of human potential and actualization.

Consequently, pastoral action is viewed from the perspective of how to actualize the potentialities of the person, family, group or institution. The world is seen less as a sinful place and more as placing unreasonable, artificial or oppressive limits on the person. Actualization must take place in a social context, so retreat from the world is seen in negative terms. Pastoral action, then, must be focused on and take place in the world. While progressives try, with great passion, to see personal and social problems as caused by a combination of environmental and spiritual factors, these problems are very frequently analyzed and interpreted, in first place,

via the instruments of the social sciences, and only secondarily from a spiritual perspective.

The role of the pastor, or of pastoral agents, is that of compassionate companion, teacher and guide. Since progressive pastoral agents generally reject the authoritative place of scripture or tradition, they frequently rely on reason and personal experience. The goal of pastoral action is to help the person create meaning in the midst of innumerable possibilities, or discover how to best live in the world. Scripture and tradition are seen as fundamental guides, but not as definitive. Preaching and teaching continue to hold a central place in progressive pastoral action, but they are understood in the context of challenge and encouragement, toward actualization, rather then the proclamation of the defining Word of God. Pastoral counseling and spiritual guidance also occupy important places in this pastoral model. However, once again, these are often more influenced by psychology, sociology and anthropology than by traditional spiritual disciplines.

Theory and praxis

While this broad description may apply more to North, Central and South America than to Europe, these two theological visions greatly affect all theological conversation. The Orthodox group generally includes fundamentalists, some charismatics, conservative evangelicals, traditional Roman Catholics and Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal churches and groups. The Progressive group tends to include more liberal mainline or traditional Protestant Churches and groups within the Roman Catholic Church. Both the Orthodox belief in righteousness based in adhering to revealed truths and the Progressive belief in inner authority and actualization are deeply held interpretations of the relationship between God, Person and Creation. At least at the extremes of these two groups, the difference between the two positions is so great that dialogue is impossible. Even in the more moderate interpretations of these positions, dialogue frequently breaks down when the two positions begin to explore the implicit beliefs behind their theological language.

What is of fundamental importance to the present discussion concerning “Cities - Fragmentations of Human Life” and “Creating Communities through Pastoral Care” is that both theological positions are reactions to the confusion and relativism of values in contemporary culture. Orthodox groups react to cultural fragmentation by appealing to revealed truth in an effort to build “A Mighty Fortress”. Progressive groups react to cultural fragmentation by a frequent over-dependency and trust in conscious rationality and the ability to self-create and self-actualize. The fragmentation of our world can be clearly seen in the internal divisions of the Church and in the pastoral models supported by these theologies. While there clearly exists a middle ground, where beliefs are not held in absolute terms, the voices frequently heard in theological debates tend to be those of the extremes in both groups. Even among more moderates, theological discussion frequently fails when fundamental beliefs are revealed. The result is theological confrontation instead of dialogue. Such confrontational attitudes create deep fragmentation within the Church that appears to have no hope for reconciliation. It also serves to reinforce secular views that the Church has little to offer in terms of the creation of genuine community centered in a shared faith in the presence and action of a loving God. Or, in other words, from a secular point of view: “Why trust an institu-

tion, the Church, that preaches love and practices intolerance? Why trust an institution that preaches community and lives in fragmentation?"

How then can we respond to our own internal fragmentation in the hope of building genuine community in the light of the Gospel? I believe that the fundamental challenge is to discover how to live with relativity without succumbing to relativism. This involves learning how to hold apparent opposites in tension with one another without falling into the constant temptation to go to extremes. It is a temptation to surrender reason and experience to scripture and tradition. It is a temptation to surrender scripture and tradition to reason and experience. The challenge is to hold each in a dynamic tension with the others. I am not certain this can be done at the level of rational theory or theologizing. In fact, I have deep doubts that the Church will ever manage to build theoretical, academic or intellectual bridges between its divergent theologies, moralities and ethics. It may be that the solution to healing our fragmentation and building community is less at the theoretical, academic or intellectual levels than it is at the level of shared experience and praxis. James Fowler has suggested that: "At the heart of theology's challenge at the end of modernity is the practical theological task of evoking and shaping a depiction of the praxis of God. Related to that task is the challenge to help postmodern persons and cultures claim the possibility of shaping their lives and institutional systems in response to and in partnership with the praxis of God." [5]

In his book Faithful Change. The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life, Fowler presents several theological and pastoral models which reflect the praxis of God.[6] I would like to present, and expand on, one of these as a way of building pastoral community in the midst theological fragmentation.

Liberation and political theologies and a common language of suffering

One of the realities that is shared by the human community as a whole is suffering. Johannes Metz has said that "I could never again do theology with my back to Auschwitz."[7] The same could equally be said in terms of a South American *favela*, slum, or the massacre of Indigenous Persons by groups in search of gold or lumber. Both realities point to the central issues of theodicy, suffering and praxis. "Political Theologies in Germany and Latin American Liberation Theologies have made the questions of massive suffering and the maldistribution of resources and possibilities in our world the starting points for reinterpreting Christian faith and the calling of the churches in our time."[8] These theologies are fundamentally practical. Their roots are in the life and suffering of individuals and groups in concrete historical situations. They do not focus on middle class individual or family contexts, values or actualization or on questions of absolute revealed truth, authenticity or meaning. Their focus is on the lived experience of those on the margins of power, or totally excluded from power and on the shared human experience of suffering. Yet, the importance and power of scripture is central. These theologies

[5] James Fowler, *Faithful Change: The Personal and Public Challenges of Postmodern Life*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1996.

[6] Fowler (*op.cit*), 1996.

[7] Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza and David Tracy, eds., *The Holocaust as Interruption, Concilium vol. 175*, T&T Clark, Edinburg, 1984.

[8] Fowler (*op.cit.)*, p. 182.

seek to understand suffering and freedom from within the lived experiences of persons and groups and at the same time locate the praxis of God in the context of history. Sociological and political analysis of culture are used to inform and reform the actions of the Church in the world. However, these analyses are constantly critiqued in the light of scripture in the sense of asking the question: "How has God acted in the world in the past, as present in scripture, and how is God acting in the present?" The praxis of God, then, is central. The analysis of the social sciences is understood and applied in light of the nature and praxis of God.

The Political Theology of *Johann Baptist Metz* is a good example of this dialogue between the praxis of God and the analysis of social situations. Metz does not use the term "political" in the narrow sense of political parties, but in the broader, original sense of the polls, society as a whole, government, culture and economy. Political Theology is a theology of the polls, a theology that examines social structures, cultural movements, and economic philosophies in the light of the Gospel. This relationship between faith, analysis and the praxis of God can be seen in Metz's definition of faith:

"The faith of Christians is a praxis in history and society that is to be understood as hope in solidarity in the God of Jesus as a God of the living and the dead who calls all men to be subjects in his presence. Christians justify themselves in this essentially apocalyptic praxis in their historical struggle for their fellow men. They stand up for all men in their attempt to become subjects in solidarity with each other. In this praxis they resist the danger of both a creeping evolutionary disintegration of the history of men as subjects and of an increasing negation of the individual in view of a new, post-middle-class image of man." [9]

Such approaches attempt to do theology in terms of the action of God in the world. Theology is not focused on the centrality of universal truths or the power of human reason, but on how God has and is acting in the world. Metz, in particular, recognizes that the suffering of the excluded, middle and upper class persons must be recognized as suffering. Suffering is suffering. However, the degree and extent of suffering, marginalization and exclusion must be acknowledged.

What is of fundamental importance is not who is suffering more or less, but the centrality of God's action in the world with those who suffer. The reality of suffering and God's praxis in the name of liberation and reconciliation take the place of revealed authoritative truth or individual rationality and actualization as the foundations for theological reflection and the creation of community.

A related approach to suffering is that of *Dorothee Soelle*. In her books *Suffering*[10] and *Theology for Sceptics*[11], Soelle deals with the experience of suffering and images of God which serve to reinforce the fragmentation of community and human suffering. She, like Guierrez, identifies the problem, the sin, of idolatry as central to our suffering and fragmentation. She questions the idolatrous God of power, authority and transcendence in light of a God who truly participates in human life and at the same time is genuinely transcendent. Her theology begins with the experience of being wounded. Her God is a God who suffers with us. She distin-

9 Johann Baptist Metz, *Faith in History and Society*, New York, The Seabury Press, 1980, p. 73.
10 Dorothee Soelle, *Suffering*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1974.
11 Dorothee Soelle, *Theology for Sceptics,* London, Mowbray, 1995.

guishes between the suffering of the world, which is blind, superficial and produces only death, and God's suffering which produces a "repentance that leads to salvation and brings no regret" (2 Corinthians 7:10). This is suffering which is based in injustice and the destruction of life. Her theology is focused on how it is that we can link the suffering of the world with God's suffering. As such, Christology is central to her thought, but it is a Christology that values the importance of life before death much more than life after death. Life after death is, certainly, important, but it is what comes before death that is of fundamental importance to any understanding of God.

What may make Soelle crucial for the current discussion is that her work is much less systematic than that of Metz, Gutierrez or Pannenberg, who seems to be her theological opposite, and much more oriented toward communicating a few basic images, ideas and experiences. While this may limit her acceptability to systematic theologians, it increases her access to a broader public that, via her focus on shared experience, has the potential of crossing the boundary between "Orthodox" and "Progressive" beliefs. Her use of images, stories, experiences and feelings may provide a bridge which systematic thought is incapable of building.

The Liberation Theology of *Gustavo Gutierrez* shares many common features with the Political Theology of Metz in terms of the centrality of experience, or the experience of suffering, and the necessity of reflecting on experience in light of scripture. For Gutierrez, theology is critical reflection on praxis. This reflection is not only the epistemological reflection of Kant, but also critical reflection in terms of the economic and social realities of life, particularly the reality of human suffering. A key element is the search for the economic, cultural and ideological presuppositions that we bring to our reflection on life and praxis.

Theology as critical reflection thus fulfills a liberating function for humankind and the Christian community, preserving them from fetishism and idolatry, as well as from a pernicious and belittling narcissism.[12]

This understanding of theology challenges Biblical, economic, political, social, psychological and theological ideologies that create fragmentation within the community of the Church. Our action should be oriented not toward satisfying our ideologies, or our limited truths, but toward transforming the world in light of the Gospel. Thus, the actions of the Christian community must always be oriented by the presence and activity of the Spirit, rather than by our desire for safety or self-actualization. For Gutierrez, the presence and action of the Spirit are reflected in the desire for transformation and liberation in both spiritual and historical terms. Spiritual and historical transformation cannot be separated. While the meaning of historical transformation is clearly open for debate, it includes, without any doubt, the concept of community as opposed to immunity. The fragmentation and narcissism of our communities contributes, in profound ways, to human suffering. As such, the healing of our fragmented lives and communities is a crucial factor in the creation of genuine community that promotes liberation.

For Gutierrez, one of the central factors in avoiding fetishism, idolatry and narcissism is the constant return to a new reading of the scriptures that is deeply sensitive to their historical circumstances and how the Spirit is speaking today. This focus on the scriptures helps to avoid an artificial reliance on the social sciences and the power of rational thought, without rejecting these as valid tools. However,

[12] Gustavo Gutierrez, *Liberation Theology,* Maryknoll, Orbis, 1988, p. 10.

a literal or authoritative reading of the scriptures is also avoided via an acknowledgment of the importance of understanding their historical and cultural contexts.

One often-overlooked aspect of the work of Gutierrez is the idea of evangelization that raises consciousness. Evangelization, in this sense, means educating, stimulating, inspiring, challenging and orienting all human actions in the light of the Gospel.[13] Evangelization does not mean the conversion of the world to one understanding or interpretation of the Gospel, but a reunion of the shared truth present in the Gospel. For Gutierrez, this shared truth is very similar to Paul Tillich's understanding of moving beyond our little gods in order to have faith in the God beyond the gods.[14] However, Gutierrez understands this deep faith not as existential affirmation but as concrete and religious liberation or transformation of person and world in the light of the active love of God.

Liberation and Political Theologies have generally either begun with or been adopted by individuals and groups associated with "Progressive Theology". This has sometimes led to individualistic and highly rational arguments about the nature of suffering, who needs to be liberated first, or who has suffered more, and a possible overuse of sociological and political analysis. However, it would appear that Liberation and Political Theologies continue to correct their course when they stray into the extremes. This is most obvious in the return to Biblical sources and analysis and a focus on concrete experiences.

Of fundamental importance to the present is the centrality of the experience of suffering. Fragmentation creates suffering and suffering creates fragmentation. It is a vicious circle. Thus, a central question for Liberation and Political Theologies is how to understand and participate in the praxis of God in the midst of fragmentation toward the creation of genuine community. One response to this central concern is that it is the task of the Church, particularly in its pastoral action, to identify with and seek to alleviate suffering as the key to healing our fragmented world and creating genuine community.

This means that the alleviation of suffering takes precedence over the defense of an idea, an ideal or a universal principle. It also means that the alleviation of suffering takes precedence over individual actualization and the immediate satisfaction of perceived needs. The alleviation of suffering is directly linked to the praxis of God. For Liberation and Political Theologies, this is the meaning of genuine community that participates in the praxis of God, or living the Gospel.

Final considerations

The fundamental proposal of this presentation is to explore the human experience of suffering, as understood in Liberation and Political Theologies, as one way of overcoming, or healing, the fragmentation that exists within Christian theology and pastoral action. The creation of community as an expression of faith or Gospel is fundamental to the creation of community, and to pastoral care, within the Christian faith. At present, the Church is deeply fragmented in terms of its understanding of Gospel, and, consequently, the meaning of pastoral action. These divisions reflect cultural fragmentation in terms of values, meaning, goals and identity. It would appear that this fragmentation has more to do with creeds, dogmas

[13] Neil Ormerod, *Introducing Contemporary Theologies,* Maryknoll, Orbis, 1997, p. 148.
[14] Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith,* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957.

and systematic articulations of faith than it does with the shared human experience of suffering. This is not to say that creeds, dogmas and systematic theologies are not important. It does mean that unthinking, or highly cognitive, allegiance to certain creeds, dogmas and systematics can create barriers or divisions that fragment shared experiences.

To create community requires a shared sense of identity and direction that can overcome our sense of immunity, or fragmentation. This does not mean that everyone within a community must be in total agreement. It does mean that everyone within a community has a shared sense of direction and meaning. This is the genuine meaning of sharing a common faith and living in community and not immunity.

It is doubtful that the Christian "community" is capable of finding unity at a rational or theoretical level, at least in the immediate future. The fragmentation within the Church may be too great. It is at the level of image or shared vision that we may be able to create community in Spirit. Political or Liberation "Theologies", as intellectual disciplines, may not be adequate, as theologies, to heal the divisions that we are currently experiencing. The words "Political" and "Liberation" carry great emotional and intellectual "baggage". Everyone has an opinion, positive or negative, about these theologies. The word "Suffering", on the other hand, may be a starting point. At the very least, these theologies name suffering as their central concern. Suffering may be the shared experience that can provide us with a common metaphor. As an image or a shared experience, suffering is a human experience that everyone in the Christian, and human, community seeks to overcome, transform or heal. What divides us, as a Christian community, is how we heal or transform our suffering, or how we can best fulfill the Gospel and transform immunity into community. Political and Liberation Theologies may be able to provide us with a language for the centrality of the human experience of suffering. Almost certainly, though, we will have to move beyond the „theologies", and their related ideologies, in order to make the lived experience of suffering central. However, if we can agree on a starting point, the truth that we all have suffered, we have at least laid the foundations for the possibility of agreeing upon what it is that needs to be healed or transformed. We can, at the *very* least, begin to build community amidst fragmentation by sharing:

1. How we have suffered,
2. How we have caused others to suffer,
3. What our suffering and the suffering of others means to us,
4. How we feel God is present in the midst of our suffering,
5. How God is acting to heal our suffering, and
6. How we believe we can best face and heal our suffering as a community united in love and justice.

This is, at least, a beginning.

Leonildo Silveira Campos *Brazil, 2001*

New religious movements and traditional Protestantism in Brazil

topics:

- *popular religiosity in Brazil*
- *influence of Pentecostalism and "new religious movements"*
- *syncretism and "deregulation" of the Brazilian religious field*
- *pastoral challenges for the Protestant Churches*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 7, 2001; pp. 17-21

Introduction

In Brazil, we have not intensely experienced the process of secularization. Even at the peak of the discussions on secularization (Bonhoeffer, Gogarten, Vahanian and others) and on the theology of the "death of God", the positions of many ardent defenders of secularization seemed very artificial. Even so, at the beginning of the seventies there were already voices, such as Rubem Alves, a Brazilian Protestant theologian, saying that God had not died. Alves even pointed to a renaissance of religion that was in full bloom in Brazil.

In this light, I need to take as a point of departure the idea of "religious field" (as presented by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu). A "religious field" is a social space demarcated by symbolic interactions and institutions and trusted by our society for the administration of the sacred. In Latin America we are experiencing a mutation process within the religious field. What we are experiencing is that traditional borders are being diluted, or are becoming increasingly fluid, and that no religious institution is fixed or solidly in place in terms of defining or delimiting the religious field. For those of us who live in the situation, it seems that "everything that was solid is unmade, everything is in the air". We continue like this in the midst of a renaissance of religiosity that is detached from many traditional religious institutions.

A parallel subject is related to the difficulties of calmly accepting the term "sect", "church" or "denomination." The first two are derived from the research of Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch (*The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, London 1931). The term "denomination" was coined, in its currant usage, by H. R. Niebuhr in the 1920's *(The Social Sources of Denominationalism*, New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1929). From Troeltsch (op. cit. 443) the word "church" has been used to designate an "institution that was, as a result of the work of redemption, endowed with grace and salvation" and that can "receive the masses, and adjust itself to the world," while "sect" is applied to "institutions formed by

volunteers, "composed of believing Christians, rigorous and explicit, united to each other by the fact all have experienced the new birth." H. R. Niebuhr preferred to use the term "denominations" to study North American religious groups, while Bryan Wilson (*Sociology of Religious Sects*, Madrid, Guadarrama, 1970:26 ss) has called attention to the difficulties of applying the concept "sect" out of areas culturally dominated by the Christianity.

In Brazil the term "sect" was first used by the first specialists of the Protestant religious phenomenon at the end of the 1960's, to show how religion works in society. Thus, perhaps more because of the influence of North American functionalism, religion was understood in the light of an adaptation process of the rural masses to an urban world, experienced by the migrants as source of hostility. In this sense, the term "sect" was used to refer to a group that stood back from the society, and "church" for that movement that provokes social interaction between the organized religious group and the society that contains it. Among the significant texts of that period we have that of Beatriz Muniz de Souza (*The Experience of Salvation: Pentecostals in São Paulo*, São Paulo, Two Cidades, 1969) and the classic text of the Swiss sociologist Lalive D'Epinay*, (The Refuge of the Masses*, Rio de Janeiro, Paz and Terra, 1970).

Later on, the term "sect" became a "political-ecclesiastical" weapon, used mainly by the Catholic Church to expose the new "non-Catholic§ religious movements located outside the ambit of its influence or aloof to the ecumenical dialogue. Protestants, for their part, used such a term to classify those phenomenon located out of the boundaries established by the orthodoxy of its religious institutions. For example, this sense always appears in texts of apologetic character produced by various Protestant groups in Brazil. For these reasons, a simple evaluation of the current language can show us how much this terminology expresses ideological and political-ecclesiastical agendas. In other words, "sect" is always the group that is strange or contests the ecclesiastical reality of who those who use such concepts as weapons.

This sense of the word appeared in texts published under influence of the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil (CNBB). Still in this decade, there are conceptual mixtures, sometimes even in academic works such as that of Florencio Galindo (*The Phenomenon of Fundamentalist Sects - The Evangelical Conquest of Latin America*, Estela, Verbo Divino, 1994), that refer to fundamentalist and Pentecostal "sects", linking them to the process of "the evangelical invasion of Latin America." Such approaches contribute to increase the current confusion, and have made, in our view, the paradigm "sect-church" unusable. The concept has become such an enormous and imprecise umbrella that is difficult to use it in the study of the Pentecostal phenomenon and other contemporary "new religious movements". From here the truth of a phrase offered by Julio de Santa Ana (*in Religious Studies*, Year VI, no. 8, 1992, pp. 11-34) rings true. In the conclusion of his article he states that: "it seems to me clear that it is no long possible to affirm that 'sect' and 'church' are completely different realities." There are still, however, specialists who have preserved the term "sect" much more for "reasons exclusively didactic" than for love and academic exactness. The term "new religious movements" offers some advantages over the use of the concept "sect-church." Even so, we have to recognize that not everything is new in such movements.

Even so, before we advance the discussion I suggest an examination of the historical origins of the extent and current limits of the Brazilian religious field. What

forces have molded this field? What is happening now, in its interior? Is the Brazilian religious field being impacted by deregulation or is it coming apart? What issues does this raise in terms of the mission of the historical churches in the country?

The historical constitution of the Brazilian religious field

The Portuguese colonization of Brazil was linked to the construction of a Roman Catholic society in the New World capable of maintaining a medieval synthesis broken in Europe by the eruption of the Enlightenment and Protestantism. In this way, a religious-cultural matrix was formed, though not always directly managed by the hierarchy of the Church. In the interior of the country, a popular and rustic form of Catholicism appeared, based on the work of active lay persons, lay brotherhoods, which formed at a distance, in varying degrees, from catholic vicars (official agents of the church). Even so, Catholicism formed Brazilian identity and maintained the country, until the beginning of the 19th century, far from Protestant and anti-clerical philosophical influences that boiled in Europe.

There were, however, several attempts by Protestantism to penetrate the world of Brazil. The first happened in 1555, with the invasion of the bay of Guanabara by French sent by John Calvin and, later, in 1612, in Maranhao, in the north of the country. One other attempt occurred beginning in 1630, when Holland installed a colony in the northeast and remained in the region for approximately 30 years. When they were expelled, the group from Holland had close to two dozen reformed communities (Calvinist). Nonetheless, in the following 200 years nothing more occurred that disturbed the peace of Catholicism, beyond a few relatively sporadic attempts by foreigners dedicated to spreading the Bible, mainly at the beginning of the 19th century.

The great change would happen at the beginning of the 19th century, due to the influence of the Napoleonic wars that forced the Portuguese imperial family to settle in Brazil, under the protection of the English navy. Due to agreements imposed by the English, the Portuguese were obliged to open not only "ports to friendly nations" but also the religious field to the penetration of Protestantism. A second factor was the arrival of German and Swiss immigrants in the interior of Rio Grande do Sul and the marine area of Rio de Janeiro and Espírito Santo. A great part of these immigrants were Protestant (a majority were Lutherans) and beginning with their arrival the Catholic Church could not maintain its hegemony on the religious field.

Then, in 1835 the first Methodist missionaries arrived in Brazil. The first Protestant preacher to definitively settle in the country (1855) was Robert Kalley, a Scottish doctor, Congregationalist, previously from Ilha da Madeira, in Portugal. In 1859 the first Presbyterian missionary, Ashbel G. Simonton, arrived. In this same period philosophical pluralism grew in the country. As such, theories of evolution, positivism, French Maconry, socialist ideas, republicanism, Kardecism and various North American denominations and sects appeared for the first time. Only after 1930 did African religious movements, hidden by Africans during the period of slavery, enter the light of day to proclaim their presence. It was in this way that candomblé, umbanda and other regional forms of African worship entered the religious scene.

Pentecostalism entered Brazil only four years after its explosive appearance in the United States (after its appearance in the well-known phenomenon that took place on Azusa Street). In 1910, an Italian-American, of Presbyterian descent, founded the Christian Congregation in Brazil, in the city of São Paulo and in Santo Antonio de Platina, in the state of Paraná. The following year, two Swedish Baptist Pentecostals, from the United States, founded the Assembly of God Church in the north of the country, in Belém. In 1932, the Adventist Church of the Promise, a Pentecostal version of Adventism, was founded in the northeast of Brazil.

This panorama maintained itself more or less unaltered, though with considerable growth in Pentecostalism, particularly after the crisis of the 1930's, while historical Protestantism experienced a reduction in growth. In the 1950's a new religious trend appeared with the introduction of religious movements dedicated to preaching and the practice of divine cure. During this period the Foursquare Gospel Church was born along with the Pentecostal Church "Brazil for Christ" and, a little later (1961), the Pentecostal Church "God is Love". There have been, since this period, an explosion of small, Pentecostal movements and religious sects. Further great changes would occur in the 1970's with the appearance of Pentecostal groups with considerable presence in the media (radio and television), that emphasized divine cure, exorcism and the theology of prosperity. These groups have been called "Neopentecostals".

The deregulation of the Brazilian religious field

We have seen that in a religious field there are never moments that are permanently static or fixed. What there are, are moments marked by slower changes, through agreements between actors and institutions, which give the impression that there is stability in the religious field. We have worked in UMESP (The Methodist University of São Paulo) with the hypothesis that this new form of being Pentecostal is tied to a process of deregulation of the religious field. This is because, in this "new form of being Pentecostal", there is an abandonment of characteristics traditionally emphasized by the Protestantism (authority of the Bible over tradition, the universal priesthood of believes, and salvation exclusively by grace) or a weakening of the emphases of "classic Pentecostalism" (for example: the gift of tongues, psychological trance attributed to the Holy Spirit and the immanent expectation of the second coming of Christ).

Parallel to the arrival of Protestants and of new ideologies in vogue in Europe, there was also in Brazil the incorporation of religiosities tied to either the Roman Catholic matrix or to non-Christian influences, such as Afro-Brazilian cults or Kardecists, which can be described as follows:

a) *Kardecism* – Of French origin, this group believes that energy is present in objects and people, and can be directed for healing or objectives indicated by the medium or religious agents who have received special revelations from the sacred.

b) *Candomblé* – The spirits are divided between good and evil. After the death of the ones who have received them for "habitation", they wander in search of "empty" bodies (be that an airport or a horse) where they can descend and find new "habitation". Evil is always caused by wickedness committed by other persons (the evil eye or sorceries) or by "spiritual works" sent by fathers or mothers-of-saints, capable of bewitching persons at a distance. For Neopentecostals, after their being called forth by the pastor-exorcist, demons (creators of all evil) should

be exorcised. Also, objects need to be exorcised and blessed because they can also be impregnated by demonic powers. For this reason, Neopentecostals use, and give great importance to, various objects "charged with power", such as "prayed over oil", "blessed water", "rocks from Mount Sinai", "blessed water from the River Jordan", and so forth. Such objects (that carry a strong magical sense in the popular imagination) bring strength, well being and prosperity. For example, course salt and anointed roses are often used as carriers of this type of power. Thus, temples become distributors of "new sacraments". They are, in the words of Saint Augustine: "visible signs of invisible graces."

c) *Popular and Rural Catholicism* incorporates visions of the world that belong to Popular Brasilian Catholicism. Among these we encounter: Concern with objects that mediate between the sacred and the profane; the use of objects such as the cross and sacred water; the need to make promises to God that function as sacrifices in order to receive certain earthly blessings. There is also an emphasis on *do ut des* religiosity, which has been rejected by Protestantism since the Reform of the 16th century.

There is, therefore, a process of religious *syncretism* taking place in which visions of the world, traditions and objects originating in various religious and historical sources are being combined. All of this takes place within a new mold, without larger worries regarding the possibility of internal contradictions.

On the other hand, elements and values oriented by the market are also being introduced into religious practices. This is indicated by the demand for productivity on the part of pastors, the rational calculation of the effectiveness of their activities, the use of *marketing* to attract new "clients", the development of the idea that the ends justify the means and a strong emphasis on advertising results such as miracles and cures obtained.

The result of all of this is a climate of competition, of pluralism and of little space for ecumenical practices. The most that occurs are momentary strategic alliances around immediate political and ecclesiastical interests. However, these soon fall apart because they do not occur at the level of ideas, only persons.

This new religiosity, allied with the conditions present in post-modernity, has made Neopentecostalism a mass phenomenon in Brasil. Consequently, it exercises a contaminating power over other religious groups installed in the country since the second half of the past century. With this, it provokes: An emptying of historically more liberal and even fundamentalist churches and a movement toward Pentecostalism within Protestant groups, at least at liturgical if not theological levels. It has also influenced the growth of the charismatic movement within the Catholic Church, which can be called the "Pentecostalization of Catholicism".

Historical challenges for traditional Protestantism

Without the concern of exhausting the subject, I would like to present some of the theological, liturgical and pastoral challenges that the Neopentecostal explosion presents to historical Protestantism in Brazil and Latin America.

Theological challenges – Oral revelation vs. Written revelation (reduction of rationality), all connected to the force of visual communication; Universal priesthood of believers vs. the power of the prophet or of pastors "divinely revealed", in an authoritarian and manipulative relationship; Sola Gratia vs. sacrifice and

works, following the presuppositions of the ideology of prosperity (not specifically theological and much less Christian, since even oriental groups in vogue in Brazil, such as *Seicho-no-ie*, for example, have such teachings).

Liturgical challenges – Worship is transformed into a show (theater), with the process of emptying the word and exaggerating praise. The expression of emotion is valued. The demand for a new type of pastor, the "animator of the auditorium" model vs. the traditional Protestant model of the "learned one" or "doctor". This new "cultural intermediary" model does not demand an academic formation, but it does demand that the pastor be able how to get a good collection, do cures or lead an exorcism.

Pastoral challenges – The pastor should be at the service of the needs of the "poor" and the "needy". Among these are putting lives back together which have been torn apart by the use of alcohol, drugs and family strife. The pastor should also stimulate the dreams and hopes of persons (a religion of marketing aimed at the realization of dreams) in a process of insertion in the ideology of the market of a society driven by consumption. On the other hand, the community becomes a place shelter or of recharging psycho-emotional-spiritual batteries, worn down in a world on which still hovers the force of secularization.

Conclusion

We concluded our comments insisting that religion in Latin America, especially historical Protestantism, Pentecostalism and even Catholicism, have experienced a profound process of mutation. This process is characterized by deregulation of relationships woven together over the course of a century and a half, as well as by the crumbling of institutions that appeared to be solid. Marx's well-known expression that what is seemingly "solid comes apart in the air" seems to fit this reality well. Nonetheless, the search for a new enchantment with the world is reborn and old and new forms of articulating religious experience cross and collide in search of hegemony of the religious field.

To further complicate matters, religious institutions start to act like companies, using marketing strategies to attract followers, while, ironically, commercial and industrial companies assume ideological and religious postures, provoking religious loyalties on the part of their employees. This reality has been studied by Max Pagès et al. *(L'emprise de l'organisation*, Paris, Presses Universitaire de France, 1979), as well as by Albert Piette (*Les religiosités séculièrs*, Paris, Presses Universitaires of France, 1993).

In other words, the sacred is emigrating from traditional religious institutions to new religious movements and even to institutions and movements seemingly non-religious. Obviously, this new situation demands deep reflection on the part of the Christian intellectuals, particularly those that are entrusted with planning the strategy of the Church in these new cultural contexts.

Translated by James R. Farris

Frances Ward *Great Britain, 2001*

Beneath contempt

Dignity, contempt, and expulsion

topics:

- *human dignity and contempt*
- *self-hatred and self-denigration*
- *the task of integrating the abjected/contempted within oneself*
- *Reflections on Genesis 3 and 4*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp. 7-11

Introduction: What has dignity to do with contempt?

It might seem strange to present a paper exploring the nature of contempt at a conference on dignity. What, you might ask, does dignity have to do with contempt?

A working definition of dignity might run like this: Human dignity is the inherent worth or value of a human person from which no one or nothing may detract.[1]

As such, dignity lies at the bottom of any appeal to human rights, and ultimately in any issue of justice. It provides a crucial bedrock to any system of value, and you will find appeals to dignity in any institution concerned with pastoral care – or, more broadly – with people in all shapes and conditions: prisons, schools, hospitals, you name it.

I found myself, in preparation for this paper, trying to discover what might be the opposite of "dignity". Indignity doesn't work; indignant has altogether a different meaning with its sense of righteous offence. You have to have a sense of dignity to be indignant. But there's nothing as undignified as contempt, to my mind. There is an English expression where you might say of someone or something that "they are beneath contempt". By which you would mean that they are the lowest of the low. Beneath consideration. Beneath even the extremes of hatred and scorn you could pour upon them. It's an expression that has challenged me for quite a while.

I think Tolstoy comes close to a description of contempt when he wrote of his relationship with his tutor. Alongside the feelings of revulsion, he notes how compelled by his feelings he was: "Yes, it was real hatred... the hatred that fills you with overpowering aversion for a person who, however, deserves your respect, yet whose hair, his neck, the way he walks, the sound of his voice, his whole person,

[1] Falconer, A. D. "Human Dignity", in *A New Dictionary of Christian Ethics,* ed. Macquarrie, J. and Childress, J. (London: SCM 1986), p. 278.

his every gestures are repulsive to you, and at the same time some unaccountable force draws you to him and compels you to follow his slightest acts with uneasy attention. Such was the feeling I experienced for St-Jerome."[2]

And what might be "beneath contempt"? When you bottom contempt out, the revulsion and compulsion, what is there? Further contempt? Contempt piled upon contempt? Or when the contempt works itself through, do we return, somehow, to a dignity of sorts?

So today I want to explore with you the nature of contempt. I want us to hold in our minds that question: What is beneath contempt? I want us also to experience something of the ugliness and contemptible nature of contempt by reading an excerpt from a play. I want us to think together about some biblical material as well. At the end I don't promise any answers, but I hope you will have had cause to think a little more deeply about dignity by focusing on a profound and stirring emotion that can render us, or someone else we are involved with, "beneath contempt".

Familiarity breeds contempt

There's another English expression that you'll hear: "Familiarity breeds contempt". Sometimes used of a couple who have grown too used to each other, or of a situation that has become habitual, this expression hints at the *tiredness* of contempt, its boredom, its dismissive nature. But if we stop and consider the notion of "familiarity", I think we come to something quite important about contempt. For it belongs, I'd suggest, in relationships that are familiar, even familial. Contempt emerges, in my experience, where people are bonded together. Where there is little or no means of escape. So perhaps in the work place. Perhaps in the family. Perhaps in a couple. Perhaps, even, between God and humanity.

Contempt and abjection

I should note, I think, at this stage, some convergence between the way I am understanding contempt, and Julia Kristeva's notion of abjection. In *Powers of Horror,* she argues that what is *abject* is "the jettisoned object, [it] is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses."[3]

Reflecting upon the power of the Symbolic to shape culture, the Abject is that which is rejected, expelled in order that culture can be sustained. Elizabeth Grosz has explained Kristeva's idea of the abject thus: "Abjection is what the symbolic must reject, cover over or contain. The abject is what beckons the subject every closer to its edge. It insists on the subject's necessary relation to death, corporeality, animality, materiality - those relations which consciousness and reason find intolerable." [4]

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[2] Kerr P (ed): *The Penguin Book of Fights, Feuds and Heartfelt Hatreds: An Anthology of Antipathy* (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 108-109.

[3] Kristeva, J.: *Powers of Horror*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press: 1982), p. 4.

[4] Grosz, E: *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Wellington, London, Boston: Allen and Unwin, 1989), p. 73. See also Condren, M.: "Women, Shame and abjection: reflections in the

Perhaps we could argue, following this line of thought, that what we find contemptuous is the abject of dignity. Our contempt is what our dignity rejects, covers over or contains. But only just.

A play of contempt

I want to turn now to a powerful play, written back in the early 1960s in the United States, where a couple play out, again and again, their contempt for each other, circling around the loss of a son, many years before. You're never clear, as audience, if this son ever existed – what is clear is that he fulfils a crucial role in the drama between the couple.[5] In "*Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf?"* all semblance of dignity has long since gone. We have now only the contempt between George and Martha that fuels their ongoing marriage. Early one Sunday morning, at the end of a faculty party, Martha and George, draw another couple, Nick and Honey, into their relationship. They are locked together in contempt for each other and they need an audience for their habitual struggle.

The foursome become caught in a vicious circle, but there are two other significant persons in this drama who do not appear. With one of them, Martha's father, the contempt begins. George marries Martha on the understanding that he is to be the father's successor as chair of the faculty, but he is a disappointment. Father rejects George, Martha idealises her father, and grows in contempt for George. Unable to contain the father's contempt, the couple create the other absent character, a son. This son is precious to both of them: perhaps he bears all the good things that they cannot experience in each other. This night is the denouement. There is a killing, the killing of the son. By that forbidden killing, George breaks the established rules of their marital contempt, and leaves Martha pliable and submissive, finally afraid of Virginia Woolf.

How many times, I wonder, have you observed relationships that seem to exhibit only bonds of contempt, a negative dynamic from which there is no escape?

Contempt and expulsion

Edward Albee's play, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf,* is an astute exploration of contempt, a powerful but relatively ignored emotion. In my remaining time, I want to argue that beneath any experience of contempt, there is a psychological drama at work which finds resolution either in the banishment of the contemptible one, or in sacrificial action. Because it is an emotion of such power, and discomfort, the most obvious action is avoidance. When this is impossible, for example in a family, complex patterns of behaviour come into play. With George and Martha, locked together in mutual war, the sacrifice of their son becomes the only way they can live to see another day.

Perhaps something similar was going on in this story as well: Donald Capps offers us a full account of an incident in his own childhood when he experienced the contempt of his parents:

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light of Julia Kristeva" (in *Contact: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Pastoral Studies 130,* 1999) for further exploration of the notion of abjection.

[5] Albee E: *Who's afraid of Virginia Woolf ?* (first published USA 1962 Penguin reprint 1989).

"I was nine years old. My younger brother, then four, had been unusually difficult that day. When my father came home from work, my mother told him about my little brother, how he was becoming more than she could handle. At dinner that evening we – my brothers and I – could feel the tension. No one was speaking. A sense of doom was in the air. After dinner ... my father pulled the car out of the garage and my mother came out of the house. They directed us to get into the car, my younger brother between my parents in the front seat and my two older brothers and I in the back... 'Where are we going?' one of us had the courage to ask. No answer. My father drove on. Dusk was approaching. Then, on our right, we recognised the building and began to realise what was going on. We felt dread in the pits of our stomachs. It was the orphanage, and our parents were about to send my little brother away. My father stopped the car and turned to my brother and said, 'This is the end of the line.' My mother opened the door and began to get out so that my brother could follow. The three of us in the back seat were stunned. I somehow found my voice and, amid sobs, pleaded: 'Don't send him away. He'll be good. Just give him a second chance.'

What I did not know, of course, is that they had no intention of leaving him at the orphanage that night... I took them at their word, first believing that they were going to abandon him; next assuming that my pleading in his behalf had made them change their minds. For a very long time – months, maybe even years – I assumed that my parents were capable of abandoning a child of theirs, and I did all in my power to make certain that it would never be me. But something surely died in me – in all of us – that night. Life before that night had not been perfect. There had been the usual conflicts between parents and children, the usual fightings and reconciliations. But this was different. This was the threat of abandonment. The sense of dread that this threat produced in me was nearly overwhelming."[6]

Alice Miller takes the analysis further. The final chapter of *The Drama of Being a Child* is a full consideration of the vicious circle of contempt, and there she writes:

"The contempt shown by narcissistically disturbed patients… may have various forerunners in their life history. These may have been, for instance, 'the stupid little brothers and sisters', or the uneducated parents who don't understand anything – but the function all these expressions of contempt have in common is the defence against unwanted feelings. Contempt for younger siblings often hides envy of them, just as contempt for the parents often helps to ward off the pain of being unable to idealise them. Contempt also may serve as a defence against other feelings, and it will lose its point when it fails as a shield – for instance, against shame over one's unsuccessful courting of the parent of the opposite sex; or against the feeling of inadequacy in rivalry with the samesex parent; and above all against the narcissistic rage that the object is not completely available. So long as one despises the other person and overvalues one's own achievements ('he can't do what I can do'), one does not have to mourn the fact that love is not forthcoming without achievement. Nevertheless, avoiding this mourning means that one remains at bottom the one who is despised. For I have to despise everything in myself that is not wonderful, good, and clever. Thus I perpetuate intrapsychically the loneliness of childhood: I despise weakness, impotence, uncertainty – in short, the child in myself and in others."[7]

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[6] Capps D: *The Child's Song. The Religious Abuse of Children* (Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), p. 170.

[7] Miller A.: *The Drama of Being a Child* (London: Virago Press Ltd reprint, 1988), p. 129.

Contempt enables the avoidance of despising the "weakness, impotence, uncertainty of the child in myself and in others." Miller believes that the parent's contempt is perpetrated onto the child in order to defend the parent against their own self-hatred. The child absorbs the negativity, and because s/he is powerless, turns the emotion into self-denigration, and in turn projects that onto future victims. Thus the "narcissistic rage" takes out on the other what is unacceptable in self. Miller's perception that contempt is a narcissistic emotion can be observed by any who have experienced the emotion for themselves. The contemptible person is repulsive. To look them in the face is impossible. You want to banish them from sight, but cannot: they are too important to you. You also experience compulsion in their company. Who knows why some people offer us reflected images – of beauty or contempt – which catch us unawares?

The myth of Narcissus is a story that revolves around countenance and reflected image. Narcissus falls in love with the only image he can have power over – all other real lovers are invisible to him. But he is mistaken: for this image is one which has power over him: "the very abundance of my riches beggars me". From this relationship with self, this interlocking, there can be only one escape: death. But if, instead of beauty, the image in the mirror holds the ugliness of self, what then? We have the same narcissistic process, the same compulsion and repulsion, the same rejection and death – worked out with fear and loathing. The image is caught on the face of the other – and if this contemptible image can be killed, then negativity can be murdered within self, leaving behind all that lightens the countenance.

God's contempt: expulsion

If we follow this train of thought and turn to the first chapters of Genesis, some interesting insights come to light. I have always felt that Cain, and Adam and Eve before him, had a rough deal from the God of the writers of Genesis. Some, like Rene Girard, have examined this material, focusing upon the fraternal - and fratricidal relationship between Cain and Abel. He recognises the pairing that is essential to this cultic drama of sacrifice, this projected violence. For Girard the drama is between the brothers:

One of the brothers kills the other, and the murderer is the one who does not have the violence-outlet of animal sacrifice at his disposal.[8]

My reading draws God into the story, giving God a more central role. As the stories have it, God creates the world and everything in it, including humanity, in God's own image, and it is deemed very good. Very soon after, however, an account needs to be given for the presence of evil in creation. Of course God cannot be held responsible for evil, so it must initiate in the created order. But perhaps the writers and redactors have been too protective of God (and too revealing of their own contempt). Perhaps the first chapters of Genesis can be told another way, as a story of God's growing knowledge of the evil within his[9] own creating

[8] Girard, R.: *Violence and the Sacred* (Maryland: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press [1977] 1993), p. 4.

[9] For God to be male entails, if Julia Kristeva's thinking is correct, the murder of the archaic mother, a proto-sacrifice so that God (and language) can be established as one and male. See Kristeva,: *Powers of Horror*, (op. cit.), and *Tales of Love,* trans. Leon S Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987). My thesis that God splits off what is unacceptable in his nature can equally

nature and God's projection of that evil onto his children in order to preserve his identity as good.

I find that final verse of chapter four enigmatic: "At that time people began to invoke the name of the Lord." This is usually interpreted[10] that at this time people began to worship the Lord as a name of sufficient power and identity to receive such worship. But a great deal happens before this point to establish that God is good enough to be worshipped.

We can read the story differently: In the beginning, God knows both good and evil (Gen. 3:22), and creates "in his own image". God is surprised, and horrified, when creation mirrors not solely his goodness, as expected, but both good and evil. A narcissistic God finds in the reflection more than he bargained for: he finds evil and imperfection. Now reflected in the mirror of creation, God can no longer dismiss as irrelevant the presence of evil in Godself. So God has to set about recreating himself as good. These early chapters of Genesis are the story of the formation of the good identity of God, an identity above reproach.

For God to be above reproach requires a vicious contempt. God behaves towards Adam and Eve, and then towards Cain, just like Miller's parent. They are sent away from the presence of the Lord, bearing with them into the land East of Eden all that God rejects in Godself – the knowledge of evil. Only after such banishments is the Lord's identity sufficiently secure that his name could be invoked, and the blessing of a good God received by the people.

God here affects, in psychological terms, a split between good and evil by contemptuously scapegoating the proto-humans. Contempt is the right word. Adam is humiliated: "you are dust, and to dust you shall return"[11] –, and Cain fares no better. The story in Genesis 4 is a story of contempt that ends in murder and banishment but begins with God. Cain and Abel bring offerings to the Lord: Cain "an offering of the fruit of the ground" and Abel "for his part brought of the firstlings of his flock, their fat portions." It does not say that Cain's offering was of lesser quality than Abel's. As the story stands, the Lord receives Cain's gift with contempt – "with no regard". If both gifts are equal, and who is to say that they are not, Cain's anger is predictable. He takes his brother out into the field and murders him. His punishment follows, a punishment that Cain feels is too great to bear: "Today you have driven me away from the soil ...". Powerful indeed, this divine contempt projected out from the Godhead onto the bitter shoulders of Cain: "...and I shall be hidden from your face" he moans.

God: the Good-enough parent?

The first children are banished east of Eden, away from the face of God. God drives out from himself the evil he knows in his own heart. He splits the image to preserve his goodness. But is it good enough? By the time of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God has found another way. A way which gives humanity a pattern

well be applied to gender. The establishment of patriarchy requires the same process as the establishment of goodness.

[10] I owe a debt to Walter Houston for exegetical help with this verse.

[11] Donald Capps pursues this theme in *The Child's Song* where he believes God is "punitive" in his treatment of Adam and Eve. See page 164.

of reconciling the primal split between good and evil. But it is a costly reconciliation. It demands the sacrifice of the child of God.

The story of Cain and Abel can be paralleled by Jesus and Judas. Judas, who stands as an archetypal scapegoat through the centuries, bears all the marks, like Cain, of the contemptible reject. (A reject who, incidentally, has proved too necessary to be allowed to rest in peace throughout centuries of Christian anti-Semitism.) He is as necessary to the story of the passion as Jesus himself, for he bears all that the innocent Jesus is not. It is significant to our narcissistic theme that the traditional portrayal of Judas at the last supper has him with his face turned away.

But more significant is the kiss, a kiss of identification. The moment of handing over is sealed with a kiss - the physical expression of an intimacy for ever denied to Narcissus. That kiss draws together what is split between Judas and Jesus. That Jesus receives it means he carries with him to the cross all of Judas' self-hatred, fear and pride. Jesus goes to the cross a contemptible figure. Judas hands Jesus over to be exposed to mockery and derision and contempt. "And the soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe, They kept coming up to him, saying 'Hail, King of the Jews!' and striking him on the face". (John 19:2- 3)

There is a different God beneath this drama of contempt. Unlike the God who splits and banishes from sight, God in Christ owns the contempt, and receives the narcissistic rage of creation on the face. God knows the evil at the heart of creation, and Jesus dies, mocked and reviled, a sacrifice to that evil.

We are given here a way to manage and resolve our own experience of contempt. "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son ..." It is only by so loving what is contemptible that it can be changed. The child within God – all that is weak, insufficient, pathetic had to be so loved to be redeemed.

What an effort there is in that "so". Alice Miller writes that "freedom from the contemptuous introjects only comes when the patient has truly emotionally worked through the history of his childhood and thus regained his sense of being alive..." and "... a person who has consciously worked through the whole tragedy of his own fate will recognise another's sufferings more clearly and quickly, though the other may still have to try to hide it. He will not be scornful of others' feelings, whatever their nature, because he can take his own feelings seriously. He surely will not help to keep the vicious circle of contempt turning."[12] Between the old and new Adam, God "worked through the whole tragedy of his own fate". With Cain, God scorned the child; with Jesus, God so loved the child.

Conclusion

In this paper I've tried to explore with you a powerful, even violent, emotion that we would all, I suspect, acknowledge as part of our own experience. I'd argue that it's difficult to treat others with dignity if we ourselves have not faced our own contemptuous feelings. What is beneath contempt? Perhaps our own harboured selfhatred, the abject. And if that's the case, facing contempt – in order to be dignified, and to treat others with dignity – will always be a difficult, costly process.

[12] Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 140-141.

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Dignity and pneuma

Social-cultural analysis in pastoral care and counselling

topics:

- *theological anthropology*
- *hermeneutics of pastoral care and counselling*
- *from individualistic to a systemic understanding of pastoral care*
- *methods of cultural analysis*
- *a model for practising intercultural counselling*
- *African spirituality*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp. 53-64

Abstract

Inculturation in pastoral care requires a paradigm shift within theological anthropology. In order to move from an individualistic approach to a more systemic approach, a pneumatological perspective on being human is proposed. Hermeneutics in pastoral care implies an understanding of the interconnectedness of life issues. It is argued that such an approach links with African spirituality. In order to put theory (a theological anthropology) into practice, a social and cultural diagram for making a pastoral diagnosis is developed. It is imperative that such a model should take several existential dimensions and structural components into consideration. The application of this model to the practice of cross-cultural counselling should enhance the relevancy and efficiency of pastoral care.

It is inevitable that a theological and pastoral approach to the theme of human dignity should meet the urgent need for a design of an anthropology for care and counselling. Immediately the following question surfaces: what is meant by human dignity in terms of a theological understanding of our being human?

Our basic assumption in the design of an anthropology for pastoral care and counselling is that, theologically speaking, one should opt for a pneumatological approach rather than for merely a christological approach. The reason for such a presupposition is that a pneumatological model for a pastoral anthropology assesses human dignity in terms of the Biblical ethos as related to the so called fruits of the spirit. It also links with the spiritual Dimension of our being human.

The basic hypothesis I want to argue is that, unless a theological anthropology is linked to a hermeneutical and systemic approach, it runs into the danger of becoming isolated from important cultural and contextual issues. The danger in a theological anthropology is that it can become so identified with the very individualistic paradigm of Western thinking that it runs into the danger of becoming irrelevant for a culture which thinks in terms of the interconnectedness of life. Thus the argument that a pneumatological approach broadens the vision of a theological anthropology and dovetails with a systemic approach.

The article will be divided into the following main components: the need for an anthropology in pastoral care; a metaphorical and hermeneutical approach in a theology of pastoral care; the human person viewed as "pneuma"; the pastoral encounter and contextualisation/inculturation: the making of a social-cultural analysis in pastoral care and counselling.

The need for an anthropology in pastoral care

It must be admitted that the concept "anthropology" and the notion of a "doctrine of persons" are, as such, foreign to Scripture. The latter deals with different perspectives on our being human. It does not unfold a systematic description of the nature of human beings. By "a pastoral anthropology" is not meant such a systematic description or theological theory. Its purpose is to reflect on the significance of our relationship with God and its possible consequences for interpreting humanity.

Reasons for a pastoral anthropology

It could be argued that the need for an anthropology in pastoral care stems from theodicy and the experience in pastoral ministry that exposure to suffering poses two main questions: "Who am I?" (What is meant by humanity and personal identity? What is the significance of our human life?); and: "Who is God?" (the appropriateness of different God-images within different contexts and their significance to our human misery).

My argument will be that these two questions compel pastoral care to undertake a paradigm shift, moving from the traditional "soul care" to a much broader undertaking: "faith care within the contextuality of life care." Furthermore, these contribute to what can be called a "hermeneutics of pastoral care." Hermeneutics then refers to the understanding of different narratives and life stories within the existential reality of pain, suffering, anxiety, guilt and despair, as well as our human need for meaning, hope, liberation, care and compassion. Although the scope of pastoral care is much broader than the realm of suffering, suffering poignantly exposes two important dimensions of our being: the dimension of *identity* (who am I?) and the *transcendent* dimension of our human existence (what is meant by human destiny, the ultimate concern and how do these concepts link with the concept, "God"?). A hermeneutics of pastoral care is therefore engaged in the challenge to link the significance of human life to an understanding of God which enhances meaning in suffering. A pastoral anthropology should therefore try to meet the challenge of how to reflect on God while simultaneously contributing to a more just and caring human society.

However, it must be admitted that the interest for a theological anthropology has been caused by other factors too. In his book, *Anthropologie in Theologischer Perspektive*, W. Pannenberg points out that contemporary philosophical issues urge one to reflect on a theological anthropology.[13] To be frank, postmodernity's quest for human identity within relativity, plurality, globalisation and a fragmented society, forces one to reflect anew on the issue of being human.

According to Pannenberg the main reason for such a reflection is that Christian theology is engaged in the question regarding the salvation of human beings ("die Heilsfrage des Menschen").[14] Healing and wholeness is not only on the agenda of postmodernity. It is predominantly a question for the Christian faith.

Furthermore, theological issues such as the notion of the suffering God *(theologia crucis)* and the incarnation, force pastoral theology to reflect on the meaning of human identity. Pannenberg identifies this motif (incarnation) as the main theological reason for reflection on the doctrine of persons.[15]

The danger in a pastoral anthropology is to become so spellbound by our being human (the issue of personal identity) and the contemporary quest for justice and humanity (anthropocentrism) that the relationship with God becomes irrelevant. The danger is to become so psychological and contextualized that the notion of God is just a pious afterthought. To avoid this danger, the categories "pneuma" and "spiritual direction" should be introduced as an indication that our reflection tries to combine the quest for humanity and meaning with the problem of metaphorical and hermeneutical theology: the naming of God and the influence of God-images on our self-understanding, identity and Christian spirituality.

Another danger in a design of a pastoral anthropology is that all attention is given to God, while our quest for identity and humanity is being ignored. One must admit that, although a Christian anthropology is theonomous, it should not become so God-centered that the danger of "theocentrism" lurks. A biblical approach is not there to "safeguard" God, but to disclose our human identity *before God (coram Deo).* It should focus on the salvation of human beings in order to restore their humanity within the network of relationships as well as within the contextuality of environmental issues. In this regard Hall's assertion is most helpful: "A religious Tradition whose very *Theos* is other-centered cannot be described adequately as a theocentric tradition".[16] The God of the biblical faith is fundamentally creation-oriented (geocentric) and human-oriented (anthropocentric). "To the God-orientation of repentant humanity there corresponds a human-orientation of the gracious God."[17]

Another reason for a pastoral anthropology is the praxis of ministry. It is, to a certain extent, a functional reason. Pastoral ministry is not only about faith and God. It is indeed about the function of human relations within contexts. This is the reason why our approach for a pastoral anthropology can be described as a "functional anthropology", i.e., an anthropology which does not solely focus on the nature of human beings, but on their conduct and function as well. Furthermore, by

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[13] See W. Pannenberg, *Anthropologie in Theologischer Perspektive* (Göttingen: Vanderhoeck & Ruprecht, 1983), p. 12.

[14] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

[16] D. J. Hall, *Professing the Faith Christian: Theology in a North American Context.* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), p. 346.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 346.

"functional anthropology" is meant the relevancy of the Christian faith with regard to identity, maturity and burning existential issues such as anxiety, guilt and despair.

Pastoral care as a theological discipline

Pastoral care and pastoral theology are those disciplines within a practical theology which are engaged with what traditionally has been called *cura animarum* – the care of souls. As part of practical theology, pastoral care deals with God's involvement with our being human and our spiritual journey through life. Essentially, it is engaged with the human search for meaning and our quest for significance, purposefulness and humanity.

As a theological discipline, pastoral care focuses on the meaning of such concepts as care, help and comfort from the perspective of the Christian faith. It deals with the process of communicating the Gospel and the encounter and discourse between God and persons. This encounter is based on the notion of stewardship and the covenantal partnership between God and human beings.

In the past, pastoral care commuted between either a *theological reduction* (the basic anthropological problem is human sin – thus the need for redemption) or a *psychological reduction* (the basic anthropological problem is blocked, inner potentialities - thus the need for self-realization). What had been understood by pastoral care was often more psychotherapy within a Christian context than spiritual direction or *cura animarum.*

A bipolar approach in pastoral care is an attempt to work with the principle of mutuality and correlation. God *and* human beings, theology and psychology, pastoral care *and* the human sciences should, therefore, not operate separately, opposing one another, but in terms of a more integrative approach. Nevertheless, pastoral care should maintain its distinctive character, namely *as cura animarum, i.e.,* the care for people's spiritual needs. Our assumption is that care is a theological issue and should be interpreted in terms of an *eschatological perspective* [18].

By "eschatology" is not meant in the first place a doctrine regarding the temporary "end" of time and history. Eschatology is connected to the notion of salvation (Heil) and refers to the essential quality and status of our new being in Christ.[19] An eschatological perspective interprets human beings in terms of the event of Christ's death and resurrection. It reckons with the new *aeon.* Recreation determines the direction and destination of creation. The implication of such an eschatological approach in theology is that reality is assessed in terms of the already

[18] K. M. Woschitz (*De Homine* [Graz: Verlag Styria, 1984]) gives a thorough description of different perspectives on our being human. His finding is that in Christian theology the perspective of faith dominates. "Im Glauben an das offenbarende Wort weiss sich der Mensch gleichsam von 'oben' gedeutet und erleuchtet sowie vom Soll des Glaubens beansprucht. Die christliche Existenzweise ist Glaubensexistenz und der Glaube ein geschichtliches 'Prinzip,' d..i. das, woher, worin und woraufhin sich das Leben vollzieht. Er hat sein geschichtliches Unterpfand in Jesus Christus" (p. 283).

[19] J. Moltmann, "Theologie im Projekt der Moderne" (*Evangelische Theologie 55,* no. 5 (1995), pp.402-415): "Christliche Eschatologie hat jedoch mit solchem apokalyptischen 'Endlösungen' nichts zu tun denn ihr Thema ist gar nicht 'das Ende,' sondern vielmehr die Neuschöpfung aller Dinge. Christliche Eschatologie ist die erinnerte Hoffnung der Auferweckung des gekreuzigten Christus und spricht darum von neuen Anfangen im tödlichen Ende." (p.12)

and not yet of God's coming Kingdom. Grace defines the essence of our being and the character of humanity. Spiritual direction is then viewed as the outcome of a dynamic and vital hope which encompasses more than visual perception. It reckons with the transcendent dimension of the Christian faith, i.e., the faithfulness of God.

A metaphorical and hermeneutical approach in a theology of pastoral care

Because of the influence of metaphorical theology, pastoral care should be interpreted more and more in a hermeneutical paradigm than in a kerygmatic or homiletic paradigm. It becomes clear that the pastoral encounter is not merely about proclamation and admonition. Pastoral care is about communication, trying to establish a relationship of trust and empathy through listening skills. But, as a theological science, pastoral care is more than communication. At stake is the discourse of the Gospel and the narrative of salvation. Pastoral care should therefore maintain its theological character. In order to do this, a pastoral hermeneutics of care and counselling should deal with the naming of God and religious experiences which refer to spirituality and the ultimate.

A hermeneutics of pastoral care deals with the interpretation of the presence of God within human relationships and social contexts. It also tries to interpret existential issues from the perspective of the Christian faith. Central to a hermeneutical approach in pastoral care is dealing with different metaphors which reveal God's compassion and care. Hence the importance of Godimages and the interpretation of experiences of faith. In short, a pastoral hermeneutics of care and counselling is about religious experiences which give an indication of believers' perception of God and their Interpretation of the significance of their existence; hence the quest for spirituality in a pastoral strategy for counselling. The outcome of such focus on spirituality should hopefully shed some new light on the very important issue of the interplay between a Christian faith and the current quest for human rights and humanity.

Traditionally, the different functions of pastoral care have been described as: *healing, sustaining, guiding, reconciliation* and *nurturing.* Within the framework of a hermeneutics of pastoral care, a sixth one must be added: *interpretation and diagnosis / assessment.* Hence the challenge to a pastoral hermeneutics to deal with metaphors which portray God. Such a portrayal in pastoral theology must not be understood in terms of a dogmatic model (to systematize information about God in a rational way), but to understand God in relation to contextual issues and suffering (to interpret crises and problematic/painful events with the aid of experiences of faith which refer to God).

When employing a metaphorical approach in pastoral theology, one should be aware of the underlying assumption that all reference to God is indirect. "No words or phrases refer directly to God, for God-language can refer only through the detour of a description that probably belongs elsewhere."[20] Metaphors refer to a non-literal, indirect and figurative way of speech without denying the reality and the ontological quality of that which they denote.

[20] See S. McFague, *Models of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), p. 34.

Hick makes a distinction between metaphorical and literal speech. The latter refers to meaning in a lexicographical sense. "Metaphorical" is derived from the Greek *metaphorein*, to transfer. There is a transfer of meaning – the unknown is explained in terms of the known. One term is illuminated by attaching to it some of the associations of another, so that the metaphor is "that trope, or figure of speech, in which we speak of one thing in terms suggestive of another."[21] Hick further argues that metaphors serve to promote communication and a sense of community.

Theology may be defined in many ways. The most famous definition, without doubt, is that of Anselm of Canterbury: *fides quaerens intellectum,* faith seeking understanding. Within the current demand for dialogue and communication, theology should be supplemented by the notion of: *fides quaerens verbum,* faith seeking ways of saying, or more precisely, ways of discoursing.[22]

Theology needs both: understanding and communication. But then, understanding is not the *intellectus* of speculative rationality, but that understanding which entails different experiences of God. Understanding is a process of contextual interpretation, not of rational explanation. Theological and pastoral communication is more than merely interpreting and denoting messages. Pastoral communication entails communion, fellowship,[23] i.e., that kind of communication where people can experience the presence of God as a space for intimacy and unconditional love. And that is exactly what spiritual direction in pastoral care is about. It focuses on our human disposition. But, by doing so, human behaviour and human acts become increasingly important. This is the reason for a third supplementation: theology is indeed practical and is seeking ways of "appropriate doing." Meaningful and just actions become important. Theology must therefore be supplemented by the following formula: *fides quaerens actum* – faith seeking ways of right/just doing/action.

A pastoral hermeneutics, as a theological discipline, could be defined in terms of Tracy's description of theology as "the discipline that articulates mutually critical correlation between the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the Christian faith and the meaning and truth of an interpretation of the contemporary situation."[24] Both practical and pastoral theology are involved in a communication process which should result in concrete and meaningful *actions of faith (fides quaerens actum).* The challenge to pastoral theology thus is to develop an anthropological theory for human transformation and direction which reckons with existential contexts. It should also try to assess the existential value of God-images and deal with the interplay between God-images and our human self-understanding.

The implication of our argument for designing a theological anthropology is that the naming of God in pastoral care is essentially an existential concern. Very aptly

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[21] See J. Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford: Clarendon Press [1985]), p. 54, cited in Hick, *The Metaphor of God-Incarnate* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister, 1993), p. 99.

[22] See M. Viau, *Perspectives on Practical Theologies and Methodologies,* Unpublished paper read at the International Academy of Practical Theology, Seoul, Korea (April 1997), p. 4.

[23] L. Benze (Die Kirche als Kommunikation [Zsambek/Hungary, 1996], p. 2) describes the inner structure of the church in terms of communication. "Kirche als jene Semiogenese." Without communication, the church loses its identity. "Nimmt man die Kommunikation aus der christlichen Theologie heraus, bleibt kein einziges Dogma, überhaupt nichts."

[24] See D. Tracy, "The Foundations of Practical Theology", in: *Practical Theology,* ed. D. Browning (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 62.

Braaten remarks as follows: "The question of God arises out of the human quest for meaning; it is, thus a structural dimension of human existence. Statements and symbols about God function to answer questions concerning the nature and destiny of human existence."[25] Pastoral theology is not a theology "from above", but a theology "from below". Braaten[26] calls it the existential locus of God-language.

Although being a sociologist, P. L. Berger pleaded in his now famous book, *A Rumor of Angels,*[27] for that kind of awareness of transcendency which can contribute to joyful play – the human being as *humo ludens*. "In openness to the signals of transcendence the true proportions of our experience are rediscovered. This is the comic relief of redemption, it makes it possible for us to laugh and to play with a new fullness."[28]

A pastoral hermeneutics which is concerned with spiritual direction is an attempt to rediscover "signals of transcendence" which create hope and joy on an extential level. This attempt should deal with the overall new theological agenda posed by postmodernity: "…how can the Christian faith be made intelligible amid an emerging postmodern consciousness that, although driven by a thirst for both individual and cosmic wholeness, still affirms and extends such modem themes as evolutionary progress, future consciousness, and individual freedom?"[29]

The implication of a hermeneutical and relational model is that it deals with the notion of interconnectedness and the systemic nature of the human environment. "It declares that in the Christian understanding the most significant thing to be said about being, is that it is integrated whole, interconnected, not fragmented, but delicately interrelated, ecological, relational."[30] A relational model implies that being, in all its aspects and manifestations, is relational. This is what Hall calls "the ontology of communion."[31] This means that the meaning question is linked to the ontological assumption of the inter-relatedness - the integrity - of all that is. "It means, further, that the ethic which emanates from this system of meaning is directed toward the restoration of broken relationships. To state it once more in a single theorem: For the Tradition of Jerusalem *being means being-with.*"[32] An ontology of communion and an understanding of humanity as co-humanity should, therefore, inevitably result in what I want to call "an anthropology of responsibility": *respondeo ergo sum.* This notion of *respondeo* and the understanding of humans *as being-with,* compels us to develop a diagnostic model for making an analysis of our being human in terms of social and cultural issues.

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25 See C. E. Braaten, "The Problem of God-language Today," in: *Our Naming of God: Problems and Prospects of God-talk Today,* ed. C. E. Braaten. (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 11-33, p. 20.

26 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

27 See P. L. Berger, *A Rumor of Angels: Modern Society and the Rediscovery of the Supernatural* (New York: Doubleday, 1969), p. 121.

28 *Ibid.*, p. 75.

29 See T. Peters, *God - The World's Future: Systemic Theology for a Postmodern Era* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 6.

30 D. J. Hall, *Professing the Faith* (op. cit.), p. 317.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 304.

32 *Ibid.*, p. 3 2 1.

The human person viewed as "pneuma"

In the past the classic point of departure for a theological anthropology was always the notion: our creatureliness (creaturehood) and its connection to the concept, "the image of God." The latter should not be ignored. However, our starting point for a pastoral anthropology is the Old Testament's notion of *nefesh* (spiritual life) and the Pauline expression, the human being as a spiritual being, *pneuma. Pneuma* then refers to our spiritual relationship with God and to the new being in Christ. Christian spirituality should, therefore, reflect the eschatological stance of human beings, i.e., our being recreated in the image of Christ and baptized in the Spirit. *Pneuma* refers to the transformation from "death" to "life" (resurrection) (Rom 6:4-21). We have been justified by faith (Rom 5: 1) and should now live a life guided by the Spirit of God. We have been saved in hope (Rom 8:24-25). Spiritual direction should thus explore the connection between hope and our being a "spiritual person."

Pneuma is often used as an alternate term to imply human existence in terms of an inner dimension and an awareness of the ultimate. Paul accentuates the term *pneuma* when he links human existence to our new salvific condition in Christ and to the reality of resurrected life. This link between the human *pneuma* and the work of the Godly *pneuma* is prominent in Romans 8:16. Because of this connection between the human spirit and the work of the Holy Spirit (2 Cor 1:22, 5:5; Rom 8:23), the non-believer cannot possess *pneuma.* Hence, the importance of Guthrie's statement: "In the Christian doctrine of man the central idea is not psyche but *pneuma*. In Paul's exposition of it he modifies the Old Testament emphasis on *nefesh* (LXX: *psyche*) and switches to *pneuma* because he at once considered man from the viewpoint of his experience of Christ."[33]

In the light of the previous argument, we can present the following thesis for the founding of a pastoral anthropology: as a result of the Christological basis of a person's new being and the pneumatological interaction between God and the human spirit, the notion of a person as a pneumatic being should play a decisive role in a theological anthropology. The dimension of pneuma in the new person describes a total new condition and submission, transformation and focus upon God. Such a person is moved and motivated by God in a way that transforms the person's volition and thoughts and enables the person to experience new life each day.

According to 1 Corinthians 2:11-12, God transforms the human *pneuma* to such an extent that people realize what God has given them through his grace.[34] 1 Corinthians 2:15 thus speaks of a spiritual person who can judge life from the new spiritual perspective, that is, from the teachings of the Holy Spirit (v.13). These teachings correlate with those represented in Christ's Person and Spirit (v. 16). We may thus conclude that the human *pneuma* attains a new dimension through rebirth. It describes a new focus on God, and a new submission to Him. This transformation imparts new meaning to the human spirit. The pneumatic focus makes

[33] See D. Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Leceister/Illinois: Inter-Varsity, 1981), p. 165.

[34] See W. Russel's remark ("The Apostle Paul's View of the 'Sin Nature'/'New Nature' Struggle", in: *Christian Perspectives on Being Human: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Integration,* eds. J. P. Moreland & D. M. Ciocchi (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), p. 226: "Rather than a divided self, distraught over an intemal battle between flesh and Spirit, Paul pictures a new self, emboldened by the liberating work of the Holy Spirit and a vibrant community, with others of like identity."

humans dependent on the transcendental dimension of their Christian life; that is, on the eschatological salvific reality. Their lives in future will be qualitatively determined by this salvific dimension. The Holy Spirit addresses people in their inner being (soul). The new person's *pneuma* can thus be described as a point of connectedness or point of mediation for continual spiritual growth and the development of Christian faith. As a result of the work of God's Spirit, an association emerges in the *pneuma* of the new person between the believer and Christ (the indwelling presence of God) (Gal 2:20).

This pneumatological point of contact for an encounter between God and the human spirit is significant. It indicates that the continuity between the earthly and the eschatological life is not situated in inner psychic abilities, but only in the faithfulness of God and in his transforming actions through the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in our hearts acts as the security deposit and guarantee (2 Cor 1:22).

A person whose life is qualified as "spirit" *(pneuma)* lives from the Godly qualification of life, and has been transformed to be totally dependent on God's grace. This new person's dependence on God is emphasized by the pneumatic dimension of human existence. Barth calls this God-centered dimension of human life: *pneuma;* God's impact upon his creation; God's movement to people.[35]

The human *pneuma* is thus the center of a Christian's understanding or personality.

- On the one hand it labels the person as an individual, subject and conscious being, who is totally dependent on God. The *pneuma* constitutes and constructs the *psuché* as a religious and moral being with personal identity. The *pneuma* of the new person endows the *psuché / sarx / soma* with an eschatological identity: one now lives from God's grace and promises. *Pneuma* views the human being from an eschatological perspective, i.e., a person is understood in terms of his/her new being and status in Christ.
- On the other hand it defines the human being as *more* than a mere individual. The eschatological perspective views a person in terms of a "corporate personality": the status of all believers in Christ as expressed in mutual fellowship *(koinonia).*

The burning question for our overhead topic is now the following: How can one transfer this theological perspective on our being human and the corporate dimension of life, into a practical model for making a pastoral diagnosis?

The pastoral encounter and contextualization/inculturation :

The making of a social-cultural analysis in pastoral care and counselling

"Encounter" does not describe a relationship between a personal God and an isolated individual. When seen in terms of the Gospel's covenantal framework, "en-

[35] See Barth, *Die Lehre von der Schöpfung*, Kirchliche Dogmatik 111/2 (Zollikon-Zürich: Evangelischer Verlag, 1948), p. 425.

counter" implies a network of relationships, reciprocal interaction and associations. The pastoral encounter implies a system of "inter-connectedness".

Graham, referring to Augsburger's use of the term "interpathy", is convinced that a systems approach is important when pastoral care moves into a cross-cultural situation.[36] "Interpathy is an intentional cognitive envisioning and affective experiencing of another's thoughts and feelings, even though the thoughts rise from another process of knowing, the values grow from another frame of moral reasoning, and the feelings spring from another basis of assumptions."[37]

Bosch also refers to the importance of the process of inculturation.[38] Inculturation does not focus on accommodation or adaptation to a certain culture, but on a "regional or macro contextual and macrocultural manifestation."[39] Inculturation implies an inclusive, all embracing comprehensive approach.[40] In a certain sense, inculturation aims at being a form of incarnation: "the gospel being 'en-fleshed', 'embodied' in a people and its culture…"[41] This process of inculturation implies further that different theologies and approaches enrich each other within a systemic approach to the pastoral encounter. Bosch claims that we are not only involved with inculturation (the contextual manifestation), but also with interculturation (the interdependent relationship between different cultures for mutual enrichment).[42] In the light of the recent development of ethnopsychology, Hesselgrave advocates that the area of missionary work needs to be re-thought in terms of "enculturation" and "acculturation", using what he calls a "cross-cultural missionary psychology."[43] In future, the pastoral encounter and diagnosis must take note of a systemic and cultural context. For instance, a systems approach would be important in a situation where group bonding (family, tribe) is a primary value.

Graham, believes that a systems approach in the pastoral encounter implies a new way of thinking.[44] He calls this "systemic thinking" which is a view about the universe, or a picture of reality, affirming that everything that exists is in an ongoing mutual relationship with every other reality. For Augsburger, a systemic perspective means an inclusive process of relationships and interactions: "System is a structure in process; that is, a pattern of elements undergoing patterned events. The human person is a set of elements undergoing multiple processes in cyclical

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36 See L. K. Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), pp. 19-20.

37 See Augsburger, *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1986) p. 29.

38 See D. J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1991), p. 452.

39 *Ibid*., p. 453.

40 J. M. Waliggo et al. (eds.) *(Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency* [Kampala: St Paul Publications, 1986], p. 11) point out the different concepts used to describe the process of identification between Christianity and different cultures. *Adaptation* implies a selection of certain rites and customs, purifying them and inserting them within Christian rituals which have any apparent similarity. Then *indigenization:* this refers to the necessity of promoting indigenous church ministers. *Reformulation* refers to the Christian doctrine and understanding of God in the thought and language that are understood by local people. *Incarnation* is used to reveal the humane character of the Gospel and Christ's identification with cultural issues. According to Waliggo, *inculturation* underlines the importance of culture as the instrument and means for realizing the incamation process of the Christian religion and the reformation of Christian life and doctrine in the very thought-patterns of different cultures.

41 *Ibid.,* p. 454.

42 *Ibid.,* p. 456.

43 See D. J. Hesselgrave, *Counselling Cross-culturally* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), p. 39.

44 See Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds* (op. cit.), p. 40.

patterns as a coherent system. Thus a system is a structure of elements related by various processes that are all interrelated and interdependent."[45]

Two factors should be considered during the pastoral encounter in order to understand human problems. Firstly, problems are embedded in cultural contexts in which attitudes, values, customs and rituals play an important role. Secondly, problems may correlate with the position and status which people adopt and hold within a certain network of relationships. Friedman draws attention to the fact that a systems approach focuses less on the *content* and more on the *process*: "less on the cause-and-effect connections that link bits of information and more on the principles of organization that give data meanings."[46] Systemic thinking means that the pastoral encounter not only takes note of the person and psychic composition, but notices especially of the *position* held by a person within a relationship. "The components do not function according to their 'nature' but according to their position in the network."[47]

Graham lists four characteristics of a systemic view of reality.[48]

- It affirms that all elements of the universe are interconnected in an ongoing reciprocal relationship with one another.
- It affirms that reality is organized. The universe is an organized totality, of which the elements are interrelated.
- It emphasizes homeostasis, or balance and self-maintenance. Balance is maintained by transactional processes such as communication, negotiation and boundary management.
- It emphasizes creativity in context, or finite freedom. Although systems are self-maintaining, they are also self-transcending.

In Graham's terms, the implication of a systems approach is that a human being is a "connective person."[49] "The self is not only a network of connections, it is an emerging reality eventuating from those ongoing connections. By definition, the self is the qualitative and unique expression of the psyche, which emerges from reciprocal transactional processes within individuals and between individuals and their environments."[50]

It would seem that a systems approach has implications for a pastoral anthropology. During pastoral encounters, a person is approached as an open system, not as an isolated individual. "The soul is both *activity* of synthesizing and creating experience, and the *outcome of* the process of synthesis and creation."[51]

It is gradually becoming clear that the pastoral encounter and the making of a pastoral diagnosis involves both our spiritual and our existential life. It involves a complex network of relations which should be assessed contextually. The pastoral encounter is a contextual event within a systemic setting.

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45 See Augsburger, *Pastoral Counselling Across Cultures* (op. cit.), p. 178.
46 See E. H. Friedman, *Generation to Generation: Family Process in Church and Synagogue* (New York: Guilford, 1985), p. 14.
47 *Ibid.,* p. 15.
48 See Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds* (op. cit.), pp. 39-40.
49 *Ibid.,* p. 73.
50 *Ibid.,* p. 78.
51 *Ibid.,* p. 42.

Cross-cultural Communication

It is important that when the pastoral encounter is applied in a situation of cross-cultural communication, it should be free from the unilateralisms of an "individualistic" and "private" understanding of human problems.[52] An example of a more holistic and systemic way of thinking is the African philosophy of life. For the African, life is a continuum of cosmic, social and personal events. When one breaks society's moral codes, the universal ties between oneself and the community are also broken. This factor may be the main issue in a person's experience of suffering. It also brings a new dimension to recovery and cure. It is not the individual who has to be cured: it is the broken ties and relationships that need to be healed.

Ancestors play a decisive role within the African societal order and network of relationships. It is often stated, erroneously, that Africans *worship* their ancestors. This is not so. The latter are not gods, but are part of the systemic network of relationships. Ancestors are the protectors of life and of the community. "Africans do believe strongly in the presence and influence of ancestors in daily life, so much so that they do things, often unconsciously, to reflect such a belief, but they do not worship them as gods."[53]

Pastoral care should view an African primarily as a social being who is intimately linked to his/her environment. Systemic concepts have important *anthropological implications*. For example, personality is not a purely psychological concept. In Western psychology, personality usually refers to the self-structure of a person. It is part of the I-nucleus with its conscious and unconscious processes. Personality thus becomes an individual category which reflects the constant factor of typical behavior and personal characteristics. The human being is autonomous and independent.[54]

In contrast, within an African context, personality refers to a dynamic power and a vital energy which allow a person to come into contact with ancestors, God and society. For example, Berinyuu, refers to an Akan tribe who have their own unique view of a person. "The *ntroro* spirit is the energy which links him/her to

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[52] In *Pastoral Care to the Sick in Africa: An Approach to Transcultural Pastoral Theology* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 5, A.A. Berinyuu, writes: "In Africa there is no division and/or differentiation between the animate and inanimate, between the spirit and matter, between living and non-living, dead and living, physical and metaphysical, secular and sacred, the body and the spirit, etc. Most Africans generally believe that everything (human beings included) is in constant relationship with one another and with the invisible world, and that people are in a state of complete dependence upon those invisible powers and beings. Hence, Africans are convinced that in the activities of life, harmony, balance or tranquillity must constantly be sought and maintained. Society is not segmented into, for example, medicine, sociology, law, politics and religion. Life is a liturgy of celebration for the victories and/or sacrifices of others."

[53] *Ibid.,* p. 8.

[54] Within African life, the community counts for almost everything. The individual is absorbed in the community. The relationship between the two is somewhat like that in a living organism: the single persons are like the limbs of a living body (E. Ackermann, *Cry, Beloved Africa! A Continent Needs Help* [Munich-Kinshasa: African University Studies, 1994], pp. 43-44). The constitutive community in African society consists of a relatively autonomous extended family which depends on marriage and blood relatives. It ties together three to four generations and ancestry. The special duties and rights in every aspect of life are determined by ancestry and the degree of relationship.

the ancestral lineage."[55] The human spirit is not regarded as an identifiable self, but as a personal consciousness of powers which is associated with the concept of "destiny". This destiny can be modified, so that one can adapt within circumstances and within a social context.

The above facts shed more light upon Africans' non-analytical approach to life. They do not practice Western-style introspection. Life, with its pain and problems, is accepted without questioning. This approach to life demands much patience and adaptability. As such, it differs vastly from a Western model. The West regards (clock) time and the manipulation of the environment as important. (This does not mean that African rhythm does not also manipulate and often abuse life and nature.) The point to grasp is that, within an African model, time is an *event* and life is an interplay of powers. Life and personality possess dynamic energy within societal relationships. Myth and symbol, ritual and rhythm determine everyday life, and not structures, analyses and solutions.[56] In terms of this view, a person can never be an isolated entity, but is embedded within social and other powers within which the individual has a role to play. A person's role in society determines identity. This is of greater importance than personal qualities and individual needs. Role fulfilment[57] becomes more important than personal self-actualization.

The previous outline of contextualization and inculturation makes it very clear that the assessment of Christian spirituality and the making of a pastoral diagnosis cannot be made without making a social and cultural analysis. A pastoral model for a theological anthropology should therefore always try to determine the interplay between cultural values and our human self-understanding. The cultural context will determine contemporary views on being human. A good example of this is the individualism attached to the achievement ethics of postmodern materialism and capitalism. Another example to prove our argument is the previous brief sketch of an African view on life and the human being.

The following diagram could help the pastor to refine his/her pastoral diagnosis. It functions as a guideline to pose different questions and to control whether the diagnosis deals with the immediate context and reality. It also tries to put a hermeneutical and systemic approach to a pastoral and theological anthropology into practice.

For clarity on the interplay between a social-cultural context and an understanding of our being human, the following structural components should be dealt with. In a cultural[58] and social analysis, these structures shed light on vital questions which

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[55] *Ibid.,* p. 10.

[56] On the meaning of African spirituality, see A. Bellagamba, "New Attitudes towards Spirituality", in: *Towards African Christian Maturity,* eds. A. Shorter et al. (Kampala: St Paul Publications, 1987), p. 108: "African spirituality is spirit-inspired, life-centered, Gospel-based, creation-celebrating, hope-oriented, people-affirming, joy-filled. It is an incarnated, cosmic and global spirituality."

[57] A role does not indicate social position as a result of skills, possessions and professional status, but is a behavioral pattern based on society's expectations. A role is not a matter of choice. The view of the community/tribal community determines the person's role. Social identity therefore creates the person's role.

[58] In the various disciplines, there is, generally little consensus on the meaning of "culture." For example, culture could refer to the "social practice" of activities and attitudes. It could even refer to the symbolical level denoting rites, traditions, myths, language, etc. In a more technical sense, it refers to technology and the transformation of creation into a human environment or "Heimat." It could even include the human attempt of understanding him-/herself within the processes of

should be posed in order to obtain a better profile of those factors which influence the process of making a pastoral and anthropological assessment. They are the following:

a) *Existential questions within environmental settings.* These questions embrace issues regarding the meaning of one's life. What are the driving forces and motivational factors behind people's behavior? What are the main objectives and how are they linked to major life issues and philosophical questions? What causes anxiety and what kind of suffering determines a person's outlook? These questions should try to probe painful events which shape current attitudes and important processes of decision-making. Existential questions should also try to obtain clarity regarding the link between our human suffering and the destruction/pollution of our environment.

b) *Belief systems.* Questions should be asked in order to determine how a person, or a group of people, view the quest for the ultimate. The transcendental dimension refers to the important factor of spirituality and religiosity. Belief systems reveal the cultural background of God-images and refer to norms, values and customs which shape basic religious needs and expectations. They also give an indication of concepts used to express experiences of faith.

c) *Societal and communal structures.* An analysis should reveal those structures which determine social and communal behavior. Politics and economics play a crucial role in defining and determining the character of these structures. For example: whether one deals with a democratic, communist, socialist, bureaucratic or autocratic system should be questioned. Are the economics oriented towards an open market system (free enterprise) or are they dominated and regulated by a nationalistic or socialistic ideology? Other important factors are technological development; the communication network; the education system and the legal system.

d) *Language and symbols.* Communal stories should be investigated in order to come to grips with possible existing myths which shape attitudes and thinking. A narrative analysis and linguistics could be of great assistance in this regard. Symbols in language and metaphorical expressions often reveal a culture's "inner soul" and its influence on anthropology.

e) *The dynamics of relationships.* Another area is the important influence of marriage and family structures on human behavior. For example, monogamy has a different influence on sexual values than polygamy. An important area which should be investigated, is that of sexuality (norms and values) and its influence on marriage structures, role fulfilment and family life. Whether one deals with an extended family system or a modem family unit (the private family), will determine the outcome of personal identity (interconnectedness versus privatization and individualization).

f) *The existing ethos.* Ethos refers to morals and basic attitudes regarding diverse life issues. A culture's dominating ethos influences anthropology because it reflects the values and norms which determine personal identity and self-image. The ethos deals with questions relating to what is right or wrong. It also mirrors the

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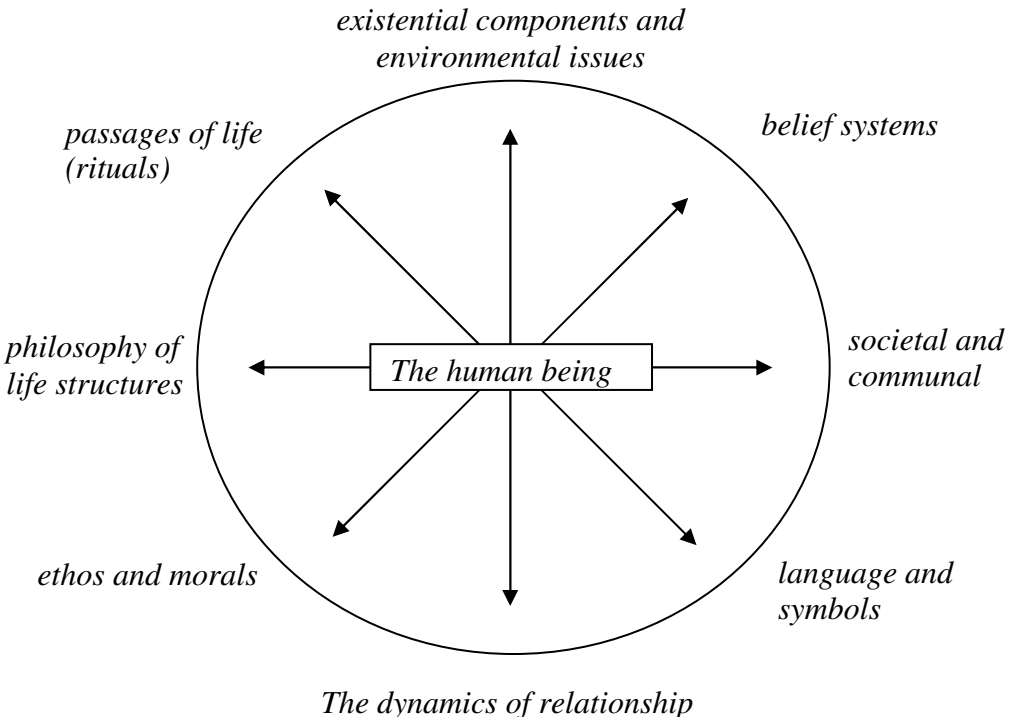
self-realization in the world. It includes knowledge or the act of knowledge. On the notion of culture as self-realization, see A. R. Crollius, "The Meaning of Culture in Theological Anthropology", in: *Inculturation: Its Meaning and Urgency,* eds. J. M. Waliggo et al. (Kampala: St Paul Publications, 1986), p. 52.

influence of long-standing traditional values (the impact of Tradition on anthropology).

g) *Philosophy of life.* The undergirding view of life, as expressed in different philosophical models, should be determined: for example, whether one deals with a premodern, modern, or postmodem society. What is the existing approach to life: is it religious, rationalistic, scientific, socialistic or capitalistic?

h) *Passages of life and rituals.* Throughout the various stages of life, rituals occur which help people to pass through difficult phases. Rituals are embedded in cultural views and indicate how a person or cultural group deals with important life issues such as birth, festivity, death and grief.

Diagram for Making a Social and Cultural Analysis



Remark: The diagram should be used together with the various models for making an assessment of God-images and the character of religious experiences. The whole notion of understanding our being human and the processes of developing a mature faith and growth in spirituality must be interpreted within the components and structures of the above-mentioned diagram. It helps the pastor to gain a more realistic insight regarding the dynamics of spirituality and contextuality. The value of such a systemic approach to anthropology and spirituality is that it contributes to developing a pastoral hermeneutics of care and counselling which operates within systems and contexts rather than merely with isolated individuals and privatised religiosity.

Conclusion

A theological anthropology for pastoral care and counselling should deal with a pneumatological perspective. The latter views our being human in terms of *pneuma* .

Pneuma refers to a new state of being which connects humans with the interconnectedness of life events. In order to cope with different situations and crises in life, a Christian understanding of being human is linked to the "charismatic dimension" of spirituality, i.e. the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 22-23). The fruit of the Spirit should be embodied and enfleshed within the systematic interrelatedness of human life. In a pastoral diagnosis a systemic approach should take cultural and social issues into consideration in order to enhance our human dignity. With human dignity is then meant the treatment of humans in terms of the most basic gift of the spirit: unconditional love in order to help humans to respond in a responsible manner *(respondeo ergo sum)* and to discover purposefulness. A purposeful life can be fostered in pastoral care on condition that a pastoral hermeneutics is exercised within the parameters of a social and cultural analysis. The latter helps pastoral care to become contextually relevant by putting theory (a pastoral anthropology) into practice.

Part 2, Chapter C
Methodological reflections

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Counselling in the Indian context

Problems encountered in application of Western (especially non-directive) models of counselling

topics:

- *cultural limitations of "non-directive" counselling*
- *person and self in Hindu religious setting*
- *the individual within the joint family*
- *relationship between counsellee and counsellor in Indian setting*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling Nr. 1, 1996; pp. 26 – 27

Person and Self in the Hindu religious setting

The basic conflict in the application of Rogerian non-directive counselling in the Indian religious setting is in the way the person is understood. Carl Rogers' view is that the person is capable of attaining self realisation, reason is the final arbiter, humankind is the peak in the evolutionary process and he does not discuss the reality or relevance of the supernatural[1]. This "reductionist view", Vahia argues, is limited and totally different from the wholistic view of the person taught in Hinduism[2]. Hindus believe that no person is merely a biological product, but has had longer history than biological science[3]. According to the Upanishads (the sacred scriptures of Hinduism) a person has three important aspects:

a) the inconsistent matter of which the body is made; b) the mental being; and
c) the real person, "the pure self-existent conscious being", the *atman*.

The *atman*, which is part of the *paramatman* is encased in the body. It gives inspiration to the human mind towards encasing and identify with the original self [4]. Hindus see their original self in the universal self, a fundamental oneness and supreme consciousness of which the individual is but a tiny spark. Self is understood

1 Hurding, *Pastoral Counseling*, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1953, p.108.

2 Cf. Vahia/Doongaji/Jeste, "Value of Patanjaii's concepts in the treatment of Psychoneurosis" in: S.Aheti and G.Chrzanowski, *New Dimensions in Psychiatry. a world view*, London: John Wiley and Sons, 1975, pp.294-297, 302f.

3 P.Sankaranarayanan, "Human Person, Society and State: The Classical Hindu approach". in P.D.Devanandan and M.M.Thomas (eds.) *Human Person, Society and State. A Collection of Essays*, Bangalore: CLS, 1975, p.61.

4 "The Conception of Man in Indian Thought", *Religion and Society* Vol. X No. 3, September 1963, pp. 11-16.

as an emergent aspect of the world process and not as substance different in kind from the process itself[5]. Radhakrishnan argued that it should be identified neither with a series of mental states nor an unchanging essence[6]. A person is not a separate individual possessing qualities and relating to the environment externally but the elements are all interrelated. A human being is not an absolute individual. The individual and the world co-exist and subsist together, society and environment belong to the same nature[7]. Human progress is understood as increasing awareness of the universal self, seeking harmony between the self and environment building a world of unity and harmony[8]. The distinctive capacity of the person is to identify the self with the whole in co-operative enterprise. The objective pursuit is to reach the super conscious with a strong belief in the individual capacity for attaining spiritual realisation. The superconscious stage is described as the self becoming as wide as the world itself, recognising that one spirit is present in all minds and bodies[9]. The aim is thus to attain a corporate identity and not the individualism of the Rogerian non-directive approach.

Of course, the human person is understood as having individuality and personality. Individuality, called *jivatman*, is the product of ego sense according to which one distinguishes one's self and interests from that of others'[10]. But true self, the *atman* encased in the body, is not to be confused with ego or human self. What a Western person regards as strength, firmness and consistency in an individual, is seen in India as a limitation and separation from the universal self[11]. Hindus argue that individual development enhances the awareness of ego, *ahamkar*, pride in one's own achievements which leads one to cling to the world, which is *maya*, illusion.

The individual within the joint family

There are also in India other religious groups - Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Zoroastrian and others - each with their own specific views of the person and society. It is difficult to make generalisations for counselling that are applicable to all of them. Nevertheless there is a common Indian culture and a social pattern which becomes clear when studying the organisation of the joint family[12]. Though the delegation of work, and obligations vary from family to family according to the level of exposure to Westernization and modernisation, the power of the joint family provides a strong framework with the elders being responsible for decisions, exerting power and influence. The same pattern becomes a determining factor for social, political and economic life. For example, relationships are not lim-

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5 *Ibid.*, p.18. R.C.Zaehner, *The Bhagavad Gita with a Commentary based on the original sources*, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969, pp.21f, 10f.

6 S Radhakrishnan, *Introduction to the Gita*, London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960, p.107; S.C.Thakur, *Christian and Hindu Ethics - Two World Religions Compared,* London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969, pp.88f.

7 "The Conception of Man in Indian Thought", *op.cit.*, p.18.

8 S.C.Thakur, *op.cit.*, pp. 88f; See Swami Ahilananda, *Mental Health and Hindu Psychology*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951, pp. 12, 14-16.

9 P.Shankaranarayanan, *op.cit.*, p.63, Zaehner, op.cit., pp.11f, Swami Ahilananda, op.cit., pp.18f.

10 P.Shankaranarayanan, *op.cit.*, p.62.

11 *Ibid.* p.63

12 Erna Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1983, p.106.

ited to blood ties but extended to the whole caste[13]. Generally, Indians identify themselves in relation to their family, caste, place or position. One's name signifies one's identity. Unlike westerners Indians write their village, family or caste name first. This implies that the individual exists for the group or family. Insistence on one's rights disrupts the social solidarity, security and belonging. Though the 'power' exerted by the joint family can be a hindrance to growth, it remains the source where Indians find their identity. Kinship bonds give individual members a sense of belonging by constituting a network of interdependence and mutual support. The self is to be understood within this setting.

Therefore, Ego or Self for Indians is determined in relation to others in a given situation. Two consequences of this development of flexible self or ego[14] are that the ego adapts itself to the nature of human relationships or situations and systems, develops with duties, traditions, customs or patterns of being which help an individual to feel secure and stable about one's ego-field as long as he/she conforms to the patterns. A person has been taught from childhood that relationships between members of a family are determined by their assigned roles, such as brother, sister, uncle and aunt. This extends to the *jati* (i.e. the extended family or caste). Each one joining the family falls into assigned roles which carry mutual life long obligations[15] seen especially operative during family celebrations and crisis situations. Such obligations carry both good and bad effects. One learns to adjust to a given space and to perform one's duty. The flexible ego is more willing to adjust than to assert. The desire for independence and assertion of one's rights conflicts with one's understanding of self within such a cultural matrix. To take a course of action different from parental expectations is considered as creating disharmony and a disobedience that causes guilt.

Self-evaluation and accountability

The effectiveness of the non-directive counselling depends on the motivation to get help and the ability for self evaluation and criticism.

a) In the Indian context the strong motivation is to get help from the elders (relatives, friends, neighbours and religious workers) and family members. If one seeks help outside the family it is to discuss economic problems, seek information about study and job opportunities and not personal issues.

b) Non-directive counselling assumes that as genuine insight is gained, self acceptance will be enhanced and the person will deal with life situations more realistically and constructively. Gaining insights depends not only on the availability of a non-directive counsellor but equally on one's capacity for self-perception, self awareness and self criticism. Some Indians lack self criticism. Erna Hoch argues that the prolonged period of dependency in childhood prevents the development

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[13] S.S.Jayaram, "Adaptation of Western Techniques to Mental Health in India", in: *Religion and Society* op.cit., p.69. Cf. P.D.Devanandan and M.M.Thomas, *Christian Participation in Nation Building*, Bangalore: CISRS, 1962, p.37.

[14] K.V.Rajan, "Man, Society and Nation: A Psycho-analyst's View" in *Human Person, society and State*, op.cit., p.48; Sudhir Kakar, *The Inner World - A Psycho-analytic Study of Childhood and Society in India*, New Delhi: OUP, 1979, pp.111f; Cf. Japanese Understanding of Self in Akihisa Kondo's "Morita Therapy: Its Socio-Historical Context" in S.Arieti and G.Chrzanowski, *New Dimensions in Psychiatry: A World View*, op.cit., pp.242-245.

[15] Sudhir Kakar, *op.cit.*, p.112.

of strong ego boundaries[16]. Illiterates and semi-literates in a rural setting are not used to introspection or self reflection. Even if they do have a capacity for self-awareness, self-reflection is low. Spratt in his study of Indian personality uses a Freudian frame work and concludes Indian personality is narcissistic. One of the reasons he gives is a negative oedipus complex in the son father relationship which leads to submission rather than the aggression found in occidentals. This inhibits one from exercising a spirit of enquiry but promotes submission to authority[17]. K.V. Rajan indicates that the social hierarchy built on respect and obedience to elders prevents one from showing any disagreement since disagreement, however polite, causes anxiety to those in authority. This perpetuates a vicious circle where those under authority do not disagree with their superiors, but opt for their approval instead. Independent thinking and creative action are inhibited[18]. Indian education system tends to be based on rote learning and fails to enhance critical thinking and a spirit of enquiry. The reason for the lack of self-perception is the way Indians understand the totality of life. In the joint family clear boundaries are set in terms of obligations and expectations. When tensions occur child learns to accept and relate to all the members of the extended family. The child reacts in a manner which totally reflects the family member's expectations. K.V. Rajan notes a person raised in such an environment lacks the ability to look at life in its totality and attests that this split existence deprives people of the ability for self-criticism. They develop the capacity to accommodate contradictions, allowing science and superstitions to co-exist[19].

c) Decision making: To take a decision 'right now' is not the way many Indians operate. Depending on the problem, people consult the astrologers, Indian calendar and time. This varies in families depending on their education, exposure to westernisation and the influence of modernisation on them. Though some take a decision, but such decision is changed at home depending on the locus of control at home.

The relationship between counsellee and counsellor

a) *Relationship*: The counsellor is a catalyst and not an advisor and in non-directive counselling, counsellor and counsellee relate as equals and such a relationship is devoid of parent-child, physician-patient or priest-parishioner model which implies deep affection, authoritative advice, submissive acceptance and following the leader. This is contrary to the Indian understanding of the *Guru-shishya* relationship. From childhood one is taught to respect teachers next to parents, elders and God. The *guru-shishya* relationship predominates in Indian family thinking and forms the basis of relationships in institutions and offices. Elders are respected and never addressed by first name. Counsellees find it hard to relate to the counsellor as an equal.

Non-directive counselling proceeds with the expectation that the counsellor will be the enabler and the client (counsellee) will be responsible for decisions. There is no conflict between these two expectations. In the Indian context based on the *guru - shishya* model, the expectation is that the teacher leads and the learner is

[16] Hoch, *Hypocrite or Heretic*, op.cit., p.107.
[17] *Ibid.* pp.83-86 and chapter 8.
[18] Devanandan and Thomas, *Christian Participation*, op.cit., pp.144, 173; Rajan, op.cit., p.46.
[19] *Ibid.*, pp.48f.

led - a counsellee comes with that expectation. The *guru* or elder is not anxious about the *shishya's* dependence on him. *Guru* continues to reinforce such dependence.

b) *Acceptance*: A sub-ordinate in India may not stand or sit in front of his / her superior as a sign of respect. The same is seen in counselling situation. Acceptance is to be understood in a different manner from the Rogerian view.

Acceptance is seen in relation to rapport and eye contact. In Indian culture, similar to African culture, a person being in the same room in close proximity is enough to indicate attentiveness. There is very little eye contact. Direct gaze is considered hostile by the Indians and is mostly used in disciplining. Like the Japanese the Indians also avoid eye contact as a sign of respect.

c) In non-directive counselling the relationship is limited to the *periods of therapy* and exists only within the counsellor's office. Even if it continues it takes a different form. In the Indian context the relationship is on going and not compartmentalized into 'professional' and social.

Edwin T. Decenteceo *Philippines, 1996*

"Burden-Bearing" as a metaphor for counselling

Experiences from the Philippines

topics:

- *counselling in the Filipino context*
- *popular images and story-telling as a tool for couselling*
- *counselling to political prisoners*

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp. 30-31

Introduction

Within his work with victims of human rights violations in the Philippines, Dr. Edwin Decenteceo has developed a model which takes up common images and experiences of Philippine people, and which may encourage the victims to describe and reflect on their difficulties in their own words, within their own story. The model starts from the image of "bearing a burden" and the Filipino culture of telling stories. In the Philippine context, the individual is generally interwoven with his or her responsibilities, and this is even more so with people who joined the resistance movement. Political detainees are very committed individuals, who took over many risks and give a higher priority to their goals than to their own person. A therapeutic model cannot neglect these responsibilities (these "burdens") and put the person alone into the centre.

I am a clinical psychologist, I am not a worker in pastoral care. I am American trained and my specialisation is behaviour modification, behaviour therapy. My work has been with victims of human rights violations and workers, who work with these victims. These include families of victims of extra judicial killings, political prisoners most of whom have been tortured, ex-political prisoners, families of victims of disappearances, and 'internal' refugees - communities that have been sent from their homes, because they are in the way of an industrial project or in a combat zone. Counselling is only one part of a larger effort. Co-ordination and co-operation among different human rights organisations are very important. While individual counselling is conducted, the task of counselling is shared with other political prisoners, especially in distant detention centres to which visits are not frequent. This has been formalized into counselling training.

Most of the people I work with are very poor, and they speak in different languages. I am able to speak two of them. What I will talk about is a model that I have developed as a result of my work, but I will talk about it as it were a story. I call it: the story of burden-bearing. "Ang lahat ay may dinadala" is a common Tagalog saying, "we all bear burdens". I will write the Tagalog terms, because it is important for you to realize that this story is rooted in the language of the people I work with - these phrases are there, in ordinary day-to-day conversation. And it is also important to realize that I am talking about the act of burden-bearing, the whole act. I can start the story anywhere, because no matter where I start I will eventually talk about everything.

There are different parts or aspects of this story. One part of the story is, of course, about the burden bearers. I have drawn here – or tried to draw – a farmer couple, the majority of the people in the Philippines anyway. As you can see, the man is carrying a plough and a little basket. The woman is carrying a baby and something wrapped in cloth. So these are burden bearers and they have their burdens. Burdens in this story are tasks, responsibilities, relationships. The burden of each of the couple is the relationship of the two, or their family. He traditionally has his farm to work with, that is his burden. She traditionally has the children to take care of (although if you go into the farms you will see that half or more of the workers in the farms are actually women). Each burden has a destination. In the burden-bearing story, the destination is not a place, it is actually a condition: a family is brought to good health, given an education, given a good life.

So we have – let me put up the Tagalog terms again: "Nagdadala", the burden bearers, "Dinadala", the burden, and "Patuntuguhan", the destination. There are two other elements I will talk about, and that is: The manner of carrying a burden, "Pagdadala" - in the Tagalog we say some people carry burdens heavily, some people carry burdens lightly, these have to do with the manner of carrying a burden. And finally, there is the way, "Pagdadaanan". Sometimes the way is easy, sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes it is downhill, sometimes it is uphill. So these are the major elements of the burden bearer's story. But we must also realize that the burden bearer is never alone. The burden bearer is always with a community. This community helps in defining all the elements of burden-bearing.

So now we have someone talking about his or her act of burden-bearing. How can I as a helper help in this act of burden-bearing? First I must ask: When does the burden bearer need my help? The burden bearer needs my help when the burden becomes heavy, or when the act of burden-bearing becomes difficult. When does it become difficult or heavy? When it is not clear who I am, I will have difficulty with my burdens. When it is not clear to me what my burdens are, I will also have difficulty with my burdens. When I am not clear about my destination, or if I do not accept my destination, it will also make burden- bearing difficult. I may be carrying in a way that makes burden-bearing heavy (e.g. the woman in this picture is carrying the baby on her hip. That may be difficult. In some cultures they carry a baby on their back, tied to the mother in a blanket). The path itself may be difficult, or events can happen, a flood, a fire, an earthquake, that make my bringing of my burdens to their destination very difficult. If these are what makes burden-bearing difficult, what can I as a helper do? Then an important part of my role is clarification, or to "enlighten". In clarifying, I lighten the load. I can help to clarify the person, the burden, the destination. I can also help to clarify why that is the way that must be followed. I can also help in teaching the person - the burden bearer - ways of making burden-bearing easier. I can also help by actually carry-

ing the burden part of the way. I can also help by making the person – the burden bearer – rest.

I am working among cause-oriented individuals, who feel that they should not rest. One of the major problems we had in talking about this resting, was the concept of "burn out", to which we are used. "Burn out" is based on the image of a candle burning down or of an engine running out of fuel. The people I work with cannot relate with those images. Burning out means: loosing any function. But if I point out: It's okay to put down the burden every once in a while, there is nothing wrong with that, you have not given up your burden-bearing – then they are more likely to listen to me.

And there is one more way that I have found among Filipinos, that is: I can listen to their stories of their burden-bearing. That also helps to enlighten their load. How is that related to burden-bearing? Those of you who do manual labour or know people who do manual labour, will sometimes see them do this: breathing deeply. In the burden-bearing story, this act of breathing deeply in and out is equivalent to telling your story to someone else.

This is how this model has helped me to understand those who would come to me and say: "I don't need counselling, I just need to talk". It has also helped me to understand why the people I work with say they do not need counselling. Of course, they will say only those who are crazy need counselling; but there is more: Counselling deals only with the burden bearer. What the burden bearer needs is help with the act of burden-bearing. And I can help with all these other aspects of burden-bearing. So I must take on a lot of roles - but my training has strained me to help only with the burden bearer himself or herself.

So that is the story, but it is now a model that I am trying to use in my work – both to help directly with people, and to train those who will help other people. And it is my hope that, because it is based on the experiences of the people I work with, we can talk to each other more, and I can be of help to them more.

One last point though: Who am I in relation to the burden bearer? I realize that I am a co-burden-bearer. I have my own burdens to bear. But I have a one additional burden: I have taken on the burden of helping other burden bearers.

Julian Müller *South Africa, 1997*

Intercultural exchange

A discovery of being different

topics:

- *concepts of culture in social sciences and in family therapy*
- *a narrative and constructionist approach to intercultural pastoral care and therapy*
- *the attitude of "not knowing" as a prerequisite in intercultural encounter*

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 4-8

Personal experience as a South African

The earliest story of my life that I can remember is a birthday story. It must have been either my third or fourth birthday, I am not sure. On that birthday I received as birthday present from my parents a box with a few toy cars in it. I remember that I was overjoyed and that my first intention was to show this wonderful present to my best friend. We lived on a farm and my best and only playmate at the time was Daniel, a black boy, a little older than me. He and his parents lived on the farm and they were our servants.

So, I ran outside to show my present to Daniel. I remember that he was sitting on a little bench in a room in the backyard. Proudly I showed him the cars. He looked and admired, and then after a while, chose the two most beautiful ones and gently pushed them on their wheels, underneath his bench, backwards. With this act, he said to me without words: "I'll take these, thank you!" The rest I do not really remember. There must have been a commotion, but I got my cars back. Perhaps my parents intervened. The fact is that I got the cars back.

This is a personal little story from my childhood and I would like to use it as a basis of reflection on the South African society.

1. The story of South Africa is one of involvement and even enmeshment of black and white people. Like the little boy who ran to share his birthday joy with his best friend, most people in South Africa would be able to tell stories of how they shared moments of joy and sorrow with someone of another race.

Black and white South Africa don't exist as two completely separated and isolated worlds. Although the apartheid policy was a form of social engineering which forced people apart in different neighbourhoods, different schools, different churches, etc., it couldn't stop people's involvement with each other. Economical realities forced

people towards each other, at least in the work situation. And today South Africa is very rapidly changing towards a totally integrated society – a process which started gradually long before the laws of segregation were repealed.

2. A second point of reflection on my childhood story: As in Daniel and my relationship, most South Africans grew up with definitive and even rigid role distinctions and expectations. Although Daniel was my friend, he knew and I knew that he was the servant and I was the boss. And because of historical reasons all the bosses are white and all servants are black in the South African community. Therefore we grew up with the stereotype that a person's colour equals his/her value and status in society. When people are framed into these roles because of stereotypes which developed in our minds from childhood, one cannot easily get rid of such presuppositions. I must admit that within the South African context, it is up to this day not easy for me not to put myself in the boss-role when communicating with a black person. I think that I and many other South Africans try hard, but find it still an effort, a struggle to become free from the roles inflicted on us through our upbringing.

3. These are structures of society with a long history. The roles into which Daniel and myself fitted so easily from childhood, were the inheritance of generations before us and the way in which they structured society. The way in which the South African society developed was not the result of a criminal government which one day sat down and made a list of vicious laws. It developed through centuries and what the Nationalist government wrote in the law books from 1948, was only the legalising of social practice through many years. The development of this legalisation process represents indeed the deepest point of inhuman and unchristian discriminatory practices. But the fact is that it is deeply rooted in the history of our community.

4. This story represents most probably also a difference between the African and Western experience of personal property. According to the western capitalistic mind, personal belongings and property are individualistically earned. The African, on the other hand, has primarily a communalistic mind. The riches which were developed on African soil by western industries and capital, are seen as the corporate riches of all the people. Prosperity and poverty must be shared by all. That is why issues such as the private ownership of land and the rights of inhabitant workers on farms are the most difficult ones to handle in the negotiation processes.

It is against this background of personal bias, a history of social injustices, and conflicting cultural expectations in the South African context, that I would like to try and contribute to the development of theory which can be of value in our praxis of intercultural interaction, especially in the field of pastoral family therapy.

Approaches to culture in the social sciences and in family therapy

In recent literature, a number of different possible approaches to intercultural therapy were described:

The essentialist view

According to this view (Krause 1995:364) cultural differences are considered to be much like other differences, i.e. differences based on gender and age. Culture is seen as an overwhelming influence which determines the individual's behaviour and thought. According to this view, the individual does not really operate as an agent constructing and making choices about his/her own life.

The essentialist definition of culture would have us think about culture as one great organism in which all parts are connected to all other parts. You have to take either the whole lot or none of it, for only in this way could culture have the iron hold on individuals required to form and mould their bodies and their minds. If, however, we combine a generative notion of culture with an interactive one then it becomes possible not only to consider some cultural differences more important than others but also to talk about them cross-culturally (Krause 1995:365-6).

The universalistic view

The universalist approach (Falicov 1995:373) takes the position that persons and families of different cultures are more alike than different. This school of thought argues that there are basic similarities which are to be found in all cultures, for instance the concept that all children need love and discipline and that parenting always involves a combination of nurturing and control.

The problem with this view is that the perception of what is considered to be normative, may be local knowledge or beliefs based on a certain cultural experience. It also follows that adherents of this position have little use for training in cultural differences.

The particularistic view

This position is the opposite of the universalistic one (Falicov 1995:374). According to this approach persons and families of different cultures are more different than alike and no generalisations are possible. The uniqueness of each family is stressed and often idiosyncrasies of a certain family are referred to as "a culture unto itself". As was said by Falicov (1995:374): "In the particularist position, then, the word *culture* is tied to the internal beliefs of each particular family rather than to the connection between the family and the broader sociocultural context."

As is the case with the universalist view, this approach also doesn't regard cultural training as very important, because the family's interior, which is always unique, is held solely responsible for all of the family's distress.

In discussing this view, Inga-Britt Krause (1995:364) calls it: culture as an idiom of differences. The popular use of the word "culture" shows a preoccupation with diversity, choice and identity. "Culture becomes an idiom for the expression of all kinds of individual differences and appears to encompass everything." (Krause 1995:364)

The ethnic-focused approach

According to this position families differ, but the diversity is primarily due to the factor of ethnicity (Falicov 1995:374). The focus here is on thought patterns, behaviours, feelings, customs, and rituals that stem from belonging to a particular cultural group. This school of thought would see culture as a symbolic expression, and "a

symbol is some form of fixed sensory sign to which meanings has been arbitrarily attached. Persons within a cultural tradition share common understandings. Those outside this symbol system take great risks in inferring the meanings of symbols from the outside of their own system" (Augsburger 1986:61).

In this position there is a real danger in oversystematising and stereotyping the notion of shared meanings. It might be assumed that ethno-groupings are more homogeneous and stable than they actually are. We are actually talking here of an epistemological error: "...clients are seen as their culture, not as themselves" Bateson (1979:30) warns also that "The map is not the territory, and the name is not the thing named."

Ethnic values and identity are influenced by various factors. There are variables within the group (education, social class, religion, etc.) and then there are the phenomena of cultural evolution and the effect of influences stimulated by contact with the dominant culture. Perhaps the most important limitation is the assumption that the observer, the person who describes the other culture, can be objective and has no effect on the conclusions being made about the group observed.

A narrative approach to intercultural pastoral therapy

Over and against these four approaches, I want to propose the narrative model of intercultural understanding and communication.

The narrative approach implies that the therapist places him or herself in a not-knowing position. And that position calls for "...a kind of conversational questioning that leaves room for the client's story as told by the client in the client's own words, unchallenged by preconceived therapeutic knowing" (Boyd 1995:220). "The process of therapy is not to reveal the truth or to impose a reality, but to explore through conversation, through languaging, realities that are compatible with a particular client's unique tendency to attribute meaning and explanation in his or her own life" (Goolishian and Anderson 1987:536).

In spite of the well intended and well phrased theories introduced by Augsburger (1986) in his good book, concepts like *interpathy* and *transspection*[1] are too much coloured by a knowing position and do not reveal the same epistemological position to be found in the not-knowing position of the narrative approach. The idea that a therapist is capable of moving over to persons of the other culture in a process of transspection, is already arrogant and knowing. It reveals something of an asymmetrical communication, of a messianic role in stead of a partnership role. It consists of a movement initiated form here to there, while the narrative approach wants to experience the sensation of being drawn into the other's world, of being drawn over the threshold of a cultural difference.

The narrative approach to therapy is clearly and in detail described by authors like Anderson and Goolishian (1988) and Michael White (1995). Anderson and Goolishian (according to Boyd 1995:221) describe the therapeutic conversation as "...a slowly evolving and detailed, concrete, individual life story stimulated by the therapist's position of not-knowing and the therapist's curiosity to learn." Seen from this point of view, intercultural therapy seems no longer a complex and rather impossible task, as long as the therapist is honestly willing to learn from the person from the other culture. "The kenotic pattern of Philippians 2:25ff describes the Christ-conversation and makes clear that our position must be one of service rather than domination or social control. A stance of agape-listening places the pastoral conver-

sation in the realm of mutual co-authoring of a new story for the one in need of healing by valuing the unique reality of the other while continually striving for a stance of openness and humility" (Boyd 1995:221).

The "tools" which fit this approach to therapy are: responsive-active listening; a not-knowing position; conversational questions. The aim, as in all therapy, is change, but change within this perspective can be defined as "...the evolution of new meaning, new narrative identity, and new self-agency." (Boyd 1995:220). The narrative approach has a capacity to "re-relate" events in the context of new meaning. We can refer to this kind of therapy as "being in language".[2]

When working in this school of thought, it becomes increasingly difficult to view culture on the basis of the previously mentioned approaches. Culture must be seen as a much more immediate and ongoing process and not as something static which is handed down unaltered from generation to generation. The broad definition which Falicov (1995:375) gives, is perhaps one which fits into this paradigm: "...those sets of shared world views, meanings and adaptive behaviours derived from simultaneous membership and participation in a multiplicity of contexts, such as rural, urban or suburban setting; language, age, gender, cohort, family configuration, race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, socioeconomic status, employment, education, occupation, sexual orientation, political ideology; migration and stage of acculturation."

When the combinations of "simultaneous memberships" and "participation in multiple contexts" are seriously taken into account, the groups that emerge are much more "fluid, unpredictable and shifting, than the groups defined by using an ethnic-focused approach" (Falicov 1995:376). It thus becomes much more difficult to make generalisations about culture groups and much more necessary to take on a not-knowing position.

In discussing the phenomena of cultures, cultural similarities and differences, Falicov (1995:376) refers to two important concepts:

Cultural Borderlands, a concept which refers to the overlapping zones of difference and similarity within and between cultures. This gives rise to internal inconsistencies and conflicts. On the other hand, it is the borderlands that offer possibilities of connectedness. Falicov (1995:376) refers to the poet, Gloria Anzaldua who describes the "new mestiza" (a woman of mixed Indian and Spanish ancestry born in die USA): She "copes by developing a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures. She has a plural personality."

Ecological Niche refers to the combination of multiple contexts and partial cultural locations. We can think of a family narrative which encompasses multiple contexts rather than a single label (Mormon, African, Afrikaner, Boer). The philosophy here is to emphasise large categories – a philosophy that supports inclusiveness and a diversified unity.

With these concepts in mind, I again want to strongly argue the not-knowing position of the narrative approach as the only acceptable approach in an intercultural therapeutic situation. I agree with the approach and words of Dyche and Zayas (1995:389): "We argue that one should begin cross-cultural therapy with minimal assumptions, and that one way to learn about a culture is from the client. This argument seeks to balance the cognitive model of preparation with a process-oriented approach by exploring two therapist attitudes: cultural naiveté and respectful curiosity."

The ideal is for therapists to be participant-observers. Rather than working with historically constructed descriptions only, the therapist should learn from a present and current cultural community (Falicov 1995:385). As is shown by Goolishian and Anderson (1992:27), all human systems are linguistic systems and are best being described from inside by those participating in it, than by so called objective observers.

Narrative pastoral counselling: a social constructionist approach

Narrative therapy can be described as the rewriting of history and auto-biography (Boyd 1996:215). And this rewriting takes place through the mutual conversational co-creation of new stories. This is a view of pastoral counselling which takes seriously our "radical embeddedness in history and language." "Such a view takes for granted the creative and creating power of language. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the God who is active in history is also active in language. Consider the powerful *dhabar* of the Old Testament creation narratives and the *logos* of John's gospel and the early Church Fathers" (Boyd 1996:215).

To focus on conversation in this way directs our attention away from the inner dynamics of the individual psyche or events in the external world (Boyd 1995:216). Instead, we are more free to be attentive to *words in their speaking*, words we create and by which we are created.

With reference to an article by Gergen (1985), Boyd (1996:218) summarises the social construction orientation as follows:

a) what we take to be experience of the world does not in itself dictate the terms by which the world is understood,

b) the terms in which the world is understood are social artifacts, produced of historically situated interchanges among people,

c) the degree to which a given form of understanding prevails or is sustained across time is not fundamentally dependent on the empirical validity of the perspective in question, but on the vicissitudes of social processes (e.g., communication, negotiation, conflict, rhetoric), and

d) forms of negotiated understanding are of critical significance in social life, as they are integrally connected with many other activities in which people engage.

To take a narrative approach is to look for a "negotiated understanding". When a new negotiated understanding is reached, a new narrative has been constructed. By taking this approach, culture is no longer seen as a determining factor, but as an interesting "borderland" from where new "ecological niches" can be developed. Then human beings become inventors of and inventions of culture. The prerequisite is of course that we take on the risks of the borderlands and give ourselves for intercultural interaction. As Augsburger (1986:25-26) puts it: "This change comes from encounter, contact, and interaction, not from programmic education or social engineering. It occurs on the boundary, not in the cultural enclave. ... The capacity not only to 'believe' the second culture but to come to understand it both cognitively ('thinking with') and affectively ('feeling with') is necessary before one enters cross-cultural counselling."

The way we interpret our world, the rights and wrongs of our life, the good and bad, are all products of our social (and therefore cultural) embeddedness. "There is no recounting of the history of a country ... apart from a narrative loaded with interpre-

tations of interpretations which are by-products of human relationships." (Boyd 1995:218).

The South African context

Although things have changed much for the better during the past few years, the poem by a black South African, Oswald Mtshali, still describes the situation in our country:

WALLS

Man is
a great wall builder
The Berlin Wall
The Wailing Wall of Jerusalem
But the wall
most impregnable
Has a moat
flowing with fright
around his heart

A wall without windows
for the spirit to breeze through

A wall
without a door
for love to walk in.

Oswald Mtshali, Soweto poet

These walls of fear are part and parcel of the South African scene and history. The following story shows how in an ironic, but tragic way, it shapes our lives (Malan 1990:226): "This is a parable of fear obscuring fear that occurred a long time ago, in a small town called Bulwer, in 1906 – the year of the Bambatha rebellion, the last Zulu uprising. Bulwer lay close to Zulu territory, and white farmers in the district feared the local Zulus might join Bambatha's rebel army and butcher their masters in bed. So the whites called a meeting and formulated a plan of action: if the Zulus rose, all whites would rush to Bulwer and barricade themselves inside the stone courthouse.

A few days later, someone cried wolf, and the whites panicked. They loaded their guns and children onto wagons and abandoned their farms, leaving meals on the tables and leaving cows unmilked in the barns. They barricaded themselves inside the courthouse, loaded their guns, posted lookouts, and sat back to await the barbarians. By and by, they saw dust in the distance. Peering out through chinks in the barricade, the whites beheld a vision from their worst nightmares – a horde of Zulus approaching on foot. The crowd halted a few hundred yards away. A deputation detached itself and approached the courthouse. The Zulus knocked on the door. The wary whites opened a window, expecting to hear an ultimatum. Instead, the black men said 'Why have you forsaken us? We see there is a terrible danger coming, because our masters have fled into this fort, and we are frightened, for we don't know what it

is. So we came to ask if we could also come inside, to be under the protection of our masters' guns.' "

Stories like this one which tell of misunderstandings and fear between cultural groups in Africa are actually very common. Language and other cultural differences are part of our community. To communicate across these borders is not always easy, but it remains fascinating. For those among us who are willing to listen and willing to be drawn into the stories of others, new worlds of understanding emerge almost daily. The difficulties sometimes bring us to the verge of despair, but with a narrative, not-knowing attitude we can make growing progress in the "borderlands" and develop new "ecological niches" where being different can be experienced as the most fulfilling part of existence. This is the joy of becoming part of someone else's story - like it is to know the joy of fish in the story of the old Chinese philosopher Chuang Tzu (as quoted by Rosenbaum and Dyckman 1995:41):

Chuang Tzu and Hui Tzu
were crossing Hao river
By the dam.
Chuang said:
"See how free
The fishes leap and dart:
That is their happiness."
Hui replied:
"Since you are not a fish
How do you know
What makes fishes happy?"
Chuang said:
"Since you are not I
How can you possibly know
That I do not know
What makes fishes happy?"
Hui argued:
"If I, not being you,
Cannot know what you know
It follows that you
Not being a fish
Cannot know what they know."
Chuang said:
"Wait a minute!
Let us get back
To the original question.
What you asked me was
'How do you know
What makes fishes happy?'
From the terms of your question
You evidently know I know
What makes fishes happy.
"I know the joy of fishes
In the river
Through my own joy, as I go walking
Along the same river."

Notes

[1] "Transspection is an effort to put oneself into the head (not shoes) of another person... Transspection differs from analytical 'understanding.' Transspection differs also from 'empathy.' Empathy is a projection of feelings between two persons with one epistemology. Transspection is a trans-epistemological process which tries to *experience* a foreign belief, a foreign assumption, a foreign perspective, feelings in a foreign context, and consequences of feelings in a foreign context, as if these have become one's own." (Maruyama et al., cited by Augsburger 1986:30)

[2] Anderson and Goolishian (1988: 378) use concepts like "language", "in language", and "languaging" to refer to the process of the social creation of the intersubjective realities that we temporally share with each other.

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John Foskett *Great Britain, 1997*

The 'unknown' in intercultural communication

topics:

- *the unconsciousness in groups*
- *revealing the 'unknown' in group behaviour*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 13-15

Since 1977 in Eisenach[1] I have been coming to intercultural and interfaith meetings about pastoral care and counselling. My family and colleagues would testify to the extra-ordinary impact these have had upon me. I have come to expect that I will be surprised again by what I learn about myself and others as a result of these gatherings. Although this is true of my life in general, intercultural meetings generate an *extra-ordinary* quality to this knowledge. They reveal some of the unknown that is not yet thought let alone voiced or conceptualised. I think there are a many reasons for this. We are detached from our cultural and racial roots. We are in someone else's world and bumping up against differences we do not understand. These expose us like new born creatures[2] and we can not ignore what we feel and think even from ourselves. Likewise there is an end to this detachment when we return to the familiar places from which we have come and where our livelihoods if not our lives depend upon us fitting our culture more or less. In intercultural meetings we are bound not to fit and in our not fitting to uncover heaven knows what about ourselves and each other. Those whose homeland we visit have a special problem with our coming amongst them. We and they do not fit but on their territory. This evokes all the uncertainties and fears associated with immigration and assimilation. In Ustron it was not until the last day of the conference that anyone asked about the thoughts and feeling which lay behind the inscrutability of our hosts.

Learning from experience

These conferences remind me of learning about the dynamics of group behaviour in the 1960's. As a pastor finding myself at the mercy of the groups for which I had responsibilities, I went on a course about the understanding of group behaviour organised by the *Tavistock Institute of Human Relations* [3]. We were invited to learn from our own experience of being a group member. This was a revolutionary idea to me then and shocked me in the same way I have been shocked since in intercultural gatherings. My educational culture had always been academic and I had learnt to minimise the value of my own experience. Later I was to meet this

learning from experiencing culture in other forms - clinical pastoral education, therapeutic communities, liberation movements and psychotherapy. It was a revelation for me to trust my experience and the experience of others in order to learn. It was a 'new birth' to have hypotheses as embryo theories in the birth of my learning and not as credal authorities to which my experience had to be fitted. I saw the Bible and the traditions I had studied at university and seminary take on a new life. In fact to have a life, a flesh that enlivened the dead words and ideas they had been. I suppose I began to grasp that scripture and tradition were only the fruit of human experience. Food for all my senses.

The good that I want, I do not do; the evil I do not want, that I do...

Fruitful as my first learning from experience was, like birth itself there was more to it than bliss and satisfaction. All to soon experience confronted me with the reality St Paul expresses in Romans 7:18-19. 'I can will what is right, but I can not do it. The good that I want, I do not do, the evil I do not want, that I do'. That was all too true for me as a pastor and as a husband and father. What was more it was especially true of my corporate efforts with others to achieve the objects of our faith and to try and realise the coming of God's Kingdom amongst us. In my revolutionary optimism I joined a radical Christian group to make the church do, and not just will, what was right. We reformers found all too quickly that we were as irreformable as the church. In my despair I was introduced to psychoanalysis.

It was not a comfortable introduction, but it did offer me another perspective on learning from experience, and one that took seriously the difficulties I had encountered. The idea that I live and act unconsciously as well as consciously was another shock to my cultural assumptions, another new birth as painful as the first. If there is so much of me that is unknown and its effect upon me and others so unconscious, then there must be compelling reasons for this. In this new language of experience I was confronted with my *defences* against the unknown and unconscious. Defences upon which my very existence depended, or so I believed unconsciously. Despite all I said about wanting the good, my actions revealed a different story. It was no wonder I could not do the good I wanted as there was so much of me that unconsciously depended on something else. My behaviour demonstrated that I was and I am a house divided against itself.

The group's unconscious

As I learnt more about my own unconscious I became aware of the corporate unconscious of the groups of which I was member, my family, parish and community. Realising the power of my own unconscious I recognised the even greater power of a group's unconscious. Groups keep the unknown from being known in order to protect all of us from the many anxieties we fear will overwhelm us were they to be revealed. Groups unconsciously believe in these compelling reasons and suffer much frustration and despair as a consequence.

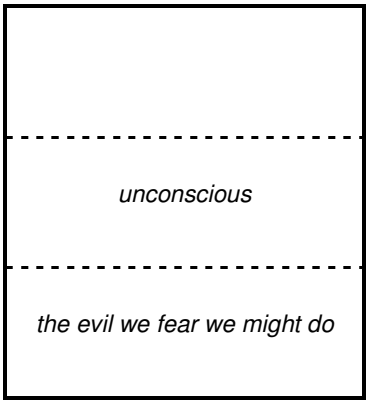
"An ironic feature of the congress was that the theme was about coming together, but the programme accentuated rather than dissolved the differences and made it difficult for people to come together at all. The prevailing atmosphere of the congress was one of chaos and insensitivity." This report from a delegate at the 1st World Congress for Psychotherapy in June 1996 illustrates how the profession

most aware of the unconscious is nevertheless at its mercy when gathered in an intercultural forum for the first time. In order to protect itself from the corporate insensitivity and chaos at the heart of the psychotherapeutic task, the congress embodied and enacted unconsciously what it was most afraid of. Just as in individual therapy the bringing to consciousness is central to the work, so therapists and pastors want to discover how the same can be possible for societies and institutions. In individual therapy client and therapist have to learn from experience to face their insensitivity and chaos, so congresses of therapists and pastors have to learn to face the corporate manifestations of their fears. We can not face what we will not look at, but our behaviour can reveal it to us.

An important part of the work of the Tavistock Institute since the 1950's has been to try and understand what the behaviour of groups reveals about the unconscious fears that dominate them and can prevent them fulfilling their conscious aims and objectives. Staff from the Institute have worked with and studied groups and institutions in industry, politics, religion, education, health and welfare in many different cultural contexts. I tried to apply some of the results of their work to the pre-conference and the following seminar at Ustron.

Traditions: shadows of the past – sources for the future

The purpose of the pre-conference at Ustron was *"to work on the theory of communication in an intercultural context and apply it to the work of the following seminar in reality."* We discussed in pairs this objective for our pre-conference and the seminar as the good we wanted to do. Then we spoke of the evil that we feared we might do. To remind ourselves of our discussions we wrote something about the latter on the bottom third of a paper.



We put the word "unconscious" on the second third of the paper. So we related the evil we might do to whatever was unknown and unconscious amongst us. Whatever each of us brought to this meeting and whatever was corporately evoked between us.

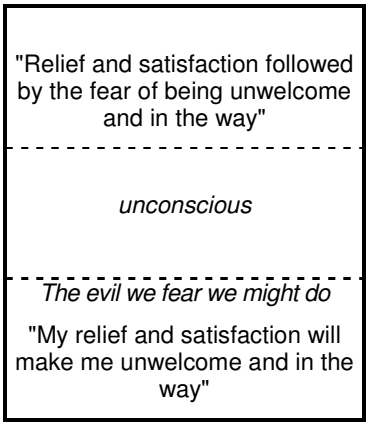
Revealing the 'unknown' in group behaviour

In his book *Experiences in Groups*[4], Wilfred Bion explored how group behaviour reveals the unconscious anxieties which can dominate group life and undermine

the task the group has to complete. As a psychoanalyst he drew upon his experience of working with soldiers who had broken down in the second world war. Their conscious task of fighting was impossible for them and their unconscious took control of their behaviour. He explored with them the nature of the trauma which had caused this to happen. He observed that entering any group exposes us all to memories of the earliest experiences of our lives - to our births - and to the first group we entered. A group which might have consisted of all or any of the following, our mothers, fathers, a midwife, a doctor, siblings and relations.

In the conference we tried to remember from the stories we had been told and with the help of our imagination who had been present at our births, and what traumas and anxieties may have accompanied our entries into our first group. We drew upon our current experiences of entering groups including this conference to identify what causes us most anxiety and uncertainty, to see if there were any connections to our initial experience in as far as we could recall it.

On the way to the conference I had stopped in Prague, where I met a colleague who invited me out for a meal with his Czech guide. As I sat opposite them I was relieved to be with someone I knew and then even more pleased to be offered my first 'feed'. But as the meal continued, I realised that they had planned to eat together to enjoy each other's company, and that I was an intruder, and unwelcome 'birth' into their lives. Although not a surprising revelation it made me aware of the feelings of relief, satisfaction and then fear, which were to dominate *my* unconscious during the coming conference and seminar. We wrote on the first third of our papers something to remind us of these early feelings in our lives, which coming to the conference stirred again. This provided us with an aide memoir linking our earliest anxieties through our unconscious to the evil we feared we might do instead of the good we hoped we would do.



Bion recognised that the more stressful the task a group undertakes and the more unstable the context in which it undertakes that task, the more likely the group is to regress in order to manage the unconscious anxieties provoked by the task. This regression can be so powerful that it will completely undermine the work and the aims of the group. Although I had made no connection at the time, my personal clues to this regression were to be feelings of relief and satisfaction as a prelude to my getting in the way of the task when I had no conscious wish to do so.

Towards the end of the seminar this happened in a most dramatic way. The day before we had visited Auschwitz and we returned heavy with our emotional reactions to what we had seen and heard. During the tour the German and English speaking parties were separated, but at one point we met each other again and I

recall the sense of relief and satisfaction I felt to see our colleagues and to know that they too were surviving this trauma. In an emotional service that evening we were able to express some of these feelings, albeit with more sentiment than serious thought. On the following morning the lecturer explained how the Jews had kept alive the memory of the Holocaust in their diaries and writings and in the retelling of the stories.[5] As I listened it occurred to me that they did this in order to stay in touch with their *unconscious*, and with the buried fears which would still affect their lives. They were facing the reality that being born into the human race is as dangerous and evil as the Holocaust reveals it to be. If ever the memory was lost, once again humanity would be at the mercy of the most destructive forces within our unconscious. Someone asked the lecturer what help this knowledge was to us. He replied that it was no help. We human beings are poor pupils and we learn very little from history as current ethnic cleansings bare witness. We can not learn to be better from the tragedies of our past, but we can take the memories of those tragedies with us as symbols for today and tomorrow. The more we forget and the more we bury in our unconscious, the more evil we stock pile to destroy the good we want to do and to feed the evil we will do.

It seemed to me that we needed all the time left to us in the conference to gather our memories of these events in order not to forget them. Soon we would be in other familiar places without each other's help and support to keep alive the memories of Ustron. However, our need to forget and to bury proved stronger. As a group we avoided assembling for our last plenary together for as long as we could. Then we sat patiently as our leaders discussed how we might apply our faith to our experience of the seminar. To help us they offered to give examples from their work. The first example was of a crisis service for the suicidal. I think this subject, introduced in a thoughtful and unemotional way, ignited my sense of crisis within the group itself. At the end of the morning one person described what then happened as the group being on the verge of suicide. Whatever our unconscious needs were, I could stand it no longer, and so I intervened before the second example could be given. I said we had the most vivid and fearful examples amongst us and needed all the time left to share them with one another. However in doing this I had stopped an Indian woman colleague from giving her example. All hell broke loose as first she agreed with me, and then was admonished for not taking her turn. Disagreements about how to proceed multiplied and the group was paralysed in conflict. Realising how my anxiety had fuelled this battle and defeated my object in intervening, I was urged to do something to put it right. As I stood up to try I saw how hopeless the task was. So I remained standing feeling very awkward, ashamed and in the way.

Afterwards it occurred to me that I was like the 'poor pupil' sent to stand in the corner of the class. I wonder now if that was the way we as a group embodied and remembered the reality of our humanity, which we had confronted in Ustron. We are all poor pupils and we will defeat ourselves if ever we forget that truth in our pursuit of wisdom and expertise. The lecture had been my most satisfying 'meal' of the seminar, and the following plenary exposed me to my dread of being the wrong person in the wrong place and doing the wrong thing.

I wonder now if all of us learnt a little more about being the wrong people, in the wrong place and doing the wrong things. After all, that was the tragedy for the Jews, the gypsies, and the homosexuals in Europe in the 1930's and 40's, and is still the tragedy for many people somewhere in the world today. We must keep that knowledge alive in us whenever our fear makes us want to burn and bury the evidence and whenever the ashes start slipping through our fingers.

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[1] The first European Conference in Pastoral Care and Counselling was held in Eisenach in then East Germany in 1977. Since then a European Conference has been held every four years organised by the European Committee for PCC. International Congresses have been organised by the International Council for PCC every four years since the first Congress in Edinburgh in 1979.

[2] St.John 3:1-8. The conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus reminds me of the 'new births' I have experienced at intercultural events.

[3] The Tavistock Institute of Human Relations is the leading centre for the study and practice of Kleinian and Object Relations psychoanalysis in the United Kingdom.

[4] Bion, W. (1961) *Experiences in Groups*, London: Tavistock Publications. Bion describes regression in groups by the term *Basic Assumption* group activity. He saw how groups began to behave in ways that assumed a very different objective than the one they publicly proclaimed. This unstated objective appeared to him to be more fundamental (and so basic) than the task itself. The examples of what Bion meant by basic assumption activity are the behaviour of the delegates at the 1st World Congress on Psychotherapy, and our behaviour in the final plenary at Ustron (cf. the end of this article). What was more remarkable to Bion was the unconsciousness of groups to this change in their behaviour. He noted three different forms of basic assumption activity, and identified the social institutions which manage these assumptions on behalf of society as a whole and in order that society can get on with its tasks unencumbered by the anxieties which basic assumption activity embodies. These are:

- *Fight and Flight:* The group engages in battles within or external to itself, and/or it runs away from conflict. The *military* provide the institutional embodiment of this basic assumption.
- *Dependency:* The group is unrealistically dependent upon an individual or idea which can not possibly sustain the trust being placed in it. The *churches* and the *health services* embody this basic assumption.
- *Pairing:* The group allows a pair of people to take control of the group and everyone else waits expectantly for them to bring something important to birth to save or fulfil the groups expectations. The *monarchy* embodies this basic assumption.

As in individual therapy Bion would not challenge the defences of the group as revealed in the basic assumption activity, but from his knowledge of the group's task and context, he would try to help the group identify the anxiety which was responsible for the basic assumption activity. He would explore his own feelings and behaviour as evidence for the group's anxieties and as an encouragement to others to do the same. He found that the recognition of the unconscious anxiety by even one member was sufficient to begin the redirection of the group towards its task and the harnessing the power of the basic assumption activity for rather than against the task.

[5] The lecture was given by Jacek Leociak *(see the following article in this workbook).*

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Appendix

The following are excerpts from oral contributions during the last, rather tension filled "Intercultural Forum", to which John Foskett refers in his text. Each contribution shows an individual way of interpreting the events; thus, along with the interpretation given by John Foskett, they bear witness to the complexity and to the manifold aspects of intercultural interaction.

I. S.-J. (Hungary):
...This is a dynamic group process. If the leaders offer something, and all agree to do it, and then the process is being stopped, it boils from within.

G.J. (Germany):
It is my impression that we are now dealing with how we treated one another. That was the source of interference. You *(speaker is refering to the female facilitators of the plenary session)* proposed to enter a dialogue, i.e. to present two models from two different cultures. That was a proposal made by women. And you, as a man, went in *(unrest in the plenary)* – please, let me finish – *(more unrest)*. For me as a woman it was quite easy to understand how a woman from the Indian culture would immediately put her interests last, when she heard that this might be disturburbing for others.

S.P. (Iceland):
Perhaps I now understand a little bit better why one cannot really help people who are suffering. I felt offended when N. was not able to contribute her story. When she finally had the opportunity to speak, she did not want to anymore. And since then we have been talking for twenty minutes. Her story would have been much shorter. But we are dealing with another story here as well: J. asked whether we could begin with the plenary session fifteen minutes earlier. And now I think, that maybe the first story we heard was a bit too long, and maybe this offended J. But if we only talk about what is happening here, then we can never help those who feel offended.

After a lengthy discussion the plenary finally divided itself into groups, and then met for a conclusive plenary, talking about the insights gained in the small groups:

P. H. (England):
We ended up with a very useful discussion about the place of magic in Indonesia. I think it is useful because I think it deals with the intercultural problems when you try to understand what is going on. In the discussion it became apparent that magic is part of traditional culture in Indonesia. But one church says: Magic is of Satan. The difficulty is that that tells you nothing, it simply is labelling. And in fact, in my view, what is going on (also here in our group) is a series of levels of language. And the problem of understanding *that* is, that you have to know what the assumptions are and where the person is coming from. And that is one of the problems we face in this group. Every now and again I do not understand. The trouble is: I understand the language, but – I'm damned if I understand what we're on about! Isn't it, that my cultural assumptions, when I am here, are usually English. And every now and again I realise: those are not the cultural assumptions of the Germans. But what I do is: I go and slap Klaus. And I say to him: Klaus, what on earth does all this mean? Some people here cannot, for their own cultural reasons – and linguistic reasons – do that. And this is my analysis what happened at the very beginning of this intercultural session: If you break rules of a group,

and you do not know – it is very difficult to recover the situation. It will happen – and we need to think about what we do when it does happen.

Ch. K. (Ghana):
In our discussion group, we started examining what happened when N. was called again to speak - and she refused. I was saying that culturally I would have done the same thing. And I was trying to explain that, if there is any action or behaviour which would cause division and confusion between people, then our endeavour is to withdraw and not contribute to it. But one European friend in our group did say: No, in his case, he would fight for his rights.
So this was all cultural, and we need to understand one another. And I feel that John was a person who was offended by our not coming *(to the plenary-session in time)*. But I am thinking that he, too, was acting culturally.

Jacek Leociak *Poland, 1997*

Tradition as a dialogue between generations

in the perspective of the Holocaust experiences

topics:

- *Remembrance in the shadow of the Holocaust-experience*
- *the written word as a symbol for life*
- *writing as (a) testifying, (b) prophetic formula and (c) a liturgy of memory*
- *the interconnection of writing, memory, and salvation*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 36-39

Ladies and gentlemen,

we are here today to think about tradition. Let's consider the situation: *hic et nunc* we want to look behind us, to better perceive of what is in front of us. Which means, we want to fill our present time with the past as well as with the future. Tradition means also that every dimension of time is present in our *hic et nunc*, here and now. So, what is our *here and now* like?

We are about forty kilometres from the town of Oswiecim (Auschwitz).[1] The chimneys of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp ceased to work fifty years ago. Let's take such a *hic et nunc* as the basis for our further reflections because it is the Holocaust which is the shadow of the past and is still putting a dark trail on our present time.

That is why I would like to submit the reflection upon tradition to the reflection concerning the Holocaust, the strategies aiming at accommodation and understanding of the Holocaust, and the burden of that heritage.

Associated with tradition is a continuous return to the sources, a re-reading of them from the beginning on. My reflection is a fruit of reading the Holocaust testimonies. Those preserved texts became a basic source for my reflection.

Word-grain symbolism

Memoirs and diaries written down by Jews in the ghettos and camps were very

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[1] This lecture was held at the 10th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, taking place at Ustron/Poland. The day before, the participants of the seminar had visited the former concentration camp at Auschwitz

well hidden, usually buried. Let's ponder for a while on this symbolic meaning of such a situation. A paper upon which those chronicles of destruction were written was thrown into the soil as a grain for the future harvest. The Jewish poet Abraham Suckewer interpreted it as such in the Vilna ghetto in March 1943. His poem entitled *A wheat grain* became a commentary for the action of hiding the books and manuscripts of the Jewish Institute in Vilna and Vilna library. "*I am burying and sowing manuscripts here...*" says Suckewer, telling a story of a grain which had been hidden inside the pyramid in ancient Egypt. The grain taken from the pyramid after nine thousand years and put into soil grew and bore ears. The poet writes:

"Maybe also one day these words will be taken up to the light
and maybe in the hour of destiny
they will blossom as unexpectedly
as that ancient seed
which grew an ear (...)"

Seed – which is considered a basic food in the Judaeo-Christian civilisation – is a symbol of existence. The symbolism of the word as grain incorporates the process of writing in the ancient and everlasting order of sowing and harvesting. The text becomes a life-giving food. The symbolism of word-bread which is so deeply rooted in the Bible also leads toward such understanding. You can share a word with other people as a piece of bread. There are no limits of time and place for such a sharing of words.

The poem by Suckewer speaks about the hope for surviving in the reviving rhythm of culture. The grain resists the damaging influence of time because it preserves energy in itself, thus reviving the organic world. The power of a written word is this energy in the world of culture. A text may be hidden for a long time as a grain in the ground, until the season of crop comes, i.e. when being read it is alive again and blossoms.

The parable of the grain taken from the Egyptian pyramid after thousands of years determines the horizon of hope for all those Jews, who had written their texts and then hid them, believing they preserved a spiritual nourishment for the future.

The poem by Suckewer shows a mechanism of tradition as a process of handing over and receiving – amongst others by word. A deposit which reveals our identity and its roots, creates community, establishes links between the past (which is inexhaustible source of the new) and the future (which reveals itself as an explanation, fulfilment and reviving of the old). That bond is created due to the memory, which unites, joins and preserves. Memory is the first commandment of tradition.

So, let's read the preserved testimonies of the Holocaust carefully. Those texts should become for us a source of knowledge about ourselves, who live *hic et nunc.*

A reflection concerning the phenomenon of preparing testimonies about Extermination reveals three dimensions of writing symbolism: 1) writing as testifying, 2) writing as prophecy, 3) writing as a liturgy of the memory. Each of these dimensions relates in its own way to the traditional action and binds it with the universal heritage of the past.

Writing as testifying

Writing as an act of bringing testimony about the Extermination is deeply rooted in the Biblical and Talmudic tradition.

The Torah and the Talmud demand to testify about inequity. In the Book of Leviticus you can read, that a person sins heavily when "*he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about"* (Leviticus 5:1). In the context of this tradition a witness is not only the person who has seen what happened but also who "only" knows. The knowledge obliges. You should testify. Such a duty has both moral and religious obligation. Testifying is closely connected in the Jewish tradition with the legal process of determining all proofs to find out the truth and reach justice.

This Biblical and Talmudic tradition of testifying reveals one of the foundations upon which the authors of the Extermination period could build their decision about writing. In the light of that tradition an author of a diary or memoirs can perceive his role as a fulfilment of the duty to testify. Diaries, memoirs and reports as well as other written records of the Holocaust reveal themselves to be a fruit of an attitude which can be drawn from the sources of Judaism. Even more, the subject of the testimony itself can also be compared to the original Biblical models. The Bible and the Rabbinical literature provide a model for this situation and a language to describe it. Traditional ways of describing misfortunes, suffering and the triumph of evil, are written down there. The text created in the face of extermination and the text which testifies to extermination has that Biblical model behind itself. The description of reality seems to repeat the original archetype: the Biblical paradigm of common banishment, destruction, national defeat and individual disaster of a suffering Jew. Jeremiah, weeping his lamentations over destroyed Jerusalem, the fall of the Temple, defeat, captivity and disgrace, was the archetypical eulogist of the extermination. The Bible provides all later witnesses of national disasters with a well formulated "rhetoric of martyrdom" and "liturgy of disgrace".

Listing all disasters which afflicted Jews and handing them over to posterity has a long tradition. The period of crusades, expulsion from Spain or the Cossacks uprising of Bohdan Kchmielnicki in 1648 gave birth to numerous chronicle writers of pogroms and persecution.

Writing as prophetic formula

Some of the Holocaust testimonies seen from the perspective of the Biblical tradition can be compared with inspired writing contained within a framework of specifically understood prophetism. The special meaning of this prophetism is due to the fact that it does not mean forecasting future events, revealing a Divine message or being a medium for a Divine Voice. This prophetism means the unquestionable duty of writing and testifying. The author understands himself as fulfilling a mission. He has to speak in the name of those who cannot speak. He has to preach the truth which should be known by the world. The imperative of writing is so strong you can not resist it.

A prophet acted despite the dangers awaiting him, despite despair and discouragement, even despite his own human and weak will. You can find the same de-

termination among the testimonies of the Holocaust. The author is in a compulsory situation. It is not up to him to chose but he is chosen himself, he is called.

Writing as a liturgy of the memory

The sheets of paper, covered with texts, can resist a death inflicted on a mass scale and may overcome the destructive power of time. They are like monuments made out of words, in which immortal messages have been sculpted like in granite. They are like a sanctuary preserving and immortalising the names of victims. The registration of sufferings is an obligation for the descendants. Memory is a keyword for that strategy of duty. And the action of writing in and at itself becomes a liturgy of the memory.

An essay by Rachel Auerbach entitled *"Izkor"* of 1943 has exactly this liturgical form of celebrating a memory. The essay was written in November 1943. Its title means in Hebrew "*You will remember"* and it is a begging prayer said four times a year for the blessed memory of all the deceased of a family. These days are: the last day of the Pesah, the Shavouot, Shemini Aceret (the end of the feast of Tents) and Jom Kippur. All the deceased are named during the prayer.

The essay starts with a description of flood which is a great metaphor for the deportation of the Warsaw Jews, of which only a mute scream and silence have remained. Then we can find a ceremony of bewitching, casting a spell on memory, inscribed into excerpts taken from the Psalm 137: *"If I forget those I had seen may me myself be forgotten and my name damned"*.

The Izkor prayer itself is a chain of acclamations of the particular groups or classes of the Jewish nation. In such a group portrait of the nation you can find little children, boys and girls, young people, pious Jews, rabbis and teachers, craftsmen, grandmas and grandpas, scientists, artists, musicians, painters, professors and tailors, watchmakers and doctors, poor men from dark town lanes and petty thieves, smugglers and street tradesmen, beggars and starving displaced people. They all pass in front of our eyes.

Rachel Auerbach ends her prayer commemoration with a declaration to say continuously this rite of memory, listing names of the murdered nation. This declaration becomes a call, addressed to all of us at the same time.

Writing – memory – salvation

We are now at the climax of our consideration. The reading of the Holocaust testimonies has introduced us in the dimension of tradition, on which the decision to write itself was founded and which to a great extend modelled the language of description. And if now the voice of Rachel Auerbach's prayer is reaching us, calling for cherishing the memory, it is exactly due to the phenomenon of persisting in defiance of death and destruction, regardless of the distance in time and space. The voice coming to us from the very bottom of the destruction reveals a great mystery, around which we are circulating in our reflection. Memory is the key to this mystery.

Classic metaphors of memory describe it as a registration – a waxed plate preserving an inscription (Plato, Cicero). The action of writing down is connected already

at its beginning with providing a confirmation to something volatile and transitory, – a transfer of our traces to the posterity.

The memory is one of the foundation of Judaism. The faith of the Jews is not based upon theological dogmas but upon the memory. History is a scene for the covenant with God. Judas Halevi, a medieval poet and philosopher, stresses that the Decalogue does not begin with a statement, or a dogma but with a reminder "*I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery"* (Ex 20:2). A Jew reassures his faith by continuously remembering events in which his ancestors took part. We can find a warning in the Book of Deuteronomy: "*Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen..."* (Deut 4:9).

An impulse of writing down to preserve, interpret or hand over a sense of experienced events is based upon an ancient tradition. Writing down used to become an opposition against the destruction, an act of faith in a better future, an act of hope that coming generations would learn, understand, evaluate and compensate.

The pages of the dairies, memoirs or relations made by the witnesses of the Extermination demand to be read. In return the act of reading enables the text to speak, undertakes and revives the heritage of the memory. Writing can save the memory of existence i.e. the existence itself.

Handing over the heritage of the Holocaust – traps and dangers

If we understand the tradition as a space of dialogue – through texts – on the basis of the memory – so the dialogue about the heritage of the Holocaust has been exposed to special shocks and dangers. An optimistic conviction of Rene Casin seems to be far from real. So let's sketch briefly those dangers which await such dialogue.

Barriers for the dialogue

First, it is difficult to open the dialogue because even those texts which survived hardly reached their readers. The history of discovering the manuscripts buried by Jews of the Auschwitz Sonderkommando in ashes is symbolic. They could not be searched immediately after the war because there was a Soviet camp for German war prisoners in Brzezinka (Birkenau). When the Auschwitz Museum was created, the digging that had already started had to be stopped because there was too much excitement among the "gold-diggers" prowling the surrounding region. So, the manuscripts were taken out and saved only in 1961 – although if the place where they were hidden was well know from the beginning, thanks to rescued witnesses. The last manuscript was found by chance in the late fall of 1980 when a group of school boys planted trees around the crematory in Birkenau.

Second, the dialogue is embroiled in contradictions resulting from a fundamental question about the possibility to express an experience of Extermination. An imperative to say a truth to the world about the Holocaust (that phrase "You should know") runs into a resistance, resulting from a conviction that such truth can not be expressed as "no words can express it". And the world would not be able to understand it anyway.

Third, the roles in that dialogue are not well suited. Witnesses, rooted in the tradition, believe in the value of a written testimony. According to them, it is not only a warning and a lesson for future generations but it can also save a sense of victims' and witnesses' existence. However, the addressees of the testimony, who declare a great crisis of the art of wording after Auschwitz, stating that language cannot express the inexpressible sense of the Extermination.

Multiple memory

The memory of the Holocaust has many dimensions. There is a common memory and an individual one. There is the memory of victims, witnesses and of executioners. There is the memory of those who encountered help, care or friendship and the memory of those who were pushed away, betrayed, sold. There is the memory of suffering and the memory of hate. There is the memory of humiliation, shame, hopelessness and stupefaction. There is the memory of heroic resistance and struggle, and the memory of resignation and defeat.

We should also take into consideration all those testimonies which will never reach us any more. The suffocated voice of all those, whose names did not last and who did not preserve any traces of their existence.

The deposit of the memory is scattered, hardly accessible and very often lost forever. The message of the memory is exposed to many dangers. It can be deformed on different ways and even completely blocked.

Oblivion

The memory which is a foundation of tradition does create an identity. Oblivion means a betrayal of grandfathers and fathers and a breaking of the bond. As a result it sentences us to non-existence.

What happens when the Holocaust becomes an area of oblivion? Is the message of the Holocaust really remembered in the contemporary world? When looking upon today's wars and slaughters, ethnic purges, living skeletons behind barbed wires in camps and upon mass graves, we must come to a conclusion that the world knows nothing, remembers nothing.

Henryk Grynberg, a child of the Holocaust and one of the most persistent of the Holocaust writers-witnesses, states that Holocaust does not teach us anything new or delivers a breakthrough. "Great evil, and the Holocaust was an expression of it, can teach us that there are values, without which the human world can not exist, that there are some bans which should not be broken if you want to remain a man. And we know about it for some thousand years" – says Grynberg. Is this knowledge covered by oblivion?

The memory of the Holocaust can become an arena for lies and manipulation. The expression "Auschiwtz-Lüge" describes the activity of false historians, suggesting that gas chambers and crematoria never existed.

Wounds of the memory and the memory of wounds

The horror of the Holocaust cannot be understood, cannot be expressed. However, this is exactly an experience which demands an extremely powerful expression. It is an expression of pain and suffering, as well as of loneliness, desolation, of abandonment, of being sentenced to non existence and to vanishing without any trace. That is why the struggle for memory becomes even more important than the struggle for life, it is a memory of the very bottom of hell, a memory of excruciating and never healing wounds.

So, the memory of the Holocaust is a memory of wounds and at the same time it is wounded itself. It is wounded, since it is torn between the possible and the impossible, between the human and the inhuman. The absurdity of the mass extermination cannot be understood, however it should be remembered, i. e. we should hand it over to posterity and furnish them with that terrible knowledge.

However, how can a normal human memory grasp the heritage of the Holocaust? Such wounded memory of the Holocaust can become a nourishment for diseases and fears, which worry the contemporary world, which worry ourselves. Sometimes we want to nourish our own prejudices with the message of the Holocaust in order to preserve comfortable stereotypes. For example, this is the source for the competition of martyrdom between Poles and Jews which is going on since the War. Which of the two nations was persecuted more and suffered more? We can find origins of some attempts within the Polish historic publications submitting to an ideology to purge the Holocaust of Jews, to purge Auschwitz of the Jews. The question is whether the Jews were just only one of many nations murdered in Auschwitz. That is also instrumental in the case for understanding of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The Jewish wound has its sources in experiencing indifference and betrayal by Poles, in the memory of those who tracked and blackmailed Jews for money. Such thinking is transferring itself into stereotypes pretending that a Pole suck his anti-Semitism with his mother's milk, or the stereotype of Poland as the biggest Jewish graveyard – a graveyard and nothing else.

The Polish wound has its sources in the experiences of the September of 1939 and the behaviour of Jews in the Polish territory, when occupied by the Red Army. The experience of installing the communist regime in Poland supported the common conviction about a union between the Jews and communism. Such thinking finds its expression in the stereotype of a "Jewish-commune" and of "Jew-ubek" (Jews as officers for the Sovjet secret political police, which occupied Poland and persecuted Poles).

We should face the challenge

The heritage of the Holocaust is extremely difficult to accept. It cannot be completely judged and understood. It is a moral and a theological scandal. The horror of this heritage may be perceived of as an overwhelming burden which can justify our helplessness to some extent. It frees us from taking the risk of understanding, and it provokes to create different self-tranquillising therapies.

Zygmunt Bauman, in his book entitled *Modernity and Extermination,* criticises the tendency in the Holocaust research, which focuses on creating defence mechanisms rather than on searching for the essence of this phenomenon. The

thesis, that the Holocaust was a terrible aberration and a complete break of any continuity within culture and civilisation, is only the historians' wishful thinking. Rather, the Holocaust seems to be a fruit of modernity. The dark side of modern civilisation – not fully recognised and located beyond the horizon of our knowledge – is still presents a real danger. Neither anniversary celebrations, nor warnings against the repetition of the tragedy may effectively oppose it.

Condemnation of the evil by putting ourselves outside its range, and facing the challenge by trying to respond to the evil, are two different things. "The most horrible about the Holocaust is not the presumption that it could happen to us as well, but that it could be done by us" – says Bauman.

A grain buried in ashes

Let's come back to the symbolism of the word-grain, the symbolism of sown manuscripts, put into the ground with the hope that they would bring an abundant harvest. The collaborators of the Warsaw Ghetto Archives buried them with such a kind of hope in boxes full of documents and manuscripts. With the same hope, prisoners of the "Sonderkommando" in Birkenau, who worked in the crematory, hid their manuscripts in glasses, German army water flasks, mess kits, etc. and buried them in human ashes. The holes, where the ashes from the crematory furnaces were thrown, seemed the safest places to them. The history of the exterminated nation was hidden inside its own ashes.

There is an incessant request, a kind of a litany, in those manuscripts:

"Dear finder, look everywhere, in each piece of ground (...) look carefully and you will find a lot (...) Look for a hidden bigger material (...) Look over there in the holes (...) Keep on looking! You will surely find more!

Ladies and gentlemen, you walked on the paths of Auschwitz-Birkenau yesterday. Please remember the manuscripts buried by the prisoners of the Sonderkommando. The grain taken out of the crematory like it was taken from the ruins of the Egyptian pyramid should not be lost in all this chaos and noise. Today, we should be courageous enough to listen to this request that is written down on shreds of paper. We should be courageous enough to respond to that hope, buried as a grain in human ashes.

Ronaldo Sathler-Rosa *Brazil, 2000*

Pastoral action

in a context of economic slavery and cultural apathy

topics:

- *pastoral care in a context of economic oppression*
- *the public dimension of pastoral care*
- *pastoral theology and human sciences*

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Introduction

This paper will attempt to discuss some traits of the modern economy and its pervasive influence on the shaping of contemporary cultures. The current process of economic globalization is critically identified from the perspective of the so-called emerging countries. The engagement of globalization as an economic, cultural and political process with diverse contemporary religious phenomenon is explored. Implications and applications for Pastoral Action and Pastoral Care within this encompassing cultural context provides the major focus of this study.

The pastoral-theological theory that underlies this paper comes from Practical Theology. Within this frame of reference two specific theological concepts will be emphasized: the reign of God and God's Grace. Major presuppositions of this analysis are:

(1) Pastoral Care and Counselling of individuals and families is not adequate to address the current social and economic conditions of most of the global population;

(2) Pastoral Care givers have a special vocational call which implies that their mission goes beyond the limits of a congregation or institution; Pastoral Care agents together with the churches can create and develop prophetic-pastoral channels to fulfill the public dimension of the ministry of care.

A. Defining the context

First of all, let me share with you the findings of recent researches by three different scholars on current economic processes. In the 5th Asian Conference on Pastoral Care and Counselling, held in 1993, in Indonesia, Lester E. J. Ruiz Krisetya, 1993, p. 8) states:

"We are living in a time of world-changing events. Historical conditions are changing at an almost unimaginable rate forcing us to redefine our ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. We are witnessing, indeed, participating, not only in the acceleration of history, but in a profoundly uneven, not to mention deeply contradictory and contestatory transformation of that history. This distinctly modem experience has many names: integration and fragmentation, combined and uneven development, the transnationalization, if not globalization, of the market and of capital."

Ruiz contends that according to different international scholars (such as Immanuel Wallerstein, Joyce Kolko, Maria Mies, Richard Flack, Cornel West), "increasingly, there exists a single, integrated global economy, oriented around a capitalist ideology. By global economy I do not refer to national economies that are linked globally. Nor do I mean a totally homogeneous, invariant and symmetrical economy. I mean, rather, an extensive and fairly complete global division of labor, with an integrated set of production, distribution, and consumption processes that are related through corporate market institutions by which I mean a complex set of interlocking enterprises that have a disproportionate amount of capital, power, and exercise a disproportionate influence on how our society is run and how our culture is shaped" (p. 8).

Ruiz continues his statement: "the global economy is characterised by both the globalization of the market as well as the regionalization of capital. It is marked by the globalization of production and the territorialization of consumption. The global economy is a process and structure marked by hierarchy and unevenness that links economies as diverse as those of the advanced capitalist states as well as those more popularly called 'semicolonial, semifeudal or postcolonial, even postmodern' " (p. 89).

Richard Falk (in Ruiz, p. 9), in his article "Economic Aspects of Global Civilization; the Unmet Challenges of World Poverty" states: "These interlocking constellations of economic and political power [G7, IMF/WB, GATT] are concentrated in the North, and augmented by the Asian NICS - although its practices and effects are dispersed widely throughout the planet. So confident are the G7 countries that in 1990 they declared that 'market-oriented constitutionalism' was the only acceptable basis for legimate governance."

According to M. Douglas Meeks (1998), "the global market economy is not only full of promise, it is also full of threat. At the turn of the century there are several tectonic plates just under the surface of the global economy, several fault lines that could erupt into destructive social earthquakes: there is an increasing gap between rich and poor in developed and developing countries...; there is major migration of non-skilled peoples to the areas of brainpower industry just when knowledge has become more important than manual energy; with the end of the cold war there is no completely dominant political and economic power. International corporations become too powerful for national governments and regional trading organizations to control them; no one knows whether democracy and global market economy will be able to live together and survive together. They have different beliefs about the proper distribution of power. Democracy believes in the completely equal distribution of political power, 'one person, one vote'. Democracy is the systematic criticism of privilege. Democracy tries to include all people in the public household and to give all persons the dignity that is owed them because of their humanity. The global market economy, on the other hand, believes it is duty of the economically fit to drive the unfit out of business and into

economic extinction. Inequalities in purchasing power are what capitalistic efficiency is all about; finally, nature itself is more and more exploited and depleted in order to be at the service of human economic goals."

B. Pastoral analysis
…on excludent competition

Rumscheidt (1998, p. VII) affirms that "Local, national, and continental economies have been restructured within an integrated free market system. The imperatives of 'globalization' compel all members of the human family to secure their livelihood in competition against each other, in a global market place. A consolidation of this 'global economy' has been proposed by the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), negotiated secretly in closed sessions around the planet, by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)."

…on apathy

I will refer to my short article published by the Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling from Düsseldorf, Germany.

In a conversations between Rene Girard and Brazilian theologians on the connections between violence and economy, Girard points to a subtle way of sacrificing people. His words: "There is another way of sacrificing people: indifference. The mimetic desire of the indifference concentrates on an obsessive object and destroys the importance of the rest" (cf. Assmann, 1991, p. 21). This apathy seems to be a major trait of many societies. It is more than a personal attitude, it is part of a cultural pattern that idolises "success" [profits] and the "winners" to the detriment of the victims [of economic exploitation]. The victims become visible in the faces of the unemployed, the two-thirds of the world that is impoverished, children, women, Indigenous persons, and others. For Girard, this is a type of sacrifice is derived from indifference (Sathler-Rosa, 1998, p. 20; cf. Assmann, 1991, p. 21).

…on ethics

Corruption at the level of politics, sports, law seems to be a hallmark of humankind in our present time. It appears in different cultural contexts, in rich and impoverished countries. It splits the so-called minorities and also contaminates the younger generation. There is also a general and broad consensus among various authors that we all live in a worldly society molded by the logic of market, which creates the social conditions for correption of religious and ethical values. Hanna Arendt refers to our time as "gloomy times"; it means, in her own way, that we are living under a social atmosphere that creates room for the neglect of basic ethical values, such as meeting fundamental human needs (cf. Josgrilberg, 1999). We may examine ourselves vis-avis the seduction of the consumerist relation. The consumerist relation is the predominant offer in a market-oriented society. From a pastoral-theological perspective human relationships should not grow apart from the soil of gratuity. Sound and creative relationships cannot be replaced by "talk-shows", "friendship lines"... (cf. Josgrilberg, 1999).

Rumscheidt: "In the 'global economy', restructuring corporate enterprises, breaking social contracts, and privatizing public services may provide jobs. But there is

no economic security. The common good is actively underdeveloped by a perverse but rational process in which privatization produces privation. The impact of this process on the real lives of real persons takes a corresponding toll on the actual faith of actual people" (p. 87).

…on our congregations

In the presentation of the book *Faith and the Future*, by Metz and Moltmann, Fiorenza says that "Metz's critical analysis of modern society takes particular aim at the crisis of the church posed by bourgeois religion. The bourgeois virtues of autonomy, stability, competitive struggle, and performance obscure the messianic virtues of repentance, compassion, and unconditional love for the least of the brethren (xiv). "Industrialization goes hand in hand with an exponential growth of impoverishment. The technological rationality that dominates nature leads to a neglect of the Other" (xiv)

M. Doulas Meeks in his *God the Economist* states: "The worship and life of churches in our society appear isolated from the economic context. Christians have often been unware of the ways in which economic systems have distorted Christian faith and the way in which perverted religious notions have dehumanized economic relationships. The predominant economic values have sometimes been virulently ant-Christian. Yet church people have tended to assume that the economic environment of the church had nothing to do with faith. Theologians, moreover, seem assiduously trained not to see critically the connections between God and the economy. When these convictions hold sway it is easy to make surreptitious use of Christian faith as religious legitimization of assumptions behind prevailing economic systems."

Meeks (1998, non-published paper): "While the science called economics is certainly a modern invention, the word economy (oikos + nomos) is not; it is an ancient word that means literally the "law or management of the household". The word "economy" is found throughout the Septuagint and the New Testament and the phrase oikonomia tou theou (the economy of God). "Economy" is central and decisive for the biblical rendering of God. Economy in its biblical meaning is about access to what it takes to live and live abundantly. The basic question of economy was, "Will everyone in the household get what it takes to live? Will everyone survive (sur-vivre = "live through") the day and, where possible, flourish. As the arrangement that makes it possible for the household or community to live, economy was bound to community. In fact, it was clear that economy existed to serve community. Economy in the broadest sense meant the relations of human beings for the producing of the conditions of life against death. Economy was about human livelihood and human flourishing."

…on Pastoral Theology and Human Sciences

"The specific nature of pastoral theologizing is to establish a dialogue between the data supplied by social [and human] sciences and the demands of revelation. In fact, to make pastoral action effective, socio-analytical mediations are necessary to unveil society's mechanisms" (Sathler-Rosa, p. 32; cf Boff, 1987; Libanio, 1982, p. 25).

Clodovis Boff (1998, p. 378) says that the human sciences such as Psychology, History, Linguistics, and the Social Sciences, e. g., Economics, Sociology, Political Sciences, Anthropology take as their object of study the human being. The-

se sciences help us to understand the human being. Moreover, they are important auxiliary sciences to help Theology & Pastoral Care Agents to bring faith into history and culture. However, the scientific character of the sciences and their academic autonomy does not make them free from critique by theologians.

From a Practical Theology view Theology does not concern itself only with God; it scrutinizes the human processes that lead to know God and the events which happen between human beings and God, and among people in their searching for God (Sathler-Rosa, 1993, p. 36).

C. A pastoral agenda

What are some pastoral-theological principles that would underline Pastoral Care practices in the search for ways of doing Pastoral Action that could express fidelity to the Gospel, and offer meaning and relevance to our contemporary world?

Love and justice

First, we cannot forget the biblical connections between love and justice. Justice is the implementation of love. To work for justice within primary relationships as well as between communities, churches and nations is a perennial goal of all pastoral practices. As the professor of communications Clifford G. Christians (1999, p. 15) says: "Our long-term goal ought to be normative thinking on distributive justice widely shared by churches, media users and producers, teachers and students, government regulators, and engineers. A general understanding of justice is nurtured as we call one another to account within participatory media where we have a voice and a hearing."

Resistance and solidarity

Second, to motivate congregations to become "communities of resistance and solidarity" (Sharon Welch). The congregations is a political model that invites people and communities to live abundantly.

To resist means to be in opposition to practices, legislations, policies that would work against the goal of creating a culture of peace and justice. It is a difficult and dangerous task. It brings back the messianic hope and memories. For some this stance may sound naive and foolish.

The theological principle of solidarity means an invitation to find pastoral ways of exerting mutual care among the members of the community. In addition, the community is invited to exert several ministries - or a variety of ways of doing critical pastoral care with others, nature and at the political-public level. The idea - and ideal - of solidarity is to support justice-love based relationships, i.e., opportunities and recognition of one's capabilities and fair differentiation. We are increasingly coming to realize that the role of the clergy needs to be reshaped. Instead of pointing out models or methods I would like to stress a fundamental attitude by the clergy as member of such a community. As a basic attitude I would say that this leadership should be shaped according to essential characteristics we find in Jesus ministry: compassionate, attentive, respectful. In other words, we need to be aware of Jesus' subversive and merciful power. Also, we may remember that Mary, Jesus' mother, sent him to the kitchen, in Meeks' words, to "do something about the wine". As we look again to the story of the first miracle in

John 2, we learn that our pastoral duties are not as transcendent as they use to be. We have to deal with "down-to-earth" issues and concerns.

Ecologically anthropocentric-oriented pastoral sction

Third, we need to search for ecologically anthropocentric-oriented Pastoral Action. The traditional theocentrism of many pastoral practices focuses on, for example, preaching about different interpretations and experiences of God, polemics on the history of God, indoctrination or moralist teachings. An ecologically anthropocentric-oriented Pastoral Action assumes that Jesus did not incarnate for the sake of the Divine, but for the sake of women, men, nature and the cosmos An ecologically anthropocentric-oriented Pastoral Action would ponder human questions and human aspirations, and establish a pastoral dialogue on matters or subjects involved and correlate them with appropriate pastoral responses. It would look like a shared pilgrimage in which the Pastoral Care givers attempts to facilitate the process of self-knowledge, the search for meaning vis-a-vis the anthropological and theological concept of "Image of God", and construct theological affirmations regarding the whole creation. This pastoral emphasis would seek to integrate "the whole-biosphere well-being perspective" as well as for "the whole-human-family well-being perspective" (Clinebell, 1996, p. 79-81). This emphasis would require attentive and continuing study of the economic-cultural-political influences on people's lives.

Of course I am not speaking about a modern anthropocentrism that, in J. Moltmann's words (1995, p. 188ff) "has robbed nature of its soul and made human beings unembodied subjects". An ecologically anthropocentric-oriented pastoral care of persons, systems, world and nature "can be fitted into the conditions for life on earth and into the symbiosis, or community, of all living things in a way that is not a nostalgic and 'alternative' flight from industrial society, but which will reform it until it becomes ecologically endurable for the earth, and is integrated into the earthly fellowship of the living". It means that one of our tasks as Pastoral Care givers is "to decentralize human culture and to incorporate it harmoniously into a single web with nature" (Moltmann, 1995, p. 193).

The public dimension of pastoral care

Fourth, this pastoral agenda would incorporate into our current care of individuals and families the public dimension of Pastoral Care, i.e., look for ways of witnessing prophetic and messianic concerns for the underprivileged.

As Larry Graham (1999) says:

"In the last fifteen years, pastoral theology has discovered social and cultural 'location', and has gone contextual and 'public'. Through the rise of feminist and womanist consciousness family therapy and other systems analysis, intercultural conversations with pastoral caregivers around the globe, liberation and other political theologies, the ecological crisis, and greater clarity about a variety of oppressive structures, the field of pastoral theology and care have expanded its theory and practice to interpret and engage the larger world. Indeed, Bonnie Miller-McLemore, one of the leaders in the field, characterizes pastoral care and counseling as moving from exclusive focus upon 'living human document' to attend also to the 'living human web'."

I would like to offer an image that could illustrate this public dimension of Pastoral Care: joining hands with social and communitarian movements that are strug-

gling for a more just distribution of land, equal opportunities, and against economic slavery. I would like to offer a model to implement the public dimension of Pastoral Care. We may confront, i.e., to offer another perspective, to policy-makers, politicians, business persons, entrepreneurs in order to show the reality, or the social location, of those who are the victims of their economic decisions.

As Konrad Raiser pointed out in his address at the jubilee Consultation 1996:

"Any perception of reality, in particular of social reality, is shaped and conditioned by a perspective which reflects the social position and the interest of those who speak or act. This was brought home to me very dramatically at an ecumenical hearing about the international debt crisis. A senior representative of the World Bank, fully convinced of the validity and realism of his analysis, was confronted with the testimony of people from countries which bade experienced structural adjustment programmes. They spoke about a reality which he had never seen or experienced personally. Under the impact of these testimonies, he said somewhat helplessly: 'Could it be that we have become blind and cannot see reality?' "

Hope

Finally, we need to examine the past and be hope oriented. Some sociologists have adopted the concept of "analysis of conjuncture" (K. Marx, Bromide 18th) as a tool in order to understand the circumstances and historical factors which have contributed to the present shape of groups, societies, institutions. Many of our legitimate critiques of, for example, institutional ecclesiastical bodies would be much more effective if we were aware of the past factors which have shaped us – and our congregations – and tailored us into a "bourgeois religion" (see Metz and Moltmann, 1995) rather than a radical Christian religion. Hope-oriented Pastoral Action would be "utopian-oriented", that is, reject the dictatorship of "facts", or of the so-called "common sense", that would adopt attitudes such as "this is the way things are... you cannot change it... this is the way we do business..."

"Hope" is one of the constitutive elements of the theological metaphor of the reign of God. The reign of God is hope-oriented.

Hope for the coming reign, in Jewish tradition, was more than merely an addition to the pious duties of the law. The hope that comes from Jesus' message is the unique spring of "knowledge and guidance for living. Whatever God demands from [men and women], and whatever he gives to [men and women] is comprehended in the message of his imminent kingdom" (Pannenberg, 1977, p. 54). The concept of hope is even more significant when it is articulated in concrete and conflictive situations. Gustavo Gutierrez discusses how Ernst Bloch has used this predominantly theological category. According to Gutierrez, Bloch has pointed out that humankind dreams of the future and hopes for it; however, Gutierrez says, "it is an active hope which subverts the existing order" (p. 216). Hope belongs to "expectation affections" together with anguish and fear (E. Bloch). The expectation affections foresee the unseen.

In Gutierrez's words:

"Hope is the most important as well as the most positive and liberating [of the expectation affections]. Hope is a daydream projected into the future; it is the 'yet-not-conscious'... the psychic representation of that which 'is not yet'. But this hope seeks to be clear and conscious... When that which is 'yet-not-conscious' becomes a conscious act, it is no longer a state of mind; it assumes a concrete uto-

pia function, mobilizing human action in history. Hope thus emerges as the key to human existence oriented towards the future, because it transforms the present" (Gutierrez, 1971/1973, p. 216).

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Lothar Carlos Hoch *Brazil, 2001*

Healing as a task of pastoral care among the poor

topics:

- *pastoral care in a context of economic poverty*
- *rituals in pastoral care*
- *healing and community*
- *questioning "pathogenic structures"*
- *pastoral care in Brazil*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 7, 2001; pp. 32-38

Let me start with questions:

- Can the form of pastoral care in Latin America is relevant to people in Europe?

- Can it be argued that the societies, cultures and churches are basically too different here in Latin America from Europe?

- Finally, experiences, especially experiences in the field of pastoral care, – can they be conveyed accurately at all?

There are lots of good reasons to answer all these questions with 'no'. Nevertheless, I would like to explain something about pastoral care from a Latin American perspective, i.e. especially from a Brazilian and Lutheran perspective.

I would like to do so, because this exchange of experiences is expressing the fact that we all belong to the one and same Church of Jesus Christ on earth – and pastoral care is of course a matter of the Church! Secondly I would like to do so, because there are developments occurring which have a similar impact on human bodies and souls all around the globe. I will deal with this at the end of my lecture!

At first a historical remark is appropriate to be made:

Historical remark

The Catholicism of the Iberian Peninsula introduced a specific type of Christianity to Latin America which was marked by hierarchical pastoral activities putting the main emphasis on catechesis and the proper handling of the sacraments. Within the Lutheran Tradition the central figure was the preaching of the Gospel from the pulpit. The first model focused on teaching, the second one on preaching. But both models neglected a third element of the *triplex munus Christi*, the threefold

ministry of Christ, i.e. the healing. And this lasted on and on, in spite of the fact that the people in Latin America were poor and in bad health conditions with an ongoing decline of the medical care structures.

But then the religious landscape was shaken. A new sound was to be heard, i.e. special offers for healings! It started in the quarters of the poor, then being spread by the media. And the masses of the people were rushing there! Soccer stadiums were filled with people, longing for a healing of their diseases and pains. I am now talking about the Pentecostal churches, mushrooming all over in Latin America.

Meanwhile we had a growing awareness of the fact that there were a lot of destructive things being done under the camouflage of 'healing', but nevertheless I want to stress this:

For one: it is quiet a bit of irony, that the 'historic' churches in Latin America had to be reminded of the central role, which the healing took in the work of Jesus, by the Pentecostal Churches and by other form of religious praxis like Spiritualism and other Afro-American Cults.

Secondly: consequently pastoral care has to draw the conclusion, that -from the very outset- it has to be healing care much more than ever before.

The onset of such a pastoral care model is a challenge for church work in Latin American Churches, and in the following remarks I want to outline shortly what it might mean, especially for the Lutheran Church in Brazil. Some thesis and their explanation will support this task:

Thesis 1

The Word of God remains sovereign, i.e. it does not act according to our human ideas. In pastoral care healing does not necessarily mean to do miracles, but to show solidarity in our weakness.

In the Lutheran Tradition the sovereignty of God is to be kept untouched, i.e. one is rather cautious not to interpret the Word of God in way which might just suit our own wishes and needs. One is also aware of another danger, i.e. that we as human being should never try to make God follow our will. This would be the case i.e., if we would insist that that he should fulfill our wish for healing on our command - urged by our prayers or by any other human donation we gave him for that purpose!

Observing the praxis of healing over here among some Pentecostal Curches, then it is quite evident that exactly this is happening, which the Lutherans try to give warnings about. i.e. people try to act out a manipulation of God. The game that people play is that if: one gives a donation of a 10th of the – often very small – income to God, attends church every day, seeks betterment of one's lifestyle etc., and in return one is healed, or gets a new job or realizes social advancement.

According to this ideology the human service and obedience obliges God to act accordingly to the needs of the believer. Well, God might interfere in a healing way in a human fate and passion. And we are entitled, or better to say even destined, to stand up before Him in favor of a healing of a sick person, for example by prayers if intercession. At the same time, however, we are called to give in to the sovereign will of God and to leave it up to him, whether or in which way he

might intend to help us out. Often the miracle in the real sense of the work does not exist in the fact that some sensational healing of a sick person had happened, but in the fact, that he was given the strength to 'carry his cross' in dignity and strong hope.

Regarding all the turmoil existing over here in regard to theses healing-miracles I am more and more inclined to say that often the real miracle is happening whenever the bodily healing stays unfulfilled and when -in spite of this- somebody nevertheless stays faithfully attached to God, the one who is mighty in the weak. And also, that true pastoral care is not showing it's dimensions by accomplishing "great things" at the bedside of a sick person, but by standing along with the powerlessness there, i.e. not to be able to help, and that pastoral care nevertheless is showing it's "caritas", the act of love to people, as a solidarity in weakness.

Thesis 2

The Word of God does not need to be experienced with all senses, but it may be experienced that way. Rituals from old, well acknowledged church traditions may be supportive.

Therefore, the statement in thesis 1 does not exclude the possibility that pastoral care is striving for a way by which the sick and the suffering may experience the message of the word of God as concrete as possible. It would mean a shortcoming of the mandatory task of pastoral care, if we would restrict ourselves to a way by which the biblical word would just be verbally targeted at the 'heads' of the people. People long for a type of pastoral care, which mediates the consolation and the support of God in such a way, that at best all senses, emotions included, are addressed.

Those who are simple minded and those who are in weak moods - this from time to time and depending on the situation will include us, too, considering ourselves to be 'enlightened' people - all they can deal much better with a God who is encountering us in the Gestalt of Rituals than in the rather dry way of regular preaching.

In Latin America we are rediscovering the usefulness of the rituals like the anointing of the sick and the celebration of the Lord's supper, as also that form of prayer which is accompanied by the laying on of hands. Also the singing of songs of faith can be experienced as supportive. Our way of pastoral care was adopted from Europe and was very much brain-centered, which has led a lot of people to join other congregations, whether Pentecostal or of other faiths. We now learn better in our everyday practice of pastoral care and in the celebration of the worship as well as in the Christian religious education, to make the logic of the faith match with the mystery of faith. One can say that we are rediscovering the importance of the dimension of spirituality in pastoral care in Latin America.

Thesis 3

In Latin America such a healing type of pastoral care fulfills the task of responding to the character of urgency which is implied in the human emergency situations over here, without disregarding other long term goals.

It appeared that the way of pastoral action, which followed the patterns of western enlightenment aiming at the self-determination and self-reliance of the individual person to take on their own responsibilities, was too one-sided and too over demanding for underprivileged people. Many poor people are totally occupied by the daily fight for survival, so that they can hardly provide some extra power that would be necessary to also care for those things which would be in the agenda only by tomorrow. And nobody here can count on public subsidies any more.

All my remarks are not intended to imply that medium- or long-term goals in pastoral care should be abandoned in favour of only immediate measures. Focusing on long-term goals will always be important, especially when groups have to be accompanied which are suppressed within a society, for example the landless farmers, the street children, the single mothers. Such goals have to be linked with measures combining pastoral care and diaconia-tasks, which can bring relief to acute emergencies as well as they can foster the organizing of self-help activities.

To go back to Pentecostal congregations and congregations of other faiths: Whether or not they succeed in providing real help to people, they do ensure that a lot of their prayer houses are open to the public around the clock, whereas the buildings of the historic churches are kept closed, in order to present them to those very few participants of the worship an Sunday mornings in a 'neat and clean'-way. We, the pastors, ourselves can be reached only by fixed appointments.

Our way of being the church is not designed to be at hand for the people right there and then. We stick to a more bureaucratic form of helping and supporting. But the poor neither have a schedule book, nor a telephone to call us. Often their situation does not permit them to wait until we can deal with them. We are out of reach for them. Therefore they do not turn to us in the first place. The consciousness of these facts is growing here and there among us. But I take this small development to be a reason for hope.

I gained my own education and training in the area of pastoral care and counseling in the United States of America and in Germany. There I learned to know the therapeutic model of pastoral care and counseling, and I still value it. I still take it to be very important to integrate psychological knowledge in one's own work of pastoral care and counseling. Nevertheless I started questioning more and more to what extent this approach might be helpful in practicing pastoral care and counseling with the poor.

In my part of the world the urgent need of the people cannot be met by an approach which is based on long-term pastoral counseling techniques and therapeutic methods aiming mainly at the single, individual person. This approach might be a first choice for people with a good and constant and more reasonable income. Pastoral care in Latin America however has to respond to the aspect of urgency which is always present in the kind of human sufferings we encounter over here; that is to say, pastoral care has to respond to this by looking out for short-term obtainable goals. Pastoral care here has to start with the things at hand; and only after a successful 'first-aid'-intervention can one start to think about further steps.

I will come back later on to deal with the question as to whether pastoral care and counseling can be an apt tool to work with poor people at all.

Thesis 4

Healing seldom falls down from heaven, it needs community. Healing pastoral care and counseling therefore has to be surrounded and held by a congregation and has to lay the foundation for new communion at the same time. In the course of the massive rural exodus and the fast growing of the cities in Latin America many people lost their inherited social, cultural and family-related frame of reference. So often in the urban context they feel rather lost.

If some special problems, like for example unemployment, diseases and the break-down of family relationships are added to this, then frequently a situation comes up, where those people start remembering their religiosity and seek support from diverse churches or religious groups. It is just a matter of fact, that people over here are more religious-minded than in Europe.

How can the churches in Brasil react in an appropriate way to these needs? Our Lutheran Church in Brasil is asking this question, as our church is striving for a stronger presence in the city, especially in the poorer areas. We have not yet found the right way, but some indicators are becoming apparent:

a) we Lutherans critical of ourselves ask, whether we developed an understanding of pastoral care and counseling which was too much centered on the role of the ordained pastor, in spite of all our theories and teachings about the 'general priesthood of all believers'. This type of pastoral care and counseling, based mainly on pastors is overloaded simply in fulfilling their full time parish-ministries anyway, and is based on some few highly trained specialists, so does not have any chance to respond to the manifold demands of the people. Pastoral care and counseling needs to be a care done by the congregation, much more than ever before. The congregation is the true subject of Christian pastoral care and counseling.

b) Therefore one of the most important task of the pastors is the education and training of volunteers among the parish members to enable them to do specific forms of 'pastoral' care and counseling.

c) It has proved to be very helpful to set up small groups of people who have experienced similar situations in life, like disabilities, grievances or unemployment.

We become aware of the fact that people tend to leave our church, if they have been in acute life crisis situations and felt neglected and even forgotten by our church. But in all those places where different types of self help groups had been established within a congregation, showing a specific profile of 'pastoral' care, we realize that the feeling of belonging to our church is strengthened.

This shows that healing pastoral care and counseling in an urban context has the role to help people to overcome their helplessness in the midst of their suffering and also to overcome the lack of strong relationships which often accompanies their social reality. So parishes can become places of encounter mediating a real sense of belonging to their people and providing a framework where they can also find their spiritual stronghold. This last topic is important since many people do not know their way out any more in facing the diversity of religious bids offered to them. This all requires a praxis of pastoral care and counseling which is meant to be the jointly liable engagement of all the membership of every single congregation.

Thesis 5

Healing pastoral care and counseling does not restrict itself to just healing diseases. It is also striving for identifying pathogenic structures and for questioning these structures.

According to the main-stream opinion in most of the Pentecostal churches and also in a good number of Afro-American religious groups all evil, especially diseases of the body or the mind, are caused by efficacy of supernatural powers. So healing worship services in Pentecostal Churches and also certain rituals in African Cults serve this purpose to exorcise the powers of Evil. Among the Spiritualist believers according to Cardec, suffering is understood to be the outcome of wrong doings in earlier incarnations of the soul of a person, - that is to say that they also refer to 'the other world'.

Conceptions of this type, however, are just using smoke to conceal the eyes of the poor from the true reasons for their situation, i.e. from the fact that most suffering in this world is caused by human failure and unjust structures. These conceptions therefore are extremely dangerous.

Having this in mind Lutheran pastoral care strives to care for two things: first, that all kinds of human suffering are opposed; second, that those social structures are identified and unmasked which are frequently causing the suffering. Healing pastoral care and counseling is always and simultaneously a type of pastoral care and counseling with a strong intention to critically observe and analyse societies and ideologies. In other words: this is the prophetic dimension of its task.

Thesis 6

Christian pastoral care and counseling is open-minded to accept medical progress to be a way by which God is acting to promote his healing efforts among us. At the same time we are refusing, however, to glorify medical techniques to such an extent that there might no space being left to pastoral care itself.

Providing good medical care is in short supply in Latin America. Therefore the Lutheran Church of Brazil from its very beginning, was engaged in setting up hospitals and other centers which contributed to the medical supply for the people in remote rural areas and in the cities. In Latin America this is a part of the self-understanding of Christian-Diaconical action that we engage for as many people as possible to benefit from the progress in the area of medical techniques. The Lord who "heals all our diseases and saves our lives from destruction" (Ps 103), he is making use of these techniques, too, to act out his promises to us.

Holistic healing, however, is including more than whatever medicine and its techniques is able to give. God's salvational action towards people wants to use the tools of pastoral care and counseling in manifold ways, as I was describing above.

To stress this point of view is very important over against widely spread magical attitude towards healing on the one hand, and the almost blindly trustful attitude towards medical progress on the other hand.

Thesis 7

When we try to approach and reach the poor and the suffering people by means of pastoral care and counseling then this may be a legitimate way to demonstrate and prove the credibility of the church to be an advocate for the poor and the suffering.

The point at question is this: Is pastoral care and counseling a legitimate way for the church to deal with the complex problems of people in Latin America? Does this not show the collusion on the side of the church in engaging in pastoral care and counseling while basically agreeing that nothing can be changed at all in the overall society?

This is an existing danger, i.e. that the church turns to pastoral care and counseling in order to be able to stay out of the social and structural problems. This danger will be avoided when one is uses the type of self understanding of pastoral care and counseling, which I have described above, i.e. when we are fully aware of the prophetic mission we have. For, following this path, pastoral care and counseling may help prepare the soil for critical socio-political engagement of the church by connecting the church and the reality of the suffering of the people in a new way.

Keeping this in mind then I take it to be not only legitimate, but also appropriate in a strategic sense to start a new approach to pastoral care and counseling. Pastoral care and counseling and changes of society do not exclude each other, and wherever the church is offering it's regular services, i.e. worship, rituals like funerals, weddings etc. and other events, these reach only very specific groups of people, the poor not being among them.

Pastoral care and counseling may be the best way to stay close to people in critical situations of their lives, provided that you find an appropriate way to get through to them. The traditional church appears to desert their members in moments when they would most urgently need church support. Small Christian Communities and sects have realized this long time ago and they are capitalizing on it. Once, however, a Christian parish has proved its solidarity and support in hours of urgent need, then it will regain the credibility necessary to deal with changes in the society, hand in hand with the people concerned.

Building bridges in care and counseling between Latin America and Europe

At the beginning of my article I mentioned that contemporary global developments were affecting people all around the globe in their minds, souls and bodies in similar ways and that I would be coming back to this issue at the end. I will begin doing so by citing a longer quotation. The author tries to describe the present situation in Germany:

"Looking backwards from today the eighties have been a wonderful blazing time. Well, there were, for the first time after WW II was over, real cutbacks in income for most of the social groups in the former West-German society, but in general, everybody wanted to leave behind the attitude of the seventies, .i.e. the attitude of political ponderings over lots of issues and the attitude of social joylessness.. People were discovering luxury, they were amazed by the perplexity of codes and

they were prone to happily just carrying on…
Without any doubts the mood of the nineties cannot be covered and described by the terms of the eighties. 'Event', 'adventure', 'Life style' and 'risk' – these terms are not defining the present time any more… People became more sober, more modest, but also more anxious… What had developed in the times after WW II, the so called 'Model of Germany' is disintegrating.
Instead of this a new type of latent panicking for one's status is spreading, since the new arrangements in society and economy usually go along with a loss of certainty for one's social safety. In the nineties a feeling of ontological insecurity is become more direct and more existential to be widely experienced.
Now, to all appearance, it seems as if the 'class society', after it had come to its end earlier, is finally returning again. There are losers, winners, and, most horrible to say so, there are superfluous people…"

Others may judge whether these words are a true description of Germany in the nineties. I intended to discover the parallels to our situation in Latin America. Especially the last sentences of my quotation were showing this to me. In fact, over in your place and here in our place, there are losers and winners, and, again, what is the worst fact, really: there and here we have superfluous people.

Another parallel I find is this, that among people in Germany as well as among people in Latin America there is a growing loss of trust in traditional institutions like state, church, family and labour unions. The unions are still attempting to mediate between winners and the losers. Regarding the poor, however, the unions are meaningless for them, since the unions are not advocating the poor, not at all.

And how about the role of the state? Isn't it that the state, over there as well as over here, is more and more overtaxed in its opportunities, to take care of the poor and the superfluous people?

Who, then, is basically advocating the concerns of the poor? Should it happen to the church, badly blamed otherwise, not trusted also by many people any more, should this develop upon the church to become a key figure in advocating for the poor, in Europe as well as in Latin America? If this might be the case, then it would be worthwhile to start thinking about the task of a healing pastoral care among the poor in a joint common effort.

Jutta Beldermann *Germany, 2004*

Two pieces of work

A summary from United Evangelical Mission

topics:

- *pastoral care and the issues of the ecumenical movement*
- *relation of pastoral care and pastoral action*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 11, 2004; pp. 32-38

"Ecumenical Workshop" – the title is our program!

Ecumenical, that means cooperation with people from different countries and churches as well as from different cultures an contexts. And in every seminar or conference conducted in the "Ecumenical Workshop"[1] of "United Evangelical Mission" (UEM) here at Wuppertal, participants can start a "piece of work", which they can develop further while they continue with their work in their daily lives. The same happened to me during the coorperation with the SIPCC and the issue of "Global Economy and Every Day Life".

Even the slip of the tongue "Economical Workshop" in one working group (not for the first time!) is programme: It is most characteristic for the worldwide ecumenical movement, that it has always seen and included into its theological discussion and work, that there is an influence of global economy on the every day life of the people of the world.

During the cooperation between the SIPCC and the Ecumenical Workshop / UEM in the conference for me mainly two "pieces of work" were shaped, on which I would like to continue working:

1. Pastoral Care Needs Pastoral Action

That there were only very few participants in the conference from the North and the West of the world (seen from the European perspective) while the SIPCC-members from the South and the East would have wanted to participate in greater numbers than it was possible, shows the reality of today's societies and the churches within them (and in fact is the general issue of the development education programme of the Ecumenical Workshop):

In the North and the West life is still ruled by one principle: "One doesn't speak about money, one has it!". People don't like to deal with the global economic issues, not least because they know or assume, that then they will have to tackle with their involvement into the global system and their profit from it (even against

their will). All the more only in exceptional circumstances the economical context of every day life is included into the work of pastoral counseling in the churches of the North and the West. Fort many people's problems it doesn't seem to be relevant.

In the case study groups at the latest colleagues from the South and the East have taught me to see things in a different way: For them and their clients the economic situation is of such great influence on their reality, that there will be almost no case, which will not take the economic context of clients' lives into consideration. And the case studies from Germany have made clear to me, that in our context it is time to stop leaving out the context of economy but to include it into the theory, practice and research of pastoral care and counselling.

Reliable pastoral care and counselling, that has Ronaldo Sathler from Brazil made clear in many statements,[1] can not stop knowing about the economic influence on every day life, let alone help people to hold out. True care will at certain times and places require action against the negative effect of global economy and therefore break the long existing "division of labour" between pastoral care and political action in the church.

2. Pastoral Action Needs Pastoral Care

Development education programmes in the Ecumenical Workshop in Wuppertal, UEM-projects for the improvement of the economic situation of people in Africa and Asia, cooperation with international organisations against the negative consequences of global economy – these are the ways UEM (e.g.) proposes to overcome structural economic violence – right in line with the above mentioned "division of work" in the churches.

But the cooperation with the SIPCC for UEM establishes an important process of learning: Dealing with structures very often lacks the personal level of the affected people and the work of pastoral care makes that obvious. Many politically and economically high efficient projects do not take into consideration the pastoral aspect and the well known "division of work" functions here as well: On one side economic improvements, pastoral care and counselling on some other. Improvement of the economic situation in strong connection with pastoral care does already happen in some projects, e.g. the counselling for female workers in the Batam / Indonesian textile industry. But economic improvement and pastoral care should go together without saying.

Two "pieces of work" from an interesting cooperation, which are worth being worked on in the future. The training course for Indonesian pastors, which will be run by Helmut Weiss and sponsored by UEM in early 2002 in Sumatra, will be a good start.

Notes

1 SIPCC's 15th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling was conducted at the "Ecumenical Workshop", an educational institution of United Evangelical Mission at Wuppertal/Germany, in co-operation with the staff there. The theme of the seminar was "Pastoral care between global economy and every cay life".

2 See e.g. his article in this workbook, p. 144.

Part 2, Chapter D

Feminist aspects

contents of this chapter:

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Nalini Arles *India, 1998*

Woman – the scapegoat

Experiences from India

topics:

- *violence and sacrifice*
- *violence against women*
- *theories about violence*
- *psycho-social problems of women*
- *movements in India to overcome violence against women*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp. 50-55

Introduction

As I was struggling to write this paper, I heard an experience from a friend who heads an organisation consisting of 215 members. Her staff venerate her as a mother, almost as a goddess and call her *Amma* (mother), though she detests it. If anything goes wrong and she questions them, the immediate response is "Amma, you said so" or "you only asked me to do so, Amma." There is a refusal to take any responsibility for what has happened and a tendency to look for someone to be blamed or scapegoated. In my career as a counsellor, this experience of being scapegoated was echoed by many friends and clients. Invariably all of them happened to be women, and they said, it affects relationship, distances people, prevents people from taking responsibility, causes stress, anxiety, leads to judgement and ultimately retards growth. I have also had the experience of being scapegoated. This used to anger me "why should women be scapegoated?" It is not fair ... it is not ethical. I wanted to "fix it", going against my profession of being a counsellor. I ventured by explaining to people the seriousness of such mentality and appealed to their rationale, intellect, faith, sense of morality and even proved that it is against Biblical faith especially to conservatives who quote scriptures for every action of theirs.

My simplistic, value based, moralistic and faith-perspective approach ended in a failure. This annoyed me further and I started searching for answers. I have come to a conclusion that scapegoating is a form of sacrifice rooted in a philosophy and that it needs analysis. It is a complex global phenomenon seen in both developing and developed countries. It is an acquired phenomenon, learnt in society during the course of socialisation through imitation and identification. 'Scapegoating' is not an isolated subject; to understand it, one needs a multidisciplinary approach since it has many fields involved such as political, economic, social, behavioural, religious, cultural and psychological.

The purpose of this paper is not to give answers, but
(a) to pose the problem of scapegoating which seems to be rampant and increasing,
(b) To trace the various philosophies, ideologies and belief systems that influence scapegoating, and
(c) give a brief summary and critique of other women's movements and give suggestions to address this issue.

The methodology is to study select practices in India and deduce from it the principle of scapegoating and establish its relation to violence. The first part of the paper will deal with definitions of sacrifice, violence etc. the second will be a narration of a few incidences with deductions and conclusion.

Definition of terms

In the definition of terms, the intention is not to trace various theories but select an existing definition or summary definition:

Violence and force are interrelated. I agree with Gelles that violence refers to those acts that society views as non-normative, while 'force' to those acts which fall within society's definition of legitimate behaviour.[1] I have a problem in accepting force as Girard interprets it. What does he mean by legitimate behaviour, because what is legitimate behaviour to one person/society may not be legitimate to another who sanctions such a behaviour. Violence against women is often seen as an assault against a body but more important is a negation of her integrity and personhood.

There are various categories of violence such as overt, covert, legal and illegal, just and unjust.[2] Gelles identifies three categories of violence:
1. Normal violence,
2. Secondary violence – violence used to resolve conflict which is contrary to the family values; this creates additional conflict which produces further violence-violence perpetuates violence;
3. Volcanic violence, when the offender has reached the state where he cannot hold any longer with problems which erupts into violence.[3]

I do not subscribe to the view that violence is necessary and is a beneficial attribute of human life, for this view is influenced by Charles Darwin's theory which promotes violence on the basis of the understanding of progressive competition in which the fittest survive and the weak are eliminated. Nor do I prescribe violence. Some call for a total annihilation of violence to have a benevolent, rational and non-violent involvement. Others advocate the use of violence as a tool in revolutionary process to overthrow aggression. I would detest the use of violence for personal, social and economic benefit and attach value to such heroic character traits, such as bravery and courage.

Sacrifice: I would agree with Girard's concept of sacrifice, however biased it is that the victim is not a substitute for some 'endangered individual' or to quench the thirst of an individual's 'blood thirsty temperament' but a substitute of all members themselves. He further says that sacrifice protects the entire community from it's own violence and they choose victims outside themselves.[4] Here I would interpret community especially consisting of men and also women who are conditioned to believe certain myths and philosophies as given by God and sanctioned by religion. The victim outside themselves are mainly women.

Selected practices

Our discussion about the general kind of 'scapegoating' as seen in mundane transactions, or in daily lives, will be focused on certain practices which are not common (as there are no accurate statistics) but true happenings. I am selecting a few.

A. The practice of Sati [5]

Sati refers to the action or event whereby a women is immolated on her husbands funeral pyre or a women is placed at the centre of this spectacle "sati" as a goddess. Sati was the name of the goddess.

The English used 'sati' as an object of the verb 'to perform', 'to commit', which connotes committing a crime or suicide. Sometimes it also refers to the person who burns rather than the circumstances in which she dies. We see a reversal in the Indian languages, especially Hindi: Sati is understood as a rule rather than an exception, the focus is purely on the person rather than on the practice of sati, and means to venerate a good woman (sadhvi), a woman devoted to her husband (pativrata), as a goddess. It is devoid of any judgement.

Origin: Sati was originally grounded in a non-religious ruling class, a patriarchal ideology, and later glided with notions of valour and honour. Many stories are seen in the puranas and epics. It is told that Sati, wife of Lord Shiva and daughter of Daksha, in defence of her husband opposed her dad's insult of not including her husband in the sacrifice, and killed herself by entering the fire. Later the 'laws of Manu' (a traditional collection of laws) were used in advocating 'Sati'. Even in the 17th century stories are told of women committing 'Sati'. This practice was banned through the efforts of missionaries and Hindu reformers and the East India Company legitimised to abolish this practice in 1829. Pandita Ramabai, a Brahmin convert, later shows the fallacy of such texts and gives proper interpretation saying that widows are called to live.[6]

Present: Today there are many shrines dedicated to Sati Matas and stories inscribed on stones. Villagers in different parts of India tell tales but are unable to gives dates or names. The sati of 18 year old Roop Kanwar in Deorali, Rajasthan on 4th September 1987 caught the public eye and led to many debates and writings and became a political issue. Some demand a temple in honour of her, which is still an issue. Roop Kanwar was an educated girl married to a student who died suddenly in mysterious circumstances. He was medically diagnosed as having acute "gastro enteritis", and a "burst appendix". Others say he was poisoned. The motive for the last cause is not clear. Sati was arranged immediately and even before her family came, the funeral pyre was lit by the brother (Pushpender Singh) of the deceased (Mal Singh) who was later arrested and released.

Anti-Sati Group: such as feminists and others demanded a legal action. Their findings were

(a) Roop Kanwar was forced on the pyre in spite of her deliberate attempt to escape,

(b) There was a possibility of her having been drugged, and

(c) The motive of the in-laws was primarily economic, the rationale being they arranged for immolation on a plot near their own home rather than in the cremation grounds. There was an expectation of huge offerings and later the erection of a shrine, which was forbidden by the government and still people are requesting for a temple.

The counter-defence group (advocating Sati) called themselves *Sati Dharma Raksha Samiti* ("committee for the defence of religion"), later shortened their name to "Defence of Religion". It was run by educated men in their twenties and thirties. When the anti-Sati-group mustered 3000 people, they had 70,000 people marching in favour of Sati arguing that the government had no right to intrude into the realm of religion by attempting to suppress the practice of Sati. The political parties (Janata *Party* and *Bharatiya Janata Party* of Rajasthan) rallied and supported the cause. Though there was ban on written slogans, Sati was glorified at the oral level such as 'Sati mata ki jay', 'Roop Kanwar ki jay' (victory to mother Sati and victory to Roop Kanwar). This shows the inability of the law to stop any deaths.

Analysis: This is clear evidence of scapegoating women in a form of sacrifice for vested interest in which the practice is accepted as cultural and baptised by religion. Such a practice has religious sanctions. There is a gradual development of such practice which slowly imbibes culture, ethics, morality, and legality, philosophy and develops into an institutionalised monster protected by the state. Christianity is no better, women's sub-ordination or subservient position and denial of ordination is all proved from Scriptures.

B. Witch hunting

Today women are named as witches in certain sections of the Indian society and are mutilated and killed.

Background: The tribes of Bihar, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh are demanding for a separate Jharkhand State.[7] Among them the inheritance of land is through the male line; but within this system, the women have had certain definite, though limited, rights of land which have evolved over a period of time. They are of two kinds:

(a) The right to manage the produce and share the produce and

(b) the right to divide and sell the land. The widow acts like a surrogate father having equal rights of maintaining and passing the wealth. This residual life interest in land restricts the property rights of the male agnates of the deceased husband, and they have to wait till after the death of the widow and her children to have any rights.[16]

Witches: In the same society there exists a belief that women have an evil influence and are capable of being witches. Some women are identified as witches by 'witch finders' called Ojhas (spirit healer), predominantly men. They collect information from the complaints made by the people about the witches and give a warning to witches to behave. Then he names them as witches and all deaths, misfortunes, tragedies are attributed as a proof of the witches' unrepentance. Finally they are driven out of the village, killed or mutilated. These witch hunters have power and are ruthless that they are called as "unmitigated scoundrels".

Myths surrounding witch hunting: One of the myths surrounding witch hunting is that men wanted authority over women and sought wise man for power. The

wives heard about this and tricked the wise man and learnt the secret, which was 'to eat men'. Both the husband and the wise man were disappointed. As a reaction the wise man made men experts in witch hunting, in addition to the power they had in conducting rituals, as rituals were a taboo for women.[8]

An analysis of the witch hunting:

(a) Victims are women: Various studies show that the victims were women (mostly widows and aged), and they were related to the accusers, the murderers invariably were family members. "Out of thirty five cases, eleven were against the brother's wife (sister-in-law), eight were against the husband's mother (mother-in-law)".[9]

(b) Protection of men's rights: Political leaders and certain advisors argue that witch hunting is an attempt of male agnates to remove the threat to their property rights posed by the widows' interest in life.

(c) Economics: Dr. Ram Dayal Munda, Head of the Department of Tribal and Regional Languages in Ranchi University confirms that the cause for witch hunting is rooted in economic reasons.

(d) Political: T. K. Kapaz representing the All India Santal Conference asserts that witch hunting is political. He bases this on his study of the function of witch hunting, which is basically used by the dominant class to get rid of people who politically oppose them, as well as the unwanted females whom they had used for pleasure.

Conclusion

Moving from the two extreme cases, scapegoating is seen in day to day life. Papers daily report of dowry death in spite of anti-dowry bill. I hear stories from female clients which are hurting. Each story is different but in all these stories the common feature is women who are victims for the survival of the stronger. In all these incidents there are common features.

(a) It is the sacrifice of the other and not the sacrifice of the self, where force, persuasion and at times provocation are used.

(b) In the scapegoating of the these cases a common element that stands out is that it were always the weaker sections for the benefit of the stronger, meaning men, policy, and religion, all to preserve patriarchy.

Psychological perspectives

One could see the psychological benefits of the scapegoating. There is an assertion of one's ego, authority, pride and identity in scapegoating others. I see this in the practice of Sati as well as in witch hunting. In the former the widow brings the pride, name and honour to the family and those who enforce it exercise their authority and their power.

'Anger' and 'aggression' are necessary elements for self definition. I agree that in the act of violence toward another, the attackers attempt to defend themselves from a sense of "vulnerability", "pain" and "anxiety" or even annihilation. This is true in the case of Sati and witch hunting. In the former, just after the death fear,

guilt, pain, anxiety, vulnerability are part of the grieving process. Even before they could resolve or work through their grief, they involve in attacking and deciding the fate of another. In the latter, again 'pain' and 'anxiety' are connected to see the family property being in the possession of a women. In both cases it is more of a defence of men of their feelings, property and right. Scapegoating is a form of resolving one's conflict. In attacking another the families attempt to resolve their conflict.

Even fear is resolved in 'Sati' by erecting a temple. There is still a cry for the temple in Deorali, Rajasthan, in honour of Roop Kanwar. Worship, Ritual and elevating the victim to the status of a goddess is a way of appeasing the wrong doings or even justifying their action, a clear pacification of violence. Pacification here I mean as silencing rather than peace.

Scapegoating as a sacrifice is structural and is rooted in the men's desire of control and it is to perpetuate the exercising of male power. One is aware that unilineal descent groups such as blood sacrificial religions are found among pre-capitalistic societies that have some degree of technological development. Lineage structure is particularly for control and inheritance of productive property such as land and cattle etc. These groups transform biological descent in the interest of social continuity in order to celebrate intergenerational continuity, they are willing to sacrifice 'Women', eliminating the women for the male line to continue. To perpetuate this male line and for the exercise of power and control, the 'weak' have no protection or place.

Effects: Women go through psycho-social problems.

(a) When women are subjected to violence and sacrifice, and are scapegoated there is disintegration in the 'self' of the woman as she is alienated from herself. This state is what Charles H. Boon calls "confused identity". Erik Erikson who traces the psycho-social development of human beings argues that identity formation is a pre-requisite to achieve intimacy.[10] In the Indian context, women's identity is closely linked to her attachment to men. For example, women derive identity first from association with fathers, then husbands, later sons, always in relationship to males who have control over them. Women's sense of self is always traced to her experience of violence. Identity and intimacy are always closely inter-related, never separate. Though a woman may be talented educated, competent and independent outside the home, at home she subjects herself to her husband's control. Charles H. Boon opines that women live in two worlds, with "two simultaneous but incongruent experiences of self". Though she is aware of her strengths of her self yet she struggles between her experiences.

(b) Along with her struggling self and the present fear for her safety women spend all their energy on learning survival skills. Some women who have developed positive self esteem have to live in the atmosphere of fear and intimidation at home where criticism, blame and punishment are normal to her.

(c) I use the words "conflicting self" or "struggling self" in order to indicate an ongoing process between self and society instead of 'false self` used by Donald W. Winnicott which gives a negative and pathological connotation for the development of an external self designed to please others but to cover the turmoil and pain that characterise the inner self.[11]

(d) Some women ultimately disown their bodies, mentally absent themselves from their bodies and become spectators watching from afar. Disassociation from the physical selves becomes normative, which is contrary to holistic growth.

(e) Finally discrimination and scapegoating made women to be treated as objects. Female persons and female sexuality are conceived as objects for national and political control, dominance and analysis.

Acknowledgement and critique of various movements [12]

(a) Some activists use *Marxist ideology* to address injustice. Marxism has provided the ideological frame work for the liberation of exploited sections. Yet in Marx's analysis the emphasis is on the economic issues, such as production, exploitation and property. The assumption is that surplus production achieved in a settled agricultural production will solve various forms of exploitation. For me Marx's view of liberation is limited in the way that change from private ownership to collective ownership of the means of production will end all oppression. This may address the class issue but the caste and religious ideologies will remain.

(b) *Women's Liberation Movement* which burst on the scene in 1960 focused on patriarchy as the form social exploitation and violence. The emphasis was on the conflict between men and women. and the dialectics of sex. The importance of 'sexuality' was seen as a potential power for women's liberation. Violence has been a central theme in organising against rape and wife beating. But their emphasis was similar to the traditional Marxist view on production, exploitation and property. Their preoccupation on sexuality and dialectics of sex took precedence over violence and sacrifice.

(c) *Cultural Feminism*: The trend is to accept the difference between men and women as irrevocable and men as naturally prone to violence and women as non-violent, yet seeing women as superior. They are exclusive and moving towards God oriented spirituality viewing science, and technology as dominating, militaristic and patriarchal. Though there is strength in their analysis, their preoccupation with differences and accepting men as being violent and their exclusiveness prevents providing a holistic framework to address violence and sacrifice.

(d) *New Movements*: Autonomous eclectic feminist groups comprised of both, rural women (peasants and poor) and the urban educated women. They all have their own particular emphasis but the similarity is the asserting of their rights not in isolation or with feminist groups or with women's wings of political groups but with social movements. The context is given prime focus in their reflection.

(e) *Ecofeminists:* They bring together all the themes such as production, violence and sexuality. They take an interdisciplinary approach in discussing issues. They give naturalistic explanations of violence where men are rapists of earth and women have productive relationship with nature.

There has been a paradigm shift from addressing violence in relation to men to a larger system. This is indicated in the resolution of a women's conference of Nasi Mukti Sangharsh Sammedan which met in Patna. They pointed to the state as the major support of violence against women: "Women face specific forms of violence: rape and other forms of sexual abuse, female foeticide, witch-killing, sati, dowry murders, wife-beating. Such violence and the continued sense of insecurity that is instilled in women as a result keeps them bound to the home ... we recognise that the state is one of the main sources of violence and stands behind the violence committed be men against women in the family, the work-place and the

neighbourhood. For these reasons a mass women's movement should focus on the struggle against them in the home or out of it".[13]

This group raised several questions: "... 4) What is the effect and incidence of violence on different classes, castes, communities of women? ... 5) What is the relationship between specific Indian traditions of sri shakti or prakriti to violence against women; in particular how is this violence related to caste structures and traditions?" [14]

One observation of this group is their experience of more of social violence than violence at home. They point out that they have relative independence with regard to men but are more assertive than the sheltered upper-caste/class women and can fight back with no inhibitions.

Indeed all these movements have contributed in bringing awareness, producing literature, setting up of family courts, removing 'consent' in dealing with rape cases and passing anti-dowry bill.

Suggestions for Pastoral Care and Counselling

I wish to reiterate the already known areas.

1) Education

a) To explain laws pertaining to women.
b) To provide technical details in lodging a criminal and civil complaint, the difference between cognisable and non-cognisable offences, bailable and non-bailable crimes, civil rights and civil remedies.
c) To initiate studies as proposed by women's groups on relationship between violence and sacrifice.
d) to study the correlation between globalisation and violence/sacrifice against women

2) To address the tendency towards glorification and pacification of violence, in the media.

3) To rethink our approaches and methods used in pastoral counselling and reconstruct new therapies.

As we concern ourselves in this conference to engage in serious dialogue and action to bring liberation to the many who suffer violence, Flavia's (a victim's) poem may encourage us:

> *You can bend me but never break me,*
> *'cause it only serves to make me,*
> *More determined to achieve my final goal,*
> *And I come back even stronger,*
> *Not a novice any longer,*
> *'cause you've deepened the conviction in my soul.* [15]

Notes

[1] Richard J. Gelles: *The Violent Home. A study of physical aggression between Husbands and Wives*, Los Angeles (Sage Library of Social Research 13).

[2] Cf. Lakshmi Srivastava, in: N. Sinha (ed), *Women and Violence*, New Delhi: Vikas Publ. House, 1989. See there p. 20f.
[3] Cf. Gelles, *op. cit.*, p.20.
[4] Cf. R. Girard, *Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore/London 1979, p.8.
[5] For the following cf. the articles in: *Sati, The Blessing and the Curse. The Burning of Wives in India*, ed. by John St. Hawley, New York/Oxford 1994.
[6] Cf. N. Arles, *Pandita Ramabai and Amy Carmichael. Their Contribution towards the Transformation of the Position of Women in India*, unpublished M.Th.-Dissertation, Universtity of Aberdeen 1986.
[7] The region of Jharkhand covers mainly the Chotanagpur Plateau, split between the Indian States of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh. Cf. (also for the following): Govind Kelkar / Dev Nathan: *Gender and Tribe. Women, Land and Forests in Jharkhand*, New Delhi: Kali for Women, 1991.
[8] W. G. Archer: *The Hill of Flutes. Life, Love and Poetry in Tribal India*, London, 1974, p. 292f.
[9] Cf. A. B. Chaudhuri, *The Santals. Religion and Rituals,* New Delhi 1987 p. 167.
[10] Cf. Erik Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, New York: Norton, 1950.
[11] Cf. Doanld W. Winnicott, *From Pediatrics to Psychoanalysis*, New York: Basic Books, 1975.
[12] For the following ovierview cf. Gail Omvedt: *Violence against Women. New Movements and New Theories in India*, New Delhi: Crescent Printing Works, 1990.
[13] Resolution of a Women's Conference, organised in February 1988 in Patna, Bihar (India). In this conference, 700 women gathered and discussed various topics, representing a wide coalition of Women's Groups ranging from those who call themselves 'Autonomous Feminists' to women's organisations connected with radical mass movements. Women and violence was an important issue for three days and 10,000 were organised in a militant mass rally on the fourth day.
[14] G. Omvedt, *op. cit.*, p.8.
[15] Flavia Agnes, *My Story*, Bombay: Ms Insta Print, 1984.

Ursula Pfäfflin *Germany, 1998*

A walk in a rosebush

Violence and sacrifice in feminist intercultural perspective of pastoral care and counselling

topics:

- *patriarchal structures in family and society*
- *theological aspects of mutuality*
- *mutuality as an alternative way to stop sacrifice*
- *the theory of Rene Girard*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp. 55-60

When Nalini Arles addressed her experiences and knowledge about scapegoating and victimisation of women in India (*cf. her article in this workbook, p. 163*) I thought: yes, I know phenomena and structures of that kind even though I live and have worked in two countries which claim to have equality between men and women and claim that both, women and men have access to public power. Yet, reality is different. To call yourself feminist is "out" nowadays, to talk about violence against women and children, taboo. I am glad that our society has dared to address the issue of the logic of violence and I thank all who have named important aspects of violence and theology of sacrifice. I would like to address some aspects which are significant in feminist intercultural pastoral care and counselling: the mystification of family in society, the mystification of guilt and endurance in Christian tradition, alternative interpretations of sacrifice, and new perspectives from feminist pastoral care and counselling which also have consequences for concepts of power, economics and politics.

A walk in a rosebush

Maria, a student of theology from Puerto Rico, delivered a paper when I taught Pastoral Care and Counselling at a seminary in the United States. She choose the title: *A walk in a rosebush* and started her paper with the words:

"This is the story of a nineteen year old adolescent who was in her third year of college. A happy teenager, with lots of dreams closely to get married. For about three months she was having a hard time with a man. This man who was a stranger to her was following her around the University and places that she commonly attended. One night he tried to have a very close encounter with her but she

had enough time to run. The story went this way until the man decided to stop harassing her, and she thought that he never would bother her again.

It was a beautiful October night, in one of the most beautiful islands in the world. That night she was working at the library and was planning to attend a welcome back to school dance. At the end of her work shirt she was walking out of the University when suddenly the stranger encountered her. This time he had enough time to grasp her and put her in his car. He took her far away, and she was frightened. She begged him not to do anything to her and he promised he would not do anything bad to her. That naive nineteen year old adolescent believed that promise and even though she was frightened she was hoping and praying that he would keep his promise. That proves how naive a woman can sometimes be. After a long drive he stopped the car and started touching her; something that made her very uncomfortable. She felt dirty, like a prostitute. She started crying and begged him not to do anything bad to her. At this time he was closer to her. She tried to fight but lie was getting aggressive and she really was afraid of losing her life. She thought that to stay passive was enough for him not to kill her. He had a very aggressive behaviour. He pulled her and touched her genitals and at that moment she came to reality. A cruel reality, the humiliation, the painful truth. No matter how much she cried or begged he would have sex with her. 'Stop, please, stop'. But he never stopped. He forced her and committed the sexual violence act. She cried and cried and to comfort her lie promised her that if something happened he would be responsible. However, at that moment, she lost the capacity to trust. She felt humiliated, dirty, she died as a human being and that beautiful night in October became the ugliest one for the rest of her life. I am a Survivor of Sexual Violence. This is my story. A painful story which did not stop there because I was victimised again by my family. As a consequence of this violent act I got pregnant and for my family it was hard to deal with a single mother because they thought of it as a disgrace for the family. My family decided to deal with the social status and never listened to my story, they never allowed me to cry and take out all my anger, frustration and pain. They silenced me for almost the rest of my life. I also was a victim of society. People felt sorry for me but never offered any help. Then, a male therapist who in order to help me deal with my anger and my vengeance dreams, tried to convince myself that this criminal was a victim of society."

When Mary wrote this story she was at age thirty-four. After she had participated in one of my pastoral care and counselling classes she asked for counselling with me. She wanted to talk about her marriage and her situation as a woman from Puerto Rico in the United States It took several sessions until Maria was able to talk about her real issue: the ongoing memories of the rape which she had not talked about to anybody during all these years. The feelings of rage and desperation, the sense of being dirty and of no value, even now after she had accomplished so much, in spite of being stigmatised by family and catholic church. She did not feel able to marry her finance after this event, she had given birth to her child all alone, she raised her son by herself, lost her career, and went to New York because he was sick. In New York she met her husband, married, got a second son, and was very respected by her community and the church. Thus she decided to study theology and become a pastor. She was an impressing woman, strong, influential to other students, convincing in her preaching and conducting of worship. Yet, during fifteen years, she had not talked about the most important feelings, thoughts and memories which moved her daily.

Violence as a characteristic of patriarchal structure in family and society

The story of Maria expresses all the traits that have been brought to awareness and to public discussion from the work with victims of violence during the past decades by feminist research and therapy, by women's shelters and projects for girls. Violence especially against women and girls, and also against boys and oppressed men, does not only happen in terrible wars and torture, in hatred against foreigners and burning of their homes. Violence is done every day and globally especially against women and girls, but also against boys in form of sexual, physical and psychic abuse within the core or extended family and the well known context of the victim. As James Poling pointed out (*cf. his article in this workbook, p.314*), the family is by no means the safe haven and place of happiness we think it is, but the family is one of the most dangerous places of the world for women and children. In her excellent book on incest, the Swiss Analyst Ursula Wirtz writes: "That also means to say good bye to the myth of family, the heaven of trust. Especially the family has become a breeding place for violence... sexual abuse is fostered by the social isolation of the core family".[1]

Of course, this is meant in regard to Western isolated family systems, yet, as we hear from Nalini, this is also true for other patriarchally structured societies.

Maria was an excellent student, she was looking forward to a career as lawyer in Puerto Rico. She was engaged. She was estimated as the eldest child by her father. The campus of the university was her home. She war rooted in the Catholic church. In all of these spaces and places to which she belongs and feels safe, she experiences an abuse of power which kills all of her hopes in one hour. She is raped in spite of all the strength she had. Not only the physical overpowering made her soul die within these minutes but also and even more the experience of absolute powerlessness: I have no more influence, my trust in everything I believed in is shattered. It is important for the work with traumatised to recognise that the physical damage is terrible. Yet it is the experience of powerlessness that. is crucial: I cannot do anything anymore, I am delivered. So Maria says herself that the reactions by her family, the therapist and the church have traumatized her once more, and even worse. Her mother thought it was a disgrace to have her daughter be pregnant and advised her to have an abortion even though she was catholic. Her family wanted to hide her because an unmarried mother was a shame for the family. Her feelings got no space because the male therapist did not want to hear about her anger and asked her to understand the perpetrator. After giving birth, Maria wished to participate in the mass. Churchmembers were friendly, yet their looks were talking. One day she overheard a woman saying to another: She should not bring this child to church because he is the result of sin.

The mystification of family

How can we understand that traumatization by abuse of power has such dimensions in the most familiar spaces and places of our lives, in family, in mother-father-child-relationships, in therapy and church? The answer by feminist research is: violence against women and children is so pervasive because it is not the exception, a special accident, caused by sick or pathological persons. Violence is pervasive because it is made possible, it can be, it is ingrained in the structures of living and working which are functioning by patterns of unilateral, hierarchical

power. Violence happens because it is allowed to be and even intended to be in order to keep the structures of unilateral use of power and one-sided distribution of privileges in place and keep them going.

Ursula Wirtz indicates that the Latin word "familia" originally meant the ownership of a person by another person. Family had to do with a relation of ownership and meant a relation of domination which was founded on power and ownership. "Pater familias" was not the daddy or father as we use the word but a dominator in the meaning of master of his slaves. The word *patriarchy* stands for a legal regulation in which the "pater familias" (father of family) has all the power of the law up to the decision on life or death over women, children, slaves and animals of his household. In societies which are structured by this law and therefore are called patriarchal, daughters are put under the domination of their fathers and then, by marriage, under the domination of their husbands. Also in the laws of early Israel, witnessed in the Hebrew Bible, we can read that there existed a marriage of children which could be bought. The daughter was given from one owner to the next, from father to husband. She was an object. In this context, rape is not a violation of the human right of a person but sort of a crime of theft in regard to the one who "owned" the girl.[2] Therefore the daughter has to keep her virginity in order not to be possessed by somebody else because otherwise she is of no value for the husband (value of being new, unused).

This way of thinking exists up to now with the exception of a few societies and has been internalised even by women and girls themselves. Maria's reaction to the rape demonstrates how much in her culture, she learned to internalise this view: immediately she feels dirty, a whore no longer worthy to marry the beloved fiancé. She herself dissolves the engagement feeling shame and desperation. She sacrifices her hopes for a happy partnership because within the structures of her society, her church and her pastor's counselling, there was no other foundation to help a women who has become a victim of sexual or other abuse.

As Girard demonstrates: the victim becomes the guilty. She is a shame for her family, her child a child of sin, her anger not justified. She should not have gone to the street, especially not to a dance, in the evening. Maria did not only have to carry stigmatisation and isolation but also all the psychic, financial and social costs for the enforced pregnancy. The perpetrator did not have to be accountable to anyone. He escaped into silence. Until today.

Also in German law victims of sexual abuse have to carry the burden of proving the crime done by the perpetrator. The victims have to prove that they have experienced violence. The perpetrators often switch the direction and accuse the woman or girl of being provocative or wishful. In our courts, perpetrators get sentences that are ridiculously small in comparison to crimes of theft. The costs for perpetrators of violence against women and children are extremely low, the immediate effect of their abuse of power is remarkable. In contrast, the costs for the victims to call to attention and defend themselves are very high and they risk a lot without any prospect for an effective cause. Therefore, many women and girls remain silent and do not talk at all.

The mystification of guilt

In a conference on violence against women and girls, my colleague theologian Julia Strecker from Cologne talks about the myth of the fall and how the original

sin and guilt of the woman is linked to the feelings of guilt and responsibility that girls and women develop in the experience of sexual violence. "The silence, the inability to talk is mainly caused by the internalisation of guilt. The myth defines women by their sexuality and creates an immediate linkage between guilt and female sexuality. Women who have been abused sexually in their childhood, even when they are still little, have a sense of not being treated and respected as children but as female sexual beings. If the myth that by woman sin has entered the world meets with the experience of sexual violence, women feel guilty within themselves. The Christian tradition reinforces the connection between female sexuality and guilt. As a result, the myth derives all problems of man and of the world from female original sin and guilt. The girl experiences sexual abuse as a threat for this world. Again, silence is in place: the experience has to be kept a secret because the perpetrator threatens her that she might cause the breakdown of the whole family, and a catastrophe if she would not keep silence. The girl and later the woman takes all the responsibility for her own fate and the unhappiness of her whole family... The myth connects the order of woman's special availability with a demand for subordination of women in patriarchal marriage (see Tim. 1, 12ff: woman has to be available in a special way and has to be silent)".[3] Each part of the mystification, as I prefer to call it, reinforces the non-guilt of man and the guilt of woman and therefore stabilises the status quo and system we live in because this piece of Christian tradition has shaped the Christian image of woman and her self-image around the world, especially in former regions of mission, but even in our liturgies, songs and theological commentaries up today.

Maria wrote about herself: "What are the results of sexual violence? After experiencing sexual violence women, and in this case I speak from a female perspective, feel dirty, guilty, humiliated, and powerless. I remember that I showered three times or more a day only to feel clean. During all these thirteen years I felt guilty because I thought I could have hindered this event to happen, and because of the problems I caused for my family. Only after I went to counselling once more, I realized that it was not my guilt and I could have never prevented it from happening."

Girard's theses help reveal the mystification of the guilt of women for everything and since ever. But Girard's analyses themselves remain too mythical where he does not name concrete historical and sociological facts. There is evidence that each. and everyone can become a scapegoat – but we cannot deny; and James Poling made us aware of that a couple of times, that the reality of the sacrifice of others has been perpetrated for one half of humankind to a degree which is hard to imagine. When Girard talks about collective persecution, of crimes, that are committed by a murderous crowd, it is not unimportant to raise the question, who really did initiate these persecutions and who participates in them in which way? I find it very intriguing that he reveals the structures of logic of violence that happens when systems feel threatened in their usual way of differentiating. But there is a danger in talking about structures and logics in that the specific historical and contextual differences are not seen from the point of view of the involved. The public silencing of women has made their own witness invisible for centuries and still is.

It is not an obsolete question to ask, in which amount and in which roles women are present in mass persecution. The differentiation of present systems has a logic of violence within itself as I have shown above: Women have to be controlled, because they – as sexually attractive beings – represent danger to men, because they lead men into temptation and therefore need to be subdued. This logic and

mystification of violence does not only happen in times of crisis but is in itself part of the normal formation of patriarchal societies and their family – and work structures. To recognize, to name and to describe these structures and their facts, we owe to women's research worldwide.

The demystification of sacrifice and violence – are there alternatives to "sacrifice of other"?

"The mass always has a tendency to persecute", says Rene Girard. "They look for a cause, which can satisfy their hunger for violence".[4] In this kind of sentences there is the assumption that everybody, regardless of the person, can be violent in a society. Girard emphasises that there is a pattern of collective violence regardless of culture[5] and that persecution exists even in mythic-ritual societies, which is mirrored in their myths. I appreciate that Girard reads myths in a historical way and not just as a condensed expression of archetypes. On the other hand, I find it important to differentiate between so-called mythic-ritual societies, and to have a closer look at: what forms of violence are perpetrated and indulged in which places? One study that helped me a lot is an analysis of family violence worldwide. A Canadian institute analysed agrarian societies in how far violence against women, children and the elderly is allowed. They found out, that indeed there are 16 societies in the world in which violence is not allowed, is immediately stopped and the adults deal with conflicts in a different way. In these societies the roles between men and women are also defined in a different manner: both women and men have equal access to the fruit of labour, to sexual pleasure before marriage and to divorce. Women work in the community of other women and men, therefore they are not isolated and exposed to isolation and silence.[6]

From these kinds of tribal societies we also know of a different interpretation of sacrifice. Because there is close interrelation between cosmos, nature, women, men and all living beings, that which grows in your environment is not used as a commodity but is seen as a gift, that is given by the earth. Sacrifice is understood as offering, a response to the gift: what was given to me creates a reverberation in me, a response. I return part of what keeps me alive and gave life to me. Dedication is not – as in our Christian ascetic tradition – the sacrifice of all sensuality, needs, desires and lust, but offering something of everything I have received. As has been shown by research in matriarchal societies, there have even been human beings, who have given themselves back to earth in this meaning. But this was not, as Girard says, a sacrifice of other, but a giving of oneself in correspondence to the context. There even are examples of this interpretation of sacrifice of offering yourself and rededicate some of what you have received before in the bible: for instance in the story of intercultural corporation by Hebrew midwifes, the mother and sister of Moses and the Egyptian princess; in the interpretation of love in the song of songs, in the anointment of Jesus and in the donation of the coin by the widow etc. Pracha has indicated, that in Thai-society, the tribal life was founded on this view on life and spirituality within community.

Mutuality as an alternative way to end the sacrifice of other

One thread leading through the writings of women from different classes, races, cultures and religions is the call for mutuality. My thesis is, that this call for mu-

tuality in relationships and in the structures of work and life holds an alternative to the logic of violence. For mutuality as a process counterparts the construction of unilateral and linear differentiation of power. Women and men, who are willing to recognize their needs mutually, do not differentiate in a rigid manner (Girard uses the word "differentiate" for the order of a society or a group, and the word "de-differentiate" to describe the breakdown of the family order). Women and men, who perceive their needs mutually, do not experience de-differentiation as an existential threat, because their boundaries are clear, yet not shut. So: boundaries can be changed by mutual perception.

What does mutuality mean?

In the writings from the Stone Center in the U.S., women psychologists and therapists have developed new concepts of therapy. In these writings mutuality is described as openness for influence, as an emotional presence, as a changing pattern of reacting of others and influencing others. Instead of using other people as containers of our own projections or as a source of satisfaction of needs, in mutuality empathy and active interest in the partner as a complex person is developed; an ability to acknowledge the "otherness of the other" and to even strengthen it. "If empathy and engagement flow in both directions, there is an intense affirmation of self and paradoxically also a transcendence of self. A sense of being part of a greater unity of relationality". (Stone Center, p.82)

Another term for this is inter-subjectivity. Inter-subjectivity goes beyond mutual empathy. She also includes the motivation to understand the other's system of sense from their own frame of reference. Good interaction depends on "holding" the subjectivity and the needs for community of others. Mutuality does not mean a formal balance following the motto "I do as you do" and vice versa; it does mean though a reciprocity in intensity of both, engagement and true interest, an investment in exchange, which holds gratification for both. Such mutuality indeed is demanding; the word "sacrifice" therefore can be used. But it is not to be seen as a total surrender for the other, as it is over and over again – basically and almost naturally – asked from women; Nalini describes the demand for total surrender to the husband, even when he is dead, in the maintaining of the Sati. Such mutuality is giving of the self in the process of mutual perception; an openness towards change; the other's boundaries not interpreted as an attack on oneself (like Cain interpreted God's reaction to his offering) but as an otherness which can be accepted and known; mutuality requires a surrender of manipulation because it is interested in the forthcoming of the other. This concept of mutuality relates to an alternative concept of power, which is exercised and called for by women in various political, social and therapeutic environments; instead of using unilateral controlling power: to live power from within, power as mutual in-fluence, and to share power: power coming from different voices, which by confluence form a new truth.

Economic and political aspects

Mutuality is not only a concept of personal relationship. If we enlarge intersubjectivity to interdependency of different kinds of economic and political systems, it would mean to develop mutual interest in concrete traditions instead of unilateral

exploitation and manipulation. The history of diverse economic concepts and practices would be "held" and given value in their difference. Is it utopian to think of a global market in which influence would function as a system of mutual information and ex-change in which small economic units are as much respected as bigger companies, for mutual interests? A friend of mine, Sabine O'Hara, a feminist professor of economics in the state of New York develops some interesting alternatives to traditional concepts and practice in economics. She offers three principles to enlarge economic theory and method in order to reframe the conflictual relationship between production and sustainability: concretion, connectedness and diversity. These principles seek to point towards necessary re-definitions of both production and sustainability which help to bridge rather than separate these two concepts. Concreteness means that hidden assumptions in present economic concepts and that historical and cultural contexts are taken seriously. "Qualitative criteria like well-ness, mutuality, reciprocity or supportiveness in highly interdependent systems are to be added if we don't want to risk that vital function go unnoticed or undervalued". Connectedness addresses the relationship between economic and ecological systems, in which human individuals can flourish. "Human well-being is also influenced by the resourcing, recreational, aesthetic and spiritual contributions of ecosystems. The three dimension of this connectedness are: the complementarity of inputs, feedback from output to social structures, and feedback from output to ecological structures." Diversity is a principle that criticises the homogenising assumptions of traditional Western production theory. "A shift from familiar androcentric and anthropocentric concepts towards less culturally biased and more ecocentric ones can only take place if the normative character of economics is recovered and ethics in economics becomes more than a support system of existing definitions... The stories and metaphors of cultures which have lived sustainably for centuries may offer valuable insights for our own sustainability. This is not to be misconstrued as a call 'back to nature' but rather as progress moving forward to new insights." [7]

Theological aspects

Relating this interpretation to the image of God and to Christology, we find revolutionary changes to our traditional system of faith. A totally different perspective of God comes into being: God is not the total different one, the almighty, never-changing, who has all creation in his hands. After Shoah and the terrible persecutions and atrocities which still occur in our world, God is interpreted as the kind of power, who gets involved to the extend of total suffering, moving this suffering and Evil within Godself God is changed in relation as we are changed, as we get involved with each other mutually. I find Jim Poling's interpretation of God as the ambiguous God very challenging. I would like to add one aspect though that has become important in feminist and womanist theology and Christology. God and Christ and Holy Spirit are not only interpreted as relational within the trinity but as relational in regard to humans and all creation. God is transforming and transformed, in Christ and with those, who are transformed by Christ: Christa-Community. This term Christa-Community indicates that even in the concept of redemption, healing and liberation the community of women, girls, boys and men plays an important role. Not Jesus is the Christ as a one person individual entity who is the exception and the saviour. But salvation and healing are seen as a process between, in, and with persons, Christ and God: Jesus is as much healed by the woman who touches his garment as she is healed by touching him. Christa-

community means mutuality in the becoming of the Christ-process or the Christ-structure of the world that we long for.

Intercultural pastoral care and counselling

Maria had not told her story in our first encounters. It took a good while, until our mutual sympathy grew into a good foundation of our relationship. She herself says: "In my case the worst damage is, that I cannot completely trust people. It is very hard for me to trust anyone. My first step was to recognise the need of help. Then, I asked for that professional help. I started therapy and I began to deal with the issues. Another thing that I have to recognise is that I still need help." After she found safe space for her grief and her deep anger in our meetings across cultures, she was able to change her more artificial strength and toughness and open herself to closeness in her family. She performed very well in her exams and we celebrated a wonderful ordination. Mary's story did not have a happy ending, only. She had no chance, to become a minister in her Hispanic church. The traditional roles of women and men did not allow for that. I do not know, where she lives and works today, but I know, that she had to struggle a lot in spite of all her powerful changes.

Maria's history is a history in which mutuality to her was denied. For the pastoral work with abused women and men it is important, that we do not label the symptoms of traumatisation by using the traditional diagnoses of personality or character disorder. In this way clients or counsellees would be pathologised.[8] Instead we have to acknowledge the specific needs of safety and that is takes difficult and long term work in mutual awareness and transparency of the process. As Jim Poling has pointed out, co-operation with other professionals is detrimental.

We all are part of the denial of mutuality every day. To me it is important to mention the discussion about the diversity of women and the responsibility, we as white European privileged women carry in relation for colleagues and women from other economical, cultural and religious traditions. Sacrifice of other does happen between women everyday and is as unbearable as amongst gender. There is much discussion in feminist discourse on this issue but I can only mention it here. Violence amongst women, mothers, daughters, sisters, colleagues needs to be addressed. But the history of women shows also, that there have always been alternatives and they still exist. The Italian feminists call what they recognise as an alternative to violence and victimisation amongst women: affidamento. "A politics of liberation as we have called feminism has to create the basis for the freedom of women." Affidamento is the relationship between two women, who encourage each other mutually, like Ruth and Noemi in the Biblical book on Ruth. Affidamento contains the root of the word fides (faith), fedelta (fidelity), fidarsi (to trust one another) and confidare (to trust). In our intercultural counselling movement we are beginning to develop affidamento also between women of different classes, cultures and religions. This also is walk in a rose bush with many thorns, with pain but also with a lot of beauty.

At the end of our work we want to introduce to you a concept for training in mutuality, working with reflecting teams – a new method for supervision and working with life-stories in groups, developed in Norway and the United States, in which the gap between professional experts and counsellees or supervisees is bridged by transparency of the process: all the voices are heard by every participant in the counselling system, all participate in the conversation, though in dif-

ferent steps. The main principle in this work is to acknowledge concreteness, diversity and the rich potentials of each person and system. The question is not to find causes and explanations but for people to ask themselves new questions. "All versions are neither right nor wrong. Our task is as much as possible to engage in a dialogue in order to understand how the various persons came to create their descriptions and their explanations. Thereafter, we invite them to a dialogue to discuss whether there might be other not-yet-seen descriptions and maybe even other not-yet-thought-of explanations... the structure of the reflecting team offers the possibility for those who consult us, as they listen to the team, to ask themselves new questions thereby drawing new distinctions". The participants of the process are invited to respect the integrity of the other persons, to listen carefully, to be honest yet not shaming or derogative, and to focus on the resources. Questions for the process are: What has impressed me in this person, theme or process? What did I perceive? What enlarging questions would I raise? "In this way, we see ourselves to be congruent with Maturana saying that instructive interaction is impossible. We can only offer a chance for a transitional structural coupling of mutual interest, and the exchanges of ideas that follow. And we like to emphasise the importance of mutual interest".[9]

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4 Rene Girard: *Der Sündenbock,* Zürich 1988, p.28. (Concerning the theory of Rene Girard, see the articles of R. Schwager and H.-M. Gutmann in this workbook, p.56 and p.302).

5 Ibid. p.33.

6 David Levinson, *Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective,* Newbury Park: Sage Publications, 1989

7 Sabine O'Hara, *From Production to Sustainability. Considering the Whole Household*, paper held at a church meeting in Nordelbien/Germany, 1995.

8 In this regard I have gained most by reading Judith L. Herman's book *Trauma and Recovery* (New York: Basic Books 1992) in which she suggests a new diagnosis which respects the complexity of symptoms of women and men who have been violated: *complex* post traumatic stress disorder.

9 Tom Andersen, *The Reflecting Team*, New York 1991, p. 38f and p. 40.

Margarida Fátima Souza Ribeiro *Brazil, 2001*

A chair for women's support

topics:

- *study and work of women at a Methodist School of Theology*
- *women in the Methodist Church in Brazil*

Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 7, 2001; pp. 43-44

The Otilia Chaves Chair at the Methodist School of Theology

Professors Barbara Kemper, Thomas Kemper, Rui de Souza Josgrilberg and the Women's Project of the Pastoral Institute of the School of Theology created the Otília Chaves Chair in the context of the Decade of Women. In order to make this dream possible, support was sought from the Board of Global Ministries and the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church of the United States. In 1994, pastor Nancy Cardoso Pereira assumed this chair, and all of its many responsibilities. For a short time, the chair was empty because of the departure of Pastor Pereira, and during this time the duties and responsibilities related to the position were rethought. In keeping with the plan of the School of Theology, the purpose of the chair was defined as seeking to develop pastoral questions that affect the work of women pastors, the theme of women in the Church and theological research related to pastoral development within the Methodist Church.

After twelve years of work as a pastor, I was offered the challenge of returning to the School of Theology to fill this chair. During my time as a pastor I had the opportunity to work in a wide variety of settings. I was a District Superintendent of a District which had 42 churches, did pastoral work with an agricultural ministry, experienced the challenge of youth ministry, and had the opportunity to work in the ecumenical community through CEBI – The Ecumenical Center for Biblical Studies. All of these proved to be both challenging and fulfilling. Now I face a new challenge. The Otília Chaves Chair brings together a variety of ministries that interest me a great deal, and challenge my understanding of ministry.

This work is very diversified. I work in pastoral ministry to the life of the community of the School of Theology, together with Bishop Nelson Luiz Campos Leite and Professor Otoniel Ribeiro. We also work with Professor Dr. Ronaldo S. Rosa and Bishop Nelson accompanying theology students in their supervised pastoral internship. I also participate in planning and carrying out worship services at the seminary. Beyond this, I am active in a variety of meetings, programs, assemblies, congresses and workshops that make up the life of the seminary. In the midst of all of these activities, I constantly seek to raise questions regarding the identity and presence of women.

Working with students and women

I try to accompany the students in their studies, and, when possible, in their pastoral activities. I pay particular attention to the pastoral aspect of my ministry because I am identified by my conference, in Sao Caetano do Sul, as a pastor working in Theological Seminary. In this way, I see my work as an integral part of the ministry of the local church. I try to avoid separating the seminary community from the life of the local church, and very much want to communicate this belief to the students.

However, the central focus of my ministry is with women. In this capacity, I work with local churches, districts and in regional and national conferences to raise questions regarding and try to inform others about the identity and role of women in the Church. I also do this at the ecumenical level and in conjunction with other groups and institutions. In the Pastoral Institute of the School of Theology, I have the responsibility of developing the Women's Project. This project sponsors a yearly national encounter of Methodist Women. The National Encounter of Women of the Methodist Church seeks to enable leadership in all aspects of women's ministry in the Church. Women attend this encounter from the six ecclesiastical regions of the Methodist Church and the two missionary regions - REMENE, in the northeast of Brazil, and The North and Northwest Missionary Field.

The Women's Project also sponsors a yearly ecumenical women's meeting. The Ecumenical Meeting of Women seeks to integrate work related to women in other denominations. The central theme of this encounter is the fight for women's dignity. Women from other denominations and women involved with popular movements such as Sem-Terra (The Landless) and Pastoral Work with Marginalized Women all participate in this exciting event. Out of this encounter comes a yearly publication called: *Telling Our Stories*. Besides being a record of the event, this publication challenges others to participate in the journeys of women.

The Women's Project is also related to NETMAL – Nucleus of Women's Theological Studies in Latin America. The Women's Project and NETMAL work together in a wide variety of ways and on diverse projects. However, a central image that holds the two groups together is that, as women, we are learning to learning to walk together.

It is important to point out that in Brazil, more than 70% of the membership of the Methodist Church is composed of women. There are women working in diverse areas of the action and mission of the Church. Women work in SMM (The Methodist Women's Society) and others as church school professors. Women work in a variety of settings with children, youth, the elderly and persons with special needs. Women work as pastors in diverse Churches, congregations, missionary points, and community centers and as missionaries.

Presently, there are 155 women pastors in the Methodist Church in Brazil. Last year, for the first time, the Methodist Church had three women Episcopal candidates. One of these candidates missed election as the first woman bishop by only three votes. This event raised fundamental questions, among both men and women, regarding women's participation in the Church. Why not women? What would keep a woman from participating in the Episcopal College? Why not have an Episcopal College made up of both women and men? Certainly, there are still

many barriers, but women should not loose hope. Women must continue to fight and face the most diverse situations. In so doing they go forth and signal their presence in the coming of the Kingdom. Women also have the challenge of being "The Image of God" in a world full of so many contradictions.

Finally, the Otilia Chaves Chair, since it is at the School of Theology, can raise fundamental questions and active discussion about women's identity, their presence in the Church and their work as pastors. As such, the School of Theology is fertile soil. It is the place we train new pastors for the Methodist Church in all of Brazil. Perhaps this is a sign of a better world in which the barriers that separate men and women can be broken down in this theological, pedagogical and pastoral journey. Perhaps we can discover how men and women can better work together in the construction of the Kingdom of God. Since, for God "there is no longer Jew of Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all or you are one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28).

Part 2, Chapter E

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Family life in Indonesia

between tradition and change

topics:

- *tradition and modernisation in Indonesia*
- *traditional concept of marriage*
- *relationship between parents and children*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 40-42

Indonesia is a developing country in Southeast Asia which has not less than 13,667 islands. The land area of Indonesia covers about 735,000 square miles, or about 5.3 times as large as Germany or 6 times as large as Poland. The total land and sea area of Indonesia amounts to nearly 4 million square miles.

As a heavily populated country, at this time Indonesia has approximately 190 million people. They are very heterogeneous. There are more than 300 different ethnic groups and more than 50 languages spoken. Besides, the Chinese, the Arabs, the Indians, and the Eurasians live in Indonesia; and some of them have lived in Indonesia for many generations. The majority of the population, approximately 88%, are Muslims. Christians, Catholics and Protestants, are approximately 9% of the population. The rest are Hindus, Buddhists, etc.

Although Indonesian people are heterogeneous and diverse, they are also a unity. They have a national motto "*bhinneka tunggal ika"*, that means: various, yet one; diverse, but united. As a member of an ethnic group, an Indonesian has a certain sub-culture and region language. However, as Indonesian, he or she lives in the Indonesian culture, speaks the national language, *"bahasa Indonesia"*, and holds the country's national ideology, "*Pancasila"*.

For Indonesians, *Pancasila* is very important, because the unity and the diversity of Indonesia are manifested, sustained and guarded by *Pancasila*. This country's national ideology consists of five basic principles, i.e.: (1) One Lordship, (2) Just and Civilised Humanity, (3) Unity of Indonesia, (4) Peoplehood which is Guarded by the Spirit of Wisdom in Deliberation/ Representation, (5) Social Justice.

Tradition and change

Since a long time ago, people in Indonesia have had their own tradition and culture. They keep their ethnic-group tradition as well as their national one. People

living in the villages and elderly people often keep their tradition more strictly than people living in the big cities and young people.

Although people in Indonesia keep their own tradition, it does not mean that there are no changes in Indonesia. The influences from abroad coming to Indonesia have changed Indonesian people in a certain sense. The Indian culture, Islam, and the western culture have influenced people in Indonesia.

A long time ago, the Indian culture, through Hinduism, came to Indonesia and influenced people in Indonesia, especially the upper class. In the 13th century, through traders from Gujarat, Islam came to Indonesia and has influenced the majority of the Indonesian people. Islam was quickly absorbed by the mass. Several hundred years ago, the western culture came to Indonesia through the coming of the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and Dutch. Although the Dutch colonised Indonesia for approximately 350 years, the influence of western culture was mostly limited to externals.

At this time, modernisation, globalisation, and modern information and communication have influenced people in the world, including in Indonesia. This causes changes in many aspects, including in family life in Indonesia. The national development program of Indonesia also facilitates the change. Of course, this change is accepted as long as it does not damage the Indonesian culture.

Marriage [1]

Marriage is an important event for Indonesian people. According to the Javanese[2] tradition, to marry and to become parents are the facts of nature and the obligation to the order of life. Not to live up to this task is considered strange and unjavanese. For the Javanese, it is reprehensible for a man not to marry; for a woman it is even worse and considered to be a shame (*isin*) for the family.

This is a confession of a young women to Niels Mulder:
"I have to marry in order not to feel *isin*. Whatever marriage brings, I do not know, but for a woman self-respect is to be married and most males do not appreciate an advanced education. I want to finish my studies but having studied may prove to be an obstacle in finding a husband. They do not want us at the same level as they are; they still want to be served by their wives. Yet I hope to meet a modern-minded man who will respect me, who will see me as his partner in terms of equality".[3] This young woman may have been living in a traditional society, and she wanted to be free from the tradition.

Traditionally, marriage is an act not only between two persons, but also between two families. Formerly, parents made the marital decisions for their children. A lot of parents chose a spouse for them. However, at this time, this tradition is almost gone. There is a freedom for young people to choose their spouse.

This is the result of the research of Diana L. Wolf in a rural area in Central Java in 1986. Parents of married women were asked: "In Java, who usually chooses a daughter's husband: parents, the daughter, or other people?" Twelve of the nineteen parents responding felt that daughters should choose their husbands, while two felt that it depended upon the child – some daughters could choose on their own and others would need more help from parents. Only two parents felt that daughters should be matched by parents, and three parents believed that parents and daughters together should make the decision.[4]

Usually Indonesian people make a wedding feast when their son or daughter marry. The religious ceremony is very important up to now. Besides, some traditional ceremonies are also done.

The relationship between parents and children [5]

Traditionally, the relationship between parents and children is based on the vertical relationship pattern. In this pattern, parents are "paternalistic" in the sense that their guidance should be accepted by children without discussion.

In the Javanese tradition, parents are ritually and morally superior to their children. Children are dependent on their parents not only in material care but also in forgiveness and blessing. In this tradition, children should honour and respect (*ngajeni*) their parents. Ritually, children demonstrate their honour and dependence on parental blessing at the occasion of "Lebaran", at the end of the fasting month of Muslims.

The obligation to honour parents is supported by the widespread belief that "parents send punishment" (*walat*), irrespective of their personal will. Such retribution follows from the disturbance of their feeling and is brought about by their children's criticism and disobedience, or other actions that cause shame to them, such as arrogance and obstinacy. If the children's opposition is strong enough, they may be thought of as sinful and rebellious (*duraka*). Such children may be repudiated, no longer being acknowledged as belonging to the family.

This is a confession of a modern middle-forty man to Niels Mulder: "A few years ago, when my father died, I had to prepare his body for burial. It was then that I realized that it was the first time in my life that I touched his head and I felt rather shocked because of it. He was a real old-fashioned Javanese father, somewhat aloof and at a distance from his children, whom we awed and deeply respected. But now all this has changed; in my family my wife and I are close to our children; they address us in Indonesian, I play and talk with them, and all of us are really intimate."[6] This confession shows an example of change which has happened in the family life in Indonesia, especially for educated people who are living in the big cities.

A university lecturer in Yogyakarta also confessed to Niels Mulder: "All of us admire my father and respect him; all children, even the youngest, address him in *krama* (respectful form of language). When I speak to my mother I also use *krama* such as do my two eldest younger siblings; the others speak *ngoko* (jovial language) with mother. Personally I do not care; my children speak *ngoko* with me, although they should address their grandparents in *krama*. Well, things have changed".[7] According to this man, his relationship with his children was intimate and relaxed, while he, as father, should be the protector of their welfare and spiritual development.

A university graduate women confessed: "At home our relationship with the children is very different from my relationship with my parents; we are close together, more open, and far less authoritarian. We never hit the children, but try to develop mutual trust and their right initiative. They address their father in *ngoko*, but since I am their stepmother they address me in polite language (*krama*)".[8]

Nowadays, many middle class and educated parents want to break the hierarchical distance that existed between themselves and their children. They like to have a

closer relationship to each other. On the contrary, children dare to express their opinions and sometimes to oppose their parents.

Niels Mulder wrote a case of his Indonesian friend in Jakarta who is not satisfied to his parents and opposes them openly. This man is a highly educated man who knows the world, a descendant of a well-known '*priyayi'* family whose father held high positions in colonial days. To him, his father had always been a distant person whom he did not much appreciate. When he was young, he did not experience much family life. He was brought up to feel himself a member of the widespread extended family and at the age of five he was given into the care of a Dutch family for the sake of his education. When the war came to Indonesia, he came back "home", doing his middle school in Surabaya where he became infused with nationalist ideas. All the time, however, his parents remained staunch supporters of the Dutch and could not understand the sign of time. In his opinion, the experience of a warm family life was a rare occurrence in the circles of his birth and he sees it as his ideal to develop more spontaneous and intimate relationship among the members of his family than he could experience in his youth. For a long time he remained unmarried, refusing to consider the well-born marriage partners his parents suggested. When he finally decided to settle down, he married a "Batak" girl which seemed to highlight the rupture between him and his parents. It was only upon his having children that a measure of normal relationship was re-established. Emotionally, however, he rejects his milieu of origin and has developed an aversion of its cultural manifestations. Even though his mother is still alive, he refuses to visit the grave of his father.[9]

Of course, not all of the Indonesian people do as that man. A lot of them still adapt to the tension between tradition and the demands of modernity more gracefully.

The role of pastoral care and counselling

The role of pastoral care and counselling in family life, especially in the process of change, from traditional to modern life, is very important. At this period, people need to be helped to develop their own identity and to act in a way which is suitable with the situation. In this matter, the function of pastoral care as guidance is important.

In relation to marriage, young people can face two main problems. First, if they have a freedom to choose their spouse, sometimes they are not ready to do it, yet. In this case, the role of guidance and pre-marital counselling is very important. Second, if the parents still keep the traditional value and they do not agree with the spouse chosen by their children, conflict can happen. If this happens, the function of pastoral care as guidance and reconciling is very important.

Tension and conflict between parents and children can also be happening in the family, especially if they have opposite perspectives and opinions. Although at this time parents want to break the hierarchical distance, they often still keep some traditional values while their children keep the modern ones. In this case, pastoral care and counselling is needed; and the function of pastoral care as guidance and reconciling is important.

Notes

[1] This part is based on the results of the research of Niels Mulder, an anthropologist in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, in 1979. See: Niels Mulder, *Individual And Society in Java: A Cultural Analysis*, Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 1994.
[2] The Javanese is the biggest ethnic group in Indonesia. In 1984, the Javanese was about 47% of the total population in Indonesia.
[3] Mulder, *op. cit*., p.33.
[4] Diane L. Wolf, "Industrialization and the Family: Women workers as mediators of family change and economic change in Java", in *Women and Mediation in Indonesia*, ed. Sita van Bemmelen et al., Leiden: KITLV Press, 1992, p.102.
[5] This part is also based on the result of the research of Niels Mulder.
[6] Niels Mulder, *op.cit*., p.78-79.
[7] *Ibid*., p.81-82.
[8] *Ibid*., p.83-84.
[9] *Ibid*., p.79.

George I. Euling *Papua New Guinea, 1997*

The impact of westernisation and commerce

on the family values in Papua New Guinea

topics:

- *the impact of modernisation on the society of Papua New Guinea*
- *cultural change and the loss of identity*
- *modernisation/monetarisation and the loss of family values*
- *marriage and divorce in Papua New Guinea*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp. 42-46

This paper is written from a pastoral perspective on the impact of the Western culture and commerce upon the traditions and family values in urban Papua New Guinea. It also provides the pastoral problems that are faced by Church workers in counselling situations. But first, some general information about the country is necessary:

Geographical features

Papua New Guinea (PNG as it is called in short) is a very fascinating country, probably the most fascinating country in all of the South Pacific basin. Within the country there are about 800 different languages (as recently assessed). With its diverse cultures and traditions – the way of life that varies from tribe to tribe and from the many ethnic groupings – Papua New Guinea stands to lose immense cultural wealth and riches with the imposition of the Western influence.

Papua New Guinea has the largest land mass of approximately 90% of total land mass (960,000 square kilometres) of the entire Melanesian group of countries, it has a population of four million people. A country that is so rich in natural resources (with large deposits of copper, gold, oil, and forestry, fisheries, coffee and other cash crops) is the envy of many countries of the world. PNG strives so hard to hold together the different ethnic groups for the purpose of national unity.

Colonial administrators

The country's government is democratically elected with 109 members representing the people in the national parliament. The political system is a "synthesis of

traditional democratic structures, for an example clan-based common ownership of land, and modern democratic institutions, such as a federally-structured parliamentary system."

Papua New Guinea was colonised by two countries in Europe; the Germans had under their administration the northern part and the islands of the territory which is called New Guinea, whilst the British administered the southern region - the Papuan Region. The British handed their part of the colony to Australia in 1902 followed by the German counterparts to the same administration in 1919. Papua New Guinea gained its independence from Australia in 1975 without any blood bath.

It was a ceremonial lowering of one flag and the raising of the other. On the 15th of September 1975 a baby began a political walk on its own. The reins were handed to Papua New Guineans. There were mixed feelings by many people, as to its timing then. The western part of the country was managed by the Dutch from 1828 - 1962. What we know of today as Irian Jaya is now part of Indonesia. It became an integral part of the Republic of Indonesia in 1963.

Papua New Guinea is a tropical country with its highlands displaying a sub tropical climate with alpine mountains and snow-capped peaks. The coastal and the island regions boast of some of the worlds best diving and fishing spots. The country also boasts of its position as the second largest habitat of diverse flora and fauna in the world.

The highly fertile and rich environment made it possible for the people in the past to live by gathering, hunting and fishing. Today most Papua New Guineans concentrated mostly on root crop cultivation which puts them on a different board then the Australian Aborigines, who lived to the South of them, who still are hunters and gatherers and the Indonesians to the West who are primarily rice cultivators. They would rotate taro, kaukau, banana, and other root crops all year around. Rice and processed fish form Japan would form the main staple in any family home. (More on the diet later on).

Brief look into the country

Approximately 80% of people live in the rural areas of the country. Rural areas in Papua New Guinea are unlike the rural in Europe. Rural areas in PNG would scarcely have adequate health, educational and power facilities. Death from preventable diseases like malaria, measles etc. would be a normal occurrence. In the midst of immense wealth Papua New Guineans struggle to understand why essential services are not reaching them. The State ownes only 3% of the total land in PNG. The majority of land of 97% is culturally owned. Investor confidence by foreign developers is somewhat dampened by land compensation demands by land owners. Some times such land compensation would run into *(not millions but) billions* in US $. On many occasions compensation came about through ill planning of fair and adequate environmental facilities and monitoring systems by the State, independently from the developers (who are exploiters of natural resources but are not environmentally conscious). Standards of environmental checks would fall below western standards. The failure of the State to realise the importance of the safe guarding of flora and fauna and the eco-marine life has brought the country to its knees. The civil disturbance in Bouganville has seen

thousands of people killed. In the last few weeks eleven soldiers were killed in one encounter with the land owner turned rebels.

Bouganville copper which is owned by CRA-Australia, abandoned its mining activities in Bouganville because it could not possibly pay US$ 5 billion (current value) as compensation for the environmental damage to the land owners. And principally due to threats on the lives of the employees by the rebels. Obviously no Government or a corporate investor would pay that type of money anywhere. The land owners then resort to violence.

Ok Tedi Mining Limited through its management Company BHP Limited had to fight an expensive court battle in Australia over river pollution of the 1,500 kilometres of the FIy river. The A $2 billion was abandoned in place of an expensive out of court settlement. The Government then came to the aid of the mining company by legislating against the right of the land owners to take the Company to an overseas Court.

Both cases almost sank the country.

Papua New Guinea was to use its vast natural resources as the means of obtaining necessary revenue for financing developments. In order to do this, the country handed over the exploitation of the natural resources to foreign companies, who would come in with capital and technology. The Country would then earn portions of revenue from exports and employ the 'yields' for national development. Nationals, and particularly land owners would enter into businesses that spun off from these large projects. The Bouganville situation saw the country devalue the nations' currency and its subsequent float in late 1994. This has been the source of the troubles of a young rich and yet poor nation in the South Pacific.

Land rights and position of land owners

While approximately 97% of the total land mass in Papua New Guinea is customary owned, legally all resources that are on or within the land are owned the State. But the actual position is not so. The State has difficulty enforcing that legal requirement for development purposes. This is due to the fact that land to a Melanesian is a birthright and can not be taken away for development purposes without lengthy consultation and dialogue between the State, the developers and the land owners. The roots of the Melanesian people can easily be identified through land ownership. And in addition to this, the cultural background conflicts with westernisation. The constitution of the country was prepared with a strong Australian presence. Papua New Guineans who helped with the drafting of the constitution were mostly educated in the west or were educated by westerners. Because of the influence of westernisation through the constitution most Papua New Guineans would find it impossible to express their culture in a constitution prior to the experience of governing the country. This has brought added violence in the country

The Pastoral Requirements:
A Church worker would normally find himself in a dilemma between the land owners who demanded that land compensation is inadequate and the State and the developer who both say otherwise.

Let me now speak about the impact of Westernisation and commerce on traditional and family values in PNG.

The loss of identity

The advent of the unavoidable western culture through education and commerce, and the fast growing urbanisation in PNG has caught the unsuspecting people off guard. In some parts of the country, the social groups, values and behaviour norms have not just been weakened, they are totally destroyed. Many people have lost a sense of identity. They do not have an aim and are uncertain of what is right and wrong. This comes about when traditional social mechanisms, that have been in place for generations, are destroyed gradually. Traditional roles and relationships that guide members of communities are forgotten in the introduction of newer items and ways of life. Consumerism, a concept that preaches the message that '*the more products one can have the happier he becomes',* is strangling many communities in PNG. This has created tensions and has left the people powerless to counteract them. This would be true for people who live in the urban areas but is now generally true for people in the rural areas as well. This is because of the increasing number of large mining, petroleum and forestry developments that are being undertaken right across the rural areas of the country.

Certainly the majority of people who live in villages in the rural areas, (whose lives would be governed by strict traditional codes of conducts) are increasingly threatened by those that have returned from the towns, or by the large developments that are taking place on their lands. These developments bring direct challenges to the traditional values and norms. Most people would take to drinking, gambling or aggression as a way to fill the void of not having to identity oneself with a sense of roots.

Many cultures in Papua New Guinea have a high traditional value on interpersonal relationships. This enhance personal growth and development. Achievement of status in a community brings about collective joy and honour 10 all members of the society. Independence and personal success is not the traditional way. In many cases, this calls for outright rejection of one from a traditional setting or village.

The pastoral problems that are faced by Church workers are:

The village Church worker does not have the training and is not familiar with an imposing world view; nor does he understands the processes and the forces that disrupt the existing social roles and relationships that he is so familiar with. He too is caught up by the tension in a group and many times over would resort to violence against the State or a developer instead of seeking an answer. For the answer is not so much a question of personal morality. If this was the case he would have an answer. But the answer lies in the social and economic structures that the village Church worker does not have the remotest clue about. Violence against the State can be described as a form of rebellion against the authority for its failure to create, and the facilitate, an educational program that would seek to answer the question of “What is happening”.

Marriage and family

The effects of urbanisation are clearly seen and often are felt very strongly in the areas of marriage and family life.

In Papua New Guinea, and this is also true in other Melanesian countries, traditional life is characterised by separation of sexes. Physical and emotional needs are in most cases met by the same sexes. In the rural setting, men and women

would live quite separately from each other. The men would live in "man houses" while the wives, and children would live together in the family houses. Men would generally meet their wives only for procreation purposes.

The pattern is increasingly dying away as husbands and wives have to live together under one roof and even sleep in the same bed, particularly in the urban place. "Both as a result of closer physical proximity and because they are somewhat removed from the rural society and its expectation regarding the behaviour of spouses, husbands and wives have the opportunity to develop a closer relationship as friends and companions. While some urban couples have achieved this most are still engaged in a difficult process of adjustment."

The roles of the spouses have also changed quite dramatically. In the traditional setting, men would clear dense tropical rain forest for gardening. They would also take care of the heavy work. Planting of crops generally would be done by both parties. The role of the women is to nurture and harvest the crops. The yield would be seen as collective effort, and joy and satisfaction is enjoyed by both parties. Both parties see them selves as contributing equally to the needs of the family. The wife would be seen as the main provider. When the wife works regularly she sustains the family.

In the advent of "development" in an urban setting, reliance is not so much on gardening but on a fortnightly salary. In most cases the roles have changed, where the wife looses her role as a family provider. The husband alone earns a wage. There are a number of problems that rises from this, as Brian Schwarz said:

"a) The wife suffers from loss of self esteem at not being able to contribute to the support of the family;

b) The husband who is the sole provider may feel resentment toward his wife who is now an economic burden, rather than an asset.

c) If, as is becoming common among the well-educated, both husband and the wife earn an income, then the wife is economically independent of her husband. She is not bound to him by her need of him; she can, if she so desires, manage alone. This situation can also be a source of tension. The husband may feel threatened by a wife who can rival or even surpass his earning capacity; he may feel insecure because she is not in some way dependent upon him and thus more firmly tied to him."

One of the major problems that affects marriages in the urban place (where family units are more independent, unlike the rural where family units are interdependent upon each other and where the welfare of each family lies in the hands of other members of the extended family and the village) is the heavy drinking habits that most men in the urban environment have taken to.

Employed men would drink all the money and come back home with empty pockets, and nothing for the family. In most cases, if not all, wives would take the children away from the husband and leave with them to her relatives. They would be separated from their husbands for long periods of time, in most cases the ultimate penalty of divorce would happen. Such a cost to the children would be unbearable.

The Courts are also alarmed at the increasing number of deaths due to fights between husbands and wives from alcohol related problems. Husbands are known to have died from stab wounds when the wives have defended themselves from their abusing husbands. In most cases much to the sympathy of the Courts the wives

are put in jail for man slaughter. Husbands have been known also to have beaten their wives to death through alcohol related fights.

Last week my neighbour cut his wife's shoulder, almost cutting through the shoulder bones. At the same time he hit another woman who lodges with them with a heavy piece of timber at the side of her rib cage. He was lucky not to have broken any bones. He was "drunk when he did that", was an excuse he gave to some one when he was asked to explain himself

There are a number of pastoral problems that are faced by church workers when it comes to counselling:

a) Some times it is very hard, because of the language difficulties. Some times the "trade language of pidgin" is used but many people who are caught in such a situation would be those whose comprehension of the language is very limited. More often then not, people will misunderstand each other due to the limited understanding of the language,

b) Other times, the affected wives or women, would be hesitant to talk to the church workers of their problems due to the differences in age particularly, and largely also because of the differences in the world view (an educated church worker and an illiterate wife or vice versa) it makes it difficult to meet the pastoral needs of those who are in need.

c) Where the Church worker is old and his membership are fairly well educated, he finds that he would not be able to relate to them.

d) The cultural context would not permit the Church workers (in the case of male workers) to counsel women.

e) In the past, people lived together (village living). The problems were easily identified and talked about. Every body knew about the problems, because they lived together, the church workers' task was to bring the Christian response to the known problem. People never needed to learn how to talk about their problems to a stranger (church worker). Now because people have become independent from each other (urban living), and the problems are kept private, the church worker has two difficulties: he has to find what the problems are, and has to get them to speak about them; then he must bring a Christian response.

Sometimes both the husband and wife would not want the church workers to even inquire as to their health – let alone wife bashing through alcohol abuse.

Gambling in family life

The introduction of gambling in the country has yet again added to the suffocating trend upon the live of the marginalised in the urban place. The Government introduced the gambling business under the gamings act (among other commercial reasons) as a revenue raising measure. Much to the regrets of the Government many people who saved money under tremendous and tedious hardships, have thrown it all away in poker machines. A story is told of a Woman in the highlands town of Goroka who used up all her savings in just an hour of play. She saved A$ 2,000 over years of growing and selling vegetables to the town market. She was saving that money for her children's school fees. Much to her regrets, she could not take the money back. She lost it all.

The impact of the electronic and print media upon the family life

There is now a gradual decrease (but at a very fast rate) of parental authority. In the past parental authority was very important toward the nurturing and the general welfare of the children. Magazines, videos, and TV programs have altered the power of parental authority. Children are turned to believe what is said or read through the print and the electronic media more so than to believe their parents.

I have known of men who wanted to divorce their wives and take on other wives, or have taken on two wives, because their wives would not model after women that are seen in movies and magazines.

The print and electronic media have also caused many marital problems as well. Many marriage break up each year due to the telecasting of the popular Australian rugby games. The break-ups came about when husbands and wives supported opposing teams. When one team wins and the other loses, there will be very heated and emotional fights over that between husbands and wives.

Eating habits in the family life

In the past people lived on vegetables and occasionally would have protein as a complement to their vegetables. Such meat or fish would either be hunted or caught and would make up the diet of the people. The people were free from heart and kidney diseases. As the diet changes more and more people are living off junk foods, sicknesses and diseases that were never known in the past to be killers are attacking both young and old alike, because they are not careful about what they eat.

Lamb flaps dipped in oil and fried on flat metal slabs is a favourite meal to many people in PNG. Lamb flaps, declared not good for human consumption because of the high fat content of 30%, are banned in Australia. The consumer bureau affairs department is in the process of banning it from PNG.

I have had to counsel a patient who was dying because of kidney failure. The doctors told me that the disease was caused by a non control diet.

People who live in the coast would settle for rice and canned fish for their meal instead of fishing for fish. I have had difficulties, convincing people we set up in a large vegetable farm not to sell all the vegetables, but to eat some and sell some. The people have had the tendency to sell the vegetables, so that they earn money to buy rice. Similarly people in the rural areas would go fishing and would sell their catch for money, so that they would buy a can of fish produced by the Japanese. To many Papua New Guineans, death caused by poor eating habits, with poor dieting procedures would not be seen as purely a health problem. Sorcery and the spirits of ancestors would be suspected as probable causes of death.

The pastoral difficulties are:

a) The church worker finds difficulty in explaining to the bereaved families that such death is caused by irresponsible and poor dieting. Many killer sicknesses and

diseases that are associated with poor eating habits are introduced into the country by the advent of the western culture and commerce and trade.

b) A young church worker who would be regarded as having no knowledge at all on how life is lived in traditional Melanesia, will be seen as lacking in both wisdom and insight into questions of death. He would not be trusted in any way at all, and would not be taken into any confidences. This is because traditionally the elders in the village were healers, even though infant and child mortality was very high while life expectancy was very low. The advent of the modern health care was normally viewed with suspicion.

Added causes of divorce

Divorce and family break-ups is becoming a real concern in PNG, as the traditional mechanisms that hold family units together are breaking down. Marriages in the past were held together by devotion and commitment to the welfare of not just the immediate family, but the village as a whole. Success and prosperity and good living in a village would depend, among other requirements, on how spouses conduct their marital responsibilities.

Polygamy which is a practice in the highlands for generations is on an increase, right around PNG, as many young men become educated and are earning a wage. The Courts are also alarmed at the rate of killing by wives of their husbands or wives upon other wives. In traditional Melanesia, the wives would live together humbly, as their sole purpose is to serve the husband in accumulating wealth. In modern PNG today, wives fight over wealth from the husband.

The pastoral difficulty here is that, when people get married to more then one wife they just turn their backs on religion. No amount of counselling would help.

The difficulty is made bigger by the fact that many parliamentarians have taken on more than one wife. The Governor General has more then two wives. Polygamy has now become a cultural norm and an accepted way of life. There is an act of parliament on bigamy, but this law like many other laws in PNG are not enforced. Status and money in the pockets are two factors that attract additional wives to men.

Charles K. Konadu *Ghana, 1997*

The effect of social change

on the matrilineal system of the Ashantis of Ghana

topics:

- *traditional patrilineal and matrilineal family systems in Ghana*
- *concept of marriage and family*
- *polygamy*
- *the effect of urbanisation on social values*
- *counselling programs in Ghana*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No. 2, 1997; pp. 46 – 51

Presently I live and work in Accra, the capital of Ghana, some 300 km from my home town in Ashanti. I live together with my wife and three children. In the home I was raised up my mother with her children lived together with the following people: Mother, two sisters and their children, mother's sister with daughter and children. My father lived some 100 meters away with the following people: mother, two brothers, two wives who stayed in their respective homes with their children. My father died a pagan while my mother became a Christian when I was 15 years old. I am the 8th child of the 9 children of my mother. My father had 15 children. None of my parents had formal school education.

Presently, none of my mother and the sisters are living together. Two are living separately with their respective daughter in Kumasi, the capital city of Ashanti. The other one is with the daughter in USA. None of my siblings are living together. At my village home now, only one of my cousins is living with her children.

What is written above is not unique about where I come from. It is a fraction of the story of the Ashanti people. What follows is a bit more of the Ashantis and the changes going on in their matrilineal descent system.

The Ashantis of Ghana

Ashanti is one of the 10 political regions of Ghana. Ghana is situated on the West Coast of Africa with a population (according to UNFPA'S Population Card, in October 1996) of 18.06 million and occupies a land mass of 238,000 sq. km. Ashanti occupies the central portion of Ghana with a land mass of 25,123 sq. km. The population of Ashanti in 1984 was 2.1 million. Projected to 1996, it is approximately 3.2 million.

Formerly known as the Gold Coast, Ghana obtained its independence from the British in 1957 as the first black Sub-Sahara African country to attain an independent status. Ghana became a republic in July 1960. The country has gone through a series of military rule. A multi-party democracy was established in January 1993 as the 4th Republic of Ghana since 1960.

In the book, *Asante and its Neighbours 1700 - 1807*, J.K. Fynn noted that the history of the Gold Coast in the 18th and 19th Centuries "is largely the history of the consolidation and rise of the Ashanti kingdom and its relations with the neighbouring African and European people." Ashanti is one section of the people known as the Akans in Ghana. During the second half of the 17th century various Akan speaking people were organised into a military union, aiming at political and economic expansion. By the early 19th century the Ashanti kingdom "was indisputably the greatest and the rising power of West Africa" Fynn states.

The region is rich in forest lands, mineral and vegetable products. The region is considered to be the richest in the country. Farming stands first among the occupations of the population. Cocoa has been a major product in the Region. Timber extraction is also a wide-spread industry in Ashanti. Another leading industry is gold mining. Gold is the main basis of the reputation long enjoyed by the rulers of Ashantis for their wealth in gold. There are also crafts-men, gold- and silver-smiths. There are also cloth- weavers, basket-weavers and wood carvers. These carvers can make wooden drums and carve gold ornaments.

The Ashantis cherish a history of powerful kings and successful military adventurers. Ashanti was fundamentally a military union. Thus military power provided the basis of the kingdom and it was by direct military action, rather than by any process of registration or negotiation treaty-making that Ashanti achieved its political and economic success.

One of the notable kings of Ashanti was Osei Tutu. He was also the political and spiritual head of the Ashanti nation. With his friend-priest, Anokye, they worked to weld Ashanti into a powerful kingdom. The priest was his Royal Adviser, seer and designer. The Priest promulgated the mysterious appearance of the Golden stool for the Ashantis. It became the emblem of the new kingdom, the symbol of its authority and the "Soul of the nation" of Ashanti. The Golden stool was supposed to contain the spirit of the whole Ashanti nation, and its strength and bravery depended upon the safety of the stool.

The Ashanti state was at the height of its powers in the early 19th century and became a major threat to British trade on the Coast, until it was defeated in 1873 by the British force. The Ashanti was finally annexed by the British in 1902 to become part of the British Colony of the Gold Coast.

The Ashanti's everyday life, like most of the people in Ghana, is a communal life. Every household is a complete communal unit. All amenities are shared in common. Ashantis traditionally bear each other's burden as much as their own and by custom and practice are their brother's keeper. This was seen in the discipline of children and the eating from the same bowl by women and also men in a household. Guests also have special and prior attention in every Ashanti home. Custom demands that one treats and devotes time to the comfort of guests.

Regarding the religious beliefs of the Ashantis, they believe in the Everlasting Creator of all. He is known as the unchangeable One. However, as kings linguists, so they believe the Mighty King has linguists in lesser gods who serve him. Also the Ashantis' religion involves not only the living but the dead and even those to

be born. Divine powers are believed to exist in rivers, stones or rocks and trees and sacrifices are made to them.

To the Ashantis, life and religion are indivisible. Daily activities fail or succeed not because there are natural forces but because there is a universe of spirit-power on which success depends. Thus in times of calamity like illness, death, bad omen, people need to consult the divine person who know the reasons behind the calamity. Again, life is seen to be under the protection and the judgement of spirit ancestors and gods. The Ashanti believes in the continuance of life hereafter.

Let me end this section with some remarks to the status of women in Ashanti. The Ashanti has high regards for women. "We are going to consult the old woman" places the woman as the final arbiter in all decisions in the Ashanti community. The woman is the custodian of all knowledge and treasures of the community. Queen mothers have held powerful positions in Ashanti. In fact wars have been started because the Queen mother said the war should be fought although the men and the chief would have settled for a lesser option. The final battle between the British and the Ashantis leading to the annexing of Ashanti to the Gold Coast was led by a woman. In Ashanti there is little distinction of sex in the social grouping or organisations.

Some cultural and traditional practices in Ghana are similar in many tribal and ethnic groups. However, there are some that are as different as night is from day. Matrilineal and patrilineal descent systems are examples of the latter. Let us look at them.

Descent systems in Ghana

In a rapidly changing society like Ghana, people face varied challenges, especially, in the area of marriage and family life. People are usually bombarded with varied pressures: pressures of tradition, pressures of modern living and pressures of religious beliefs. The society continues to be more heterogeneous, as ethnic groups with their distinctive cultural norms and practices intermingle with others in marriage and other union.

Basically, there are two forms of descent in Ghana: patrilineal and matrilineal. The patrilineal descent system traces descent through the male with people inheriting group membership through their father; whereas the matrilineal descent system traces descent through females, with people inheriting group membership through their mother. Crossing tribal or ethnic lines to marry, for example, traditionally could pose a problem especially with the problem of inheritance and succession. Now industrialisation, urbanisation and education have changed demographic patterns in Ghana. Urban centres and towns are virtually ethnically very heterogeneous. How then does the Ghanaian handle these changes?

In traditional Ghanaian society, membership in a lineage conferred rights of access to farm lands and other resources of the extended family. These rights differed, depending on whether one resided in matrilineal society.

Let us look a bit more closely at those descent systems: patrilineal and matrilineal. We shall focus finally on the matrilineal system and observe how modern changes in the society are affecting such system.

The patrilineal family

Examples of patrilineal societies in Ghana are the Ewes of the eastern boarders of Ghana, the Ga at the coast, the Tallens in the North and many other tribes of the North. The common ancestor of the patrilineal descent is a male. The family is made up of the following:

1. A man's children - male and female.
2. Its paternal brothers and sisters.
3. Children of his paternal brothers.
4. His paternal grandfather.
5. paternal brothers and sisters of this grandfather.
6. The descendants of the paternal uncles in the direct male line.

A male parent, therefore, belongs to the same family as his children.

In patrilineal societies, residence is almost invariably patrilocal. A couple after marriage will either live in the compound of the bridegroom's father or in a house he himself has built. The Gas of Ghana, also a patrilineal group, provide an exception to the above. Their residential system, is duo-local. Here a husband and wife continue to live in their natal homes after marriage. Succession and inheritance pass in the male line in patrilineal societies.

Detailed application of the patrilineal system of inheritance differs considerably from place to place, the general rules in respect of ancestral or lineage property are fairly uniform. Lineage property is for the exclusive use of the lineage members and personal property, land or otherwise, passes from father to sons and daughters. As a rule, sons take precedence over daughters.

Traditionally, people tended to marry individuals from their own tribal or ethnic group because there was little mobility and industry was centred in people's own locality.

The matrilineal descent system

As mentioned earlier, in the matrilineal descent system a person traces descent through the female, with the person inheriting group membership through the mother. This system is practised by the Akan speaking peoples in Ghana, the largest ethnic group in Ghana which Ashanti is one. Prof. Nukunya of the University of Ghana has rightly said that "the key to the understanding of Ashanti society is matrilineal descent which forms the basis of their descent groups and interpersonal relations."

The matrilineal family is generally made up of the following:

1. A woman's children, male and female.
2. Her maternal brothers and sisters.
3. Children of her maternal sisters.
4. Her maternal grandmother.
5. Maternal brothers and sisters of the grandmother.

6. The descendants of the maternal aunts in the direct female line.

It is seen that a father does not share the same family as his children.

One important aspect of matrilineal system is that it is the mother's brother who performs the functions normally reserved for the father in patrilineal societies. Often a father has his residence with his matrilineal group while the mother stays with the children in her descent group. Thus, the fact that the father and child do not belong to the same descent group and also do not stay together often greatly limits the father's role in terms of authority and discipline.

Is there any explanation of the Ashanti matrilineal descent system with its inheritance and succession? Usually three unconfirmed postulates are given to support the Ashantis matrilineal system position, namely:

a) No cock has its chicks following it. Hence it is natural for children to follow their mothers.

b) It is only mothers who know the father of their children. Thus, there is no way the husband could tell if the child the woman is carrying is really his, and finally,

c) There is a story about a chief who was struck with a strange disease. When the gods of the land were consulted they demanded a human sacrifice for pacification. The chief conferred with his wife that one of their children be sacrificed but she refused to give up one of the children. The chief's sister after being consulted wholeheartedly gave one of her children. He was cured and when he was dying willed that because of what the sister did for him, his property should go to his sister and her children.

d) Ashanti concept of a person is used to explain the matrilineal descent. It is believed that at birth a person receives his lineage ties through the mother's *mogya* (blood) and from the father *sunsum* (spirit). It is believed that the blood is about 85% of the person, hence the maternal ties. In addition to the blood and the spirit the person receives the soul from the supreme Being.

Now let us look at some aspects of family life in the matrilineal descent system:

Concept of marriage

In Ashanti, like many other ethnic groups in Ghana, a marriage is regarded primarily as an alliance between two kinships or family groups. It is only in the secondary aspect that it is considered as a union between two individual persons. Marriage is the normal state among adults in all rank of Ashanti society. Almost everyone unless handicapped by physical or mental illness is expected to get married upon the attainment of adult status.

The mate selection

Since marriage is considered to be a communal event as shown above, decision about marriage is thus seen to be too important to leave in the hands of children alone. Traditionally, choice would come from the young person's locality. From the above, marriage based on romantic love or intimate friendship and acquaintance before marriage was not practised.

Purpose of marriage

Procreation as the chief end of marriage was emphasised. In the matrilineal descent system as well as the patrilineal system, the importance attached to the procreation and ownership of children was vital. Thus in Ashanti barrenness or sterility is an ominous situation. It is considered a valid ground for divorce. Often families put pressure on husbands to either seek divorce or take on additional wife if the original wife is incapable of having children. In fact many children in a marriage is a sign of pride, no matter the quality of children. For example the birth of a tenth child to a woman is considered heroic. The father receives a congratulatory ram from the wife's family and he becomes the envy of his peers for that accomplishment.

The Ashanti corporate life

The extended family forms the matrilineal descent system. The individual finds his true identity within this system and the community. The matrilineal family is seen as a source of support for its members. As we have seen earlier, the support system is quite wide and each member sees her self as supporting to sustain the system.

The individual has obligations and responsibilities towards the members of the family. The family is also the individual's strength and security which he can turn to anytime he is in difficulty. Illegitimacy is unknown in Ashanti. Children born outside marriage and adultery still belong to the matrikin, and hence get some sense of belonging. And since fathers usually did not care for their children such children born outside marriage have uncles to care for them.

Polygamy

In Ashanti there is toleration and even approval accorded to polygamy. A marriage according to Ashanti law and custom is potentially polygamous. In its form and subsistence there is no legal impediment to the contracting of another marriage by the husband. The possession of a number of wives is normally a mark of importance and success in life.

Youth sexuality

Premarital chastity was valued in Ashanti. Premarital pregnancy was frequently considered very shameful. Girls were not expected to have sexual relations before their puberty rites were performed. These took place shortly after they had had their first menstruation. Girls usually married shortly after this ceremony and thus entered their first conjugal unions as virgins. Thus pre-nuptial chastity was highly valued.

The above constitute some of the basic features and character of family life as found among the Ashantis. We now want to consider some of the changes which have occurred as a result of modern influence. Factors such as colonialism, Christianity, money-economy, urbanisation, education and other social factors which have affected the matrilineal descent system will be examined.

The present state of family life in Ashanti

Direct and systematic colonial administration exerted lasting changes on Ghanaian society in general and the Ashanti in particular. It could also be seen that colonialism gave support to other agents of change, namely, Christianity, formal school education and money-using economy. Specific areas of change are considered as follows:

Forms of marriage

Traditionally there was one basic way of contracting a valid marriage in Ashanti. The distinctiveness of this marriage as discussed earlier, is the presentation of gifts by the family of the man to the girl and her family whom he wished to marry. The marriage rites are termed customary rites and they gave legality to the marriage. The gifts could be in the form of drinks (Whiskey, Gin) cloths, money, and ornaments. These days the marriage presentations and gifts are abused by families, especially when the girl is highly educated. As mentioned earlier, customary marriage is potentially polygamous. To remove this polygamous factor and make marriage more acceptable to the colonial government and the church, marriage under the Ordinance was introduced. This is marriage contracted according to the provisions of the marriage Ordinance. The most important features of this form of marriage are its monogamous nature and the fact that it cannot be dissolved except by a valid judgement of divorce. Many educated women like this form of marriage because it gives security to them and the children. Some men shy away from it because of its monogamous nature, and the huge expenses in contracting it with its Western wedding rites. Some Christians prefer to have marriage under Ordinance in the chapel so it could be combined with formal blessing of the union in the name of the Lord by the Minister. The licensed Minister thus performs both a civil and an ecclesiastical duty during the ceremony.

There is another reason why some people stay away from Ordinance marriage apart from its monogamous nature, that is, some Ashantis and others feel that it is an alien institution, involving consequences inimical to the spirit and traditions of the Ashantis. What is being referred to is that Ordinance marriage puts emphasis on the nuclear family, rather than the extended matrilineal family. As a result of this, a man's loyalties are primarily directed towards his wife and children. This again is reinforced by the Christian teaching of 'one flesh' nature of the marriage union, emphasising the spouses primary loyalty to one another. This is clearly seen to counter the tenets of the matrilineal descent system.

As noted earlier, under matrilineal descent system, children and wives are not considered members of the father and husband's family as far as rights to his property is concerned. Customary laws of the Ashanti do not give rights to widows, sons and daughters except where the deceased chose to make a will in their favour. It is not uncommon to have lineage heads and sisters of the deceased locking out widows and their children from their matrimonial home only to protect properties of their deceased kinsman.

By their good behaviour children of a deceased father may be given the right of sojourning or residing in their own father's house. Ordinance marriage with its Christian implication and other recent laws (to be discussed later) try to remedy the issue so described.

Choice of a spouse

It has been said earlier that traditionally, choice of a spouse was the work of parents or elders of the extended family. Marriage was considered a communal event and a decision about a mate was too important to leave in the hands of children alone. Conflicts are being created now between some young people and their families in the area of mate selection. Urbanisation, formal school education, ease in communication and transportation have made family control over many young people very minimal. Changed demographic patterns have created an ethnically heterogeneous society. Thus young people meet in urban centres and college and university campuses and fall in love. Often parents are unhappy about such relationships because most parents want marriages from their own ethnic groups. Another factor of modern changes that affect mate selection is the question of the two forms of descent systems in Ghana. Because of limited mobility the traditional Ashanti married from Ashanti. Things are different now and the challenge of marrying from an ethnic group with varied descent system has inherent problems.

Urban life

The growth of towns has brought with it many alterations in social life as well as many social problems not associated with the traditional social organisation.

The modern life style of the towns and cities and related factors have weakened the hold of the extended family on the lives of it's people. For example, one of the major alterations in towns and cities is the living arrangement. Here, most urban couples have common residence, separate from that of either family of orientation. It is noted that in such neutral territory, the conjugal family is a more cohesive social unit. And because fathers are staying together with their own children the children's education and welfare are catered for. The other side of the coin is that in urban centres marriages could be unstable because the traditional support system and restrictions are removed.

The following are some of the results of urban living.

a) A prevalence of premarital and extramarital sexual relations. Here, the traditional restrictions and restraints have been removed. Money economy also contributes to this picture.

b) there is also greater incidence of inter-tribal/ethnic marriages since the pool of eligible partners has increased. This often creates problems for the extended family.

c) there is improved communication, educational and health facilities.

d) youth problems are common especially unemployment and drug usage. The traditional system ensured that the child's upbringing was a collective effort, involving all members of the extended family. In towns and cities the young person is unknown and people careless of what happens to him.

Male and female roles

In Ashanti and as in most tribal societies in Ghana and Africa there are traditionally assigned sex-typed divisions of labour. For example, women are supposed to bear and nurse children, cook food, fetch water and keep the house clean. The men must hunt, build houses, and do the hard work on the farm, such as felling

trees in preparation for a new farm. The problems arise when with improved education and a changing economy more women find themselves with career and formal employment. In a marriage of two career couple, who does what?

Many couples now use house helps to support the family in domestic duties. These house helps thus became the new agents of socialisation for the child. Often these house helps have little or no formal school education, and they spend the greater part of the working day with the child. Many cases of child abuse have resulted in such arrangements. Again, career demands on the couple plus harsh economic changes in the developing world have caused many couples to limit the number of children they can comfortably care for. This limitation of children by means of artificial contraception goes counter to the traditional Ashanti concept of many children for the family.

Coping with modern changes

The paper will end with discussion on what is being done or could be done by the government, the church and others to cope with the changing nature of the Ashanti society:

Social change is inevitable and a necessary part of life. The change results in complex challenges and stresses for individuals, families, communities. Governments, Religious bodies and other groups continue to battle with the product of change to see how its effect can be minimised, removed or coped with. The following strategies are noteworthy.

Government's legislation

Throughout the history of Ghana, from the colonial period up to independence and since independence, there have been four main systems of rules and laws which govern the inheritance of property when a person dies intestate. The rules which would be applied depended on whether the person was married under the marriage Ordinance or under the Moslem family law marriage or Customary marriage expressed in Patrilineal and Matrilineal systems of inheritance.

For example, at customary law, for either matrilineal or patrilineal, there was very little protection for the surviving spouse if the husband died intestate. Neither spouse had a right to the property of the other. Children in a matrilineal system, as we observed earlier, were worse off. They have neither right to maintenance nor inheritance.

The Government of Ghana in 1985, therefore, passed the Intestate succession Law (PNDCL III) with a view of removing the anomalies in the existing laws relating to intestate succession. The idea was to provide a uniform law that will be applicable throughout the country irrespective of whether the deceased comes from a patrilineal or matrilineal community and the type of marriage contracted. The provisions of the law are aimed at giving a larger portion of the deceased's estate to his spouse and children than was the case before the law.

The Church is to take advantage of this Law and educate her members about these provisions. Also individual family members are to be encouraged to make wills.

Church's family life education and counselling programmes

The Christian Council of Ghana is an ecumenical body made up of 14 member churches and two affiliated organisations. Over the years the Council has tried to catalyse the churches to respond to societal needs through its specialised Departments, namely, Church and Society, Development and Environment, Church Relations, Theology and Research. The general purpose of the Council, in addition to spiritual upliftment of the churches, is to create awareness in individuals, equip them with the requisite skills for empowerment, development and transformation. Some of the prime foci is to confront change, reduce stress and poverty and enhance the quality of life of people.

The Christian Council of Ghana for the past 30 years has tried to strengthen the integrity of the Christian family and to address some of the issues raised through her Family Life Education, Family Counselling and Family Planning Programmes. Some of the challenging problems of matrilineal inheritance can still be tackled through above named programmes.

The following can also be strengthened and promoted.

a) *Awareness Building* through Seminars, workshops and the setting up of Counselling and Christian Education Services in the Churches.

b) *Capacity Building*: Counselling Programmes to provide basic skills in effective communication and how to deal constructively with marital and other conflicts.

c) Provision of relevant *literature* which address some of the issues raised.

d) *Advocacy*: Mobilise church and communities to form pressure groups to speak against some of these cultural practices that dehumanise people. The need also to speak out on human rights for children and women is to be promoted.

e) Institutionalising *Premarital Counselling* and making it a pre-requisite before blessing marriages in the Church. In this way some of the issues of say, inter-tribal/ethnic marriages, child bearing, inheritance and succession and the changing nature of sex roles would be addressed before the marriage takes place.

f) *Family/Couples Support Groups*. Such groups could be a substitute to the traditional extended family which has lost most of its functions in the wake of modern change.

Conclusion

What has been said about the Ashantis, an ethnic group forming about 18% of the population in Ghana, can be generalised to cover the whole country. The Ashanti society, like the bigger society of Ghana, is rapidly changing.

Individual, family and national concerns resulting from these changes are often complex and unyielding to simplistic solutions. People in our churches and communities need knowledge and understanding to grapple with these changes. The Church can continue to examine the problems and evolve Biblical based solution to help people cope with such life issues.

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Rose Zoé-Obianga *Cameroon, 1998*

Violence in the family

The polygamous family in Cameroon

topics:

- *violence in families*
- *structure of family in Cameroon*
- *problems of polygamy*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp. 42-44

The African continent has not been spared the problems of profound crises which shake the very foundations of human relationships. Ever since the beginning of time, crises have been dealt with and resolved within the families themselves. And the present political, cultural, religious and socio-economic situation once again imposes on the members of the family, the immediate parents, the Church (the Pastor and his wife and the whole congregation) the heavy task of accompanying the relatives who are experiencing difficulties. The methods used so far have been those of proximity, a tender, sympathetic and understanding ear, confrontation between the protagonist and, finally, narration which reflects the point of view of the person who is complaining.

If we have found ourselves exercising more or less empirically a ministry which was not ours initially, it is due to the lack or, more exactly, the limitations of structures, the lack of institutions and the lack of a literature which could have helped us to act in the same way as it is done in the countries of the North. The limited means put at the disposal of everyone tend to tremendously curb the intervention of specialists.

Before I continue with this presentation, I wish to express our gratitude to the organizers of this important seminar. They have not hesitated, in spite of the numerous difficulties – financial ones, ones of communication, and otherwise – to invite us to come and participate, as an African woman, a Christian, a Pastor's wife confronted with the various forms of violence which are being experienced in the African continent these days.

Violence in the African context

Africa South of the Sahara has for centuries been experiencing the most sordid and abject violence. African history is characterised by slavery, colonisation, neo-colonialism, the systematic and anarchic exploitation of all its resources, diseases and epidemics, wars and genocide, etc... The list goes on and on.

The multiple forms of violence which are rife on the continent at all levels and in all domains can henceforth be analysed, understood and resolved by the theory of René Girard. Africa is experiencing violence; Africa is all violence. If violence is therefore inherent in us or, in other words, if we "are" violence, "all our relationships are governed by a mechanism of imitation and rivalry which continually fuels violence".

It is necessary to re-read the history of mankind. And Professor James Newton Poling raised the issue rightly.[1] All human and social sciences ought to question themselves. The deterioration of social and family values, the lack of a clear distinction between Good and Evil which we are witnessing in our societies (said to be heading towards modernity) provoke violence in everybody. Nothing and nobody are spared. If there were still to be a difference between a being said to be "normal", and another one who would have thoroughly experienced violence, it would only be a matter of degree or opportunity offered to one and not to the other.

Girard's theory sheds extraordinary light on the problems of our African families. It is based on the discovery of the miracle that "the collective murder of the emissary (victim) brings back calm" (Girard, p. 346). Men are doing everything to perpetuate and renew it by "thinking" it. "Myths, rituals, kinship systems 'thus' constitute the first results of this 'thought'" (p. 346).

In order to give a response to Professor Poling, we particularly got interested in the kinship systems as they enable us to highlight the existence of the "differentiated unity" of our societies. For this purpose, we have dealt with marriage in the polygamous form.

The human relationships which exist in an African polygamous family are extraordinarily diverse and require an analysis deeper than the one we can offer you within the framework of an answer to Professor Poling's outstanding presentation. It is a network whose complexity is only outmatched by its amazing richness. The management of these relationships requires thorough mastery and intelligence. It would be very imprudent to make any generalisation at this stage.

The structure of a family

In our opinion, conflicts necessarily arise when there is a mismatch between the members, when there is an accumulation of "crises of violence", "crises of desire", when all the protagonists aspire to the same thing, when they "desire the same object". Yet, Cameroonian culture, Islam, and Cameroonian law, allow men to build polygamous families. Within the framework of our reflection, we are going to present you with a rather typical case:

Mr. MBA, 45 years old, a State Employee who was recently "retrenched", is married to three wives. ADA, the first wife, is 40. When she was getting married to MBA, she was 20 years old. Five years later, as she did not bear any children, MBA decided to take another wife named ONDO. She is the second wife. At the

[1] *Rose Zoe-Obianga refers to lectures presented at the 11th International Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, which focussed on the question of violence and the theory of Rene Girard. The lecture of James N. Poling is reprinted in this workbook p. 314.*

time of the marriage, ONDO was 15 years old and MBA was 30. They have four children: Ella (13), Andémé (11), Essi (9), Mekui (87). A few years later, MBA, aged 43, decided to marry OYAN (18) who gave birth to a child, Olo, who is now 2 years old.

a) According to A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, MBA is the head of three "elementary families" defined as one man + one wife + children in the first degree:

1) MBA + ADA + 0
2) MBA + ONDA + 4 children (Ella, Andémé, Essi, Mekui)
3) MBA + OYAN + 1 child (Olo).

b) And these three elementary families engender three special kinds of social relationships:

Parents + Children:

1/ MBA + ADA + 0
2/ MBA + ONDO + Ella, Andémé, Essi, Mekui
3/ MBA + OYAN + Olo
(MBA + ADA + ONDO + OYAN) + (0 + Ella + Andémé + Essi + Mekui + Olo)

Children of the same marrige:

1/ Ella + Andémé + Essi + Mekui

2/ Olo

Parents:

1/ MBA + ADA

2/ MBA + ONDO

3/ MBA + OYAN

To the above should be added all the collaterals (2nd and 3rd degrees).

The social prohibitions of incest and exogamy mark the three relationships which make up the triple elementary family we are analysing. And as the separation is real between the *alliance*, the *filiation*, the *consanguinity*, all the children of MBA are indiscriminately the children of ADA, of ONDO, of OYAN. Marriage would be forbidden between MBA and all the five children, as well as between the five children themselves.

Diagnosis of violence

When the crisis occurred, that is, when MBA was “retrenched”, the network of relationships is already saturated with contained violence. The various unions were already pregnant with traces of imminent violence. We can observe a remarkable and extraordinary play of various levels where desire is outstanding. The rivalry between the protagonists of this type of family stems from all these desires which “converge towards the same object” and “mutually impede one another” (p. 217).

a) The desire for more positivity

In getting married successively to three wives who are younger and younger each time, we can talk about Girard’s hypothesis of desire. And in the final analysis,

this 'desire of the being' which MBA is seeking in his three wives is what they incarnate in his eyes and in their own, that is, the way the women are: the strength of their eternal youth, their beauty, their life. And, on the other end, what he himself is, a man who has succeeded in life and gives proof of it by accumulating so much positivity in his family alone.

With ADA, MBA would not have succeeded in maintaining an abundant life. The birth of ONDO's four children and of OYAN"s son puts him back on the track of a future the aspects of which he can control. He will no longer be absent from the future generations. Thanks to their actual youth, ONDO and OYAN recall ADA'a previous youth and beauty. And, in accepting them near her and her husband, ADA benefits from this positivity which can still be found in them (ONDO and OYAN) and which is already fading in her (ADA).

b) The consequences

The five children are, par excellence, the expression of any positivity in our societies: youth, beauty, life strength, and hope for the future. If there is a crisis, it is because the threads which maintain the bank in place have suddenly frayed. Money, strength, power, work are shaken in their respective bases. MBA is "retrenched". He no longer represents anything. He has lost part of his imposing bearing, part of those characteristics which used to make him desirable. And, being aware of this diminishing, he thinks that he is no longer an "object" of desire. His wives and children, in the disarray they experience so dramatically, send back to him the image of a non desired thing, of a non being. Everything is falling apart, the call for help is ringing out.

A rather interesting and curious phenomenon is now occurring. Each wife is going to start to "manage with her own children" and MBA is going to waver between the three elementary families he has raised himself. And, more often than not, the Church closes its eyes, as it is unable to understand what is happening.

Being himself a son from a polygamous family, MBA is perpetuating something he received from his parents. ADA, ONDA and OYAN, three wives who had become desirable for one man alone, bear in their family the seeds of the violence of a mimetic desire. By organising and integrating themselves in the religious community of their town or village, they will defend themselves with all their energy against any shortcomings or weaknesses on the part of MBA, who, as we already have seen, represents the object-being of his wives. The polygamous system therefore maintains, perpetuates and defends itself, although it is absurd to the "modern people" that we are.

Two questions

Following the presentation of the case we are studying, we would like to come back very briefly to two questions raised by Professor Poling: the issue of violence and gender, and the question of the role of Jesus Christ.

a) Who is responsible for polygamy – men or women?

As a matter of fact, this issue has been raised in our country and the discussion is under way. It would appear that when women accept to become a 2nd, a 3rd, etc... wife of a man, they socialise and therefore integrate violence in their relationships. Thus the oppressor and the oppressed seem to delight in such behaviours. The group comprising the wives may, in the face of the man, express a certain

type of power; the same also applies to the children who are very often aware of their priceless value to all the parents and the society at large.

b) The question concerning the role of Jesus is very relevant to us Africans.

The World Council of Churches recently conducted a world-wide study on "Gospel and Cultures". Africans have strongly affirmed the value of their cultures, even though they recognise that the Gospel can enlighten and even transform them. It is therefore up to us to make a choice as Professor Poling has rightly demonstrated. In the case of a polygamous marriage, it is possible for us to steer clear of a network whose negativity we quite know.

Deep inside himself MBA must know that he cannot become younger by getting married to so many younger and younger wives, by begetting so many children. He is very much aware of the fact that he is not strengthening himself in any way by accumulating so many young forces within his family. Yet, as we have already said, the desire is there, alongside the object we have referred to as positivity and which MBA and all his wives – who are all his accomplices – are seeking relentlessly.

Professor Poling's honesty and humility must be underscored. He leaves the door open to the only God capable of redemption when we no longer understand anything, when we cannot find a solution to an important problem such as that of violence within a polygamous family. On the Cross, Christ said: "Forgive them, for they know not what they do".

Dagmar Pinto de Castro *Brazil, 2001*

Understanding the Brazilian family

topics:

- *economic problems of families in Brazil*
- *poverty*
- *family income*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 7, 2001; pp. 10-11

Throughout the history of humanity it is clear that human survival requires care. A child cannot survive or grow in isolation from other human beings. Various human groupings have appeared in order to deal with these basic needs. Many of these grouping do not have the characteristics of modern families, but they have still been given the basic function of guaranteeing the physical survival of their members and the perpetuation of moral and social values. The family is dynamic. It experiences the influences of social transformation and also plays a part in the process of change. We recognize that there does not exist one model that is "best". However, we do recognize the importance of the family in the process of the development and formation of the individual, as well as its function in guaranteeing basic conditions of health, education, home, and the creation of a sense of citizenship.

This importance is declared in the International Year of the Family – 1994, which states as a guiding principle the recognition of the "family as a basic unit of society, that is essential for the preservation and transmission of cultural values, that educates, forms and motivates the human being and deserves special attention, protection and assistance. As an essential instrument of action, the family assumes specific responsibilities as presented in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Agreements and Conventions of the United Nations." (Takashima, 1994, in *A Família Brasileira a Base de Tudo*)

The family, as a human group, requires certain conditions in order to maintain the physical and mental integrity of its members, make possible the organization of values and, principally, provide its members with safety, affection, and a sense of belonging and family identity. This micro-universe is the locus of the production of the basic social identity every child needs in order to construct a sense of active citizenship. In the case of Brazil, the poorer stratum of society requires special attention. This is in part due to the concept of the regular versus irregular family. The regular, or normal family, is understood as being composed of a father, mother and children living under the same roof. Families headed by women or other figures often characterize the irregular family. The regular family is generally valorized while the irregular family is not. The irregular family is increasingly

found in the poorer sectors of society. These paradigms increasingly contain prejudices that interfere in our comprehension of and work with families.

An understanding of the history of families in Brazil will help to broaden our view regarding this situation, or these differences. Business journals, in both the city of Rio de Janeiro and in the state of Salvador, dated more than a century ago reveal "an in-satisfaction with the black street urchins that wander the streets, threatening businesses and their customers; they also complain about their mothers, women of no apparent means of support that do not care for their many children and release them on the world without due attention."(Neder, 1994, in *A Família Brasileira a Base de Tudo*). The association of poverty and delinquency (the criminalization of poverty) and the incapacity of family organization is an ideological and political question that has permeated the practice of interpretation and work with Brazilian families for decades. This context was modified with the Federal Constitution of 1988, with the Statute of Children and Adolescents (ECA) and with the conquests of movements in favor of women that have intervened through legislative means for a new constitutional definition of the family that is more inclusive and avoids traditional prejudices.

One of the major steps in this process is the recognition of equal rights and duties between men and women in the marriage relationship, the affirmation of family planning as a free decision of the couple, and the creation of mechanisms that restrict violence. These gains are fundamental in terms of work with families, but certain facts must still be taken into account in order to understand the Brazilian family. According to data regarding family income in 1990, the number of families living in very precarious conditions was quite elevated. 36.8% of family are below the so called poverty line, with a family "per capita" income of one half of a minimum salary (one minimum salary is approximately US$ 135.00). The number of families below the poverty line increased in this decade, particularly in urban areas. The following graphic shows monthly "per capita" income of Brazilian families between the years 1981 and 1990.

Brazil 1981-1990	**in thousands**	
Number of Minimum Salaries	**1981**	**1990**
total	25,971	35,233
no income	465	776
1/4 Minimum Salary	4,225	5,985
1/4 to 1/2 Minimum Salary	5,658	6,991
1/2 to 1 Minimum Salary	6,536	8,203
1 to 2 Minimum Salaries	4,786	6,544
2 to 3 Minimum Salaries	1,738	2,523
more than 3 Minimum Salaries	2,357	3,768

The analysis of this data allows us to verify the growing poverty of families in this decade. In contrast, there is an increasing concentration of wealth in this decade that has increased social inequality. According to information from the Research Institute of Applied Economics – IPEA, there are approximately 9 million indi-

gent families in Brazil. With this information we can infer that working with families has reached a state of emergency in Brazil. Not only are children at risk, but also many families, which include adolescents, youth, women, men, persons with handicaps and elderly that live in absolute poverty. In light of the emergency state of the Brazilian family we cannot expect that the State alone will be able to provide minimum living conditions. All segments of Brazilian society are called upon to join forces in order to deal with this dramatic situation. The fragmentary work that is being done with children, adolescents and women requires new expressions. The child on the street, the women that suffers domestic violence and the adolescent that prostitutes themselves must have some type of family of origin. We need to return our gaze to this family and seek effective action at a preventative level in order that children do not go to the street and adolescents do not need to sell their bodies in order to obtain a minimal survival.

One of the basic requirements for this type of action is to recognize the prejudices involved with work with these populations. One of these prejudices is the myth of the "failure" of the poor family. This prejudice impedes effective work with these groups. We need to face and overcome this prejudice about poor families in order to seek, together, viable new options. This attitude has certainly helped create the rank prejudice that has affected decades of public programs as well as the training of professionals in the areas of health, education and so forth.

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Part 3

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chapters of this part:

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CHAPTER B	**ASIA**
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Pastoral care and counselling in Africa

The case of Ghana

topics

- *changing society in Ghana/Africa*
- *youth and marriage in Africa*
- *urbanisation and migration*
- *family planning*
- *counselling programmes of the churches in Ghana*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 36- 39

Introduction

Ghana is situated on the West Coast of Africa with a population of 17.5 million. Formerly known as the Gold Coast, the Country obtained its independence from the British in 1957 as the first black Sub-Sahara African Country to attain an independence status. Ghana's population comprises many groups with a variety of cultural values which affect various aspects of life of the people.

The country has a mixed economy, and there is a dominant traditional agricultural sector, characterized by small-scale peasant farming, which absorbs about 60% of the total adult labour force. The problem of poverty is exacerbated by the high population growth rate, which is around 3% per annum, and places a burden on the majority of families, as well as on the national economy.

The 1993 National Church survey shows the following Religious groupings in Ghana:

Christians	61%
Muslims	18%
Indigenous Religions	21%

With the foregoing as a background, the paper attempts to examine how the Ghanaian has handled life stresses; look at some of the current stress areas in Ghana; observe what the Church, specifically the Christian Council of Ghana has done about some of the stressful issues and conclude with some future dreams of pastoral care and counselling.

Traditional approach of pastoral care and counselling

Families in Ghana, as all families in the world, face daily pressures and stresses. The degree of stress often differs from place to place or from one generation to another. Regarding unpredictable and accidental happenings like lightening striking somebody, a car accident, sudden death, sudden sickness, etc., many Ghanaians and Africans believe that nothing happens to people by chance. Hence, there is a cause to every misfortune. Thus, some mishaps that occur to people are supernaturally caused and they need supernatural (diviners and fetish) diagnosis to bring assurance and healing.

For example, when a 70 year old man died, the family thought the death was unnatural. They consulted an oracle and the diagnosis was that 3 people in the family with the power of witchcraft killed the man. And that the dead person was saying the 3 people would follow him soon. Within the space of 2 weeks, 2 members of the family died. The elders had to consult the oracle again to 'protect' the supposed remaining 'victim'.

Moral lapses such as drunkenness, cruelty, etc. have caused great strain in many families leading to separation and divorce. In all cases elders and parents have attempted to bring spouses together. It was common for the family head of the aggrieved partner in an arbitration to "place his foot" on the case and urge the niece or daughter to go back to continue the marriage. There has been traditional respect for the elderly and often people are forced to suppress their feelings and pain to obey their elders.

Concerning general incompatibility the traditional Ghanaian culture handled it better than what we experience now. People mostly lived and married from the same ethnic groups in the same area. Parents and family elders from either partner in the marriage had known each other and their respective children well. Therefore, selection was done adequately and to the satisfaction of the couple concerned because dad or uncle knew best.

Let us now turn to Ghana presently and examine some of the pressures and challenges families are facing.

Challenges in the changing society

The average Ghanaian is directed by three voices: Voice from the past/tradition, modern voice from the Western World with its changes, and religious voice (either Christianity or otherwise). Often there is no problem or stress or crises when one faces an issue and all the three voices are in agreement. However, when there is dissonance in the voices problems erupt.

The issue of polygamy can be used to illustrate this point traditionally, and religiously. Traditional marriage allows the man to take another wife or wives. While the Christian teaching is against polygamous relationships.

Again, sometimes cultural practices and beliefs from one tribal or ethnic group in Ghana differ from one another as night is from day. An example is the descent systems in Ghana: which have two systems of inheritance - patrilineal and matrilineal descents. The patrilineal allows children in a marriage to inherit their father's property and wealth. The father therefore makes sure he provides for his children even while he lives. The matrilineal descent enables children to inherit

their maternal uncles - mother's brothers or family. Children from such descents are therefore sponsored in school or apprenticeship by their uncles, with fathers doing very little for them.

Below are some of the specific challenges facing he young couple.

The youth and mate-selection

Traditionally, choice of a spouse was the work of parents or elders of the extended family. Marriage traditionally was considered to be a communal event - the union of families. Thus such decision about marriage was too important to leave in the hands of children alone. Now, urbanisation and especially education cause many young people to be beyond the influence of their parents and elders of the extended families. The choice of a marriage partner is now largely within the hands of the youth. However, for marriages to be completed, the choice by the youth must receive the consent and approval of parents and relatives. It is here that the youth face conflict and stress. First, his or her choice may not come from his or her tribe, and second, the social, educational and professional position of the person chosen may be far below the expectation of parents. Consequently, there is undue pressure to abandon the spouse or deliberately calculated attempts to disrupt the marriage resulting in stress. The extended family system in Ghana is going through some changes presently.

Modern conditions such as industry, modern urbanization, private property, wage earning, and easier mobility are contributing to the decrease of pressure or stress from the extended family. In urban centres the nuclear family in which a man, his wife and children alone live together, is on the increase. There is however, conflict and stress in this new arrangement too: the extended family expects couples to take on traditional responsibilities such as provision of the needs of nephews, nieces, younger siblings or ageing parents.

Mother-in-law and sister-in-law also insist on their rights as members of the family. One experiences a lot of joy and happiness until the extended family visits; then there is a lot of stress.

Migration

Rapid and unplanned movements of people is also a source of stress for many people. In a developing country like Ghana, both internal and international forms of migration are common.

In Ghana, harsh economic conditions have compelled people to move from the rural areas to the urban centres or from the country to another country for "greener pastures". Migration has social and emotional effect on the migrant, the remaining spouse, the children left behind and society as a whole.

The migrant and the remaining spouse both deprive themselves of physical, emotional, financial and sexual benefits. These can lead to marital infidelities, marital breakdown or infection of STDs or AIDS.

Children also need the two parents to have a balanced growth. The pressure on the child in our contemporary world is too much for one parent to handle. Ghana's internal migration to regional capitals puts severe pressures on the already inade-

quate services and facilities in these areas. The scramble for the inadequate facilities causes stress for many.

Female and male marital roles

In Ghana and in most tribal societies in Africa there are traditionally assigned sex-typed division of labour. For example, women are supposed to bear and nurse children, cook food, fetch water and keep the house clean. Men must hunt, fish, build houses and do the hard work on the farm, such as felling trees in preparation for a new farm.

Conflict and crises come when both the husband and wife are professional persons and are engaged in wage-earning ventures. Who cares for the child, maintains the home or cook food? There is the case of this medical doctor (wife) with an engineer as a husband. In Ghana there are 582 medical officers in the public service. If that equal number are in the private sector, then we have one medical officer caring for about 17,000 people.

With this sort of demand on the life of a medical officer, there does not seem to be any time for household chores. But naturally, this husband would insist that the wife cooks his meals even though they may have a house help. Thus, this busy and highly sought after wife, mother and specialist doctor finds herself constantly under stress in an attempt to play all her roles adequately.

Urban life with husband and wife both careerist has created the situation where couples depend on house helps to take care of their small children and also do all household chores. There have been cases where the female adolescent house helps have become the “mistress” of the husband because they had taken over the running of the house for too busy mistresses.

Fertility and family planning

Ghanaians traditionally want many children. Currently, the total fertility rate is almost 6. Reasons for this high level of fertility are various socio-cultural practices and beliefs, low level of contraceptive usage and low level of education of females.

The economic situation of the country cannot tolerate a high fertility rate. On the other hand, there have been some separations or divorces when a marriage produced no offspring. The divorcees feel cheated and unloved and the ensuing pressure under which they find themselves causes them to engage in unlawful acts such as stealing babies.

Normal developmental crises

Early this month a lady spent over Cedies 30,000 (about 1/3 of her monthly salary) on medical tests later to be told that there was nothing wrong with her, that the results on the blood and urine samples showed her to be very healthy.

The lady is 46 and it seems she is beginning to experience menopause. There are many women like this one, who have little or no information on what changes occur during mid-life or old age.

There are people who are moving from one prayer camp to another, from one fetish to another just to find answers to personal and family crisis. The inability of the priests and spiritualist to find permanent solutions to their problems is another source of stress for many.

Other issues

The average Ghanaian faces serious economic problems/challenges. In the urban centres there are youth without employment, engaged in prostitution, teenage sexual affairs, involved in drug use and other social vices.

Sometimes, instead of facing these issues rationally people tend to blame others and attribute their problems to supernatural causes. There is a recent case of a grandson who clubbed the grandmother to death because he was told by an oracle that she had be-witched him. Many people who find themselves at the receiving end are bound to experience some degree of stress.

Christian Council of Ghana's Pastoral Care and Counselling Ministry

The Christian Council of Ghana is an ecumenical body made up of 14 member Churches and two affiliated organisations. Some of the member churches are: Presbyterian, Methodist, Salvation Army, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran and Mennonite Churches. The affiliated organisations are YMCA and YWCA. The Council responds to societal needs through its four specialized Departments, namely: Church and Society, Development and Environment, Church Relations, Theology and Research, and Finance and Administration.

The Department of Church and Society has four main units, namely:

- Women and Children's Programme
- Youth Programme
- Relief and Rehabilitation Programme
- Family Life and Welfare Programme.

The general purpose of the Department, in addition to spiritual upliftment of the Churches through its activities, is to create awareness in individuals, equip them with requisite skills for empowerment, development and transformation. One of the prime foci is to reduce stress and poverty and enhance the quality of life of people.

The Family Life and Welfare Programme (FLWP) handles Population and Pastoral Care and Counselling issues of the Council. The Programme was set up in 1961 as an ecumenical response to the need to in strengthen the integrity of the Christian family and to address certain common problems regarding Christian living. The three foci of the FLWP since 1961 have been: Family Planning, Family Life Education and Family Counselling.

Let us take a closer look at the area of 'Family Counselling' for example:

Family counselling

Coping with the problems associated with the rapid rate of change in the world has not been easy for many individuals and families in Ghana. Some of these changes, which are contrary to some of our traditional norms, have sometimes created stressful situations for many people. Thus, the need for counselling.

Our churches and communities need counsellors who can help people to understand and cope with their varied needs. The counselling training programme offered by the Christian Council is meant to help along this line.

The Counselling Programme has been evolving through the years since 1967. It started with the training of Family Advisors then to a 3-Part Structured Training Programme of Family Counsellors. The programme was structured not only to train people in basic counselling skills but also to equip them to lead in seminars, workshops, talks and rallies in the churches' programmes on family living. The 3 Phase Programme took 3 years to complete. Phase I was a two-week course, mostly, on family life education with some introductory counselling topics. Phase II followed a year later. This lasted for one week. Finally, the phase III took place in a year's time after the Phase II and it was also one week. In the intervening intervals, trainee counsellors were encouraged to meet monthly with other counsellors and through talks, discussions and role plays, deepen their knowledge on Family Life Education and Family Counselling.

Since its inception, over 800 family counsellors have been trained. The Christian Council is currently the only organisation which offers formal structured training in family counselling to both governmental and non-governmental organisations.

It is being proposed to separate the Family Counselling Course as it exists now into two: purely Family Life Education and purely Family Counselling. Phase I will be Family Life Education (FLE) to interested church leaders, individuals and representatives of organisations for 3 weeks. Phase II would be more selective, admitting only those who have the requisite qualification to undertake family counselling. A new training programme is being prepared.

Over the years, the course has affected the lives of many positively. Here are a few examples. Men who felt they had learnt a lot sponsored their wives the following year. Some wives also encouraged husbands to attend. Some Moslems were converted after listening to morning and evening devotions. A man learnt of ovulation, went to teach his wife whom he had been married to for nine years without a child and she got pregnant. They have a child now. Many marriages at the verge of collapse have been turned round. Many participants with personality problems have also overcome such difficulties through the individual counselling provided to all participants during the course. If these significant changes have occurred in the lives of participants, then one can imagine a greater impact the course has on the many people who receive counselling from the 800 trained counsellors.

A look ahead

The future of this programme looks very bright, once the following have been put in place:

The Christian Council, with assistance from donors envisages training of selected past students or beneficiaries of this programme to become facilitators or tutors, locally or abroad.

With the separation of Family Life Education from Family Counselling, the varied background of the participants will be narrowed to make instruction easier.

The Christian Council has contracted experts in various fields to write papers which will be put together as a source book for use by both tutors and participants as reading materials. A course outline has already been designed.

Emphasis is being placed on biblical implications of topics treated since the programme is mostly church based.

Individual churches who can afford, have requested for and been provided with local training programme based on the same contents of the training syllabus. The number of these requests is on the increase and the committee has put resources in place to accommodate such requests.

Plans are also afoot to provide two training sessions a year for both programmes. This will double the number of counsellors trained every year. There is the need for funding.

The local associations are being encouraged to meet regularly. Current topics in counselling and family issues can be discussed or presented at such meetings. The executive of the Marriage Counsellors' Association are working around the clock to inaugurate the association early next year 1996.

Tutors who have lectured over the years are being encouraged to put their ideas together in the form of booklets for participants' use.

A programme involving 3-5 families coming together as a support system in the local churches can be a substitute to the traditional extended family. Family Counsellors and educators are to be equipped to facilitate the setting up and running of such family growth groups in the church.

Conclusion

Africa and other developing countries have some advantages as we look towards the 21st Century. We can learn from our traditional past and also from the industrialized world. We have the chance to choose what can help us best in coping with this constantly changing world with its stressors.

The resources are around us. It is our responsibility to ask-seek and knock till we see people's lives enhanced.

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Daisy N. Nwachuku *Nigeria, 2000*

Creating communities through pastoral care and counselling

in the fragmentations of urban African life

topics:

- *African spirituality of community life*
- *urbanisation and the fragmentation of life*
- *re-building caring communities as a challenge for pastoral care*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 6, 2000; pp 53-59

Abstract

Communities provide essential foundational structures for human interaction and life sharing in togetherness. From the beginning, the primary intention of human life in communal living is that communities are life giving, life sharing and life supporting. This research investigates how the very essence of communities, which is building life together, has been fragmented, in the process of urbanization. The factors responsible for the fragmentations within the context of city life in the African milieus are explored. The need for creating and re-creating communal life in the cities and the strategies are also explored, using pastoral care and counseling as the central intervention tool.

Introduction

"*And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helpmeet for him*" (Gen. 2:18). Wholesome life implies caring and sharing together. From the biblical perspective, God's intention is that human life be shared in community of people and nations beginning with the nuclear family as the smallest unit. Community life is inclusive. All living things live in families, colonies and communities.

The community compositional dimensions are conceptually and empirically independent. That is to say, communities can be found displaying all sorts of combinations of characteristics. Within a metropolis, it is possible to find a highly sophisticated middle-class group, who are highly familistic while another community may be impoverished or low in familism. Thus, the compositional variables are several and it is difficult to find completely homogeneous communities. There are always some individuals or families that may choose to deviate from community norms.

This paper has a dual-focus. On the one hand, it seeks to understand modern cities as a context within which human life suffers fragmentations in all dimensions. On the other hand it is concerned about the Church impacting the cities through pastoral care and counselling to the effect of creating communities of life despite the presence of fragmentation factors.

The search for community life in the intercultural context of the city life through pastoral care was focused around the concept of "our oneness" in the Body of Christ. Apostle Paul writes: "*Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.*" (Ephesians 4:3-6)

In this sense, we, being one Body, are called into one God's community. In the biblical perspective, one major characteristic of community of believers is that we all share the same hope of our calling into eternal life by experiencing salvation through personal faith in Jesus Christ.

Theoretical background

From the sociological concept, Parelius and Parelius (1978:330) define communities as socially meaningful territories. Within the context of this operational definition, it is implied that a community can contain a wide variety of interdependent institutions and social groups. Communities can be young or old. For example, a typical community might include a number of businesses, churches, service clubs, schools, young people as well as old-timers who have lived within the confines of that territory all their life.

From the psychosocial context, a community offers to its residents their agreed boundaries and unique characteristics. In this sense, residents often develop strong emotional attachments to the areas in which they live. Often, such sentimental feelings lead to communities thinking, believing and behaving in such ways that convey the message that they are better than the others nearby. The consensus efforts often exerted by members in a community to defend itself against encroachment in a given metropolitan area or in a given rural setting are clear indications of the existence of social hierarchy of prestige among communities.

Studies by Gerald Suttles (1968) in the United States of America revealed another very important variable in understanding the concept of community life. This is the variable of social cohesion. The cohesion of a community in this sense refers to the strength of its normative or moral order, and the degree of consensus on basic values and rules of behaviour that exists among residents. That is to say, a community is uniquely itself by its nature of homogeneity or heterogeneity of the population in terms of social rank, ethnicity, and life style (Parelius and Parelius, 1978).

There is yet a third concept of meaning to be explored. This is the concept of independence as emphasized by social ecologists. Studies by Donald Bogue (1961:524-533) reported that the degree to which the community is self-sufficient and self-governing, containing all the basic institutions and resources necessary for the residents to maintain themselves indefinitely determines a community. Although it is impossible to maintain total independence in contemporary urban African communities, in terms of economic, political, entertainment, medical care,

police protection, general securities and other matters, yet, the issue of self-sufficiency is centrally a very important factor of consideration.

In summary, understanding the concept of communities within the context of this research involves three related variables and these are social composition (i.e. rank, ethnicity and familial life style) social cohesion and independence.

African theological background

The spirituality of community life

In African theology, the Supreme Deity (God in heaven) rules over every community. He does this together with several other smaller deities (gods). Each of these deities is charged to superintend over an activity in the community e. g. fertility, harvest, fishing, healing etc. Among these gods, there is one named god of the land (ala), governing the territorial space of each community. Its shrine represents the major altar of the land, its priest is the chief priest of the land and it's people and leads them in worship and purificatory rites. Thus, a community comes under the surveillance of the god of their land with ancestors as agents.

The spiritual fragmentation of city life is then symbolized in non-ownership of the city land by one specific deity, since urban dwellers come from several lands. By implication, the city land has not one major *altar* but several *imported altars,* and no chief priests, but priests of various cultures of both foreign and indigenous religions.

Community life in the African sense: ancestral lineage

The immediate past and present African sense of community life was and still is that of being *his brother's keeper.* Theologically, psychologically and socially, the African *was and is, because his brother was and is.* The *male link* familistic theory reinforces the African spirituality of ancestral lineage and worship. *He is the son of his father, who was the son of his own father. Therefore, he lives because his father lived.*

Thus, the African community life is deeply embedded and rooted back to his ancestral linkage. He is primarily a member of a community whose smallest unit is not the nuclear family but the *extended family* (Mampolo and Nwachuku, 1991). He lives not in a house by himself and his wife and children alone, but he lives in *a compound of houses* within his kindred of the same ancestral lineage. The kinsmen affinity extols the male child preference around which, in most cases a compound can exist. He lives for the advancement of the kinsmen *(Umunna).* He succeeds for them and makes them proud. Likewise, his failure brings them communal shame. His worldview is communitarian and this includes a troop of ancestors at the background.

In summary, the African is a community-based person. (Lartey, Nwachuku and Kasonga, 1994). Extreme individualism, which extols western narcissism, capitalistic competitiveness and rivalry, was despised in the eyes of the African of old. But what is the situation now within the melting pot of interculturality of city life? This dilemma creates part of today's *schizophrenic image* of the urban African.

The umbilical cord theory of African community-based life

Nwachuku (1995), noted that contemporary Africa, there is still the element of community mystery built around the placenta of a newly born baby in the rural village communities. When a baby is born into the compound, the umbilical cord is cut. When this falls off the placenta, the waste cord is ritualistically buried at the base of a symbolic family tree. This gives a rite of passage and perpetually identifies the individual as a member of the larger family comprising the ancestral clan. The *fetus' helplessness* experiences the collective protection as first experience of communal love and the umbilical cord tie serves as symbol of membership to the body of kinsmen (the *Umunna).* The ritual thus introduces indelible concepts of belonging and acceptance. Thereafter, the child has a claim on the clan lineage and its inheritance. These in turn produce a sense of connection, orientation, and rooted acceptance of the individuality of the member, and the sensitivity of his existence. Today, city born children do not experience this community rite of entry. In its place there is the naming and christening ceremony.

Taking the approach of replacing idolatry and ancestral worship as spirituality of African community life with the biblical baptisms, confirmation and women dedication after child birth, there arises these questions: how can the city church emerge in reality as a community strong enough to be a substitute? How can the new symbols of community life and care in the church rendered to a city born child or an adult urban dweller offer enough spirituality to the church member in order to replace the old symbols?

Spirituality of community life and African theology: past and present

In the context of the ethnic social composition made up of all ethnic kindred (the *Umunna)* in the immediate past, the kin communal feeling induces the social cohesion. This also goes with being independent of other communities around in their political, economic and security services. Thus, there evolved a perpetually strong collaborative partnership between the kinsmen. This was sealed in the rural villages at the ancestral worship with blood sacrifice during cultic rituals, purificatory rites and ritual worships to celebrate births, weddings, deaths, festivals of seasons, harvests and victories, with moon light stories and dances. The degree of kin togetherness was evident in all men drinking wine together from one drinking horn at assemblies and household gatherings. Women cooked within the compound and children ate together. Suspicion and fear of witchcraft was minimal.

The living was sensitive to the cries of one another while the dead watch in surveillance of the living. It was one community of the living and the dead who were yet living; though dead. Life together was both living and worship. The worldview was and still is cosmological. Theology was natural and practically emphasized in living a good life for yourself and your brother. The evil man, the witch and wizard *(Onye nsi)* was known and punished. The thief was killed and the rebellious son disowned (Nwachuku, 1996).

One is tempted at present to believe that all was or is well with the idyllic characteristic of the rural village community existence. Although these were obvious facts, in contrast to the urban social environment especially in Africa, with Nigeria as case in point, there continued to evolve a gradual degradation of human lif e even in village communities. The mythical image of rural atmosphere and the all-embracing involvement of community life leave one in dilemma why there is the

continuous rural migration to urban cities, which offer an insensitive social life in contrast. The fragmentation of life by poverty, neo slavery, illiteracy, under development and unemployment seem to vex the mind of a growing new generation that could no longer contain the rural life. Despite urban challenges, rural population chooses to flee to the cities.

The urban question

Sule (1994:3) describes urban attributes as seducing rural migrants to flock the cities because of the glamour of electricity, pipe-born water, better housing facilities and promise of higher in come, for better life.

Defining urbanization, Wirth (1938) noted that the concept carries with it the assumption of size, density and heterogeneity. These attributes produce such a wealth of stimuli on the inhabitants of cities. Thus, they either develop protective responses by making their social contracts more formal than informal, more particular than general, more secondary than primary or more critical than natural. Consequently, this led to a growing specialization of roles, or where controls failed, led to a state of *"anomie"* and to a state of social disorganization, vices, depravity and misery as are found in modern urban centers of today.

This aspect of urban social environment has attracted not only the attention of social ecologists but also that of pastoral care gives and counsellors. The conceptualization of the relationship between cities and what they do to community life has been sufficiently underscored by the evidence of fragmentations of human life.

African concept of urban life and communities

The concept of communal life permeates the rural communities as part of African basic philosophy of life. This transcends the western concept of urbanization in terms of kindred disintegration. In this sense, urban dwellers in all Nigerian and all African cities still *carry* over the idea of kindred togetherness unto city life. Thus, urban dwelling congregates along parallel lines of ethnicity, local government areas, regional, state and village groupings. When once any new city migrant arrives, he or she looks for a house near his people.

Nigerian cities therefore polarize in enclaves dominated naturally by major clan, ethnic, tribe and national lines, e.g. *Ibo quarters, Housa quarters, Yoruba quarters, Efik quarters etc.* In a city within a state, the groupings follow ethnic lines. Naturally, the boundaries expand beyond ethnic lines to embrace state boundaries in cities outside the state. Outside Nigeria, the tribal boundaries yet expand to include all Nigerians, no matter the state or tribe.

The sense of affinity strives to maintain certain symbols of togetherness in the cities by certain social activities such as:

1. Building a civic hall of meeting known by their name e.g. Ibo Hall, Yoruba Hall etc.;

2. Institutionalizing ethnic unions and making membership almost mandatory for everybody from that particular village or group e.g. Ibo Union, Yoruba Union, etc.

3. The assemblies serve as both support and censor to monitor good behaviour, progress or failure, as well as show support and solidarity in weddings, burials or emergency needs.

4. Yearly, during Christmas festival, which serves as holidays for Africans, over 80% of urban dwellers in their urban-based unions return to their village communities to organize community development building projects in liaison with the rural unions. That is to say, ethnicity and kindred have not yet been drastically fragmented in Africa by urbanization.

5. However, city fragmentation of human life to an African takes a different dimension from that of the Western World. The issues of fragmentation in African cities are greatly evident in terms of poverty, slum dwelling, over crowding, diseases, hunger, begging, homelessness, unemployment, illiteracy, low standard of living, widened gap between the rich and the poor and marginalization of majority masses.

6. Generally, it also shows consequences of the national debt burden on the poor masses of the citizens, and these are debts incurred by the government to urbanize and industrialize for the comfort and leisure of the rich and the governance. African theology and pastoral care must address these issues in recreating African urban life.

It is therefore, evident that both development and fragmentation are neither Western nor African. Life fragmentation is a human factor. Although western modernity has impacted African community life in the urban societies faster than would have occurred, yet it cannot be argued that urbanization is purely western. For example, the Yorubas of Nigeria had always been urban dwellers, yet with very strong communal ethnic orientation wherever they are located, whether in the past or the present.

The fragmentation dilemma and our African stories

It has been established in the preceding discussion that primarily, fragmentation is a human factor enhanced by city structures and social environment. But somehow, the African is still unaware of the changing social environment in essence. So, we Africans struggle to live in the reality of the fragmentation dilemma and city schizophrenia. Caught in social transition, we still live in the daily schizophrenia of being African and Western, rural and urban, elite and illiterate, rich and poor, sophisticated and simple, informed and ignorant, independent and dependent, religious adherent and syncretism, Christian and idolater. Our daily struggles with fragmented life are reflected in the brief stories below. All names are imaginary but real life stories.

Ahmed Ali

Ahmed, a professing Moslem youth goes to Lagos to write the Federal Government College Common Entrance Examination. He arrived the famous city of Lagos excitedly being his first time. But his joy was soon gone, when he observed several lunatics along the road. Why are they so ma$_y$ here, he asked? He soon discovered that many Lagosians face disorganized life and people break down in health with the fast pace of a big city life. Why is this so in Lagos? Why is every body moving so fast, even cars? To Ahmed, these are questions without answers. His dreams and excitement about Lagos soon die off and he faces extreme nostal-

gia of his rural hamlet in the village. He longs earnestly to go home for fear of running mad too. In actual fact, the people he saw were not all lunatics, but normal people, homeless and living under the bridges and fly over structures. Every body ran and rushed to take a bus or taxi. In short, life was maddening in itself. Lagos looked more like the biblical city of Gadarenes with many demon possessed by legions. Young Ahmed did not want to run made soon. So, he resolved to return to his village.

Franca Joe

Miss Franca Joe was born and bred at Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria by Christian middle class Nigerians. She had never visited the village and relatives. Rather, she spends her holidays overseas. Once, her father was pressurized by his kinsmen to bring his children home to know their roots. During one Christmas season, Franca's parents took them home (the village). At lunch, some relatives who were present when meal was served were invited to share with them. Franca was shocked at the ease and joy with which the two visitors gladly dipped their hands together into the meal served for her father and drank from the same cup, sharing childhood age grade stories and jokes in reminiscence of the "good old days". Franca was disappointed at the regular invasion of their privacy. Relatives moved straight into the bedroom to greet and share their joy at seeing them. She longed to go back soon, so as to escape from every body's eyes and intrusion. "Here", she said, "everybody wants to know what you are doing. There is a lot of intrusion", she complained. She hated the idea completely and was glad to get back to the city life, where she could be "herself".

Bob and uncle Mike

Mr. Robert had been sent overseas for further studies. His Uncle Mike financed him. On graduating, Bob decided to reside in New York. After several years, Mr. Mike specifically invited his nephew Bob home, for a family meeting. When Bob arrived Nigeria, his first shock was over Uncle Mike's slum dwelling in the ghetto. He, his wife, five children and four relatives were living in two rooms. Bob would neither sit down, eat, nor drink any substance. Mike felt very much humiliated and rejected.

Furthermore, Bob proposed that the family meeting be held in his hotel room. Mike and the rest of the family members felt further insulted. The family elders turned down Bob's offer with vows and curses, swearing never to be involved with him as a family member any more. After few days, Bob flew back to New York. Since then, there had been a total break down in communication between Bob and his uncle Mike and family elders. Kinsmen were shocked at Bob's behaviour towards his uncle Mike who financed his education.

All our African stories have both unique and same meanings to life. That is, African life in modern times is severely fragmented. However, the fragmentation of life means different things to different people within their specific context of village and city life.

Creating caring communities

Suggestions for congregations

Present Jesus Christ and the salvation he gives in the all sufficiency power of the gospel as God the creator, giver of life, Saviour and sustainer of life. He is enough and able to save unto the utter most. He needs no other help of ancestors or other symbols. This knowledge is fundamental to the African convert because many Africans who go to church still practice syncretism.

Pastoral care givers should strengthen believers in Africa as a worshipping community, to see beyond the immediate ethnic community and see the church as one big family. They should equip the believers with practical strategies, in a dialogical community model, with which to work towards a realisation of hope.

Meaningful worship and bible studies should be understood. There should be interpretation of the worship process and messages to local language where English is used as medium of communication. Any body in the community should be able to participate in one language or the other in a community church. (see Nwachuku, 1995).

Care counsellors could mobilise the local congregation to bring hope, love and practical help to the community together with the gospel, in personal contact through door to door evangelism in the neighbourhood. Care efforts must be backed up with active follow-up till results are seen. This strategy creates friendship, love and support with a semblance of familism.

Each local congregation should have a baseline data bank on the disabled in the community and creatively reach out to meet their needs. The help needed includes advocacy in government policies and social welfare services.

Church members are encouraged to invite on regular basis families or couples from the same local congregation into their homes to share a meal. This helps to break down the cold walls of impersonal relationship found in city churches.

In All African Churches there are lively men's, women's and youth fellowships sharply demarcated. More joint fellowships across the board will bring closer and minimise the gender biases, gaps and differences.

The church should spearhead development projects and poverty alleviation programmes encouraging combined efforts such as community tree planting, farm plantations, cottage industries, animal farm projects ie. poultry etc.

Suggestions for working with youth

Churches in Africa have not yet recognised the importance of recreational facilities especially for the youth as part of their needed services to be rendered. Church-based clubs such as sports teams, music, drama, art, educational and several other types of clubs will provide a very reliable support body to the Christian youth. They will also provide good peer role models for the city adolescent exposed to several confusing models.

The African Church and city life face serious problems of generation gap which is on the increase. It could be helpful to initiate Seminars where parents and youth meet in regular dialogues over life skills management and shared concerns over

conflicts at interaction. This forum will help bring closer in a steady manner the generation gap which keeps many of the neighbourhood youth outside the church.

In Africa, vocational and employment development seminars are uppermost on the hierarchy of needs of youth due to high rate of unemployment, mass retrenchment and ill prepared retirements. The Church caregivers need to give regular seminars and workshops in this areas. This is an area where the state government has been very silent.

Suggestions for working in neighbourhoods

The situation of portable water is one of the most life devastation factors in African cities. Every urban church should provide and service bore hole water in her premises. Clean water, purchased at regular period of supply from the church will be a great hope restoration to her community. Local streams in African rural villages especially in the heat, provide rallying points of recreation with children singing and swimming together in water games. These lost good images of shared life would be recreated if the bore hole water point at the church is initiated and maintained as on-going essential service of care for the people in the community.

Caring believers should find out the interest and needs of the neighbourhood and run seminars on them. The church should initiate regular open seminars and workshops to inform as well as create awareness on needs of the hour as the case may be. It should also aim at recapturing lost and decaying moral values of community life.

From time to time, the church could organise a people's open forum where the neighbourhood adults meet to evaluate the development progress of the entire community, dialogue over point in time issues of general concern i.e. crime rate and securities and initiate further ideas and action for communal good. This recaptures and recreates the lost village kin's meetings. Neighbours are encouraged to have a personal contact and face to face dialogue with one another.

Generally, in the process of counsellors reaching out to create and recreate communities within the city population, the strategies also recapture re-orientation to love, helping attitude and unity of spirit, which are lost in the impersonal nature of city life. Through newly created care and support communities, new neighbourhoods of inter-tribal and intra-group friendliness emerge across frontiers. Likewise, new sense of openness, trust, sensitivity, consideration and connectedness is generated towards bridging the gap between the rich and the poor which is very evident in city churches and neighbourhood.

Conclusion: the Water of Life to quench a city thirst

Who would give a cup of cold water to quench a city thirst to a nameless African city woman whose life has became so fragmented in the big cities of Lagos, Kaduna, Port-Harcourt, Aba and Abuja? She has become so fragmented that she can no longer freely move about in the city except at noon? Her biblical counter part was named by her city – the Samaritan woman. She had become both nameless and faceless in trying to cope with battered life in the city. At the point of the biblical story, her face and her name (the Samaritan Woman) were worthless. There are many “Women of Samaria” today in our African cities, “many men sick with palsy, and many Gerasene demonics moving about with legions”.

Both they and their cities are fragmented and disconnected with community reality. They need healing, and so also do their communities, in order for a reconnection of life to exist once again. African theology of the year 2000 and beyond must seek to encourage a practical daily theologising for daily care and restoration of lives broken by our cities; broken with poverty, hunger, corruption, oppression, abandoned street children, wars, and diseases. The church in Africa must theologise with care and counselling strategies such that deliver life in ways that seek to quench not only the thirst of a woman caught unaware at the city well at awkward time. But such theologising must also seek to quench the thirst of the community where the well is situated.

This is the model of the Good Shepherd. He healed both the spiritual and physical thirst of the woman and also healed her city. All Samaria came to see the Lord for themselves. We all in Africa and our sisters and brethren in the West must seek to see the Lord through the eyes of His loving care.

We all have our individual thirst in thirsty cities. Our cities and we need healing from living waters of life. We must be connecting points like the woman of Samaria, to reconnect our life and our cities back to God's Community. Here is a general invitation unto wholeness of life that we all seek in our churches and cities today: "*And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the lamb. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*." (Revelation 22:1 & 17)

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Part 3, Chapter B

Asia

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Pastoral counselling in Asian context

topics

- *culture and religion in Asia*
- *the concept of family and filial piety*
- *the cultural concept of shame*
- *poverty and injustice*
- *models and challenges of pastoral counselling in Asia*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 22- 25

Asian context or contexts?

One has to think of the plurality of contexts in Asia. Asia is a large continent stretching from Afghanistan (if one excludes the Middle-east) to the far reaches of the Siberian region in eastern Russia. There are at least 26 countries in this region. If the Middle-east is included, the number increases to some 45 countries. More than 60% of the world's population live in Asia. The continent expresses a rich diversity of cultures, languages, lands, religions, lifestyles, and economies. In this sense, I cannot adequately represent Asia. What I present cannot fully capture the diversity and vastness of the Asian contexts. Nevertheless, I am an Asian, living and working in Asia, and therefore my paper, though limited by my particular context, will attempt to discuss some aspects of my own as well as other Asian contexts to the best of my knowledge and experience.

My own context

I live in Singapore which is one of the smallest nations in Asia. It is an Island state measuring some 25 miles in length and 15 miles across, with a population of 2.7 million people. The island is part of the Southeast Asian region, comprising countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam. This part of the world is a rapidly growing region economically though there are also many serious problems.

Singapore is a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious nation. It has four official languages and has Chinese, Malay and Indian, and Eurasian communities in addition to other minority groups. It is thus an interesting "melting pot" of different cultures and peoples. In that sense, I am happy to be staying here as I am exposed to some aspects of the rich diversity in Asia.

I teach in a theological college as well as serving as an associate pastor in a Tamil Methodist - church which has both English and Tamil services. My teaching min-

istry extends to several churches and Christian organisations in Singapore as well as some in the region. I also have opportunities to do pastoral counselling with church members, seminary students, pastors, and others referred to me.

In the rest of the paper, I will raise some issues which I have found to be important. They represent my own experience and reflection.

Culture and religion

When Asia is mentioned, culture is one major consideration that immediately comes to mind. I use the phrase "culture and religion" because in the Asian contexts, culture and religion are generally closely related. The ancient religions of Asia have shaped Asian cultures for centuries. The pastoral care-giver and the pastoral counsellor (who generally is trained with western models and methods since the modern pastoral counselling movement has largely developed in the west) thus have to be particularly aware of cultural realities and issues when working in the Asian contexts.

Culture has to do with beliefs, values, customs, and institutions[1]. While we recognize certain aspects of culture which seem universal across cultures, there are also particularities regarding the above dimensions in any given culture which affect the way pastoral counselling is conceived and practised.

Beliefs have to do with how reality is perceived. They help to shape world views which are hermeneutic sieves through which experiences are interpreted and assessed. If in a culture there is a strong belief in spirits, then that becomes an important part of the world view which therefore has to be taken into consideration by the pastoral counsellor.

Values have to do with what we value. Cultures may have different values though there may also be similarities across cultures. Our values affect the way we pursue certain things or goals, and determine how we react when we are unable to fulfil our goals or when we lose what we value. Pastoral counselling cannot be done effectively without due recognition of cultural values.

Customs have to do with how we do things. Cultures develop ways of doing things both at individual as well as communal levels. In a sense, customs determine what is normal or abnormal. What is customary is normal. What is customary in the west may not be so in the east. How then do we determine whether a particular act or experience is healthy or not? What norms do we use? These are questions which a pastoral care giver struggles in the Asian contexts as many of the texts on pastoral counselling come from the West and may need to be reinterpreted and modified in the light of Asian cultures.

Institutions represent how a particular culture has organized itself. Cultures may vary in terms of the presence or absence, strength and weakness, relative importance and other aspects of institutions. Examples of institutions are family, courts, churches, schools, village councils etc.

The best way to look at culture and pastoral counselling is to consider some issues which I have found to be relevant in the region I come from.

The supernatural

In Indonesia, "belief in God" is the first of five national values (pancasila). Several Asian countries have state religions, especially Islam. Religion is thus important in the Asian contexts. Sociologists such as John Clammer have noted that in Singapore and other Asian countries, with modernisation one has not seen a parallel secularisation process as has been seen in western countries[2]. In fact, with modernisation has come a resurgence of Asian religions. In Singapore, for example, the fastest growing religion is Buddhism[3].

What is of particular importance in the Asian contexts in terms of counselling is what Paul Hiebert has called the "excluded middle zone"[4]. This "middle zone" represents beliefs in the existence of spirits, demons, ghosts, and how they influence or affect us. It exists between beliefs concerning heaven and our experience of empirical earthly life. In many Asian contexts, including the developed countries such as Japan, the "middle zone" is alive and well[5].

In my own experience, I repeatedly encounter counsellees who believe in spirits and demons, and wonder whether their problems are due to these entities. This motivated me to write my doctoral dissertation on pastoral responses to demon possession in Singapore[6]. How should I respond as a pastoral care giver? I should not dismiss the "middle zone" lest I create, in my case, a split level Christianity with people seeking help from pastors as well as from *bomohs*[7]. On the other hand, I have the benefit of being exposed to a multiplicity of perspectives and I can reframe problems for people. Reality and truth become important issues in counselling.

Family and filial piety

The family remains a resilient institution in Asia though in many places it is experiencing serious challenges arising from the modernisation, urbanisation, and economisation of life. The family unit (whether extended or nuclear) is an important consideration for pastoral counsellors in Asia. On one hand, the family is an important aspect of well-being and pathology in people. On the other hand, the Asian family is generally wary of seeking professional counselling which uses models of family therapy developed in the west. Family counselling has been traditionally done by the larger extended family though in many urban places in Asia, the extended family is threatened. In these places, the church, for example, can be the new extended family and pastoral care can be done using more traditional paradigms.

One related issue is filial piety, especially in Chinese cultures. It is an important virtue and is expressed in various forms of ancestor worship (or veneration, as some would say). In my own ecclesial context, this has remained a big issue. Should Christians continue the practice of ancestor worship? Is this a cultural custom or is it a religious rite?[8] From a more psychological perspective, is filial piety a way of retaining the power structures of traditional society? Parents, especially the father, are to be honoured. What has filial piety got to do with the common experience of the "distant father" and sometimes the abusive father?

Recently, there was a seminar in Singapore in which some retired people shared from their experiences under Japanese occupation during the Second World War. One historian, a friend of mine, suggested that one of the reasons why the Japanese seem to be having great difficulty in apologising for the atrocities during the war was possibly filial piety.

Besides the above issues, the family in Asia is going through rapid changes, much faster than those in the west. Ten major changes in the Asian family have been noted in a well-known work on the family in Asia. These include egalitarian family relations, greater individualism and independence, marital disruption, urbanisation, and so on[9]. Pastoral counselling has to note these stresses and challenges to family life. In Singapore, the government as well as major institutions are taking an active role in developing family values and life.

Shame

David Augsburger has noted that Asian cultures are shame oriented cultures[10]. While that may be too much of a generalisation, I think it is still true to say that shame plays an important role in Asian cultures. Shame has tended to be seen in a negative way, and often as inferior to guilt. I like to see shame in a more positive light. Healthy shame is discretionary shame. It does allow for the well being of individuals and societies through the process of shared goals and values.

At the same time, however, shame can also cripple someone by preventing him or her to move on in life. A deep sense of shame can be motivation enough for a suicide attempt. This is especially the case in Japanese society. The pastoral counsellor must approach facts with a sensitivity to the counsellees' shame. "Losing face" is a disaster in Asian cultures. In counselling I have found the need to be sensitive to the importance of "keeping face" and "losing face" while helping people to find solutions to their problems. In the process I am also aware of my own "face" and have found avenues of personal growth through the experience of cultural relevance as well as countercultural stances. I am also exploring my experience as a pastoral care giver in a region which has many cultural practices involving masks and shadow-play, through the concepts of a "demonology of masks" and a "theology of the face"[11].

Smooth interpersonal relationships (SIR)

When I was studying in the Philippines, I was introduced to the concept of SIR which is a key value in Filipino culture. Facts and justice are secondary to the primary value of interpersonal harmony. In Chinese culture too, social harmony, group consensus rather than confrontation are highly held values. One of the national values in Singapore is decision making through consensus rather than contention or confrontational means[12]. Pastoral counselling in conflict situations will have to bear this cultural ethos in mind.

An Asian psychology / Asian psychologies

William Wundt, the father of modern psychology saw psychology based on two traditions: the natural sciences and the social sciences traditions. From the latter arose cultural psychology (Völkerpsychologie) or indigenous psychology, which Wundt predicted would be the more important kind of psychology in the future[13]. In the Asian contexts, attempts have been made to develop such indigenous psychologies such as in India[14] and other countries.

This is an important process since it addresses important questions. For example, in Filipino culture, the concepts of shame (hiya), pakikisama (yielding to the leader or the majority), and utang na loob (gratitude) are all based on the core cultural value of kapwa (shared identity with others)[15]. A mature Filipino person is one who shares his or her identity with others. The most mature person is one who belongs, not one who is independent. Many western psychologies are based on

views of maturity linked with growing independence. The implication is that what is seen as healthy behaviour in one culture (say, in California) may be seen as unhealthy in another (say, China).

The global village

The discussion on cultural particularities must also be balanced with the trend of universal cultural patterns created by the media and technology. Many parts of Asia are open to modernity and the mass media originating in the West. The result is what Japanese writer Kenichi Ohmae terms the "californianisation of taste" with the phenomenon of common cultural icons in many different contexts: Nike shoes, Levi's Jeans, Windows 95, Mr. Bean, Michael Jackson, coke etc.[16] In fact, it may be true that teenagers across cultures may be more similar to each other to their own elders. In this sense, I feel that what is written in one culture may increasingly have currency value and relevance in many other cultures.

I live in the midst of these phenomena where there is a resurgence of traditional cultures but also a growing similarity of popular cultures with other cultures largely because of new subcultures being promoted by the mass media as well as being created by new technologies e.g. the Internet, karaoke etc. We all seem to be riding the same waves of information these days.

Economic tigers and dragons

Discussions on Asia inevitably also deal with the social contexts. Here again, there is a wide variety. Life span in Japan is 81 years, while it is only 50 years in Bangladesh. In Japan, the infant mortality rate is 5 per thousand live births while it is 118 per thousand live births in Bangladesh. The GDP in Singapore is twenty times that in Pakistan[17].

I live in a region where economies are growing rapidly. There is a growing economisation of life. The economy has become the major paradigm of life in several Asian nations. How does this affect people? One obvious sign is the increasing stresses of life due to the rapid changes and pace of life. People work longer hours, are fatigued and stressed out, and have little time for relationships and family life. Social pathologies are on the rise in many Asian countries. Family breakdown, drug addiction, suicide, violence and prostitution are some such signs.

Another question is how the social environment defines and shapes the self. In these economically vibrant societies, the self is increasingly seen as efficient worker and increasingly wealthy consumer. Christopher Lasch has written about the "minimal self" as the product of a marketplace paradigm[18]. He is right, and I believe that as a pastoral counsellor, I am faced with evaluating such definitions of self in the light of what I understand to be human dignity and personhood through theological anthropology.

The marketplace may be forcing people to be functioning as efficient but hollow selves. The challenge for pastoral care giving is obvious.

Poverty and injustice

Many sections of Asian society are also marked with poverty and injustice, whether it is a village in Bihar or a kampong in Kalimantan. In our college, we have some students from Nagaland, a politically restricted area in India. Last year,

two of these students had to return home because of the death of loved ones through malaria and dysentery epidemics[19]. The health care system is poorly managed. Through corruption, supplies are diverted into the black market and the money is pocketed.

How does the pastoral counsellor function in such situations? Where corruption is strife, how does one guide? What advice can be given? In a "corrupto-metre" study[20], six of the ten most corrupt nations are Asian.

How can pastoral care be given to people suffering from poverty? Are western models of pastoral counselling sufficient? Pastoral care in such situations has to take a more communal approach, since the problem is usually systemic in nature, and a social relief, social action, or development kind of approach.

Pastoral care as prophetic

Whether in a rapidly developing economy or a poor nation, the pastoral counsellor may often have to challenge the social assumptions or inertia. The role of the pastoral counsellor may be to go beyond helping the person to merely cope in the situation. If that is all the pastoral care giver does, he or she is no more than a servant of the unhealthy or unjust system. The care giver may have to challenge the social system itself which produces such social pathologies and dehumanizes people either through consumerism or poverty.

Doing pastoral care and counselling in Asia

Before I conclude, I wish to mention two other issues briefly.

Models and training

Working in Asia I search for relevant home-grown models of counselling and care giving. There are some interesting models. One example is the "quiet therapy" model in Japan. Morita psychotherapy is a case in point[21]. It uses Japanese ideas and methods together with western concepts to develop an indigenous model of therapy. The therapy involves putting a person in a simple room to be alone without the usual sensory stimuli and activities. The patient discovers his or her own addictions, and also gratitude to significant people.

The interesting thing I have discovered is the close relationship between psychology and spirituality in traditional Asian societies. In the light of modern western exploration of the interface between spirituality and psychology, it must be noted that this has been going on for centuries in the Asian contexts. The "quiet therapies" are a modern version of this process.

Any model must take into consideration the way problems, the helper, and the helping process are perceived. In Asian contexts, these are shaped by culture and social factors as discussed above. Many problems are given a supernatural angle. The helper is seen as wise rather than as an expert. The helping process is strongly directive in many places. These facts must be remembered in developing culturally relevant models of pastoral counselling.

One interesting phenomenon in the west is the growing popularity of alternative medicine and a growing disenchantment with western medicine. In the Singapore scene, western modern medicine co-exists with traditional Chinese medicine. Would there be a growing popularity of traditional ways of caring and helping at

the expense of modern professional counselling (cf. with western modern medicine)?[22]

Networks

Modern pastoral counselling came to Asia when Carl Rogers visited Japan in 1952. The first pastoral counselling course was conducted at the Union Theological Seminary in Tokyo. Paul Johnson visited Japan in 1964 and started the CPE movement in Asia. In 1966, one of the pioneer counselling centres, the Churches Counselling Centre was started in Singapore. In 1981, the journal Bokkai Shinri (Pastoral Psychology) was launched.

Since then, the Asian Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling was organized in Manila (1982), Tokyo (1984), New Delhi (1986), Manila (1989), and Bali (1993)[23]. The sixth Congress will be held in Seoul in 1997. Recently a Christian Counselling Conference in Asia was held in Singapore with more than 800 people attending. Representatives from several Asian countries were present.

There is a need for more work to be done in thinking about pastoral counselling in the Asian contexts. I would like to see more Asian contributions in terms of theory-building, writing, training, and leadership.

Conclusion

I have recorded impressions and thoughts on some issues which I think are important based on my own reflection and experience. I live in an exciting region though it also has many dangers and difficulties. As a pastoral care giver, I am reminded daily to live and minister as a wise-fool, wounded healer, servant-guru, and powerless miracle worker in a rapidly changing context where good and evil, order and chaos, and life and death exist side by side.

Notes

[1] See the *Willowbank Report on Gospel and Culture*, Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 2 , 1978, p.7.
[2] John Clammer, *Sociology of Singapore Religion,* Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1991, chapt. 5, 6.
[3] Eddie C. Y. Kuo and Tong Chee Kiong, *Religion in Singapore,* Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1995.
[4] Paul Hiebert, "The Flaw of the Excluded Middle", in: *Missiology: An International Review, 10:1,* 1982, p.35-47.
[5] See e.g. Winston Davis, *Dojo: Magic and Exorcism in Modern Japan*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980.
[6] Robert Solomon, *Living in Two Worlds: Pastoral Responses to Possession in Singapore,* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994.
[7] See Rodney Henry, *Filipino Split World: A Challenge to the Church*, Manila: OMF, 1986.
[8] See Bong Rin Ro (ed.), *Christian Alternatives to Ancestral Practices*, Taiwan: Asia Theological Association, 1985.
[9] Man Singh Das and Panos D. Bardis (eds.), The Family in Asia (Boston, Sydney, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978), p.419.
[10] David Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures*, Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986, chapt. 4.

[11] See Christopher Nugent, *Masks of Satan: The Demonic in History*, London: Sheed and Ward, 1983, p.2, where these phrases are found.
[12] Jon S. T. Quah (ed.), *In Search of Singapore's National Values*, Singapore: The Institute of Policy Studies, Times Academic Press, 1990, chapt. 7.
[13] See Uichol Kim and John W. Berry (eds.), *Indigenous Psychologies: Research and Experience in Cultural Context*, Newbury Park / London / New Delhi: SAGE, 1993.
[14] See e.g. see D. Sinha, *Psychology in a Third World Country: The Indian Experience*, New Delhi: SAGE, 1986.
[15] As noted by Virgilio G. Enriquez, "Developing a Filipino Psychology", in Kim and Berry (eds.*), Indigenous Psychologies*, op. cit.
[16] Kenichi Ohmae, *The End of the Nation State: The Rise of Regional Economies*, New York: Free Press, 1995, pp. 28ff.
[17] These figures are obtained from *The Economist Book of Vital World Statistics*, London: Hutchinson, 1990.
[18] Christopher Lasch, *The Minimal Self. Psychic Survival in Troubled Times*, New York: W. W. Norton, 1985.
[19] See Robert Solomon, "Epidemics in Nagaland", *Newsletter of the International Pastoral Care Network for Social Responsibility*, Spring-Summer 1995, p.16-17.
[20] Reported in *The Straits Times*, Singapore, 26 August 1995.
[21] See David K. Reynolds*, The Quiet Therapies: Japanese Pathways to Personal Growth*, Honolulu: The University Press of Hawaii, 1980, especially chapt. 2.
[22] See e.g. Sudhir Kakar*, Shamans, Mystics and Doctors: A Psychological Inquiry into India and its Healing Traditions*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982, for an interesting account of how various traditional healing traditions co-exist with modern medical and psychological healing establishments.
[23] The above facts are described and more information can be found in Robert Solomon, "Pastoral Care and Counselling", in *The Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, to be published in the near future by Eerdmans in Grand Rapids, USA.

Sung-Soo Lee / In-Sook You *Korea, 1996*

Pastoral care, healing and preaching of the Gospel

Report from a Korean parish

topics

- *contextualisation of pastoral care in Korea*
- *issue of women's rights*
- *the needs of childern and of old people in Korea*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 28-29

Contextualization of pastoral care

The post-modern society of the 20th century hasn't only caused positive but also negative changes in the social, cultural and religious sphere of human life. In the Korean society it hasn't become different either. Because of the rapid development from a rural area almost being like in medieval times to an industrial state which it has become in the last 50 years, life of the Koreans has become incredibly wealthy. The bad side of this material prosperity is the weakening of the own spiritual judgement, the weakening of humanity within social contact and thereby the distortion of the true human being.

Many people suffer from the confusion, respectively the distortion of the human image being created according to the image of God (Imago Dei). The important task of the church in this context is the pastoral care and healing of the people in the own quarter of town with concrete help. Nowadays the gospel can be mainly perceived and preached by a parish by healing the sores and illness of the people who suffer from the personal and structural problems of society.

Jesus Christ has not only healed the ill people and given is love to the people who came to him, but he has visited himself the ill, the suppressed and the suffering people, he has visited, healed and freed them. Nowadays the church shall also follow the example of Jesus Christ. That means: Pastoral Care must be contextualized beyond the narrowness of the personal sphere into the living world of post-modern society.

Our parish has worked over three problems for a long time:

1) Question of women's rights – dealing with the problems of women of the social lower class including the problem of taking care of the children before they go to school.

2) Question of problems of the youth – dealing with the destruction of dreams and humanity among the young people who are only drilled and supplied with pure facts at school;

3) Question of problems of senior people – dealing with old and retired people who are isolated and estranged from their families and society.

Before outlining the projects our parish works at, I'd first like to explain the traditional idea of the supreme happiness in Korean society, and the field of problems in our parish. According to the traditional idea a human being is only supremely happy when he has enjoyed five forms of happiness in life: a long life, wealth, health and a deep feeling of peace inside him, a good reputation by living virtuously, and a natural death. All these forms of happiness rely to life on earth. Even if in the Christian tradition the idea of supreme happiness is characterized by the longing for heaven because of the beatitudes in the gospel according to Matthew 5, 3-12, we must not leave out the earthen dimension of supreme happiness. For the life on this earth that God has given to us cannot simply be a painful one, but it should rather become a happy one by tasting in advance heavenly joy.

Case-studies and practical work in the parish

The district of my community, my parish, is in the country, near the border to the capital of Seoul. The total population amounts to 19.569. Half of the population (mostly indigenous and farmers) live in detached houses, and the rest (mostly commuters who go to work to Seoul every day) live in newly built skyscrapers.

Question of women's rights

The question of women's rights automatically maintains the problem of taking care of the children. Whereas the women of the social upper class do their jobs in order to emancipate in society, the women of the social lower class are automatically forced to work, to be able to nourish their families. As those women aren't educated highly either in respect of jobs, they apparently can't get proper and well-paid jobs. Mostly they are unhappily married with men from the same social class. A lot of these men have got odd jobs, take other women. In addition to that they are alcoholics or gamblers. If these women have got any job, the actual problem arises who will be able to take care of the children. As the private kindergartens are too expensive for those mothers, they either do without work and so remain at the low limit of existence, or they lock their children in a room with food and drinks until they return home in the evening. Some years ago newspapers reported about some accidents of those children who had put on fire the room while playing with matches and had died in the flames because the room they were in had been locked. Certainly it is an extreme example, but today there are many similar cases. In this context I think that half of the women's problems will be solved when our parish takes charge of the children.

> *Case 1:* Mrs. Pae Myung-Hee, 28 years old, gets social help. Two years ago, her husband died in a car accident. Since then she has lived alone with her 3-year-old sun. As she wants to save money for the future of the child and also for her own financial situation, she has accepted a job at a hairdresser's.

> Work starts at 8.30, and she can be home only after 6 p.m. The child is too young to be alone at home the whole day. Most places that take care of children only work in the mornings. There are places that work the whole day, but she can't pay for them.

Kindergarten

In order to solve such problems, our parish has established a kindergarten on March 3, 1995. 58 children between three and seven years old have been accepted. Seven women with a full-time employment take care of these children. As we get great subsidies, we have hardly any financial difficulties. Viewing the number of children being not of school age in our district (1.516 children of which the number of children of the well-off families and the children in other kindergartens must be left off) the local contribution of our parish is relatively high.

Senior school

The rapid process of industrialisation in the last 20 years has automatically caused a new structure of the traditional system of large families in the Korean society. It has caused lots of new problems that are related to the estrangement of people. Especially stricken by that are the old people who have come out of this process. Most of them suffer both from the financial and from the mental and spiritual impoverishment. Especially the too early retired people fight for their new identity that is seen as "useless for the society".

Many of them are still healthy, have lots of time and can work hard. But the society doesn't need them any longer. Even their own family doesn't need them. Because of the generation gap hat is formed in a great measure by social changes, most of the grandchildren don't have any closer inner relationship to them. Therefore, they feel more and more lonely and useless even in their own family.

There are hardly taken any state measures on the local field. To sum up all that: the four characteristics of senior problems in the post-modern Korean society are impoverishment, illness, loneliness and loss of identity. All that leads to the loss of joy and courage of living. On task of the church in this situation is also counselling, company, and healing of these seniors with energy.

> *Case 2:* Mrs. Im Yung-Hi, 72 years old, has been an housewife during her whole life. As her husband died very early, she had to educate alone three sons. For some time she had lived with the family of the eldest son until the youngest son became an alcoholic. Since then she's lived together with him in poverty. She is alone at home the whole day.

In order to give a small contribution to the reduction of the mental and physical decay of those people by isolation and for the integration of those people into a changed situation of life, our parish founded the senior school on March 9, 1995. At the end of a 4 month's probation we've made written inquiries. Out of the 100 members of the senior school, 78 people have answered. The main reason for their coming to this school is said to be the making of new friends and the joy by learning. Because of these statistics we've learnt how important this new community is for the old people expelled by the post-modern society into isolation and estrangement.

Challenge for the Korean church

By the above-mentioned activities in our parish I have learnt that in a post-modern society of isolation and the individualisation of the communities of life by high-tech-industrialisation, the traditional pastoral care for the parish must be done in a new shape. That means: not only human beings, but also the whole own district is to be pastorally cared for, counselled, accompanied and really helped (= healed) individually by every parish. The fulfilling of this task within the own parish is – in my opinion – much more important than any missionary work in remote countries.

The question of the rights of women, children and senior people in our society is the question of the poor and the suppressed. Church must engage itself a lot for these people, because that is a form of divine service, too. We must not forget that Jesus fought at the side of such people.

Finally, I want to give biblical reasons for this new challenge for the modern church. As you can read in Deuteronomy, there will always be poor people in the country. "Therefore I command you, you shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land." (Deut. 15:11) And: "As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me." (Matth. 25:40) That means: "Do not neglect to do good and to share what you had, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God." (Hebr. 13:16)

Nalini Arles *India, 2000*

Living in differences and tensions of the self

Remarks on overt and covert tensions in urban societies in India

topics

- *problems of urbanisation in India*
- *tension between poor and rich*
- *family relationships: the joint family*
- *urbanisation and identity-crisis*
- *migration*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 6, 2000; pp 39-45

Introduction

"Difference" in this paper is narrowly restricted to describe people's external and internal cognitive behaviour patterns, which is manifested in overt and covert ways. Overt in the sense of dress codes, life style and practise of rituals and religion. Covert in the sense of thought process. Both are rooted in history influenced by belief-systems, traditions and culture.

Any study of the difference in the people has to be understood in the socio-economic, political and religious context. When we talk about social context Indians are divided and fragmented by structural and systemic evils, such as fundamentalism, regionalism, casteism and communalism. Caste is the very fabric of the Indian society and the foundation of the socio-political structure. Caste determines one's life and status. In villages low caste people, Dalit people, are not allowed to draw water from wells, eat in common eating places, or walk in the same paths and worship in temples. In cities this may not be so overt, but placement, job opportunities, promotions, housing and marriages are based on caste and people are discriminated.

In this paper I want to focus more on the covert patterns of people living in cities in India. The first section will give a brief description on cities, the second section is about joint family and the relationship in families and the urban and western influence, the third will attempt to construct the Indian Psyche if there is one, the fourth section will deal with the ways people cope with differences they experience in cities, and the last section will reflect on some newer movements which

are present in cities and I close with some suggestions for Pastoral Care and Counselling in urban differences.

Differences of Cities and in Cities

Cities in the Third World

The growth of tie cities especially in the third world is phenomenal. It is estimated that between 1975 and 2000 the urban population of Latin America will be 216%, of China will be 224%, of the rest of Asia will be 269%, of the Middle East will be 302% and Africa will be 347%. In such statistics the number of people is not accounted. The 36% of the population gathered in Asia's cities will be greater than the entire combined urban population of the developed countries. In 1950, seven cities were identified as the giant cities consisting of 5,000,000 among them only two were located in Asia, Africa and Latin America. By 1985 22 of the 34 giant cities were in third world but by 2020 it is estimated that there will be 80 to 93 cities in the third world.

The composition, development and growth of cities varies. For example: Madras city is nothing but an extension of slums. Bangalore is known to be the fastest growing cosmopolitan city in Asia, it is known to be the Silicon Valley of India. It's pleasant climate and the cosmopolitan nature has attracted many multinational and national companies, now it is the concrete jungle causing environmental problems.

Theological understanding of the city: a place for justice, peace and equality

City for some is invention of God and to others it is an invention of human being. City is to be understood as ongoing process of human interactions and not as a state or condition. City is spoken in theological themes such as of protection, salvation or liberation, survival, evil and prosperity. Any discussion on nature of good or evil depends on the functioning of the systems and the subsystems that governs the city. The systems such as the economic, political and religious and the sub systems such as education, health care, culture, art and social service. These man made systems corrupt the city and affect the people. God intends liberation for all humans from evil and desires to establish peace, justice and equality. God hates sin and oppression, for example, Amos in 2:6 and 7 explains of the sins, the illtreatment of people, such as selling the needy for a pair of sandals, trampling on the heads of the poor and denying justice to the oppressed.

Economic and social differences: poor and rich

The majority of people in India and in the cities are living in poverty. The new economic policy of India encourages privatisation, offers free trade and grants license. The actual beneficiaries of this is International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Several corporations such as Transnational Corporation are cashing on the situation, since the market dictates everything and not people. I am not a student of economics, but what I gather is that India has incurred debts and is moving towards "balance of payment crisis". The deficit has risen to $ 4.057 million due to a huge imports. The per capita GNP income in 1993 was $ 290, but in Switzerland it was around $ 36.410. This scenario only goes to prove that rich countries are becoming richer and poor countries are becoming poorer. Globalisation is defi-

nitely another means of further domination and domestication, a new form of neo-colonisation. And all that becomes visible in the cities.

The non-economic factors that come along with globalisation is much more harmful and destructive. Let me give you an example: The media promotes artificial ethos, an utopian ideal devoid of pain and suffering through electronic gadgets, food, clothes, fashion and cosmetics. Though it advocates against drudgery, relieving of pain and suffering by introducing new products yet its values are destroying communitarian values by promoting individualistic values. Added to this is the corruption scandals, these scams seem to be on the increase and has developed into "Hawala culture" comprising of money, property and power. Politically the power is still in the hands of rich and powerful.

Religious differences and the need of tolerance

In pluralistic society like India one is used to the constant conflicts among various ethnic groups mostly in regard to religious practices. One almost accepts and lives with different religious symbols and worship patterns however disturbing it is. One witnesses philosophical battles or verbal or written attacks and in extreme cases worship places will be desecrated and burned and human beings destroyed. Tolerance is one way of coping with religious fundamentalism such as accepting construction of worship places in odd places, blockade of roads due to processions or meeting, etc. The level of tolerance either enhances to live in peace or destroys harmony.

Pluralistic society and family relationship

Joint family

Joint family inculcates many familial values. Joint family comprises of three generation of families living together consisting of both vertical and horizontal relationships. Vertical is father - son relationship and horizontal means brothers of father's and their families staying together. They are controlled by one male authority. They share a common roof, food and which may vary from family to family. The strength of the joint family is that it protects the weak, unemployed and underemployed and unhealthy. All are fed, clothed and educated no matter how much one earns. Babysitting is provided free, elderly are taken care and there is constantly some one at home, so children can come to a home with people and never to an empty house which is the case nowadays as both parents are working. Joint family had many advantages, it also has disadvantages though it encourages social relations between couples and wider family. It does not provide (1) a space for intimate relationship between couples or between parents and children (2) no privacy and (3) no power for women to decide. This type of family develops a strong symbolic relationship where self is seen in relational to others, ego boundaries are more open to others and there is little psychological space around oneself. Indians always refer to as 'we', 'ours' and 'us' and never I, 'mine' or 'me'. Belonging to collectivity is preferred to individualism, autonomy and initiative is undermined. Indians will identify in terms of 'role', group, caste, class and gender. All these values are now endangered by an emerging new family type, especially in the cities.

Nature of relationships

The interpersonal functioning and relationship in the Indian society is the hierarchical structure. Most relationships are cognitively arranged in the hierarchical order. The image of the superior is seen as 'nurturant' or assertive never impersonal or fraternal. Such type of understanding is promoted in the social educational system and also religion gives sanction to this understanding.

Indian behaviour is characterised by reciprocity, strong mutual caring where emotional connectedness is essential and any feelings disruptive of the relationship are contained and inhibited. This is the reason why Indians would compromise even if they are right.

Most social scientists, writers and historians have commented on peaceful co-existence of contrasting values and behaviour dispositions which is reflected in the various aspects of live and have spoken of the peaceful co-existence of logical opposites in the emotional sphere. One can describe this contrasting personality as a sense of solidarity with uncontrollable tendency towards disunity; collective megalomaniac with abject xenolatory; authoritarianism with an archaic individualism; violence with non-violence; militarism with fascism; possessivness with carelessness about property owned; courage with cowardice; cleverness with stupidity.

Even educated Indians have the capacity to compartmentalise science and logic they study or even daily working with it. One can give a rationale justifying that Indians are torn by their internal psychological tussles and suggest that there is a creation of double consciousness each complete and coherent; but capable of shutting out the other, when one is dominant. Holding of contradicting values is seen in day to day life. For example:

There is a wide gap between what is professed and what is practised, this is revealed in the promises of the politicians. For example, premises are given and never kept and there is no feeling of remorse for not keeping it. An Indian finds it difficult to say 'no' even if he/she knows that he/she is unable to carry out what has been asked.

A research was done comparing Indians and Westerners attitude, five contrasting values were chosen such as embeddedness in one's group, harmony, tolerance and duty in contrast to hedonism, preference, personalised relationships and arranging persons, objects, ideas. and relationship hierarchically. Though there were similarities yet they were apparent differences. 1) Indians preferred embeddedness in groups 2) Preferred hierarchy particularly based on class and caste 3) Preferred maintenance of personalised relationship.

The Indian psyche

There is a need to understand a general behaviour pattern of Indians. This is not an easy journey. I will attempt to construct the behaviour pattern of Indians that effects the personality. These attributes have their roots in religio-philosophical, cultural and social values. An analysis of selected films and proverbs shows the typical personality as mild, passive, dependent, other worldly, non-materialistic, conditioned by basic values of Hindu religion. Hindu personality can be described as passive, innerdirected and narcissistic with low aspiration, passivity, and conformity as basic characteristics of Indians.

Passivity and conformity have been the basic feature of Indian psyche. Joint family and caste system are discussed as the causes for ingraining reluctance in per-

sons not to take decisions and evade responsibility. One can go further and say that out of the sacred womb of the Indian family only *yes-men* could emerge. The familial interactions develop an acute sense of dependence through extreme emphasis on parental authority and minimising opportunities for personal initiative. Personal initiative is replaced by obedience and conformity. Loyalty and conformity are expected rather than competence, efficiency and initiative.

Even after the son grows up a strong bond between son and father exists . The desire for approval and sanction of father is longed at every stage. The fatalistic submission of Indians surprises westerners. In spite of that is described about Indian psyche there is also the other side which affirms qualities such as body loving, non-dominating, non-competitive, and non-hierarchical; and virtues such as patience, tolerance, sacrifice, openness, synthesis, love, and relationship.

Identity crisis of the Self

Tension between the understanding "who are you" and "where are you from"

Westernisation process, urbanisation and education as well as the position one holds brings in tension in the understanding of self.

Indians are beginning to address the question “who are you” primarily giving importance to the individual. This conflicts with the traditional understanding which asks “where are you from”. David Augsburger notes that the Chinese are known by his/her unit and not “by individual name. The centre of gravity for Chinese is group, group values are more important”. Like Chinese, Indians also have a sociocentric personality, that means not only roots are important but branches and subbranches are important. It is a network of relationships or connectedness with others which is important.

These relationships come in a package deal with responsibilities and obligations. For example: Eldest son has economic and moral obligations towards younger brothers and sisters. This involves giving and receiving of material and financial resources. These obligations at times calls for costly sacrifices in terms of giving up one’s studies, job, forgoing promotions or selling one’s property etc.

The present situation of the conflict of holding two opposite views without integration between the understanding “who are you” and “where do you come from” creates problems and this needs to be addressed.

Today the cities are creating a new group of young people who are children of parents working abroad. These youths live in hostels have lot of money, freedom, who consider themselves as foreigners, speak English fluently and are unable to read and write their mother tongue. They consider themselves as foreigners when they are not. This causes a false identity or no identity.

What is “mental health” for those, who live with contradicting values?

Westernisation, education and the work ethos of many firms are affecting the thinking and ‘values’ of Indians, especially in cities. One of the conflict is to adopt individualism. Individualism is more a western concept which is stressed as a norm for mature personhood. David Augsburger describes individualism has a commitment to self-reliance. The belief is that one can control one's destiny without any assistance of others, often resulting in competitiveness and surprisingly

conformity. Individuals who climb the "ladder" to belong to the "status giving group" are conforming to their custom and use them to move toward success. Many Indians live in a twilight zone caught in a conflicting zone of western and eastern values, especially in cities.

Some accept, affirm and practise individualism at the cost of facing the consequences from the family, who are unable to understand such values. For example: I am aware of a couple who are very individualistic and with good intention put their parents in a home. The friends and relatives criticised them as even disobeying Christ and almost struck them of Peter's list.

Some affirm individualistic values in theoretical level but are unable to practise, for example: I am aware of a gentleman who used to be very understanding, supportive, encouraged progress, advocated freedom and emphasised individualistic values but recently came to know that he never allowed his wife to take any decision and controlled every one at home.

Some hold both the values and use it according to the situation for survival. For example: A doctor friend of mine criticised the astrologers, yet in crisis visited the astrologer. This is because Indians can compartmentalise two opposite views The conflict is between the western and eastern values. This western concept of mental health measured by "self reliance", "self sufficiency", inner directed responsibility for oneself and internal sense of personal identity, such a concept Indians consider as undesirable, abrasive and disruptive of harmonious social relationship.

This scenario presents a problem for people living in difference. There are "conceptual problems" of holding "new" and "traditional" values. This raises a lot of questions such as: What is Mental Health? The Mental Health as defined by western world should be accepted? How to access the mental health and address the mental health of those who ere caught in the struggle between two opposite and contradicting values.

How people deal with differences and tensions in cities in India

"hit and run"

These people's intention is to stay for short time and hence they are not interested in "integrating" or "reacting" to the life in the city. Some are opportunists, use the resources and then leave the city. For example:

A research was done on migrant student's attitude toward the city. 29 out of 174 rural students made use of every opportunity to return to their villages frequently and 50% were feeling "home-sick". 56 out of 174 rural migrants, that is 32% or one out of every 3 students, wanted to get back to his/her village, as their main purpose was to pursue studies in city in order to have better status or position in their villages.

Muslim community is second largest group in India. Among the Diaspora Muslims, the majority live in India. Some of them have a strong feeling that this is an alien land and one day they will reach the promised land. Though they have adopted to the local culture, speak local language, but they retain their religious practise and yet they live in eschatological hope.

There are other problems which people face for example: One such is of the problem of the youths. Children of the migrants go through inner conflicts as they are

unable to adjust to the peer pressure and city life. City youths are raised in urban environment who think differently and act independently. The frustration and influence of city life influence them to be independent, raise questions at home which causes tensions at home. Their conflicts and the parents controlling patterns affect the children sometimes resulting in severe malady.

There are several young people who drop into the cities of becoming "movie stars" as the largest entertainment world in India's movies. These people's ambition is to be a "star" and nothing more.

"came and conquered"

This group of people came and saw city as the land of milk and honey and settled in the city. Their philosophy is "survival" and development of themselves. They avoid rocking the boat, but maintain peace with neighbours, learn the local language and a bit of culture and avoid interfering with other religions, but make contributions, patronise festivals and exercise tolerance at all costs. For example: Certain positions in the offices and institutions are held by non-local people in cities of Madras and Bangalore. Eventually they conquer positions, places and practise nepotism and become exclusivists. Both in Madras and Bangalore cities, Reddies from Andra Pradesh, Keralites from Kerala have almost taken over certain organisations and firms and some have exclusive clubs for themselves.

This leads to domination of the powerful over the weaker sections. Caste and regionalism come into play. For example: A research conducted to study the intake of students revealed that there was a significant gap between admission and enrolment of rural migrants. The fall in enrolment was attested to lack of information about social amenities in Bangalore city; problems of discrimination due to their rural origins and caste.

Conquered feeling yet have lost social security. Another set of people who came to city hoped to live in harmony with others are unable to cope with pressures of city life or mainly differences.

"fight and lose"

Struggle with "familistic" versus "individualistic" values: These to whom family was the beginning and end of social organisation are used to familistic values which permeates the society from bottom to top. Behaviour in rural area is traditional. spontaneous and uncritical what one person does is similar to what another person does and patterns of conduct are clear. These people come from the close, familiar, well knit environment of a village. They are reared in the families which extends to the whole of the village community, such people get lost in the city. Where people from the cities coming from different ethnic communities live together and more and more emphasis is upon individualism, materialism, indirect contacts, impersonal ways and indifference. Unlike the city people, they feel cut off and isolate themselves or join people like them. The worst effected are those who have come alone without families. The social pressure which helped them in the past is now lacking. One's freedom to do what one pleases becomes a hindrance and a disadvantage.

Struggle with unemployment: Those who came seeking for green pastures or those who came to earn money to repay loans end up in frustration as many do not get the jobs as they anticipated. This is coupled with competition and the attitude of employer, today along with educational qualification, technical skills. Firms are looking for city cultured people or people with working knowledge of English or

state language. This tendency to prefer local people over a migrant creates in the migrant a feeling of low self esteem, believing in the given stereotype image and this result in return to village or moving away from the dominant class to the outskirts, choosing a residential area according to their class.

False identity or blocked growth: There are some people who think they have better status since they ere able to make both ends meet and may speak good English language. But in reality they actually are treated as low castes, with no privileges which they are unable to understand. This false identity paralysis them to accept discrimination. They live in a constant state of denial that every one is good to them.

How to help people living in urban settings

Governmental Programmes

The cultural and development programmes initiated by the government and private sectors to encourage integration is only benefited by a few affluent and select groups. These programmes are set within the framework of caste, class and status.

Church

The Church with all its programmes caters mostly to Christians and very peripherally to the non-Christians. The tragedy is that it also has caste churches, politics and very few leaders from the low caste, which defeats the very purpose of integration.

Groups and NGO's

There are pockets of people's groups such as ecumenical women's groups, NGQ's belonging to multi-religious faith, religious groups, tribal awakening groups, dalits and minorities addressing various differences and injustices. Some activists use Marxist ideology to address injustice though the ideological frame work for the liberation of exploited sections. This may address the class issue but the caste and religious ideologies will remain.

Media

Some of the movies very graphically and vividly expose the evils in both systems and sub-systems. But there is no statistical data on its influence on the thinking of the people, yet there is a let of substantial and categorical statements made on the negative influence of media on youths.

Women movements

Women's Liberation Movement, which came on the scene in 1960 focused on patriarchy as the form of social exploitation. Sexuality was seen as a potential power for women's liberation. Violence has been a central theme in organising against rape and wife beating.

Cultural Feminist: Many Indians followed and raised the same concerns of their counter part in the west. They moved towards a spirituality viewing science, and technology as dominating, militaristic and patriarchal. They accepted the difference between men and women as irrevocable and men as naturally prone to violence and women as non-violent, yet seeing women as superior. Though there is

strength in their analysis, their preoccupation with differences and accepting men being violent and their exclusiveness prevented providing a holistic framework to address violence and sacrifice.

Autonomous eclectic feminist groups comprised of both, rural women (peasants and poor) and the urban educated women. They all have their own particular emphasis but the similarity is the asserting of their rights not in isolation or with feminist groups or with women's wings of political groups but with social movements. The context is given prime focus in their reflection.

Eco-feminists bring together all the themes such as production, violence and sexuality. They take an interdisciplinary approach in discussing issues. They give naturalistic explanations of violence where men are rapists of earth and women have productive relationship with nature.

There has been a paradigm shift from addressing issues in relation to men and women. This is indicated in the resolution of a women's conference of Nasi Mukti Sangharsh Sammedan which met in Patna. They pointed to the state as the major support of violence against women such as rape and other forms of sexual abuse, female foeticide, witch-killing, sati, dowry murders, wife-beating. Such violence and the continued sense of insecurity that is instilled in women as result keeps them bound to the home. This group raised several questions: What is the effect and incidence of violence on different classes' castes, communities of women and what is their relationship between specific Indian traditions of *sri shakti* or *prakriti* to violence against women; in particular how is this violence related to caste structures and traditions?

Suggestions for pastoral care and counselling in urban differences

Openness and being sensitive to others would be a way to live with differences. The method for this interaction is listening. A few suggestions:

Openness is cultivating an ability to understand the mystery of things, events and people. People are not shallow creations but having depth and hidden meanings. Their relationship with God and human beings have meanings. Things and persons are symbols and sacraments. This is a Asian reality, which consist of sacramental representation and symbolic celebrations as well as poetry and art. This poetic symbolic approach to reality is integral to the human heart. Today the consumerism and commodity culture kills all symbolic and poetic nature.

Openness is not going with preconceived ideas but the readiness to study and learn which enables one to see from the depths and different perspectives. This includes discernment and evaluation meaning raising questions. This also means not taking a position of knowing rather than an "unknowing position" with no value judgements. A willingness to learn about reality calls for courage to unlearn what one knows and to relearn.

Openness means tolerance. Indians are known for tolerance, permissive and assimilative nature. Overemphasis on tolerance or experience does not mean to negate truth or to have no concern for truth. Truth of religion should be like relationships: every experience is lived experience. Truth here is not to be understood in absolute sense. The Indian understanding of tolerance springs from the conviction that God and the truth of God is an inexhaustible mystery which cannot be un-

derstood timely and not completely at any given stage and no one can claim that they know the truth not even any revealed religion claiming historical heritage.

Openness means not being dogmatic and authoritative. Authority in India is esteemed high and seen as office, position and power, but in matters of religion it is not seen as the ability to promote growth and freedom. This is based en their understanding of religious structure. The Indian religious structure offers a model, where the structure is not built on judiciary system with power to execute decisions. Authority is not

grounded in any external appointment but in the inner attainment of quality and knowledge of scriptures. In the realm of the religion there is freedom and no organisation binding people.

All these suggestions can be challenges in the approaches to counselling.

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Latin America

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Society and pastoral challenges in Brazil

Three short essays

topics:

- *relationship of religion, culture and society in Brazil*
- *poverty, economy, capitalism*
- *migration*
- *rural workers' movements*
- *pastoral challenges in Brazil*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 7, 2001; pp 3-9

"The cross is everywhere". Remarks on the intimate relationship of religion, culture and society in Brazil

One of the most fascinating aspects of Brazilian social reality is the intimate relationship between religion and culture. They are intertwined in Brazilian life. To experience Brazilian culture, or cultures, means experiencing a distinctively religious world. This may be somewhat less true today, amidst the realities of globalization and free market capitalism, but leaving the centers of banking and commerce one is immediately immersed in a culture where religion is very real and present.

This living presence can be seen in the number of national holidays that are either religious holidays or based on religious holidays. Watching televised interviews with political figures at local, state and national levels almost always reveals a cross, usually Roman Catholic, on the wall behind the speaker. Almost every village, town and city is built around a Roman Catholic church and has a statue of Christ on the highest point close to or overlooking the area. Neighborhoods are oriented around plazas that frequently have Roman Catholic churches. The number of schools and universities sponsored by Churches is beyond number. At a more intimate level, with the lack of government social services many community centers, hospitals, clinics, counseling centers, nurseries and so forth are sponsored by Churches. The vast majority of Brazilians identify themselves as religious, whether they attend church or not. While Carnival has become increasingly commercialized, its religious meaning and power continue to be very present. The list of practical and symbolic expression of religious life in Brazilian culture is almost endless.

The roots of this intimate relationship between church and culture goes back to the "discovery" or "invasion" of Brazil by the Portuguese. Along with the explor-

ers that entered Brazil were priests whose calling was to "convert" the natives to Christianity. This close relationship between political and religious presence, or domination, has continued throughout the history of Brazil. It is often difficult, in fact, to tell the two apart. The central figures in the history of Brazil are to a large degree either politicians, explorers, priests or other religious figures. While the close relationship between political and economic power and the presence of the Church are increasingly criticized, there is no doubt that religion has played an intimate part in almost every facet of Brazil's history and culture.

Whether the topic is economy, social projects, the landless, the military dictatorship, Biblical interpretation, ecology, new religious movements or the role of women – religion and culture are almost inseparable. While modern religious and cultural forces and influences may conflict, it is almost impossible to discuss one without taking the other into consideration.

In this sense, to look at Churches in Brazil is to explore an integral part of Brazilian culture. As was noted above, this is changing to some degree. There is a greater distance between political, economic and cultural dynamics and the overt presence of religion, or Churches. Brazilian culture is experiencing a growing sense of distrust of the close association of political and economic power and religious institutions. There are growing criticisms that religious institutions have often identified themselves with centers of political and economic power, and that the result has often been a failure to take seriously the needs of many Brazilians.

Still, the rhythm of life in Brazil has a distinctively religious feel. There may be more distance between Church and State, but everyday life is still immersed in a world where religion plays a central role. While Churches and Societies in Brazil may not always cooperate without conflict, they are so intertwined that it is almost impossible to understand one without the other.

The many faces of hunger in Brazil

As I sat down to write a first draft of this presentation I decided to simply tell stories about what I see day to day, what I read in the paper, and what I learn from talking with friends here in Brazil. I thought about the street children who hang around the school I teach in and the post office up the street. They spend much of their times offering to "watch your car" for a small fee. A church agency comes twice a day with meals, and offers to help them get off the street. A few of them recognize me by sight, and know that I am an easy target for a little loose change. And I know them well enough to know that they are hungry.

I thought about the woman who cleans my house once a week, and the houses of several friends. She charges the equivalent of US $20.00 a day, has five children, and lives in a two room space in a slum not far from here. She pays US $200.00 in rent. I know that she is not literally hungry, but she is undernourished.

Then I thought about the field workers called bóias frias who work in agriculture throughout Brazil. Bóia Fria literally means "cold meal". They get this name from the fact that they leave for the fields at 5:00 am, eat lunch in the fields, and return home around 7:00 pm to eat supper. Breakfast and lunch are always cold and by the time they get home, supper is usually cold. Meals are much the same every day. Rice, beans, a little meat, and a kind of cake made out of corn flower, sugar, and whatever else is available.

Then, to bring matters a little closer to my home, I thought about the refectory at the university where I teach. The food is plentiful, but bland. Though there is much more variety than the food eaten by street children and Bóias Frias, in many ways it is the same. Rice, beans, low quality pieces of chicken or beef, lettuce, tomatoes and usually two or three different fruits or vegetables - usually the same ones day after day.

During my seven years here I have had the opportunity to explore much of central and northern Brazil. On one trip I can remember driving through miles and miles and miles of oranges. I thought to myself at the time: "And I thought Florida raised a lot of oranges!" On another trip I drove through miles and miles and miles of vegetable fields. And on another I drove through almost a days worth of sugar cane.

When I was about 11 my family drove from Houston, Texas to Alberta, Canada. I can still remember the sea of wheat and corn. At 11 years old I did not raise the question of how there could be hunger in the United States with so much food being raised. Now I am raising those questions, and the answers I am finding are deeply disturbing.

A few facts according to the Brazilian Institute for Applied Economic Research:

1) Brazil has a population of approximately 170 million. Of that 170 million it is estimated that 32 million are undernourished.
2) 70% of all Brazilian families live in what is roughly defined here as a state of misery.
3) It is estimated that 9 million families earn only enough to provide basic nourishment - not including housing, clothing, transportation, etc.
4) 300,000 children die each year of diseases directly related to lack of or improper nutrition.

A few other facts:

1) Brazil is among the top five nations in the world in terms of the production of fruits and vegetables - both quantity and variety.
2) Brazil is among the top ten producers of beef.
3) Brazil is among the top three producers of sugar cane.

Finally, in the light of these inconsistencies, I have to ask: "why?". The answers are much more complicated than the simple observations that there is a lot of food being grown in Brazil, as in the United States and other countries.

It is estimated that in Brazil 20% of all production of fruits, vegetables and grains is lost through spoilage, theft or mismanagement between the fields and points of collection and distribution. Part of this is due to equipment that is ancient and poorly maintained. Part is because workers have very little motivation when they are miserably paid and often treated much like the machines they operate. The miles and miles of oranges, fruits, vegetables and sugar cane I have seen are largely for export. At the very least, top quality items are exported. The quest for hard capital is the dominant force in Brazilian agriculture. The idea, or ideal, of having the responsibility of feeding a country is not a driving force.

The fields of sugar cane are another story. They exist for two reasons. First, they exist to supply the government subsidized fuel alcohol program which is basically

a disaster due to mismanagement and the world wide drop in crude oil prices over the last twenty years. Second, sugar cane yields raw sugar which is, again, exported. The miles of sugar cane fields at one time also yielded other crops, but sugar cane is much more income generating than tomatoes, wheat or corn.

Though I have seen only the edge of the major cattle growing regions, what I have seen leaves the impression of vast cattle ranches. While beef is relatively abundant and inexpensive in Brazil, it is frequently of marginal quality. It is clear that beef is being raised for export. This has a variety of impacts. First, large areas of forest have been cut down and are being cut down to provide the open grasslands needed to raise cattle. Second, available land is converted from crops to cattle raising because beef is more income intensive. Third, to be economically viable cattle ranches need large tracks of land which puts this "industry" in the hands of the few in Brazil who can afford such ranches.

My interpretation of all of the above is that hunger in Brazil is not a matter of a lack of food. Hunger is the result of a series of political and economic decisions. The heart of these decisions is what I call Savage Capitalism, or profit without perspective. At political and macro economic levels Brazil is trying to economically "develop" at any cost. Not really at any cost, because the suffering caused by the unrestrained search for development is invariable born by the most vulnerable.

The abundance of food in the fields of Brazil is a witness to the abundance Brazil has to offer. The hunger and oppression in the countryside and the city is a witness to political and social decisions to sacrifice the many for the wealth of the few. Or, worse, the sacrifice of the many is based on the hope that economic "development" will soon spread to the many. I see no signs of this happening. What I see is much more hunger, and only a few more nice houses and big cars.

Os Sem Terra – the landless ones

Os Sem Terra, the Landless, or more accurately *Movimento dos Trabalhardores Rurais Sem Terra*, The Landless Rural Workers Movement, is a political and economic movement in modern Brazil. It is a "popular" movement in the sense that its origins, and the majority of its support, comes from the general public, and not from organized centers of political or economic power.

The movement has a variety of intertwining goals. However, the central issue is the redistribution of land. It has been estimated that twelve percent of the Brazilian population controls fifty percent of the land. While these statistics are estimates, they clearly indicate the disproportionate distribution of land, and related resources, in Brazil.

This is this imbalance that The Landless Rural Workers Movement is confronting. This essay is in no way an in depth presentation of The Landless Rural Workers Movement or of the current economic, political and social situation in Brazil. At best, this paper is a broad summary of these complex and interwoven situations via a general presentation of the historical context and current status of the Landless in Brazil.

Historical context

It is impossible to understand the problem of the Landless without exploring the historical contexts which made possible the problem. Beginning in approximately

1510 South America was, depending on your point of view, explored or invaded by Portugal, Spain and Holland. The dominant force was Portuguese because it establish a military, economic and political presence in South America that dominated competition from the Spanish and the Dutch.

In 1510 the Brazilian coastline was composed of approximately 2000 kilometers of rain forest with six or seven bays capable of being used as ports. These geographical realities greatly influenced the Portuguese administration of this newly discovered land. While the Portuguese capital moved several times, it remained in the central part of what is now modern Brazil, and eventually settled in Rio de Janeiro.

The Portuguese presence began with the founding of settlements around the various harbors on the Brazilian coastline. Each of these settlements, and the surrounding region, was ruled by what can be called a governor appointed by the chief officer of the Portuguese King, the Viceroy, located in Rio de Janeiro.

Due to the immense distances and the preoccupation of the Viceroy with international affairs, these governors had close to total control of their regions. The primary interests of the governors was to administer the settlements, which gradually developed into cities, and exploit the natural resources of the region.

In order to do this, each governor appointed a relatively small group of men to manage large territories. These sub- governors were generally political appointees, explorers or military officers whose main preoccupation was settling the land and exploiting natural resources. Over time, they became known as Colonels. Over time, and with the increased complexity of the national and international political situation, the governors became occupied with the administration of the growing cities, and the Colonels grew more independent and powerful. Each Colonel administrated his vast region of land, developed a semi-independent economic system and maintained an informal army.

Through the course of time the labor force used by the Colonels varied. At first, indigenous persons and workers imported from Europe were used as labor. Later, slaves were added to the work force. The economic system, even when slavery was abolished in 1888, was based on a form of semi-slavery or indentured servitude. People worked the land governed by the Colonel, were paid a very low wage, and shared some of the harvest.

However, again because of the vast distances and centralization of power, almost all forms of commerce were owned either by the Colonel, his relatives, his administrators or his friends. As such, not only the land, but the means of production and distribution were concentrated in the hands of a relatively few persons. One result of this was that the laborers were kept in state of constant debt and semi-slavery.

This system remained relatively unchanged during the four hundred years between the discovery of South America and the current century. One result of these historical developments is that Brazil entered the 20th Century as an agrarian economy controlled by a relatively few wealthy land and business owners. The vast majority of the population was essentially uneducated and, at most, semi-skilled.

While successive waves of industrialization created a fairly stable middle class, the basic structure of the economic and social systems went largely unchanged. With the advent of industrialization, many rural workers moved to the ever growing cities in search of work.

Between migration to the cities, industrialization and increased international competition for agricultural products the economic situation in rural areas worsened.

Workers became increasingly dependent on farm and business owners, who, in order to maintain their profits, continued to pay very low wages.

Further, state and federal governments focused much of their attention on the growing crises in the cities. As such, few funds were available to build an adequate social or economic infrastructure in rural areas.

The landless ones

The birth and early years of the *Movimento dos Trabalhardores Rurais Sem Terra*, The Landless Rural Workers Movement, are quite complex. In summary, the movement began as a collection of disorganized workers movements. Each of these separate movements had different goals. Some worked more for just wages, others on improving working conditions while still others on issues related to health and housing. One factor that contributed to this fragmentation were a series of complex labor laws which inhibited, if not made impossible, labor organization between states.

As such, labor movements of any type were restricted to one state. This made impossible the formation of national labor movements or organizations, and effectively guaranteed that such movements would remain decentralized and economically dependent on a relatively small geographical area.

With the concentration of larger and larger numbers of skilled workers in the cities the power of various labor unions began to grow. In particular, the labor union associated with car manufacturing began to wield considerable power and produce charismatic and politically astute leadership.

Out of these diverse labor movements a new national political party, The Workers Party, P.T., was formed. While initially not influential, the party grew along with the growth of industrialization.

However, the initial political base of the party was in technical labor, such as skilled workers related to medium and heavy technology based industry. This proved to be a very narrow, though influential, political base.

After a series of political successes, this labor movement and its related political party began to expand to include semi - skilled and finally unskilled workers. One of the political successes of this group was the reformulation of laws related to labor unions and movements between states.

With the new possibility of organizing between states and the existence of a national political movement oriented towards workers, new possibilities appeared for agricultural workers to organize. The Landless Rural Workers Movement, Sem Terra, is one such agricultural workers movement. At present it functions on a national level.

While the acquisition of land for workers is a central priority, the movement also works for just wages, improved working conditions and other related issues. However, the issue that has attracted the public attention has been efforts to occupy and cultivate unused land.

While such occupations directly serve the needs of agricultural workers they also touch on the problem of the centralization of land and power in the hands of a few. As such, while there have been relatively few so-called, they have attracted

considerable attention because they challenge the ancient structures of power and wealth.

One result of this perceived threat to the power and prestige of large landowners was the initial violent response to occupations of unused land sponsored by the Sem Terra.

Initially, the movement would quietly settle a small group of farmers on unused land, and possibly inform the local newspaper of its actions. The results of these initial efforts were almost universally the same. After a short while the persons occupying the land were removed by the land owner. This removal was, sometimes, relatively peaceful,. The "invaders" were physically removed from the property, but not harmed. At other times, the "invaders" were killed.

As the Sem Terra became more aggressive in their occupations of unused land, reactions became increasingly violent. There is no way to accurately judge the number of persons killed in the attempt to enter unused land or at some point afterward. What is certain is that the number of convictions for murder in such cases is almost non-existent.

In light of these developments, the Sem Terra began to increasingly use the media as both a method to divulge their activities and as a means to protect its members. While local landowners could, with relative ease, control local newspapers, such was much less the case with national television networks or metropolitan newspapers. With the appearance of television cameras and reporters from large newspapers, the numbers of deaths and disappearances dropped. However, with the departure of the media the violence often returned.

In summary, The Landless Rural Workers Movement, Sem Terra, is the outgrowth of a complex political and economic reality. It is relatively well organized, understands how to use the media both to support its political and economic agenda and to protect its members, and is actively challenging the structures of power.

It is very difficult to asses its level of organization or effectiveness. The movement is not highly organized or centralized in the sense of a labor union in the United States or Europe. It is more of a semi - structured group of movements in diverse geographical areas of Brazil. There is not a local Sem Terra group in every agricultural community.

In terms of effectiveness, the movement has been relatively successful at two levels. At the grass roots level, the movement has helped a number of landless agricultural workers to find land. However, it is almost impossible to say how many farmers or how much land. At the level of local, regional and national awareness the movement has been highly effective in raising consciousness regarding the treatment of agricultural workers and resistance at every level of government to deal with the problem. This second level of action may very well prove to be the most important.

Pastoral implications

One of the most notable pastoral aspects of the Sem Terra is its historical and current relation with the Roman Catholic Church. One tendency is to put blame on the Roman Catholic Church because of its active and passive roles in the oppression of Brazil and Brazilians. At an institutional level, its lack of support for workers and its conspiracy with centers of power are well documented. However, such superficial guilt does not take into account the complexity of current and his-

torical events. To simply blame a certain institution is not an adequate response in terms of resolving problems.

Beginning with the period of the military dictatorships, between 1962 and 1978, the Roman Catholic Church experiences a rapid growth in its awareness of the situation of oppression.

Specific elements of the Roman Catholic Church began to actively support human rights and identify the problems of agrarian reform and abuses of power. This was due, in large part, to the support of Archbishop Paulo Arns. While the Roman Catholic Church did not create the Sem Terra movement, it helped to create the political and social consciousness necessary for its development. This included a growing awareness of the needs of rural workers, the problems of rapid urbanization, the lack of voice of the poor in political decisions, and the problem of land distribution in Brazil.

In terms of pastoral action, local Roman Catholic Churches are greatly influenced by the local Bishop. With a growing number of Bishops aware of the necessity of rural workers, support for the Sem Terra grew. This included providing space in churches for meetings, theological reflection on poverty, and political support from local priests. At the practical level, this provided safe space to organize as well as a growing sense of identity and institutional support. With such support, the organization of the movement became increasingly possible.

This was in large part due to the local and national strength of the Roman Catholic Church. While powerful individuals continued to have great political and economic power, this power was somewhat balanced by the awareness and activity of the Roman Catholic Church. Protestant churches were less involved in this process, due to their relatively small size, but still were involved as much as possible.

Where the Church became immediately involved was when invasions of land began to occur. When the movement was sufficiently organized, it began the systematic invasion of unused or unoccupied land. While the invaders were initially unprotected in these invasions, with the support of local priests and Bishops, together with media attention, this situation changed rapidly. This support also generated public awareness of the reasons for these invasions, and their non - violent nature.

Currently, the Roman Catholic Church is experiencing a movement in a more conservative direction in terms of political action, in general, and regarding the Sem Terra, specifically. While the support of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church is diminishing, due to theological and political changes, the consciousness generated during the last years has created a political and pastoral base that continues to sustain the movement. Today, many local priests, predominantly in rural areas, continue to actively support the Sem Terra. In areas that have a more “progressive” Bishop, this support is more public. In areas that have more “conservative” Bishops, this support is in the form of meeting space, prayer, and the indirect involvement of the priest. As such, in a variety of ways the Roman Catholic Church continues to be actively involved in the movement.

The presence of Protestant Churches continues to be restricted due to their limited political and social power and influence. While there are a considerable number of Protestant Churches and congregations that support the Sem Terra, such support generally occurs in conjunction with Roman Catholic congregations or other groups, such as Non-Governmental Agencies.

In summary, the presence and influence of the Movimento dos Trabalhardores Rurais Sem Terra is growing. While the movement continues to evolve in terms of its philosophy and tactics, the level of cultural and pastoral consciousness of the need for land reform is considerable. Twenty years ago, the question was whether or not land or agrarian reform was necessary. Today, the question is what type of land reform is necessary to satisfy the needs of the landless and when this reform will happen. Change will come slowly. Agrarian reform will not happen in the immediate future. However, the political climate in Brazil has changed in the last decades. Also, the religious climate in Brazil has changed in recent times. From a pastoral perspective, what has changed is the understanding that pastoral action must be both individual and political. This consciousness should serve to sustain O Movimento dos Trabalhardores Rurais Sem Terra.

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Some remarks on the work of the SOS Centre of Diakonia in Prague, Czech Republic

topics:

- *society in the Czech Republic*
- *the work of church institutions in the Czech Republic*
- *social work and Christian faith*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 65-69

About the state of society

When in 1989 the communist regime was overthrown the radical change of the social system was initiated with all the positive and negative phenomena that go hand in hand with transformation. The totalitarian system on the one hand, gave a firm structure and some social securities. On the other hand it obstructed the freedom of thinking, free initiative and spiritual development.

Nevertheless, the oppression stimulated the churches to hold on to the authenticity of life. The attempts for a moral cleansing of the society did not come to a positive ending. Public moral repentance did not take place. The transforming process of the economic system into a market economy very soon showed how deep the moral devastation of the communist regime had gone. The entrepreneurial sphere was penetrated by people who in some way were compromised by the former regime. The struggle in the political scene revealed the fact that democracy wouldn't rest on a bed of roses.

After the restructuring of the economy had been completed, the market mechanism started functioning. Social care, formerly maintained by the state, had to be covered by other resources. New NGO's started to emerge, such as church charity organisations, civic associations and private health care institutions. They gained ground especially where the state wasn't effective enough (refugees and old people's homes, youth activity centres, centres for the handicapped and long-term disabled etc.). The finances for running these institutions are partly provided from the state budget and partly covered from their own resources.

Previously unknown phenomena such as *unemployment* appeared. In 1999 the unemployment rate reached 10 %. Certain social groups such as Gypsies, youth school graduates, and the disabled have only little hope in the labour market. Borders opened and migrants entered the labour competition, too. the number of for-

eigners, legally involved in labour market, is approximately 200,000, illegal labour migration is estimated at 100,000. Social *classes of rich and poor* have emerged in a previously classless society. About half of our families live just above the living wage. Social benefits are granted to those living under the minimum living standard. Nevertheless, there are people who are not able to fend for themselves and don't fit into any social protection system either. This is the case with *the homeless*. Church and charity organisations, *Salvation Army* and further Christian denominations enter the social scene just here.

Our republic with its 10 million people registers – just like in the West – a *decrease of population* and a sharp fall of the birth rate. The annual decrease comes to about 10,000 inhabitants. But for the immigration of about 10,500 people a year the tendency would be much higher. With the general birth rate of 1.17 children on one woman the Czech Republic has joined states with the lowest one. In 1998 we had 91,000 new-borns and 56,000 *abortions.* The *divorce rate* in 1998 reached 58%. The marriage rate maintains a low level as well. The average age of people getting married is growing as well as the number of people living in common-law partnerships. The number of *suicides* has diminished, though. A special type of addiction has emerged in our country after the opening of the borders and the coming of capitalism: *gambling.* Unfortunately the age of those experimenting with *drugs* is getting lower. The dealers entered even our primary schools.

Due to the geographic location our republic has become the transitory land for many migrants. That means for us *trading with people* within migration flows targeted to the West. We ere not able to stop *female trade* either. Another social problem that has to be solved by more and more communities is the growing *prostitution.*

Such is the face of modern Czech society and the ailments it suffers from. To assist in solving these social problems is the aim of our Crisis Centre – the SOS Centre of *Diakonia*.

Concept and service of the SOS centre

We belong to the church assisting institutions. The integration into the Czech Brethren Evangelical Church means that the church provides the spiritual grounds for our service. Our team consists of mainly active members of various Christian denominations. The ecumenical dimension and team work are essential aspects of our service. We try to approach the client with respect to his personality, faith, world view, etc. The mission of our SOS centre is in assisting clients to find and accept themselves as they are, their meaning of life, faith, hope and love of other people. We are not meeting them as strong and weak but as brothers. The SOS centre is a specialised workplace dealing with pastoral psychotherapy. It is open to all and provides a free of charge service with possible total anonymity. We have got our own hot line and are a member of the Czech association of help lines. Apart from work with individuals we are able to form and run pastoral psychotherapy groups. We co-operate with similar centres, charity and church organisations. We serve also as a training place for the law and social schools. As our name indicates essentially we offer crisis intervention and support during the process up to its end. We also give short-term and long-term care (adolescence problems, depression, loss of life purpose, problems in relationships, in prevention of neurosis and psychoses etc.).

Furthermore, we offer spiritual and humanitarian support to the lonely, ageing and those coming to terms with heavy losses, spiritual assistance in solving faith problems, psychological and social counselling, support in searching for motivation to rehabilitation. We also run a Gay help line, that is meant to assist homosexuals and their families.

Again, our main activities are:
a) crisis intervention
b) solving a particular problem
c) handing over a client to a more specialised place
d) group therapy
e) social counselling and information.

Our staff offers the above mentioned services to mothers with children living in a safe haven, also run by the *Diakonia*. In specialised cases, the therapist visits clients in their homes, and sometimes we provide psychological assistance to clients of the Home Care service within the *Diakonia*.

From its beginning our centre relies on the substantial help of volunteers. They work on hot lines, the crisis intervention of clients coming from "the street", in group therapy or visiting clients at home. Regular sexologist and psychiatric services are offered by volunteers on a fortnight basis as well as legal counselling service on the SOS centre premises. once a month. We have training for professionals and volunteers (e.g. courses for counselling on the telephone crisis line) and they all are supervised. They also are engaged in several other educational and organisational activities. They help us with public relations and fundraising.

Let me now present our service in the following figures.

Our centre consists of an average of 10 regular *employees* (mostly working part time) and about 15 *volunteers* who made a total of 8,808 contacts last year. They provide crisis intervention counselling both personal and by phone: phone contact (7,835 – i.e. 88,95%), visits (947 – i.e. 10,75%) and letter writings (22 – i.e. 0,25%). Professional contacts make up a third, information the other and crisis talks, which show a rise of 25% in 1999, a third one.

Our clients

Long-term clients come for counselling and psychotherapy as well as clients for one single session. We give support to shaken self-esteem or to violated human dignity, not only to those suffering from violence or are handicapped by mental or physical diseases, but more or less to all those who are seeking help. I am going to present two cases of clients who have given their consent to making their story public. Names are of course changed.

The first case is about *support to a dying woman and her family.* A psychologist from our team describes:

The Case of Family X.

Members: the father is graduate pensioner with a psychiatric diagnosis (psychosis), the mother is graduate as well and in the final stage of cancer. Sons are 12 and 13 years old.

Assistants: members of the congregation of the Czech Brethren Evangelical Church where the family attends. One of the members is an assistant of our sisterly organisation.

The story: In June a member of the Evangelical congregation and the assistant of our sisterly organisation contacted us and asked for help for a family where the mother was dying. The mother had been ill for one year (she became ill at 49, doctors at that time were assessing her life expectancy for some weeks only). Now, after one year she was supposed to undergo an operation because of the worsening of her physical state – her liver had been affected.

First I contacted the father. A modest tall and a bit restless man came and told me with some caution what he was expecting. They wanted me to find "the ideal grandmother" for them who could care for him and the sons when the wife had died. The father wanted to look at the mother not as a sick person. He wanted to keep a "genuine childhood for the children" not spoiled by disease. This principle forced the mother to take care of the family despite her worsening state. She used to talk with the children – and she did not mention her low chances for recovery. She tried to fulfil expectations, but was not able to do. I told the father, that ideal grandmothers are not met except in fairy tales. First considerations on living in that fairy tale reminded me a bit of a fairy or film story. How should we make their situation public in a Christian newspaper and ask for help in a situation where the disease should be kept in secret for the boys?

In the meantime the mother was put into a hospital, grew substantially weak, was confined to a bed and had to be fed artificially. The husband used to see her and went on leaning on her vigour with which she fought for life.

When we talked first and last she told me that after having learned the diagnosis she surrendered to the Lord accepting His will. She was humble and patient. Still it was hard for me to understand why she was so stubborn in keeping her approaching death a secret from children. The father seemed to be quite realistic in spite of his serious mental illness. He used to say he didn't want his children to be bewildered by the death of their mother and "to be able to say her goodbye". He violated her wish and shortly before her death told them the truth. Afterwards he told me that they took it calmly. During summertime they went to a scout camp and health resort. The husband himself kept visiting his wife assiduously.

While the mother was still alive I met the husband and the children only once – at that time the boys still didn't know how serious the situation was. When I was talking about possibilities which could happen if their mother died, the older boy broke into tears but spoke with courage. He said they would manage somehow, they would be able to take care of themselves. The younger brother kept silent nearly throughout the whole session. I thought that the father could be encouraged and calmed down by such positive attitude – he really was surprised by the reaction of his older son.

During the mother's hospitalisation the care for the children was shared by sisters from the evangelical congregation. At that time they had to organise only their holiday programmes as there were no school duties. I was in touch with the father regularly but no too frequently. When I suggested he could meet with the organisation which is caring for children he insisted that his children would not be in troubles. He repeated the expression when he visited me after his wife's death. His expectation was again very laconic: "Help me, I don't want to loose my children."

In reality such a threat doesn't exist but the father is enormously frightened which is one of the signs of his illness. The situation is made more and more complex by the uncertainty of the assisting sisters of the evangelical congregation concerning their competence in the case, by the responsibility of the state child's care department and their efforts to make the family use the home care services.

Upon the first meeting with the father and the children after their mother's death, the boys' reactions were brave. We spoke where their mother was (and they discerned where her body was, and where her soul) and that they were keeping her image in their hearts. They would manage the situation at home with the help of the congregation that they trusted entirely. They appreciated their father's openness in telling them about the seriousness of the mother's situation. Although, originally they couldn't bear the symptoms of their father's illness suddenly they showed almost an adult-like tolerance. They manifested the determination to manage with the house work without any professional help. I felt in their statement not only a great deal of eagerness but also some mistrust or suspicion towards anyone who could invade their space and didn't belong to their family.

At present they are beginning to live on their own, the sisters in the congregation defined the fields in which they could help and said they wouldn't try to make plans for them but with them. There are of course many dangers, misunderstandings, tendencies to manipulate and to intervene inappropriately. More difficult than helping to run the household and with their school duties, would be to replace their mother's love if that is ever possible.

Different roles in the helping activities

The role of our SOS centre is co-ordination and support. One day we might become mediators between a state organisation and a family or congregation. Another time we have to mediate between father and children or helpers. Sometimes we may become guides for helpers from the congregation. Many questions come into my mind: what are the expectations of the helpers, where will they get their strength from (the sisters are employed), what will be the state of the father's mental health?

In ending I would like to mention a motto from the mother's obituary (Proverbs 31:10-11): "Who can find a wife of noble character? She is worth far more than rubies." And the other one (Psalm 46, 2): "God is our refuge and strength, an ever present help in trouble."

The Case of Mary

The next story could be called: "Searching for the mother". It is about supporting a *young girl victim of domestic violence and sex abuse*.

Mary has become my client 14 months ago shortly after she repeatedly failed her final exams at the first year of a secondary school. She was over 18 and lived in a special young people's home. She was sent to psychotherapy for repeated self-inflicted injuries, suicidal tendencies and changes of mood.

To her family's case history belongs the alcoholism of both, the mother, and the father.

When her parents were drunk they used to beat her and sometimes she was even locked in a cellar for the whole weekend. She used to be sexually abused by her drunken father since she was ten. She was an unwanted child. Her mother didn't

manage to have an abortion, as she was in a late stage of pregnancy, so she tried to kill her daughter shortly after the birth.

From the very beginning I tried to support her self-esteem and her safety by unconditional acceptance. Soon she asked me if she could live with me. When I explained the limits of our therapeutic relationship she withdrew. Later on she used the same strategy with other helping women – a matron in another young people's home or teachers at the secondary school where she started to study. Sometimes she showed her interest in the Bible or Christian faith. From time to time she was not able to cope with difficult situations: a older man attempted to abuse her when she was working for him on a short term basis; she was accused of stealing money; in a bus terminal she was attacked by an adolescent. Her contacts with her parents living far from Prague were mostly limited to occasional phone calls. Nearly always the calls sounded like this: "Come back home immediately, otherwise the father will kill you" followed by vulgar abuse. Sometimes they made false promises that were turned into jokes when she arrived. Even when the matrons mediated regular weekend visits at helping families she clearly felt that it was just a weak substitute and so she tried to come back to her problem parents. From time to time she played truant mainly when she fell into depression or was ill with repeated viruses. She hardly ever caught up with her missed lessons despite her considerable intelligence. Once when she was in bad need of some cash she tried to steal a travel card but regretted it and gave it back. As a result she used to be blamed for other small losses in her young people's home. She felt awfully humiliated and started threatening with suicide. That way she managed to stop the accusations but the sisters took her to see a psychiatrist. He tried to give her medicaments and to refer her to a female therapist. She resisted to both and also stopped with our sessions for six weeks.

Then Mary came back to our therapy and we entered the more difficult phase with clearing up relationships, maintaining personal borders and unveiling conscious or unconscious manipulation. Mary, who in the meantime found a new close female helper and was in conflict with the favourite matron, used to be the source of my total helplessness or failure. I also had to learn that she was often playing out her female helpers against each other. In June she failed some of her exams again but not as many as last year. When it seemed as if she would terminate our sessions and pass to another therapist (flightiness in relationships is frequent with this disorder), she surprised me by her interest for further sessions and greater maturity. Even her self inflicting efforts have diminished.

So she survived her failures in school. Now she is trying to enter into a new school, where she has managed to be admitted. Such was the year of our work together which was emotionally very demanding but at the same time rewarding. Without the prayer as an important aspect of my therapeutic style, I would have given up the case very soon.

Conclusion

As both cases imply, our work is based on our faith even if very often it is not genuine pastoral therapy. We are supported by faith when the client doesn't show much progress or when it is necessary to face existential insecurity. It lends a special meaning to our work.

Part 3, Chapter E

Melanesia

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Social and economical problems affecting human dignity

Youth in Papua New Guinea

topics:

- *socio-economic situation in Papua New Guinea*
- *problems of youth: education and employment*
- *family*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 34-36

Introduction

The life and order we observe in the universe around us is constantly undergoing changes. When that change is in harmony with the creating plan of God, harmony and order are not disturbed. But, when creation is subjected to violent changes and the balance of order is upset, serious environmental disorders are the consequence.

Human kind is the centre place of God's creation and the family is the cradle of human development. Sudden change has vital consequences for the security of that all important cell, the family.

In the 1970's big and sudden changes took place on this side of the world. In the country of Papua New Guinea in the Star Mountains the huge Ok Tedi development started with the exploitation of metals like gold. In the 1980's when I was a recruiter employed by Bechtel-MKI, a joint venture in the Ok Tedi mountains, I went on bush roads, sometimes chopper rides to recruit the locals as casuals. In those days the young people were still naked, uncivilised, they never had seen white men before and never had seen an aeroplane or a motor vehicle before. Their social life did not involve any drinking or taking alcohol or drugs or going to social nights. They lived with their parents only. It is a PNG custom for a man, even if he is 18 years old, that he still lives with his parents. He will go through the normal manhood initiations out in the forest. But he will not be allowed to see his parents or go around with girls for quite sometime during his initiations. In this traditional custom he is examined by the family members and parents of some abilities such as, building a house, hunting or becoming a warrior.

Papua New Guinea is a country with more than 700 languages and 1000 plus customs. In the old days these young men were not allowed to visit other villages or

get out of their own villages or traditional ground boundaries, for of fear of sorcery and fighting.

In the early 70s when the Ok Tedi Mining exploration was under way in the area, it brought many changes to the people and the environment. Youths were looking forward to discover treasures of the white man, they left villages and went out looking for employment.

Reality on the island of Papua New Guinea

With their instable development plans for delivering the important goods and services to the people, the PNG Government has abused the human dignity and rights of the people. There is a dim prospect for education, social and health services to the majority of the population. They haven't seen and enjoyed them over the last ten to twenty years after Independence of PNG in 1975. This created problems which are affecting the human dignity of the young people in PNG. Also the political instability is another cause of problems, too.

PNG is a developing Island Nation in the Pacific and the rapid changes in the life style over the last century has placed an enormous pressure on families. About 40% of PNG's population are youths between 1 and 20 years of age. 80% of the youths can not cope with life and they are engaged in illegal acts. These are acts like taking drugs and 40% of the crimes committed in the country are that of stealing, rape, murder, suicide. Furthermore the infection rate of the HIV virus is growing rapidly.

The problems are:

Politics

One of the major problems affecting the nation's population right now is of political kind. Politically the country is an independent country but economically the country is not independent. We are still relying on overseas aid for financial support. The country's constitution is a Democratic System but it is a guided Democracy.

The Government could not create enough jobs, although we are a rich country in natural resources. We are rich in natural resources like minerals with mining industries and cash crops. The industries and the government do not provide the basic services from their profits.

Politicians are hungry for power and not hungry for basic services to be provided to the people. The government invests a lot in banks and other agencies and makes profits. But yet the government does not help the school drop outs. They should provide loans to young people to help themselves and to set up their own business or to pay school fees.

Education:

50,000 children from Primary Schools to Universities are leaving school every year. One other major problem here is that the government promises full education but it is not honouring its decisions. School fees are very high so that most people in the country can not afford to pay them. As a result children are denied their rights to be educated, they are sent away from school.

The ones who are able to go through high school will face another problem in the end. They complete their education and go back home and look for jobs or do some work. Yet, the government does not provide them any kind of assistance, since there are not enough jobs. The rights of the Child Act which was accepted by PNG Government's Constitution of 1989 convention has now been breached by the government by not looking after the rights of children in the country.

Employment

Where there is no employment there is no substantial help like it is provided in other countries of the world. The PNG government does not have an economical plan for youth, disabled and also for the old people. For example, old people are not provided with any kind of assistance, like monthly allowances, to meet their basic needs.

Out of 50,000, only 10,000 can find employment. 40,000 are thrown out into rural and urban areas without any support from the Government and unemployment rate is very high. And another point: the agricultural development plan does not satisfy the needs of the youths in the rural areas.

Due to the problems of education and unemployment, illegal drug abuse is affecting almost 90% of the youths in the country from the age group of 17 to 21 years. They easily get drugs like cannabis, sativa, marijuana and jungle juice, and end up in criminal activities and in prisons.

Young girls end up with unwanted pregnancies. Sometimes both young girls and boys are infected with HIV positive. Young girls are being raped. Every year 40% of crimes in the country are caused by youths.

The rich become richer and the poor become poorer every day. There is a big gap between the two groups. This will only stop when youths stop abusing drugs and realise the importance of life and do what they are supposed to do.

Health

Malnutrition, Aids, HIV, malaria, TB and maternity deaths, taking illegal drugs, no proper health programmes, no proper food production in the country, no proper health core centres, hospitals are run down with no maintenance… The government has no money to support the Health Services in the country.

Youth and Family

In our days the time of childhood and adolescence with so many important changes going on inside and outside of the young people is a difficult transition time.. In the rapid changes in culture and the developments of technology, the problems are compounded. It might be that parents, who have less education than their children do not understand them. It might be difficult to find the right friends and adults to whom they can entrust their questions, secrets, longings, fears and frustrations. Church and society do not always seem to give them clear guidance and support. Even if their parents fail, remember, some do not know any better. They might have done the best they could. Even if they feel that the church has failed them, they continue to relate to church and seek enlightenment and visions for their lives.

Traditionally, the responsibility for training the young people lay with the parents, the village elders and the grand parents. But that is no longer the case. Especially young couples have a lot of difficulties to rear their children. The result is that there are so many broken families and unwanted orphans, children with no fathers, some without mothers. In our society the future depends on the family. It is the family that determines, what kind of society will grow – a peace loving one or a violent and destructive one.

Conclusion

We have looked at the present changes – and the great losses which have taken place. But some of the changes are improvements, they have brought benefits and basic services especially for young people. We should not overlook them, since many young people are no longer satisfied with the traditional way of life.

The changes brought the outside world into PNG. And they brought so many problems such as rural – urban migration, unemployment, alcoholism, drugs, environmental problems, laziness, prostitution and sexually transmitted diseases including Aids. Therefore it is necessary to strengthen the family life and find new ways for it. The family is the formation centre of the person not only because the child is fed and grows up in the family, but the family is the centre, where opposite and complementary forces interact and finally balance themselves out, shaping the human persona.

Today in Melanesian society, a loving family should keep youths in the process of growing in demanding them, in generating tolerance, faithfulness and creativity, drawing from the past and reaching out to the future, teaching to be spontaneous and free, but respectful of institutions. That will educate mature persons who are able to build a prosperous and peaceful society of our nation, since the traditional boundaries of authority and roles and responsibilities for the building up of the society is no longer there.

Part 4

Issues connected with Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling

chapters of this part:

CHAPTER A **UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING VIOLENCE**

CHAPTER B **LIVING IN URBAN CONTEXTS**

CHAPTER C **ECONOMY AND GLOBALISATION**

CHAPTER D **DIGNITY AND HEALTH**

Part 4, Chapter A

Understanding and overcoming violence

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Ursula Pfäfflin / Archie Smith Jr. *Germany/USA, 1996*

Death and the maiden

The complexity of trauma and ways of healing – a challenge for pastoral care and counselling

topics

- *violence against women*
- *systemic understanding of care and counselling*
- *methodology*
- *the personal and the political in pastoral care*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 13-17

"Who are my mother and my brother?
Whoever does the will of God is my brother, and sister, and mother"
(Mark 3:33,35)

The field of pastoral care and counselling is undergoing a shift in emphasis. It is moving from a focus on the private lives of individuals and the ego to a focus on the social, political and the ecological systems that determine individual and corporate life.[1] The shift from the person to broader challenges brings up the question of how does the teacher of pastoral care prepare the student to address complex issues without loosing sight of the individual, or self? What resources do teachers of pastoral care use to help illuminate the interplay between the personal, social-political, economic and ecological contexts? Feminist and liberation theologians have emphasized in their work that the personal is embedded in political contexts, hence, the political is personal and the personal is political. The question of the case study becomes important because the case study helps to determine what is to be explored, what are the relevant questions, and how we think about pastoral care issues. In this article we select as our case study, the drama, *Death and the Maiden*.[2] We reflect upon the interpersonal issues of trauma and healing within a political context. We derive from this focus implications for teaching systemic thinking in pastoral care. Systemic thinking is a way of looking at the contexts in which behaviour occurs and tracking the reciprocal connections between individuals as well as noting the changes that occur within individuals. We believe that the drama, *Death and The Maiden* provides an opportunity to demonstrate systemic thinking in pastoral care by focusing on systemic violence. It also provides a challenge to pastoral care especially where it (pastoral care) has been defined primarily in individual terms and as a professional relationship between a help seeker and a help giver. We pursue the question of how to create relation-

ships of safety, holding, trust and connections while acknowledging and finding value in differences.

In order to address this question we look at *Death and the Maiden*, a drama written by the Chilean author, Ariel Dorfmann. The context is the unstable political situation in Chile after fall of the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. There are three characters in the play, Paulina Salas, her husband Gerardo Escobar, and Dr. Roberto Miranda. The drama unfolds in the main room of Paulina and Gerardo's home. There the history of violence which permeates every aspect of Chilean society now determines the interaction between the three characters and meaning in their personal lives. The drama shows how long standing patterns of injustice and violation create long-term trauma and irreparable hurt which can become an integral part of everyday life.

The story

Paulina Salas, around forty years old, had worked with her husband, Gerardo Escobar, around forty-five years old, for political change. One evening she is informed by TV that he was announced head of a committee commissioned to investigate the events of torture during the dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet. Contingency wills it that he is hindered to return home by a thundershower and then finds help by a doctor who accompanies him back home. His way of talking, quoting Nietzsche, and his manner of behaving makes Paulina suspicious. Then she remembers the trauma situation. In her home is the man, Dr. Roberto Miranda, around fifty years old, whom she believes is the one who betrayed and violated her in the worst possible way. She was abducted and tortured because the Pinochet regime wanted the name of her husband. She was made naked, violated and tortured with electroshocks. After the torture, Dr. Roberto Miranda came to attend to her. He promised to help. Instead, he raped her repeatedly, using her as an object of his own will. She was humiliated and hurt even more than by the electroshocks. Dr. Roberto Miranda played the famous string quartet by Schubert, one of her favourite pieces of music: Death and the Maiden.

Paulina did not confess. When she returned to her husband, she found him in bed with another woman. She is now faced with her torturer and the husband who betrayed her, all in one room. She is absolutely clear and decided on what she needs in order to begin healing. To be healed is her sense of self-respect, self-agency, and spiritual wholeness. She needed a confession about the truth of what had happened. She needed an acknowledgement of her perception and her suffering by those who inflicted it on her. This is exactly what both men in the drama are not willing to give. By using all her wits, strengths, determination, and a gun, she attempts to get what is crucial to restore her inner and outer sense of identity. The confession she receives from Dr. Miranda contains some of the following statements:

"I raped you many times. Fourteen times. I played music. I wanted to soothe you. I was good at first. I fought it hard. No one was so good at fighting as I. I was the last one to have a taste.

No one died. I made it easier on them. That's how it started. They needed a doctor. My brother was in the Secret Service. He told me: Make sure nobody dies. You saw it yourself. You told me you are dirty and I washed you clean. The others said: You are going to refuse fresh meat, are you? And I was starting to like it.

They laid people out on the table. They flashed on the light. People lying totally helpless, and I didn't have to be nice and I didn't have to seduce them. I didn't even have to take care of them. I had all the power. I could make them do or say whatever I wanted. I was lost in morbid curiosity. How much can this woman take? More than the other one? Howls her sex? Does her sex dry up when you put the current through her? Can she have an orgasm under those circumstances? O God, I liked being naked. I liked to let my pants down. I liked you knowing what I was going to do. There was bright light. You could not see me. I owned you I owned all of you. I could hurt you and I could fuck you and you could not tell me not to. I loved it. I was sorry that it ended. Very sorry that it ended."

Paulina was the maiden who died. True, she survived physically. But her soul, mind, hopes, trust, and the meaning of her life were killed. Even so, she was not broken by the torture. What Pauline needed was the truth from Dr. Miranda, her suspected torturer.

Analysis

The drama leaves open the question of whether or not Dr. Miranda's confession is real or contrived. Death and the Maiden is about systemic violence and its consequences for everyday life. It deals with the long-term effects of torture and violence on human beings. The drama is mythical and historical in that the themes it deals with are timeless and actual. The fact that violence surrounds us, trauma is complex and the need for healing is everywhere makes this drama systemic, mythical and immediately relevant.

We remember that Paulina sacrificed herself in order to protect her husband, and that her husband, Geraldo betrayed her. How can healing occur in the relationship between Paulina and Geraldo - that is to say, how can trust be restored? The way Gerardo Escobar can become the real partner of Paulina Salas is to bond with and trust her as she pursues her suspicion about her torturer. Trust becomes a first step to hearing her. He must hold, help and protect her as she did him during the time of her interrogation. He must not be afraid to hear and face the truth of her story which is also a part of his own. Once, Paulina experiences his courage to chose her side and acknowledge her pain, she can let go of her murderous rage. Both Paulina and Gerardo can begin a new phase of grieving and of working through their pain. The same possibility exists for Dr. Roberto Miranda, to the degree that he can confess his complicity in the collective and personal violence, acknowledge his responsibility, repent, and make restoration.

Death and the Maiden is a symbolic story. It is one of the key narratives of the present situation in many countries of the world. In October of 1994, we participated in the leadership of an International conference for pastoral counsellors, held for the first time in the capital of the Czech Republic, Prague.[3] The theme of the conference, Changing Values, indicated the struggles which post-conflict societies are facing, especially the post socialist countries of Eastern Europe.

We listened to the report of two participants from Papua New Guinea, Biul Kirokim and his interpreter, George Euling. Their village was recently 'discovered' by international mining companies. Their natural resources of trees and land were razed. Their air and water ways polluted, their customs and traditional way of life irreparably destroyed. New diseases and forms of illness occurred for which they had no remedy. They had to learn to rely on western medicines, which they could

not afford. People became depressed, developed psychological illnesses that were unknown. Their culture was humiliated. An entire people were violated, their land raped, their food source poisoned. Theirs is a trauma of unknown magnitude, and they search for ways to heal. What needs to be confronted? Who must do the work? Who needs to tell this story? Who needs to hear it? How can relationships of safety, holding, trust and connections be made in order for victims and perpetrators to be healed? And, how do we enable our students to make these connections in ways that empower them to be effective pastoral care givers and learners in situations such as these?

One of the presenters, Dr. Jan Urban, a former Czech dissident offered an answer to these questions. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops where there is personal and systemic violation of the dignity of persons and the effects of trauma are widespread. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops when people are not given space to openly process their experience of trauma after the acute stages of conflict have passed. A culture of humiliation and shaming develops further when public policy promotes amnesia rather than remembering. Public and private amnesia can be as dangerous as the traumatization itself. Jan Urban mentioned *Death and the Maiden* as one of the most important plays which addresses severe trauma and processes of recovery. This drama was not admitted to be staged in The Czech Theatre even though its content deals exactly with the experiences that thousands of people have had in the past forty years during and after the war. In this way, public policy promotes amnesia when people are not allowed to publicly acknowledge the violence done to them and find appropriate ways to transform their lives. If people do not want to hear or be reminded, then how can they be prepared for the consequences?

The challenge for pastoral care and counselling

The challenge for pastoral care here is in the whole movement of hearing the painful story of victims, and moving perpetrators through the processes of recognition, confession, repentance and restoration. The events of the drama could happen anywhere. They occur everywhere. But efforts to acknowledge such events may be resisted. Herein lies a partial challenge for pastoral care and counselling, namely to make known the subtle connections between personal suffering and public events, especially when people do not want to hear or know. Pastoral counsellors may be in an uncommon position to do systemic thinking and reveal the connections between public events, psychic trauma, interpersonal relations and spiritual direction. From these ideas we draw the following implications for teaching systemic thinking. The drama, Death and the Maiden will serve as guide.

First, the teacher or trainer may invite the students to read the drama and reflect upon its meaning for them. Then teacher may lead the students in a discussion by asking, ‘what is the problem?’ Rather than to assume that the definition of the problem at hand is known or shared, it is important to ask ‘what is the problem?’ Just as there are different ways of seeing and knowing, there will be different understandings and conflicting definitions of the problem. The different ways of seeing and knowing may later provide alternative approaches to the problematic situation. Hence, it is important to ask what is the problem and uncover the different ways of seeing, and entering the problematic situation.

Next, the teacher can invite the students to do some background reading about the Chilean situation. Students are encouraged to identify new questions stimulated

by the reading of historical documents and gain perspective on the political context and the authors point of view.

Students can link these new questions with their previous questions about the definition of the problem.

Given what they now know, the students may work in small groups to develop a scenario of the situation which they will role play. Class members are invited to think about the definition of the situation implied in the particular scenario and how the definition of the situation determines the motives and interaction between the characters and possibilities for healing.

Role play this situation and think about it from the perspective of each of the individuals in it.

After several role play situations are presented, the students are invited to think about the context as a whole. The overall purpose is to enable students to see multiple levels of interaction and meaning, and thereby identify alternative approaches and resources for healing. Some resources may already be available in the interaction system and wider society. Other resources need to be created in order to help transform painful situations.

During this process, another challenge for the teacher and trainer of pastoral care and counselling is to create space and time safe enough to address the pain, shame, anxiety, rage or denial connected to life stories of traumatization. There may be students or trainees who have been abused themselves and need protection for their own deep emotions, memories or present experiences. Also, the teacher and trainer need a place where they can take care of their own well being. Therefore, teaching and training which address violence and traumatization need special care given to the process in order to deal with the emotional involvement of all participants. The development of ritual elements may be helpful because ritualized beginnings and endings help to establish safe boundaries for the time and space need to process the emotions raised by the role play. Rituals can consist of small sentences like “I hear you, sister, or brother” by the whole group after a woman or man has shared her or his feelings. Rituals can include symbols like a bowl of water for cleansing and refreshing. A stone can be circled in order to contain pain or rage which then may be washed away by water. Rituals are most helpful when they are developed and agreed upon by the participants themselves. This is especially important in intercultural[4] settings where symbols have a different meaning for participants from diverse ethnic and spiritual traditions.

Further implications

We draw further implications of this drama for systemic thinking and as challenge for pastoral care. Where justice has been long denied and the effects of traumas remain hidden, there will surface a need to deal openly with the trauma and right the wrongs. There will also be strenuous efforts on the part of perpetrators to deny wrong doings, and to disavow any knowledge of it. New identities may be created to cover up the violence.[5] Others may unwittingly become an accomplice in the cover-up. Death and the Maiden revealed how a dictatorship created complex public relationships, determined the quality of private lives, and effected an inner sense of self. These interwoven issues (complex external event, private lives, and inner sense of self), in various ways, are manifest through all three of the characters in the drama. Death and the Maiden is about a real life everyday situation, in

that it deals with the long-term effects of betrayal torture and violence on human beings. This drama was written in a world marked by differences, unilateral use of power, changing gender roles, and increased violence. It forces the questions of how do we relate to those who have hurt us irreparably or whom we hurt? What knowledges need to be unmasked? What information needs to surface? Who is to do this work? Faced with such questions, and in such a context, can we create relationships of safety, holding, trust while such work is done? Can connections be made and sustained while acknowledging differences in ways of seeing and knowing?

Another important challenge was named by Jan Urban: the churches have access to social and political power by being able to speak up publicly. Traumatized persons, as the drama of Paulina´s life demonstrates, need the naming of the atrocity that happened. One of the main problems for Paulina is that even in her own perception she is not certain if her identification of the perpetrator is right. Is Roberto Miranda the one who did the torturing? Not being reinforced in her perception by her husband and facing the denial of the perpetrator are among the most difficult experiences for her. Not being listened to and believed in telling the truth, is one of the worst experiences for girls or boys when they give signs to adults of being abused. For the speakers of the people in Papua New Guinea, one of the problems they face is the disavowal of the impact of Western economy's destruction done to their ecological and social-spiritual system. Companies have produced films which are meant to demonstrate the environmental care of these Western companies based on scientific research whereas the knowledge of the inhabitants is neither heard nor acknowledged in the world's public.

To invite women and men as speakers and representatives of communities that continue to be exploited and traumatized is one step the intercultural pastoral counselling movement has provided. But even here questions such as, 'How did your learn English' and 'What kind of food do you eat' were addressed to Biul Kirokim of Papa New Guinea. Trainers and teachers of counselling from Europe demonstrated a profound lack of knowledge and interpathy because their questions failed to respond to his life threatening situation.[6] There was disappointment and anger about our own limitations amongst some participants of the conference. We became aware of how much we have yet to learn in order to develop models of intercultural counselling in which mutuality of learning and teaching are developed, hurt and anger can be worked through.

The personal and the political

Pastoral counsellors work between and within the realm of the personal and the political. We listen to personal and political stories like Paulina's when we work with refugees and victims of violence from all parts of the world, including the stranger from afar or the neighbour next door. It is a demanding challenge for a pastoral counsellor to listen to stories of torture and respond appropriately to the counsellee's or trainee's experiences of violation, dreams and flashbacks. We are challenged to help them to express their rage and ambivalence, and struggle with shame and isolation. Given this challenge, it is easy for the counsellor to feel overwhelmed by this complex reality, to feel helpless, discouraged, incompetent and burned out. We might identify strongly with the victim and condemn the perpetrator so that hopelessness or anger seem overwhelming. We might also recognize that there are many issues that we have not yet addressed adequately in our

own lives. For example, our response to the amount of abuse of especially women and children, our own racism, our participation in the structural violence of exploitation of non-white societies by white western culture and economy may escape our awareness.

In the work with traumatized women, children and men it is important, not only to establish safety and reliable connections but also to make transparent the counsellors support of the victim. Counsellors may show support of a traumatized victim and increase their understanding of the victim's situation by acting as an advocate. The counsellor may do this by helping a rape victim, for example, to gather a support network and by being present at a court hearing. In that way counsellors not only show support for the counsellee, but can enlarge their understanding of the legal process, and the counsellee's personal and political situation. As the problem of traumatization is mainly one of losing the power of decision, the basic sense of self-agency and trust in self, other and world, it is crucial to address the meaning of life in the process of healing.[7] For example, once the counsellor gains an enlarged picture of the counsellee's situation, there is greater opportunity to help the counsellee find new ways of understanding what happened and enable new connections.

It is here that we meet a further special challenge for pastoral counselling. Contemporary models of pastoral care and counselling continues to be under the influence of Western psychology at the expense of engaging in critical reflection on ethical traditions as a source of meaning making. Traditional pastoral care used ethical traditions, Bible, theology, reason and experience as it's basis. But with few exceptions, these sources have been neglected. Some of the questions that arise as theological challenges are: How do we use our traditions to address the confrontation with present day evil, violence and the traumatization of thousands of women, children and men. How do we do this theologically and spiritually? Where do we locate our own sources of meaning in our lives in the midst of such violence? What do biblical symbols like "the freedom to which Christ has liberated us" and "do the will of God", "brothers and sisters" mean to us? How do we listen to the voices expressed by women and men of diverse religious traditions? They question the androcentric metaphors and paradigms in which the Christian message of healing and restoration has been cast. Those who suffer point to the need for new interpretations that make sense of their experiences and offer hope for everyone. How do we communicate our own moral resources and committed actions in ways that respect the otherness of the other and at the same time, create safe space for steps towards healing and creativity? How can we teach others in a way that makes it a learning experience empowering for all participants?

A prophetic task

Death and the Maiden, moved both of us deeply. We identified with the victim's rage and uncompromising desire for revenge, to balance the scale of justice; to make the perpetrators pay-in-full. Why should they be let off? It brought up memories of our own pains, wishes to be acknowledged in our experience of abandonment, rejection and devaluation. But the drama must also permit us to identify with those situations where we have oppressed, violated or figured into the trauma of others. To recognize this more complex level of trauma can lead to denial or to healing. It can release energies of hope when emerging narratives are enlarged and incorporate both our idealized selves as well as our shameful self. A

more complex understanding of trauma can offer metaphors of transformation that enable us to connect the violence that is within with the brutal, systemic violence that comes from without. Both may be denied. Both possibilities present us with opportunities to re-envision the meaning of care in a world of increased violence, where political change and upheaval are creating new forms of trauma and affiliations. Ours is a changing world, pushed by global developments, technological innovations, and uneven growth with deeper divisions between the wealthy and the poor. We are challenged to raise anew the question: Who is my mother, my sister and my brother? We have much to learn from the question and the answers, especially in contexts of world wide economic and social change. Pastoral caregivers are further challenged to fashion creative responses to violence; to see and make the connections between personal suffering and political activity - especially where long standing patterns of injustice and violation contribute to long-term trauma and irreparable hurt.

There is a prophetic dimension to this challenge. It is to make known the subtle connections between personal suffering and public events, especially where people do not want to hear or be reminded of their past. Pastoral caregivers are challenged to find or create a role in situations where people who refuse to heed warning signs, will nevertheless, be unable to escape the consequences of their refusals. This is analogous to the young smoker who ignores the warning signs and refuses to stop. Such a person may soon be faced with the consequences of lung cancer and early death. She and he may never acknowledge their contribution to all the others affected by their behaviour. We are challenged to find courage and skill to confront the perpetrators denial of violations, and find compassion sufficient to enable them to take responsibility for the consequences of their actions. This means that pastoral caregivers will be challenged to hear painful stories and learn to move perpetrators through the processes of recognition, confession, repentance, and restoration. And what about forgiveness? How do we deal with the perpetrators confession and repentance? Are there deeds so horrendous that forgiveness is impossible? In the process we too must learn to recognize our limitations, and the complex levels of trauma that incorporate both our idealized and shameful selves.

Notes

[1] A few book titles signal this emphasis: Larry Kent Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of Worlds: A Psychosystems Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1992); George Furniss, The Social Context of Pastoral Care: Defining the Life Situation (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminister: John Knox Press, 1994).

[2] Ariel Dorfmann, *Death and the Maiden* (New York: Penguin Books, 1991). Citations from page 59.

[3] 8th Seminar on Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling, 18-23. Sept. 1994, Prague.

[4] By “intercultural” we mean a setting in which a member of one ethnic group facilitates a process or therapeutic intervention that empowers a member of another ethnic group to make beneficial decisions. See: Jafar Kareem and Roland Littlewood (eds.), *Intercultural Therapy: Themes, Interpretations and Practice* (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1992), p. 11.

[5] The North American Theologian James Poling has addressed the strong tendency of male perpetrators very well in his book *The Abuse of Power* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991) in which he portrays two of his cases in his own work with victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. He also discusses the theological impact of the abuse of power in regard to the image of God and concepts of Christology.

[6] David Augsburger has defined a difference between sympathy, empathy and interpathy: "In interpathy, the process of knowing and 'feeling with' requires that one temporarily believe what the other believes, see as the other sees, value what the other values." See David W. Augsburger, *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1986) p. 31.

[7] Stuart Turner in his article on "Therapeutic Approaches Survivors of Torture" states: "Only if the therapist or group has developed some coherent understanding of the social and political context in which they are working, can they really start to address the ideological needs of their clients" (in: J. Kareem and R. Littlewood (eds.), *op. cit*., p. 167).

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Urias H. Beverly *USA, 1997*

The tradition of racism in the USA

topics:

- *slavery and racism*
- *political concept of "reconstruction" and "integration" in the USA*

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Racism in America

Doing a workshop on Racism in America is a very difficult task for me. It is difficult because there are so many facets of this dreadful social ill that it is mind-boggling to try to put it in any kind of perspective. It is difficult because I believe that an hour and a half of discussing this topic will bare little fruit in terms of resolution. It is difficult because it is not an historical problem that existed a long time ago, but a current situation that I and many others must face every day. Talking about it simply brings to mind the fact that we hear, see, smell, experience racist pollutants in our environment all of the time. The only relief that I feel sometimes, is to escape the reality of this situation by not dwelling on it or thinking about it. And so to organise my thoughts into a presentation has been a tremendous challenge for me.

It is not a challenge from which I shrink, but a recognisably humbling experience that I have felt called to have on many occasions, the experience of standing in the gap between the oppressors (the racists) and the targets (the victims of racism). Because of my sense of calling and purpose and because of my choice to be a leader in society, I feel it is my duty to rise to the occasion of sensitising others to the plight of this disease which affects us all. The disease of which I speak, which has been at epidemic proportions in the United States for centuries, is none other than the de-humanising, demoralising and degregating disease of racism.

What is racism? However we define racism, such as one race hating or despising another, one race feeling superior to another, one race being better than another, etc. etc., the one thing that is constant in any true definition of racism is that one race has power over the other race. Without the ability to control, diminish and/or demolish a race, racism cannot exist. Along with the negative attitudes, the negative feelings, the philosophical concept, the moral precepts and, yes, the theological constructs about a race, the one outstanding factor that does not exist in many other situations is the fact that the race that embraces these feelings and attitudes about another race also has the power to control the race that it despises.

In answer to the question, what is racism, Dr. George Kelsey, in a profound book entitled *Racism and the Christian Understanding of Man* (1966) states that: "Ra-

cism is a faith. It is a form of idolatry... In it's early modern beginnings, racism was a justificatory device. It did not emerge as a faith. It arose as an ideological justification for the constellations of political and economic power which were expressed in colonialism and slavery. But gradually the idea of the superior race was heightened and deepened in meaning and in value so that it pointed beyond the historical structures of relation, in which it emerged, to human existence itself." In her book *Race: Science and Politics* (rev. ed. 1947), Ruth Benedict expands on the theme of defining racism as "the dogma that one ethnic group is condemned by nature to hereditary inferiority and another group is destined to hereditary superiority. It is the dogma that the hope of the civilisation depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure. It is the dogma that one race has carried progress throughout human history and can alone insure future progress." Martin Luther King jr. in his book *Where Do We Go From There: Chaos or Community* (1967) says, "since racism is based on the dogma that the hope of civilisation depends upon eliminating some races and keeping others pure, it's ultimate logic is genocide. Hitler, in his mad and ruthless attempt to exterminate the Jews, carried the logic of racism to its ultimate tragic conclusion." King goes on to say "racism is a philosophy based on contempt for life. It is the arrogant assertion that one race is the centre of value and object of devotion, before which other races must kneel in submission."

And so we understand racism to be an ideology, a dogma, a faith by which people live. In its ultimate practice, millions of lives have been destroyed mercilessly and even more millions are held in daily bondage and are victimised by the mind set of the race that is in the dominate position.

Racism is different from prejudice. Prejudice is a learned attitude and feeling that one person has towards another or another group of people. In many ways it looks like the same thing as racism, except that it is born of an internal feeling and does not require the one who feels the prejudice to have power over the other. Prejudice exists in the hearts and minds of both the oppressor and the oppressed. However, racism is often devoid of any feeling at all. An ideology does not necessarily require the person holding it to have any personal feeling about it at all. It is a common thing that racist behaviour and practices are acted out without any personal bias or malice in the consciousness of the one who is being racist.

The school teacher that says to the African American child, "you should take general math instead of algebra because algebra will be too difficult for you", may indeed be trying to protect the child, but is fostering a racist position. The friend who says, "I like you very much and would love to take you home with me, but my neighbours would have a fit", may not intend any put-down, but is yielding to racist behaviours and tactics. A person representing an institution may reject one based on race by saying, "it is not my personal feeling and I honestly believe it's wrong, but it is the policy", is still being racist in spite of the fact that he or she may not have personal prejudice as the primary motivate of his/her behaviour.

Dr. Valerie A. Batts, a psychologist who does workshops on what she calls "The New Racism", says the new racism is more dangerous than the old racism. In the old days you knew how people felt and they stood their ground for whatever their ideals and philosophies were. If you wanted to address the issue you knew exactly who to go to and who you had to deal with. In new racism the person is rarely identified. New racism is institutional. It is designed and maintained by a board, committee, or some kind of policy making group. Once the policy is formed, the

committee disbands and nobody claims responsibility for its creation. When the policy is confronted, nobody has the power to reverse it or to even discuss it's ethics, morals or injustice. Those who are hired to enforce the policy, do so without any personal conviction one way or the other; their only concern is to please the institution who pays their salary. This allows racism to go on and on unchecked, perpetuating itself endlessly. I will talk more about new racism later. Let me speak now about the birth of racism.

Racism as we have experienced it in the United States is a relatively recent phenomenon in the history of our world. There has always been slavery and class systems throughout the world for as long as we are aware. However, the kind of dehumanising and demoralising slavery and racism that we experienced in the slavery in the United States had its origin in the 15th century. Before that period of time, while there was a consciousness of race and colour, it was primarily to identify persons and the origin of their birth, rather than to belittle them or suggest that they were inferior to any one else. Most of the biblical characters were of African decent (in spite of the fact that the Bible has been tampered with in such a fashion as to lead persons to believe that biblical characters were some other race) but racism was never an issue in biblical times. Five hundred years ago Columbus was credited with discovering America. That credit is assigned to Columbus as though this was a land totally uninhabited. That is a racist notion in itself, that a land inhabited by Native Americans and people of African decent could be discovered by someone else. The powers that be (the racist powers) decided for political and economical reasons that the fact that people were living here when Columbus came does not count; hence Columbus is credited with discovering a land that was already known about for thousands of years.

The origin of racism

The origin or racism is inextricably tied to colonialism. Long before the colonial period, Europeans visited Africa for the benefit of what they could learn: mathematics, science, art, astrology and medicine. All of these things were far advanced in Africa before the common era. At the beginning of the colonial period, however, Europeans who went to Africa observed African cultural from a distance. They drew conclusions from what they saw and heard and wrote about it when they returned home. For example, when visitors to Africa saw a healing taking place from some distance, they interpreted the dancing, chanting and animated movements of the healer to be crazy nonsense. They called the healers witch doctors. Being on the outside looking in, they were not aware that these "witch doctors" were really holy men and women who had spent a minimum of 20 years of the most rigorous, sacrificial and disciplined training to be able to perform those healing exercises that were observed. This kind of misinformation and negative interpretation of experiences in Africa lead journalists and human scientists to write extreme derogatory descriptions of African life, culture and religion.

Much of what was written was not taken seriously until some religious leaders added to the damaging reports theological and christological dogma that supported the ideologies of African people as subhuman, descendants from apes and lacking the soul that would bring them under the umbrella of God's saving grace. Once the clergy began to denounce African people as more animal than human, and if human at all, certainly not to the same degree as Caucasian people, racism was born and christened in the name of superiority and greed.

The need for racism in America

It was necessary to identify a people that were sub-human and at the same time were intelligent enough to follow the instructions of a land owner who was trying to generate wealth with his property. With the colonial expansion was a new land ripe for growing cotton and other things which began a world wide textile business in the United States. It is interesting to note that racism was not limited to people of the African diaspora, but also included Chinese, Native Americans and Irish. All of these races were involved in the tremendous textile industry that was developed in the southern part of the United States and it was through racism that labour was made available to do the work.

In the case of African people, the slave trade became an international industry. As more and more cotton was grown and the textile industry continued to flourish, there was a greater and greater need for more labour to do the work. Even though slaves represented the cheapest labour that could be found (no labour cost), every effort was made to transport as many slaves at one time as a ship could possibly hold. They were packed in the lower part of the ship like sardines. The living conditions were so inhumane that millions of them did not survive the journey. Some estimate 30 millions lives were lost in the slave trade.

Tradition of racism

Racism was created because of a system of economy that required cheap labour. It was only with the ideology that one race was superior to another and that people of African decent were not really human, that made slavery able to continue and expand. In time the practice of slavery was challenged by persons who considered it barbaric, inhumane, immoral and sinful. The more slavery was attacked by those who wanted to end it, the more it was necessary to entrench racism in people's minds to justify what was going on. Racism soon became a broader tool than just one to support slavery. It became a tool to make one race feel better about itself. It became a part of the educational system and the acculturation of a total society. Racism became the tradition of the south in the US and around the world. Even persons who had never encountered a person of African decent personally, had heard the damaging reports about people of colour. The conclusions that were drawn and the comments that were made were presented to a world wide public as fact rather than ideologies. Laws were made to protect the tradition of racism and each racist considered it his or her responsibility to teach their own children how to be good racists.

After the Civil War ended in 1865, the economical system changed slightly; it changed from a system of slavery to serfism. The term for serfism in the United States was "share cropper". A share cropper was one who worked on a plantation owned by someone of the other race and would grow crops in the field. During the planting season, the share cropper would be loaned the seeds and tools for growing the crop in the field. Sometimes it was necessary to accept food on account while they waited for the harvest to come in. At harvest time the share cropper was allowed to retain a certain portion of the harvest as his own. However, before he was allowed to realize anything for himself and his family, he would have to pay off the account that had developed as he needed supplies to grow the crops. In

most cases there was nothing left and the share cropper had to work the land another year to pay what he owed. This cycle went on and on to no end.

Reconstruction

There was a period of reconstruction in which the government sent troops to the south to protect the rights of the former slaves and other black people in the south. Once blacks obtained the right to vote, they were able to make laws that brought justice to them for a short period of time. By now racism was so entrenched that the whites were not willing to accept blacks as equals. Within ten to fifteen years the troops were removed and the political system was corrupted sufficiently to exclude most of the blacks from voting and consequently retained the power of the whites in the south. While blacks were in the majority by far, they met with resistance to exercising their political rights.

Some of the ways in which whites control the system was to establish a pole tax. Unless the blacks were able to pay the pole tax, they were not able to register to vote. Another way was to require blacks to answer a questionnaire, which would determine whether they were literate enough to vote. Since they had been denied the right to read and write in slavery, many of them were unable to even read the forms much less fill them out. Even for those who were literate, they could not answer the questions on the form because in many cases there was no answer to the question. For example, one of the questions was, “How many bubbles are in a bar of soap?” So while reconstruction seemed to offer great promise to black people for a very short time, by the turn of the century those gains had been taken away and controls had been established to maintain the tradition of racism in America. Jim Crow laws were established to maintain racism.

Where ever whites failed to gain the advantage that they wanted through legal, political and economic means, they resorted to horrendous violence. The Ku Klux Klan, an organisation of people who covered themselves in white sheets and hoods and roamed at night, used armed force to resist any efforts on blacks to gain equality in the United States. The KKK became a national organisation and because their identity was not known, included people of high standing in the community and who held high political offices. While their symbol of terror was to burn crosses in the yards of black people, they were known to burn down people’s houses, shoot them down in cold blood, lynch them by hanging them from a tree limb, drown them in ponds and rivers, mutilate their bodies, especially by castration, rape women, and generally terrorise them in any way they could. Whenever blacks tried to defend themselves, they became the victims of viscous lies which welded the white community together against them which was responsible for the death of many blacks. Most of the atrocities that blacks experience in this country right up to the 1950s resulted in little or no legal action against the perpetrators of the evil.

Industrial period

In the early part of the 19th century we entered into an industrial period in the United States. Now the labour was needed not in the cotton fields in the south, but in factories in the north. Many blacks migrated from the south to northern cities where they found employment in the most deplorable situations imaginable. They

worked in factories all day like they used to work in the fields, but they were paid a wage and were protected by the law from being split up from their families. But the tradition of racism made an adjustment during the industrial period. The question of whether a black man was a man in the eyes of the law had been answered. But their lingered the question as to whether a black man was inferior to a white man. Because the later attitude was accepted by most, blacks were allowed to work in the lowest, most menial jobs that were available to anybody. Under rare circumstances were they ever able to work their way up to a higher position. While racism continued to be blatant in the south, it was covert in the north. However, racism was the same attitudinally wherever a black person would go.

During the great depression, persons who had wealth and lost it often committed suicide. Blacks, who were used to not having anything anyway, continued to do their menial tasks and survive during the depression. When the first world war began, there was a decision not to give weapons to blacks on foreign soil because they may have sided with the enemy. Racists have always believed that if blacks were ever allowed to gain any power, that they would immediately turn against their white oppressors in response to all of the hate and destruction we have suffered. Because of the necessity for soldiers however, black units were developed that fought bravely in the first world war. By the time of the second world war, not only did we have black units fighting in the war, but a black unit of air fighters was created. It was not long after that that the US Military was integrated, but racism continued to exist even with the integration.

Integration

During the 1950s a strong move by the NAACP to integrate all America began. it was understood and accepted by many blacks in the country that the total problem of racism was due to segregation. If everyone was integrated, racism would have to die. It was during the 1950s that Martin Luther King Jr. began to move against racism in favour of integration. This integration movement spilled over into the 1960s in which a liberal agenda began to be raised. This liberal agenda sought to gain everything from repayment for slave labour through the centuries, all the way to total equality for blacks in the country and access to everything that existed. You watched on television how the efforts of the civil rights marches and agendas were resisted by fire hoses, dogs, police brutality and the Ku Klux Klan. By the 1970s a number of doors and windows in the society had been sprung open for anybody, including, and in some cases especially, blacks to go through. Access to educational institutions, access to career opportunities, access to houses in neighbourhoods that had been closed to blacks, access to political office and access to dreams of the future were enjoyed for a while.

By the 1980s a conservative movement had begun which sought to undue all of the gains that had been made by black people in America from the 1960s and forward. Efforts that had been made to accommodate blacks who had been unfairly denied privilege in early years, were turned back by those who felt that enough had been done to make up for past injustices. It was during this period of time that Dr. Batts developed her theory of the new racism.

New face of destructivisms

Dr. Valerie Batts suggests that racism is only one of the destructive "isms" in our country; just as destructive as racism is classism, sexism, ageism, and ethnocentrism. She says because the new isms are not personal but institutional, three problems exist that make racism worse today than it was years ago: 1) it is harder to identify the perpetrator, 2) there is no personal guilt or responsibility, and 3) it is more difficult to change.

Batts suggests that the new racism is a co-operative system. In this co-operative system both the oppressor and the oppressed are participants in keeping the system alive. It is true that racism has been the standard for so long that many victims of racism believe in it as truth. Because of the ideologies surrounding the new racism it is easy to see how the system perpetuates itself with the assistance of both the targets and the oppressors. Batts suggests five dynamics of oppression that are responded to by five corresponding dynamics:

OPPRESSOR	TARGET
dysfunctional rescuing	system beating
blaming the victim	system blaming
avoidance of contact	anti-white, avoidance of contact
denial of cultural differences	denial of blackness
denial of political significance of cultural differences	not understanding or minimising of political significance of racial oppression

What needs to be done

What we can do is listed under three headings. 1) Individual, 2) institutional, 3) societal.

As an *individual* there are two things we can do, one is to change our personal attitude. However, a change of personal attitude does little to change a system of racism. It is important that each individual not only change his or her personal attitude, but also influence changes in the institution with which they are connected: such as school, church, work, government, community and social affairs.

Speaking *institutionally* the kinds of changes that need to be made is a change of policies and/or enforcing the policies that already exist. Another institutional change that is necessary to eliminate racism is affirmative action. Often people define affirmative action as exclusive opportunity for blacks to gain access to something from which they have been denied. That is true in part, however, the overarching definition of affirmative action is opening up the system to everybody and accepting the best qualified person. The need for affirmative action is due to racism and the "good old boys system". In the good old boys system opportunities that become available are not advertised publicly and only a select few people are aware that the opportunity even exists. Even if others become aware of the opportunity and make effort to take advantage of it, the good old boys system is one of accepting friends, those to whom we owe favours, persons like themselves or

anybody that is not black. Affirmative action is a correction to this kind of system and makes the system more fair and equitable for everyone.

The way to change racism in our *society* is to use all of the power we have in the political system to demand that laws be passed that will eliminate racism. The US is a system of laws and persons do not change unless the law requires them to do so. In spite of all of the education that has been done around the benefits of wearing seat belts while riding in an automobile, many people, including myself, did not wear seat belts on a regular basis until wearing a seat belt became the law. The same thing is true about racism. People do not change their attitudes unless the law requires them to. The next thing we need to do on a societal basis is to educate ourselves and especially our children. Racism has been able to continue because parents have passed it down to their children, teachers have passed it on to children in school, pastors have passed it on to congregations and community leaders have passed it on to those who follow them. We need to re-educate our society, especially in our homes where children are young enough to learn the difference in love and hate.

Racism began 500 years ago because there were people who benefited from it economically. It continues today because there are still people who benefit from racism. Plato said, “what is honoured in the country will be cultivated there.” Racism will continue to exist as long as our greed is more important than our morality.

Hans-Martin Gutmann *Germany, 1998*

The contagious effect of violence, the "making sacred" of the victim, and the enlightening power of the Gospel

Aspects of the theory of René Girard

topics:

- *the theory of Rene Girard*
- *desire and "mimesis" as a source for violence*
- *scapegoating in societies*
- *the meaning of sacrifice*

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0. Scenes

0.1.

A metropolis in Eastern Germany. The unemployment rate is high, especially among the younger people. There is a continuous lack of apprenticeships and job possibilities. Many of the young people are without a clear perspective in life. It is night time: A group of drunken skin heads is romping around town when they come across a homeless person who is sleeping on a park bench. Bruises cover his face and legs. Maybe he is an alcoholic. The youths start hitting him with their baseball bats and, when he finally lies on the floor, kicking him with their heavy army boots. After a while they leave him behind, badly hurt.

0.2.

A group of teachers from Hessia/Germany is participating in a training seminar that deals with "Horror-videos and their impact on children and young adults".[1] They watch the movie "Class of 1984". The discussion that follows goes as follows: One of the teachers had told the class he was teaching as a substitute, that their regular teacher is pregnant. He is unwilling to understand why the principal reprimanded him for doing so; another teacher is trying to find out which one of her students is making obscene phone calls to her for the last three years; yet another teacher is scolded by her colleagues for leaving around an address book that contained the other teachers' private numbers...

0.3.

There is a war breaking out on German highways. Each and every driver can attest to that from his/her own experience. Car racing seems contagious, and when I am being hustled by a speeding driver, using his headlights to further harass me, I have to stifle the strong urge not to enter his game and to "simply hit back". Fortunately, my rational sense kicks in after only a few moments, and I also begin to think of the environment. However, the contagious virus of violence is clearly noticeable on our highways, especially in those who are less scrupulous and drive bigger cars. The inevitable happens – an accident occurs. In the opposite lane cars slow down, some even stop in order to catch a glimpse of the metallic and bodily remains. Almost always the traffic report registers a traffic jam on the opposite lane of the accident. Those who experienced or witnessed a traffic accident are often shaken, or at least pensive. The urge to speed is dampened – for a while. Sometimes the accident reports on the radio have a similar effect on the people. But the effect never lasts long – due to stress and the low threshold of control, the speeding starts again soon – until we are dealing with the next fatality.

0.4.

In recent times one can find more and more proofs for the fact that the war in Ex-Yugoslavia was intended and the plot of selected political groups. However, the dynamic of the war, the unimaginable brutality and the continuous helplessness of the liberating forces indicate that a special kind of power was set free. A power that strongly differs from the intended plans of the war mongers, and that is difficult to understand even by them. It may be that the now deconstructed, multinational, post-socialist countries have developed a dynamic that works opposite to what Norbert Elias describes in his "The Process of Civilisation". [2]

It seems that once the core of the political power has been destroyed, psychological forces are being set free. Forces that thus far have helped the "civilised" citizen to contain his or her emotions and to keep them from erupting. Now all hell breaks loose. Violence spreads like a disease – ecstatic, uncontrolled, unlimited.

Sometimes I have a gruesome vision: the dead body of a man, thrown over the barricades in Sarajevo. He is the victim of one of the last terrorist attacks of the Bosnian-Serbian groups. His body hit the bullet in such a way that through the hole in his stomach one can see the other side of the street. For me this body incorporates the thousands of faceless victims of the Serbian massacre that happened only a few weeks earlier in the UN protected territory of Szrebenica. Could this be an act of violence so powerful, that it indeed satisfied and pacified other forces of violence?

How can we understand these scenes of violence. Do they possibly follow a logic, that can be reconstructed and thus help to interrupt the circle of violence? It is with this understanding that I read the texts of R. Girard. And I feel the challenge to try and give an explanation for the different phenomena of violence – as diverse as they may be.

1. Outline of the theory of René Girard: material theory and / or hermeneutic concept

1.1.

René Girard examines the connection between "violence" and its "victims", or rather its "sacrifices".[3] The sacrifice has the ability to ban violence in that it fits into the existing mechanisms of violence: Violence spreads through "mimesis". Girard considers it a fundamental anthropological principal that "the desire" or rather "the wish" are originally connected with the phenomenon of violence. This idea derives from Freud's theory of the Oedipus-myth. But for Girard it serves as the concrete example of a general matter. His original thought is the insight that the human "desire" or "wish" is not a natural phenomenon, rather the human learns to desire by way of examples and idols. He or she learns to wish by way of imitating the wish of the idol. And the wish, as well as the sexual desire do not stem from a sexual drive, but from a mimetic mechanism. The child wants to love his mother and ends up killing the father who seems to compete for the mother's love. All the while he is learning the desire for the mother by way of his father's example. There exists no wish without simultaneously entering into a competition with the other wishing person, who has demonstrated the act of wishing first, and who initially pointed to the object of our wishes. Later we are not so much concerned about the object of our wishes as about the competition. The mimetic mechanism shifts to the person who desires the same. The result is violence spreading in a mimetic fashion – like an infectious disease.

Desire and violence, both occur at the same biographical point in time. Moreover, in each moment of crisis, the young adult feels the need to reactivate this deathly connection. Thus, violence becomes boundless – flooding everything. Once violence established itself in a society, it cannot be stopped, rather it continues to demolish the original order of the community. It is at this crucial point where we find the culturally important role of the victim: Since violence spreads by way of imitation it can also be "bound" by way of the mimesis. It can be "bound" with the help of a killing – so monstrous that it absorbs all other violence. In the place of the continuously spreading violence we find that the one terrifying murder can cause such a shock that peace may settle in. And the people now experience reconciliation like the end of a terrible and contagious disease. Naturally, they contribute this conciliatory effect to the victim. In other words: the victim is being "made sacred" (sacralisied).

Girard calls this killing the "foundational murder", since it helps to form the foundation of any given society. Sigmund Freud's "scientific myth" of the killing of the father by the brothers[4] serves as an attempt to historically and mythologically construct an ever repeating, intrinsically human anthropological fact. Communal life becomes possible only through the deed of the "foundational murder", since it stops the general killing, and pacifies the violence of the many. The ritual sacrificing is nothing less than the repetition of the "foundational murder". As long as this ritual is being performed, and as long as it is effective in society, every day life is being protected from further violence. (Girard shows, however, that the effect of the ritual sacrificing decreases again and again). In short: the (unstable) result of the sacrifice lies in the fact that communal life is possible again – without violence.

Girard thinks that by composing all three facts (the mimetic character of desire, the pacifying effect of the "foundational murder", and the ritual repetition of the

"foundational murder" in form of the sacrificial murder) into one theory, he may be able to explain the "hominising" of the human being. Here he is referring to an absolute theory, that contains ethological, ethnological and sociological interpretations as well as theology.

This is the one side of Girard's theory. Let me soon explain the other side. But to summarise first: the hominising of the human being is the result of the human ability, to 'make sacred' the 'victim' of the foundational murder, that is to say, to ascribe a certain efficiency to the slaughtered person for pacifying the society; and also, in the follow up, to ascribe the same efficiency to all the next 'victims' ritually representing the foundational murder again and again. While we also find mimetic behaviour, i.e. desire and competition in the animal world, it is only through the ritualisation of the sacrifice – by way of the "foundational murder" – that the human being differs from the animal. Both, the process of "hominising", as well as the process of humanising, that goes along with every cultural development, can be described as the final achievement of the sacrifice.

1.2.

Along with the above mentioned theory, Girard works with a second theory, for which he does not claim absolute validity. He developed a hermeneutic concept, which allows the reader to "decipher" certain "texts of persecution", as well as "myths" of the Ancient European world and archaic societies in general. In doing so he operates with the help of a so called "Hermeneutic of Suspicion". With this Girard intends to prove that – although the motifs and the actions of the persecutors might be hidden – it is a fact, that the deed itself, i.e. the killing of the victims is very apparent and real. [5] In talking about "texts of persecution" Girard is thereby referring to those stories where certain people, like the Jews, the witches or the gypsies are blamed for a crisis situation, such as pestilence, famine or war. Thus, it is secretly expected that the termination of the "guilty party" will ultimately result in the termination of the crisis itself. It is Girard's goal to prove that these texts always refer (and here he is quite absolute in his approach) to real crises and real sacrifices (or rather, violence, killings, pogroms) – despite the fact that the dreadful actions of the victims are apparently very unreal (such as the poisoning of wells, black magic, or the misuse of economic and political power).

In order to stress this point, I'd like to quote Girard's interpretation of the works of the 14th century French poet Guillaume de Machaut. Girard summarises his poem "Le Jugement du Roy de Navarre" as follows: The poem describes a wealth of dreadful events, all of which involve Guillaume, who finally – out of fear – locks himself in the house. While some events seem more real than others, the whole story leaves the impression that something crucial must have happened. Signs appear on the sky. It is raining stones, and people are being killed. Entire cities are being destroyed by thunder and lightning. In the unnamed city where Guillaume lives many people die, and some of their deaths are contributed to the malice of the Jews and their Christian allies. What did these people do, that the population has to suffer so severely? They have poisoned rivers and wells! Heavenly justice is terminating these evil deeds by revealing the culprits. In the end all of them are slaughtered. But still, the dying does not stop. More and more people die; until one day in the spring Guillaume finally hears the music in the streets and the laughter of the men and women. The nightmare has ended, and the court poets can take up poetry again. [6]

Girard is a modern interpreter and hermeneutic scholar. He shares the modern insight that one cannot easily believe the old texts or their authors who often were without a clear understanding or hermeneutic knowledge. Still, he is of the opinion that Guillaune did not simply "invent all of this". And after applying his "Hermeneutic of Suspicion" he writes: "The many deaths that Guillaume mentioned were a reality, caused by the famous Black Death that devastated the North of France in 1349 and 1350. Furthermore one must say that the slaughtering of the Jews is a sad reality – due to the many rumours about the poisoning of wells. Thus, the spreading disease had enough power to cause the massacre."[7]

Girard detects a structure in the scheme of the above mentioned "stories of persecution", that may have the potential to reveal the true, historic course of certain crisis situation and its "solution":

a) In the beginning one finds evidence of a social crisis, triggering the mechanism of violence. This can be described as a crisis of "de-differentiation"; i.e. any difference between the people, be it due to hierarchy, gender, or individuality, is now blurred. The epidemic, for example, hits everybody, regardless of their background and thus serves as a form of "de-differentiation". All humans become equal – in a deathly way. Moreover, there exist no boundaries anymore, that could break up the mimetic competition between the rivals.

b) The people start looking for culprits – and find scapegoats. In a situation of collective persecution similar accusations are used on a regular basis, following an almost identical pattern for example in violent crimes that are especially reprehensible (e.g. violence against the king, the father, or against the weakest members of the families, such as the children, widows and orphans); sexual crimes and those that violate a sexual taboo or religious crimes. Girard interprets them as an attack against those fundamental cultural paradigms, through which a society is able to establish its differentiation. Furthermore one can find a pattern in the choice of victims: Those who serve as scapegoats, typically are outcasts, and thus are suspected to demoralise the social order (such were the attacks against the Jews); people who bear certain physical marks (e.g. physical disabilities).

(In parenthesis: With the help of Girard I now see an important correction to common explanations of violence, such as xenophobia. Violence does not occur between the "home group" and "the others", e.g. between Germans and foreigners, but it is found among people that are too similar, too much alike. Thus the mimetic violence is the consequence of fatal closeness, rather than insurmountable distance. Consequently, the stranger, the other, the distant one, who bears similarities to the phenomenon of "de-differentiation", is chosen to become the scapegoat for all ongoing violence.)

c) The scapegoats finally become the victims of murder, massacres or pogroms. And in the eyes of society this is the moment in time when the instigators of violence are rightfully convicted, so that peace and reconciliation have a new chance. While in some incidents this experience is closely connected with the termination of a massacre, at other times the pacifying effect may occur at a later moment. Almost always the "liberated" members of society are of the opinion that the scapegoats were truly "guilty", and thus responsible for being sacrificed. It is this shared opinion which largely contributes to the pacifying effect of the pogrom itself.

In later works Girard suggests to closely look at late (medieval) texts of persecution, as well as the mythical stories of the ancient European and non European world. Although he largely identifies the same scheme in terms of violence and its pacification in those texts, he emphasises the following modification: While the texts of persecution view the victims as guilty, the mythical texts treat them as sacred. Time and again Girard points out how the fact that the victims are being made sacred (are 'sacralarised') is central to any mythical text. Furthermore, in its ambivalence the myth incorporates what R. Otto has labelled the "fascinosum et tremendum" (the fascinating and the frightening).

Once you go along with this, then you can (seen from the point of view of Girard) interpret any myth similar to the texts of persecution (which are historically seen younger texts), moreover one could say: the texts of persecution can be understood as being already 'partly-demythologised myths', in that the 'victims' don't have an ascribed character of being made sacred any more, but in that they just only show the dark side of the ambivalence. And vice versa: one can 'decipher' any myth by using the interpretational insights gained from the interpretation of the texts of persecution: one can easily see the link between the "sacred victims" of the ancient myths and the existence of social crises and their solution by way of a pogrom.

Girard states the example of Sophocles' "King Oedipus" that is central to Freud's concept of psychoanalysis. He attempts a reconstruction of the myth: "The pestilence has hit Theben. It is the first sign, or rather the first stereotype of persecution. Oedipus who is responsible for the misery of Theben – since he killed his father and married his mother – represents the second stereotype. According to the oracle, the culprit has to be driven from the city, in order to terminate the epidemic. Persecution is imminent and explicit. The killing of the father and the resulting incest are the ultimate link between the individual and society. These crimes have the effect of "de-differentiation", in the sense that they are contagious and will effect the whole of society. ... Third stereotype: the sacrificial sign. ... The more signs a victim bears, the more he or she will draw termination upon him- or herself. Because of his disability, his past as an abandoned child and his situation as a foreigner, as parvenu and then as king, Oedipus bears an abundance of sacrificial signs." [8]

If one decides to read this text as a historic text, rather than as a myth, it would be easier to break its magic spell. As a myth, however, it bears the signs of the holy, and it is almost not plausible to interpret it as the proclamation of a violent crisis and persecution. Thus, in order to unveil the "aura of the holy", Girard puts the story in a historic context which reads like this: "The harvest is bad, the cows do not bear calves, the people are hostile with one another. It seems as if the village is under a bewitched spell. Obviously, the cripple has caused all this, when he appeared out of nowhere and made himself at home, as if he belonged to us. He dared to marry the much desired heir of the city, and had two children with her. There seems to be foul play involved, since the first husband of his wife – a potent person in the city council – suddenly disappeared under very mysterious circumstances. The newcomer takes his place in both, the city and the home. One day the men of the city had enough. They take their pitchforks and force him out of the city." And Girard continues: "Nobody ever has any doubts. Every reader instinctively goes along with my intended interpretation and understands that the victim most likely did not harm anybody. Nevertheless, he was almost predestined to serve as the outlet of fear and aggression. ... Nothing has changed. We are still dealing with a mythical structure – although grossly exaggerated." [9]

1.3.

I want to conclude this part with a remark concerning Girard's theoretical construction. In reading his works I realized how central the works of Freud are for him. For example, Girard feels inclined to deepen the Freudian interpretation of Oedipus. Based on this, he tries to understand the construction of myths in general. He also strives to deepen and to generalise Freud's fundamental theories of psychoanalysis. Furthermore, the re-reading of certain ethnological and psychoanalytical texts is of great importance to Girard (e.g. J.G. Frazer, W.Robertson-Smith, M. Mauss and others). Freud's interpretation of contemporary literature prepared the ground for Girard's re-reading of certain texts. In addition, other texts proved to be of great importance to him as well. For example, he describes Shakespeare as being fundamental to his theoretical work: "The bible of my mimetic theory is of course 'Troy and Cressida'. But I first discovered Shakespeare through his 'Midsummer night's Dream' Speaking from a literary standpoint, this discovery probably is the most beautiful memory of my life. ... I had already developed the theory of mimetic desire, when all of a sudden I discovered it in its most complete form in the works of Shakespeare..." [10]

However, even a careful and precise reading will not reveal how extensive the relationship might be, between Girard's hermeneutic journey through the literary world and his claim to introduce a "theory of the human race" which he considers to be absolute and complete: Girard believes that the "hominising" of the human being is closely connected with the act of "sacralising" the victim – by way of a foundational murder and its ritual repetition in other sacrifices.

As clear as his hermeneutic search seems to me, as confusing I consider his material theory. Among other points, I mainly struggle with the following problem: Can one really explain Girard's theory of the mimetic desire/violence (also described as "evil" or "bad reciprocity") in light of the typical reciprocity of the ancient societies? – A reciprocity that is not violent and destructive, but highly productive.

Marcel Mauss' revolutionary study *The Gift. The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*[11] helps to understand reciprocity as the expression of a certain kind of economic formation. Mauss describes the system of exchanging goods as controlling the exchange within the social nexus of an ancient society, as well as the exchange between the human and his or her ancestors, their gods, or their natural environment. The exchange of goods thus implies a wealth of duties, which would have to be observed by all members of society – unless they were willing to risk their "social death". He refers to the obligation to give, to take, and to give again. Mauss defines the exchanging of goods as a "total institution", operating on several levels:

The exchange of goods is not bound to economic exchanges only, but it also follows juridical, religious and aesthetic rules. [12] It involves living people, as well as their dead, their ancestors, their gods and nature in general. [13]

The goods are not specific in character. Rather, they may represent the wealth of existence (clay shards may represent sexually mature women, etc.) Consequently the exchange enables a relationship between almost anything. Without the use of a third force (i.e. money) the symbolic relationship between all things is unveiled. An order of "symbolic exchange" is being created.[14] No abstract goods are being exchanged, but goods that are inhabited by a spirit which in turn binds all participants through their sense of obligation for one another.

It was Maurice Godelier who further clarified Mauss' theory by pointing out that a 'hostile' form of exchange (where the participants try to compete with one another) is almost unknown in ancient societies. [15] It is significant that these societies relied heavily on the ethos of co-operation when it comes to reproducing natural resources. As a result, they almost always had to reproduce the living conditions of the community – a fact which is completely different in modern day economy. [16] This insight into other ethnological theories taught me the following: Reciprocity in ancient societies is not at all synonymous with the expansion of violence.

Could Girard have incorporated this notion of reciprocity in his theory? Maybe the notion of the "good" reciprocity? While I believe this notion were a sensible addition to his theory, it would also seriously question his claim of having developed an "absolute theory".

The next paragraph will further enlighten the unsolvable problem of "bad reciprocity" and violence, and "good reciprocity" and mutual obligation.

2. Girard's interpretation of the person and the meaning of Jesus

Unlike his theoretical book *The Sacred and Violence*, Girard's *The End of Violence* [17] became popular very quickly. Since then the person of Jesus Christ represents a central part of Girard's thinking.

At first glance it is remarkable how easily Girard can shrug off all research of the historical exegesis. It does not interest him, and thus, he simply ignores it. While this does not disqualify him as a Biblical scholar I feel inclined to mention it, since it reveals the characteristics of his exegesis. Girard does not read Biblical texts in light of their origin, their author or their "*Sitz im Leben"*, instead he concentrates exclusively on the problem of violence and its victims. That is, he looks at how the fundamental thesis of the mimetic desire/violence presents itself.

2.1.

Girard is clearly not concerned to separate the NT from the Hebrew Bible, in order to set Jesus against the Jewish tradition and the "Scriptures". One would immediately fail to understand his intention if one assumed that he juxtaposes the good God of reconciliation with the evil God of creation (as Marcion did it). For Girard Jesus stands in line with the whole of the Bible. In the Bible the victim is not being made sacred – a fact that is central for the Biblical perception of mimetic desire/violence. Unlike the mythical stories, the Bible does not consider the victim an ambivalent entity. While for the former the victim is guilty and sacred at the same time, the latter's message is that the victim is innocent – it should not be mystified. Murderous deeds and killers are never justified. This is the gospel.

2.2.

Using the example of various texts of the Hebrew Bible Girard explains the difference between the mythical and the Biblical texts: For example, while Gen 4 (the story of Cain and Abel) represents the classical "foundational murder" (*Gründungsmord*), there is one fundamental difference to the mythical Roman story of the killing brother Romulus (cf. the story of Romulus and Remus). Girard writes: "Romulus as a person and his killing of Remus seems unfortunate – but nevertheless justified because of the victim's evil deeds. Romulus embodies the

sacrificing High Priest. In the story of Cain and Abel however, Cain is being made an unscrupulous murderer – although God felt inclined to listen to him. And even the fact, that the first murder that ever occurred in the history of humankind had the tendency to foster our cultural development, does not imply a justification of the killer..." [18]

In examining the story of Joseph and his brothers, Girard further develops this insight. Whereas in the story of Cain the collective aspect of the persecution is still hidden – here we find it clear and unveiled in the case of Joseph. He, the victim is being rehabilitated – at the expense of his brothers (and don't we feel some sympathy for them, when we think of what a "big mouth" Joseph was?). The prophets of Israel define the political crisis (i.e. the threat of siege by the surrounding forces) as characteristic for another, a deeper religious and cultural crisis: The "exhaustion" of the sacrificial system, the highly problematic phasing out of the current order. Girard pushes this further, when he looks at Isaiah 53, where God's servant is bearing all the signs of a human scapegoat (i.e. being a foreigner, ill, ugly and despicable). While he and his fate resemble the Greek "pharmakos", he is not a ritual sacrifice, but rather a historic event. It is not God who strikes out at this servant, but it is the people who bear the responsibility for his salutary death (Jes 53:4-5). Girard concludes: "In the whole of the OT we find exegetical insights that are contrary to the common cultural myths."[19] Not through modern, existential exegesis texts are being demythologised; rather we learn that the Biblical text itself demythologised the myth of the victim, and his/her being made sacred.

In looking further, we find that this notion continues in the NT. The example of the murder of John the Baptist may serve as an example (Mark 6:14f).[20] The prophet warns King Herod, who won over his brother's wife, thereby representing the typical pattern of mimetic desire. With the exception of the prophet the text is exclusively dealing with "mimetic twins", such as mother and daughter, Herod and his brother, Herod and Herodias. Girard points out, that "it is John the Baptist's warning of these kind of people that – although seemingly insignificant at first – ultimately leads to the killing of the prophet."[21] And it is the banquet and Salome's dance that accelerated the mimetic process. Her wish, to have John's head on a platter, clearly represents the mimetic desire. And although the story has quite a sacred meaning (i.e. it is being set within the context of the King's birthday), the victim – John the Baptist – is not being made sacred. Instead his killing is being understood as a murder. In a sense, the sacred ritual is being perverted, in that the murderous origin of the sacrifice is finally being unveiled. Thus, the text discloses the mimetic mechanism. It unveils, and thus disrupts the effect of mimetic desire.

Girard's interpretation of this text intends to serve as an example of other NT texts that demythologise the myths of the sacrifice (cf. Mark 14:66-72; Mark 5:1-17; and Acts 7:51-58). All these texts deal with the phenomenon of the "foundational murder" (*Gründungsmord*) and its effect, thus de-masking the myth of the sacrifice. Reconciliation is possible through other means than by sanctifying violence.

2.3.

Girard points out how the victim is innocent. For him this insight marks the gospel of the gospels and the passion of Jesus. The story of the suffering of Christ reproduces almost all rituals and myths: Jesus is the innocent victim of a community in crisis. His death unites the community – at least for a little while – since all

the individuals and all groups that were involved in the life of Jesus give their explicit consent to his death at the height of the dramatic events. [22] ... Thus, on the one hand, the crucifixion is the result of a legalised proceeding (i.e. a law suit). On the other hand, it represents the zenith of spontaneous violence, thereby resembling not so much a ritual sacrifice, but the fundamental event of the "foundational murder" (*Gründungsmord*). ... However, in order to have an effect as a sacrificial myth, the victim would have to be guilty and the members of the community would have to be relieved from guilt. Girard points out, that "it is rather the opposite: the passion of Jesus is being described as a deed of flaming injustice. ... Instead of supporting the collective murder, the text clearly points to the ones who are truly responsible." [23] The gospel exposes the myth of the holy sacrifice as a simple lie. The victim is innocent... And God is being described as a God removed from all violence: "Whereas in the OT we still find traces of God's revengeful, violent deeds, the most important parts of the synoptic gospels deny the fact that God has any of these characteristics."[24] However, the NT does not at all talk about an indifferent God, rather it reveals a God who wants to be known, who wants to reach the people – or to say it in Jesus' words: "reconciliation not by way of sacrifice; rather reconciliation that would allow God to reveal himself – for the first time in the history of humankind – as the God he really is. Harmony between the people would not have to be established by means of bloody sacrifices. ... After all, there exists a radical incompatibility between the God of the gospels and the gods who are satisfied by sacrifices only (*Opfergottheiten*)." [25]

For Girard the renewed sacralisation of Jesus' death on the cross, that has its origin already in some texts of the NT (such as Rom 3:25ff; 1 Cor 15:3; Hebrews), represents a "betrayal" of the gospel. However, those texts would never go so far as to follow the patterns of the ancient sacrificial myths. Even in Hebrews Jesus is considered to be without sin. The victim is innocent. And even in medieval theologies (e.g. *Cur Deus Homo* by Anselm of Canterbury) this central part of the gospels is not betrayed. However, it is true that the message of Hebrews (i.e. the fact that the self-sacrifice of the high priest Jesus, is the ultimate, the final and the forever lasting sacrifice) has in the past served as a justification for all crusades and massacres against those people who refused to accept it.

3. Critique

In my critique of Girard's theory I would like to refer to the above mentioned concept of "good reciprocity", and Girard's lack of incorporating it in his work.

3.1.

It should be asked whether Girard's partial "blind eye" *vis a vis* today's economic sacrifices (This question has been discussed in detail among Girard and supporters of the Latin American Liberation Theology. The discussion was recently published as a book.) [26] ... is due to the fact that in his fundamental theory he already considers the "evil" reciprocity as an absolute fact, and thus, does not feel the need to address the notion of the "good" reciprocity anymore (i.e. the responsible integration of the human in his/her social order and natural environment). If one, however, interprets the sacrificial act as part of the operation of exchanging goods, and not as the consequence of ongoing violence, the paradigm shifts in a more or less radical way: One ultimately would have to critically examine the economic problem. Developing a solidarity with those people that are exploited

and mistreated by the world economy. Furthermore, the notion of solidarity would not arise as an ethical consequence, but would be part of the intrinsic way of thinking that should be fundamental to Christian existence today.

3.2.

In this light one could also put into perspective the partial intellectual violence with which Girard ignores the theological interpretation of Jesus' death on the cross as sacrifice. Even the most gruesome paintings of the crucifixion of Christ ... show that the Roman Catholic Church does not interpret the sacrament of the sanctification of the death of Christ as a deed of violence, but as a form of good or gift. And it is precisely in such a tradition that Martin Luther ... interprets the gospel as an economic interaction , as "an act of merry exchange and trading" that stands in opposition to the legislative texts. Luther points out that it in the midst of this mutual exchange, Jesus – the groom – offers his justice and in turn takes on all human sins. In this light justification has to be understood from the perspective of an economic sacrifice, rather than an as an act of violence.

3.3.

Consequently, on would have to interpret the gospel's message differently from Girard. For him Jesus only serves as the model of non-violence and the educator of the violent mechanisms. Here Girard thereby follows the interpretations of the post enlightenment. In other words, one could say that Girard's Jesus could all too easily mutate into the prototype of Bultmann's, Käsemann's and Conzelmann's research. More to the point: Jesus is threatened to become the "pilot issue" of an existential production of the self, or the product of an anti-ritualistic world order. It easy to understand the helplessness of a merely internal faith that operates on a moral and intellectual basis – *vis a vis* the present day economic and political constellations of power, and in light of today's mimetic crises of violence (as described in the beginning of my lecture). All too often the trans-national enterprises and their economic interests have made short work of moralists. Furthermore, all attempts to terminate violent crises with the help of education and role modelling, e.g. in Ex-Yugoslavia, have failed quickly. Whoever is concerned with religious education and the processes involved, knows of the importance of rituals and myths in the life of young adults, who otherwise are not at all concerned with the anti-ritualistic introspection of today's Christianity.

3.4.

I still think that any kind of interpretation of Jesus' death on the cross as "good" or "gift" should be enlightened by Girard's notion of the mechanism of violence. ... Wherever Christians do not experience the gospel as a word of freedom and consolation (and – here I would like to add to Girard – wherever they do not celebrate this by way of worship services or simply in the community) they are tempted to assert their understanding against "all others". And they become slaves to what Girard describes as the "mechanism of violence".

3.5.

I certainly do not understand my critique as a depreciation of Girard's theory, but as a necessary supplementation. How and if one could put them in connection to his theory we might have to discuss. In any case, I hope that my critique will question the absolute claim of his theory. There is no doubt that I have always learned a great deal by reading his books. And I still think that his theory of the

mimetic desire/violence is better equipped to explain today's crises of violence, than many others. Consequently I believe that it may even serve to dis-empower them.

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Sacred violence and family violence

topics:

- *pastoral counselling with incestuous and violent men*
- *family violence*
- *ways of "learning violence"*
- *violence of men vs. violence of women*
- *race and violence*
- *power and love in pastoral counselling*
- *responsibility vs. empathetic identification?*
- *the theory of Rene Girard*
- *towards a relational and ambigues image of God*

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I am a Presbyterian pastor from the United States. I teach pastoral theology in a Methodist Seminary near Chicago, Illinois. By training and employment, I am part of the white professional bourgeoisie. In addition to my pastoring, teaching, and counselling, I have been working in the area of family violence. I became interested in this topic for professional reasons when I started hearing stories from my parishioners and students about their experiences of violence, and for personal reasons when I realized the presence of incest in my extended family, as close as first cousins.

Some of my pastoral clinical experience for the last twelve years has been with incestuous fathers from working class and poor backgrounds, that is, biological fathers, step-fathers, and live-in boyfriends, who engaged in inappropriate sexual behaviours from fondling to intercourse with boys and girls from ages five to sixteen. I have also worked as a therapist in groups for men who have battered women, usually their wives, girlfriends, ex-wives, and ex-girlfriends, and often their children. All of these men, the incestuous fathers and the batterers, were in treatment because they had been convicted of crimes, and their attendance in therapy or group re-education was a condition of probation. In all cases, there were other professionals involved with the victims and survivors who were watching out for safety issues. I consulted frequently with other therapists to ensure that my work was not increasing the danger to vulnerable children or women. In most cases, the men were separated from their families by the court until successful treatment, however it was defined, was completed.

In a pre-conference workshop earlier this week, I talked about my clinical work with perpetrators of family violence. I work as a victim-advocate, which means that I work self-consciously to prevent violence against women and children and hold myself accountable to the community of survivors who are trying to prevent

interpersonal violence in the United States. Theories and interventions with this population are significantly different from usual pastoral counselling and psychotherapy. Most counselling is based on a premise of motivation and honesty, that is, the person wants to change and tries to be honest with the therapist. With perpetrators of violence, manipulation, denial, and dishonesty are conscious and unconscious patterns that always have to be included in diagnosis and treatment. Sociopathic traits are often part of the formal diagnosis. The art of therapy with this population is finding some ambivalence in the men that can be worked with inside a container of external coercion, that is, the risk of going to jail if treatment is terminated. Often, the ambivalence of men who make progress in therapy is generated by a fear of the consequences for their illegal and stigmatised behaviours *and* a genuine wish to be a good husband, a good parent, a good citizen, and/or a good Christian. This kind of counselling sounds impossible given the history of pastoral care and counselling theory, but I believe it is possible based on my experience.[1]

In my opinion, pastoral counselling has basically failed to respond adequately to the pastoral care needs of victims, survivors, and perpetrators of family violence. The problems of family violence have been overlooked, minimised, misdiagnosed and mistreated by most pastoral counsellors. I am beginning to develop a hypothesis about why this is true. In one sentence, I believe that pastoral counselling is a "love theory" that is naive regarding issues of power in human families. The reasons for this are complex and beyond the scope of this paper, though they are related to the influence of Freud, Erikson and Carl Rogers and the historical development of liberal and progressive theologies. I am interested in Girard because he is developing what I call a "power theory" of human relationships. In his system of thought, power and violence play a central role in the diagnosis and treatment of human sin. My work with perpetrators of violence confirms this hypothesis about the centrality of power.

Points of contact with the theory of Girard

In this lecture I want to explore the inter-relationship between Girard's theory and pastoral counselling with perpetrators of family violence and ask what difference this could make for pastoral counselling. How does a power analysis challenge traditional pastoral counselling in its misunderstanding of family violence, and how would pastoral counselling have to be revised in order to take power into account? Even as I ask this question, I remind myself that I am a pastoral counsellor – a product of pastoral counselling training and practice. I believe in love, that is, I believe that nurturing attachments have transformative potential in the lives of people. Attachment is a primary dynamic between parent and child, between partners in intimate relationships, between student and teacher, between client and counsellor. So I will be asking this theoretical question, namely, how can we develop a form of pastoral counselling which adequately takes into account both love and power as primary forms of sin and redemption in human life? In one short lecture, I can only develop the beginning of such an argument, but I hope it will be a helpful exercise and stimulate us to further thinking.

I am delighted to be able to reflect on Girard's theory of the origin and cure of interpersonal and social violence in relation to my clinical experience with perpetrators of family violence because I share several assumptions with Girard, to the extent that I understand his theory:

First, Girard says that power and violence are endemic to human experience, not only an unfortunate side effect of the search for love. Violence is a root cause of many other social and religious problems, and not just a symptom that occurs when social systems break down. Therefore we need to understand power and violence in order to improve the quality of human life.

Second, Girard says that the main function of the official religions is to sanction "good violence" and condemn "bad violence" through ritual enactment of the sacrificial crisis. This contrasts with the view of religion which understands itself in idealized terms as opposing violence and promoting non-violence. Girard's understanding of religion requires us to ask about the difference between false religion which hides the sacrificial crisis and true religion which frees human beings from this sinister dynamic and its violence.

Third, Girard believes that the lie of the sacrificial crisis and its violence must be honestly confronted in order to create social systems which are healing and transformative for all persons.

I think that my work with perpetrators validates these three assumptions and I hope that the details of my lecture will add evidence in its favour.[2]

I have developed five questions to guide my reflection today, and in each question I ask how my clinical experience with perpetrators of violence confirms aspects of Girard's theories and/or raises questions for further development of the theories. What does Girard's theory disclose and what does it obscure?

Question 1: Sin and Diagnosis

To what extent is Girard's theory of "mimetic violence and surrogate victimage" (Hammerton-Kelly, Sacred Violence, p.38.) offers an adequate diagnosis of what is wrong with incestuous and violent men and their families in U.S. society?

"Once his basic needs are satisfied (indeed, sometimes even before), man is subject to intense desires, though he may not know precisely for what. The reason is that he desires BEING, something he himself lacks and which some other person seems to possess. The subject thus looks to that other person to inform him of what he should desire in order to acquire that being. If the model, who is apparently already endowed with superior being, desires some object, that object must surely be capable of conferring an even greater plenitude of being. It is not through words, therefore, but by the example of his own desire that the model conveys to the subject the supreme desirability of the object" (Girard, p.146).

"In this light sin appears as mimetic rivalry with God..." (Hammerton-Kelly, p.92)

Mimetic desire

My understanding of Girard is that persons seek to grow into maturity and be fulfilled by imitating the desires of someone who seems to be more mature and more fulfilled, such as a son imitating a father, a student imitating a mentor, or a younger brother imitating an older brother.[3] In order to be like the admired person, one imitates the form of that person's desires. By desiring the same objects as the admired one, the person hopes to become like the one he admires and to decrease the distinctions between them. The possibility of violence erupts at the point when the social distinctions actually begin to dissipate. This loss of distinction creates mimetic rivalry from both directions. The son begins to feel competi-

tive with the father, and the father also begins to feel threatened by the son. The student begins to feel competitive with the mentor, but the mentor also feels threatened by the student. The older brother notices the growth of the younger brother and fears the loss of his domination as the younger brother begins to savour the possibility of having the objects of the older brother. Since, within a zero-sum competitive system, both persons cannot have the same desired objects at the same time, one or the other feels he must dominate and win. In the Oedipal struggle between father and son, the father usually wins and the son is forced to seek other objects. In the process the son learns what it feels like to lose and be humiliated by the greater power of the powerful father, a lesson with long-term consequences for gender relationships.

In situations of potential peerage, between student and mentor or between brothers (in blood-line or social status), such violence threatens to escalate and destroy the fabric of the community itself. This is the sacrificial crisis. At the right time, the persons in competitive rivalry discover the possibility of destroying the objects instead of each other, and, almost as if by magic, the violence between them dissipates. Therefore, scapegoating becomes the mechanism whereby mimetic violence is projected onto a "deserving" object, and after the sacrifice of that victim, peace is restored. After the objects are destroyed, they are made sacred because they saved the community from violence. Ritual re-enactment of the sacrificial crisis helps the community to remember the dangers of mimetic violence but obscures the universal responsibility for violence.

The question this description raises for me is this: To what extent does "mimetic rivalry and surrogate victimage" explain the intergenerational transmission of violence (Girard, p.174ff) with its corollary of arbitrarily constructed guilt.

The violent men I have worked with seem to learn their violence from two sources: (a) their own experiences of being abused in the past, often as children; (b) the power, privilege, and encouragement they get from race, gender, class, age and other ideologies that construct dominance as a way of being human (male). That is, race, gender, class, age, and other inequalities of social power ensure that everyone will have some object to exploit in exchange for the abuse they endure from others. Even an abused child will be able to kick the dog. Chase the cat or mutilate the doll.

Learning violence by experiencing violence

To take the first point first, every violent man I have seen in pastoral counselling has been severely abused in his own childhood. My experience confirms Alice Miller's view from her earlier books (*For Your Own Good*) that violence is passed on from one generation to another by actual experience. George was sexually abused by his older brother and two friends when he was twelve years old. At first he thought it was exciting sexual play, but when they forced him to perform oral sex, it stopped being fun and he became the scapegoated object for the older boys. Sam was rescued from a violent home of drug addicts when he was only four, only to be beaten with a bull whip in a foster home, and then forced to tolerate emotional abuse while watching his sister being sexually abused during adolescence. Phil was the excluded child in an incestuous family. While his father engaged in incest with his younger sister, Phil was forced to grow up in the streets where he got into all manner of trouble. All three of these men were arrested for fondling their adolescent daughters. If they hadn't been stopped by being arrested, their abuse would have proceeded to intercourse, by their own witness.

I think this experience confirms Girard's thesis that the mimetic rivalry of one generation is taught to the next generation in an unending cycle. If we could trace it back, I think we would find centuries of intergenerational abuse. My own clinical experience can validate three and four generations of violence within some families. Being abused as a child gives one the primal injury that leads to mimetic rivalry with other adults and the choice of children as available scapegoats. Girard does not emphasise the importance of prior injury as a motive for mimetic rivalry, but it seems to be true in my clinical experience.

Violence as an ideology of our society

The second point is that social oppression by race, gender, class, age, etc. sets up the dynamic of mimetic violence. In the stratified, oppressive capitalistic society in the U.S., everyone is exploited by someone. The silent agreement in operation is that no matter how exploited one is, there is someone more vulnerable to be exploited. For example, in therapy I heard constant stories of humiliation and injury at work. If the men could not compete and win at work with bosses and peers, then they surely could be dominant at home, and they could hate other scapegoated social groups such as the poor, African Americans, immigrants, and women. Abusing a child served to make them feel sufficiently powerful to make up for the injuries from work. Personal prejudice gave them others on whom to project their hatred with social sanction. The sexual gratification that came with the abuse became a strong positive reinforcement for the abuse.

Constructed guilt

One of Girard's corollary theories is what I call "constructed guilt." He says: "Anybody can play the part of the surrogate victim... It is futile to look for the secret of the redemptive process in distinctions between the surrogate victim and the other members of the community. The crucial fact is the victim is arbitrary." (Girard, p.257) Survivors of family violence are often relieved and enraged when they discover that their victimisation was arbitrary. They are relieved because it assuages their own guilt that they deserved the abuse. They begin to see that even their attempt to manipulate the adult abusing them in order to survive does not make them guilty for the abuse. Working through the consequences of the abuse is enough without also feeling guilty for causing the abuse. On the other hand, arbitrary guilt makes survivors enraged because there is no justification for what happened. Their abuse is without cause or meaning. Such anger is healing because it often leads to action to protect other innocent victims. Discovering that their guilt is arbitrary discloses the lie of the scapegoating mechanism. Anselm Strauss' answer to why men batter is "because they can." One molester's answer to his daughter when she asked "why" was: "because you were there." There is no reason. The scapegoat was innocent. Therefore the violence is evil and should be stopped.

Power and love

Theories of diagnosis of perpetrators of violence are divided into theories of power and control and theories of gratification, especially sexual gratification. Some programs challenge the abuser's need to dominant others, while other programs prescribe Depoprovaran or even castration to diminish the sex drive. In my opinion, theories of gratification cannot explain why certain people engage in interpersonal violence including rape of children. Power and control seems to be a foundational reality for abusers. Girard's theory takes a clear position on the side

of power, for example, when he says, "The hidden basis of myths is not sexual; it cannot be, for that motif is openly revealed. Nonetheless, sexuality is important insofar as it stimulates violence and provides occasions for it to vent its force." (Girard, p.188) I agree with Girard as a corrective to the overemphasis on theories of love. But, in the final analysis, I think we need a theory that integrates power and love. Men who sexually abuse children are trying to make up for narcissistic injuries from childhood and from victimisation in society. They seek domination, that is, power and control over someone, to make up for a fragmented self. But they also receive sexual gratification and pseudo-connection with another human being which is a substitute for being loved. It will require much theoretical and theological work to understand how power and love can be combined in one complex theory of pastoral counselling. Until we do, we will be unprepared to work with perpetrators of family violence.[4]

Summary

Girard's theory does help to interpret sin and diagnosis when working with perpetrators of family violence by emphasising power and mimetic rivalry and the arbitrary choice of scapegoats. His theory probably underestimates the importance of direct gratification as a motive for abuse.

Question 2: Redemption and Healing

To what extent is demythification an adequate theory of redemption and healing for incestuous fathers and their families? Demythification is defined as dissent (resistance) by way of "retelling the story from the point of view of the victim, exposing the lie, and revealing the founding mechanism."(Hammerton-Kelly, Sacred Violence, p.38.)

"We can no longer ritualise or rationalise our violence... We are thrust into a time of absolute responsibility. (Hammerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, p.39) As I read and try to understand it, Girard's theory of redemption and healing is radical honesty about our own participation in violence, solidarity with victims, and accepting responsibility for changing the communities in which we live. A corollary principle must be a changed social consciousness and a life of resistance to the forms of ritual and rationales that make mimetic violence and surrogate victimage work.

This viewpoint describes much of what must go on in therapy and re-education groups with perpetrators of family violence. One way I distinguish clients who can benefit from pastoral counselling as I practice it and those who cannot is whether they have enough healthy self to engage in therapy. One way to assess this readiness is whether being arrested and having their violence disclosed creates a crisis at the core of their being. Many perpetrators of family violence are not ready for pastoral counselling because their only crisis is the shame of having their sins exposed. There is not enough healthy self accessible to form a therapeutic attachment with a pastoral counsellor. While I cannot address the therapeutic issues of the more damaged, but statistically large, group, the principles about safety for victims and accountability for perpetrators do apply. All perpetrators of violence need to be held accountable for their behaviours for the safety of victims. The art of therapy for the clients I am most familiar with depends on sustaining their internal crisis over enough time that their sociopathic and sadistic attitudes and behaviours can be addressed. Most of the perpetrators I have worked with try

to manipulate the counsellor to join them in a premature resolution of their crisis. This premature resolution can take two directions:

a) over-identification of oneself as a victim;
b) rationalisation and minimisation of the damage one has caused.

Healing or remembering?

Since every perpetrator of violence in my practice has been a victim of violence from childhood and was further exploited by race and class oppression, the therapist can be tempted to focus on healing only for the victimised self of the past. Significant time must be spent on remembering the stories of injuries from the past because they are real. But the therapist must remember that the client is not only a victim, but also a victimiser. The shame around the injury done to others is usually greater and harder to explore. One reminder I use is to make sure the abuse gets half of the attention in each session. In this way I agree with Girard that absolute honesty in facing one's complicity with violence is part of the transformative process.

Responsibility or empathetic identification?

Some therapists make the mistake of joining the client in rationalising and minimising the damage done. Many abusers feel entitled to the dominance they have established and the power and sexual gratification they obtain from that dominance. They will say things like: "A father has a right to educate his child however he wants. My father beat me and I turned out o.k.. It is better for my daughter to learn about sex from me than from some rapist out in the streets." There are many versions of such entitlement that men use to justify their abuse, but it all has the same effect – these defences are ways to avoid the actual consequences of their violence on victims. Therapists who have not faced their own history as abusers may unconsciously join the client in minimising the effects of violence on others. Because of these dangers, accountability for therapists is very important, in the form of co-therapy and regular participation in a community of therapists who agree to hold one another accountable for their work.

Girard's theory helps me understand the delicate balance involved in therapy with perpetrators of violence. "Absolute responsibility" means facing the terrible reality of one's participation as a perpetrator of violence. "Identification with the victim" means more than locating my own experiences of being a victim. It means listening to the stories of victims over and over again until they cannot be denied. Healing for perpetrators of violence is a difficult road that balances empathy and ethical responsibility.

"Absolute responsibility", in my theory of pastoral counselling, is only possible within a relational context of love and power. That is, the perpetrators of violence in therapy slowly change when they begin to trust a counsellor who displays sufficient empathy for their pain and enough strength to hold out an alternative ethical vision without being abusive. In this view, I follow Winnicott and Kohut. The person who depends on violence to prop up his fragmented self and fill up his empty self is not capable of the "absolute responsibility" Girard calls for, even though it is eventually necessary. What is needed is loving attachment within an powerful social system that protects others from victimisation. Love and power in a proper relational balance is crucial – "Fierce Tenderness", as some of my feminist friends call it (Hunt, Ramsay). Where in Girard's theory is the role of loving and powerful attachments, actually an image opposite to mimetic violence?

Unless I am missing it altogether, Girard does not attend sufficiently to the role of love and empathy.

Summary

Pastoral counselling theory is severely deficient in its understanding of power. Empathic bonding with a perpetrator of violence without external control of his or her abuse of others is nearly useless. The inability to address the power dimension is a form of collusion with perpetrators of violence who feel entitled to continue their abuse. Girard helps us a lot in describing the distortions of aggression on a personal and social level, but he underestimates the power of eros and love as healing agents.

Question 3: Gender and Violence

Does mimetic rivalry and surrogate victimage work the same for men and women under patriarchy? Are men more violent than women? If so, is it because of nature or social class?

"At the core of the Oedipus myth, as Sophocles presents it, is the proposition that all masculine relationships are based on reciprocal acts of violence. . . . Both parties in this tragic dialogue have recourse to the same tactics, use the same weapons, and strive for the same goal: destruction of the adversary." (Girard, p.48)

Violence of men

Girard himself suggests that his theory is primarily a description of male violence. By use of male authors, male examples, and focus on women as victims, Girard seems to agree with some feminist theory that the structures of violence are primarily male.

"The preponderance of women in the Dionysian cult remains a subject of conjecture. ... We may therefore wonder whether the preponderance of women does not constitute a secondary mythological displacement, an effort to exonerate from the accusation of violence, not mankind as a whole, but adult males, who have the greatest need for forget their role in the crisis, because, in fact, they must have been largely responsible for it. They alone risk plunging the community into the chaos of reciprocal violence. ... The woman qualifies for sacrificial status by reason of her weakness and relatively marginal social status." (Girard, p.139 and p.141)

Girard's theory fits some of the data about family violence. In terms of battering, men are arrested for battering adult women ten times as often as vice versa (Dep. of Public Health, Chicago); one-third of murdered women (1,500 in the U.S. in 1994) were murdered by a present or former intimate male partner while only 3% of murdered men were murdered by a comparable female partner (Dept. of Public Health, Chicago); women are three times more likely to seek emergency room treatment for violence inflicted by a man than vice versa. (American Medical Association). In terms of sexual abuse, girls are three times more likely to be sexually abused than boys, and the perpetrators of sexual abuse of both boys and girls are ten times more likely to be men than women. (Diana Russell). This imbalance of male violence over female violence in research statistics and health care programs has led to the creation of many programs to support female victims and survivors and almost none for men, many programs to treat male perpetrators of

violence and almost none for women, and certain groups overlooked completely, namely women abused by women, gay and lesbian victims and perpetrators, and others. The data seem to support Girard's assumption that mimetic violence is a problem of patriarchy, and that women are more likely victims than perpetrators.

Violence of women

There is a growing debate and anecdotal material about the violence of women. Within feminism itself there is a vigorous debate about whether and how women socialise children into patriarchy and acceptance of its violence (Jessica Benjamin). Child welfare programs have always had programs of therapy and re-education for mothers of young children who cause many serious injuries (Parents Anonymous). The increase of drug addictions like cocaine and heroin appear to increase the rate of neglect and violence perpetrated on children by women. In my own clinical experience, it is not unusual for male clients to report severe physical and sexual abuse by mothers, older sisters, and older women in the community. One theoretical question is whether the violence of women is an extension of competitive power relationships under patriarchy, a reactive violence to the reality of oppression, or a part of basic, pre-gendered human nature.

Gender asymmetry

Girard himself does not present his theory as gender-specific, that is, it is not a feminist theory. This implies that the mechanism of mimetic rivalry, violence, and scapegoating are at work in most social systems, even when women are in leadership positions. Whether the mechanism works independently of gender or in some complex interaction with it is, of course, a matter for the further development of theory. Catherine MacKinnon, a feminist legal scholar, has a similar view as Girard that power is more basic than sexuality, and once patriarchy is in place as an ideology, is influential on the behaviour of women as well as men. MacKinnon believes that "violence is sexy" in the sense that eroticism is defined by culture as violent, though men are more likely to be sexually predatory and women to be victims. The episodic reversal of gender roles (the dominatrix, the passive male) so popular in the media may be a form of obfuscation of reality or an illustration of the power of mimetic violence under patriarchy to victimise anyone who is vulnerable regardless of gender.

The remaining question, though, is whether some women, who have been oppressed for millennia under patriarchy, have developed a subversive wisdom through their resistance to the consequences of violence in their lives. Patricia Hill Collins makes an argument like this regarding black women. The resistance of some women to gender, race, class, age and other forms of oppression have been necessary for survival. Much scholarship is being done by womanist scholars to retrieve the wisdom and resources of resistance from the oral traditions of the past. Therefore, it is important to identify the subversive traditions of resistance that make possible "retelling the story from the point of view of the victim, exposing the lie, and revealing the founding mechanism." (Hammerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, p.38.)

Until very recently, with the help of a new generation of women scholars, pastoral counselling has not addressed issues of gender asymmetry in its theories and practices (Moessner and Glaz/Moessner are exceptions). Analysing the power of gender oppression in pastoral counselling is crucial for understanding family violence. Violence organised by gender relationships is a major ethical and theological problem in Christian families which has been overlooked by scholars. A the-

ory based on love too easily falls into blaming those who are vulnerable for their own victimisation and minimising the exploitation that perpetrators of violence impose on persons in families. As we have explored the power dimensions of our theory, we must integrate these insights with our love theory of empathy, attachment, and transference.

Question 4: Race and Violence

Does Girard's theory of "pharmakos" help explain the persistence of classes of permanent scapegoats in the U.S., such as African Americans and other ethnic groups, women and children, and the poor?

"The sacrificial crisis – a repetition of the original, spontaneous 'lynching' that restored order in the community by re-establishing, around the figure of the surrogate victim, that sentiment of social accord that had been destroyed in the onslaught of reciprocal violence... If my thesis is correct, the pharmakos, like Oedipus himself, has a dual connotation. On the one hand he is a woebegone figure, an object of scorn who is also weighted down with guilt; a butt for all sorts of gibes, insults, and of course, outbursts of violence. On the other hand, we find him surrounded by a quasi-religious aura of veneration; he has become a sort of cult object. This duality reflects the metamorphosis the ritual victim is designed to effect; the victim draws to itself all the violence infecting the original victim and through its own death transforms this baneful violence into beneficial violence, into harmony and abundance." (Girard, p. 95)

The above quote from Girard seem to describe the U.S. situation well. African Americans, foremost in the public mind among the ethnic groups, serve as projections of every form of violence in our society -- murder, rape, drugs, gangs, child abuse. At the same time, African American images in sports and music create an "quasi-religious aura of veneration." The paradox is startling: five percent of the population (black men such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods) make up a huge percentage of superheroes in the major sports of football, basketball, and baseball, and at the same time make up 50% of the U.S. prison population of one million persons (Michael Tyson and O.J. Simpson are prominent images of violent black men).

According to Girard, the need of a society for a class of permanent scapegoats indicates a firm commitment to the sacrificial crisis as a way of life. I feel uncomfortable with Girard's observation that modern, western societies are less captivated by the sacrificial crisis. (Girard, pp.15-27) Perhaps being an empire means that the U.S., in spite of its judicial system, has enough power to project its violence away from the elite and middle classes onto permanent scapegoats such as African Americans, immigrants, the poor, and other nations. The recent mimetic rivalry between the U.S and Russia might verify this dynamic and help to explain the internal crisis in the U.S. now that it has no rival as a global superpower.

The analogy I want to make is that incestuous fathers in families seem to be an accurate reflection within families of the larger social forces I have just described. Perpetrators of family violence act with greater impunity whenever their chosen victims are less valued in the larger society, and when protection for them is less likely to be effective. For example adopted and step-children are more likely to be sexually abused within families, and children with disabilities are even more likely. Likewise, African American children are more likely to be abused in fami-

lies. There seems a direct correlation between how much the children of certain social classes are valued and how much they are abused. The more vulnerable a child is, the more likely that child will be victim of physical and sexual violence. With child abuse rates running between 30-50%, the vulnerability of all children is high.

Girard's theory of the "pharmakos" as a class of permanent scapegoats begins to make sense of the role of children, women, and oppressed economic groups in the United States. When race, gender, class, age and other forms of oppression accumulate to create multiple jeopardy for African American children (Patricia Hill Collins), the rates of violence increase. (Add section from notes)

An increasing literature from African American pastoral counsellors in the U.S. is challenging our field to understand the oppression of race, class, gender, age, etc. These power relationships create a different reality for some families, and have generated a subversive culture of resistance that must be respected as health-giving rather than pathologised. Their work discloses the collusion of pastoral counselling with the ideologies of the dominant white supremacist culture. As long as pastoral counselling remains a theory of love rather than a theory of power, its complicity in racial evil will continue. (Poling, *Deliver us from Evil*)

Question 5: Jesus and Violence

How has the image of Jesus Christ transformed humanity in the midst of sin and evil? How has Jesus helped to demythify the sacrificial crisis, according to Girard and others (Hammerton-Kelly, Schwager, et al.), and liberate humans from "mimetic violence and surrogate victimage"?

The central Christological question for pastoral counselling can be crudely stated this way: What has Jesus done for me lately? What could Jesus do for me if I believed in him and followed his way? In more scholarly language, Christology is the question: What was accomplished in Jesus life, death and resurrection that leads believers to liberation of human bodies, spirits, and communities?

For the sake of this paper, I am interested in Girard's Christology: How does Christ transform humankind? The heart of Girard's argument, as I understand it, is that the sacrificial crisis and its sanction by religion depend on secrecy and lies. That is, the community must actually believe that mimetic violence is caused by outside forces, that the scapegoat deserves to be abused and killed, that this sacrifice actually transforms the community and restores non-violence, and that the scapegoat then deserves to be ritually honoured to help the community to distinguish good from bad violence. Girard's Christology asserts that Jesus lived and died in such a way that he exposed the scapegoating mechanism itself as pathological. He disclosed that violence comes from the hearts of men, not from outside forces, and he revealed that the sacrificial victim is innocent of any guilt. This disclosure of the lie shows a way out of the sacrificial crisis, that is, humans have the choice of "retelling the story from the point of view of the victim, exposing the lie, and revealing the founding mechanism." (Hammerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, p.38). According to Hammerton-Kelly, this gives humanity a new religious and ethical choice.

"To leave the community of sacred violence is to refuse the unanimity of conflictual mimesis. As soon as one dissents, one becomes a victim oneself. Such dissent is tantamount to identifying with the victim, because the group of conflictual mi-

mesis needs unanimity to function and can treat dissenters only as victims. Thus Paul is transformed from persecutor to persecuted, he is crucified with Christ." (Hammerton-Kelly, *Sacred Violence*, p.69)

By identification with Christ crucified, we dissent from the sacred violence of the community and join in the forces of resistance to live in "absolute honesty" as free people within the love of God. Girard's theory has a Christology. Either historically constructed (process theologies) or revealed as the eternal love of God (essentialist theologies), humans have the choice of dissenting from the sacrificial crisis. By believing in Jesus, that is, that Jesus was innocent even though he was a scapegoat, and by following Jesus, that is, following his way of non-acquisitive sacrificial love, we can be liberatory in our personal, interpersonal, and social lives.

In some ways, this is a Christology that works in good pastoral counselling with perpetrators of violence. A pastoral counsellor must believe that all people are capable of change given the right circumstances, be willing to engage with perpetrators of violencer with a sense of hope, be unafraid of allying him or her self with coercive power in order to control evil, and be willing to engage in mutual and sometimes sacrificial love for the salvation of his or her clients. This mechanism is similar to the needed spiritual transformation for the perpetrator himself. A client in therapy must believe in himself enough to want change, be willing to engage with the counsellor, be willing to comply with the imposition of external power and control to stop his abuse, and be willing to engage in mutual and sometimes sacrificial relationships for the sake of his own salvation and the protection of future victims. This deconstructive and reconstructive task is complex given the many layers of defence against such change, and the fears and terror of confronting his own emptiness. But the promise of the gospel is that salvation is possible.

A relational and ambiguous image of God

What image of God is helpful to perpetrators of violence as they engage in such a theological task? In my own writing I have rejected both orthodox and liberal theologies because they are naive about the power dimension of salvation. I have held out, instead, an image of the relational, ambiguous God who is engaged in the world and does not shrink back from the ambiguity involved in sharing responsibility for the good and evil of the world. Images of God as unified, omnipotent, and perfectly loving, I believe, are counterproductive for perpetrators of violence in their search for salvation. (Poling, *Deliver us from Evil*).

I find support for my view in the work of Girard, especially his discussion about fathers and sons: "The 'father' projects into the future the first tentative movements of his son and sees that they lead straight to the mother or the throne. The incest wish, the patricide wish, do not belong to the child but spring from the mind of the adult, the model... The son is always the last to learn that what he desires is incest and patricide, and it is the hypocritical adults who undertake to enlighten him in this matter. ... If the Oedipus complex constitutes an erroneous reading of the double bind, then we can say that those desires that the world at large, and the father in particular, regard as emanating from the son's own patricide-incest drive actually derive from the father himself in his role as model." (Girard, p.175)

In this passage, Girard clearly lays the responsibility for the sacrificial crisis on the religious imagination of the father or mentor. The mentor imagines the mimetic rivalry before the student has the conceptual tools to make sense of it. Therefore, the mentor "teaches" the son about mimetic rivalry while the son is still introjecting the mentor uncritically.

In theological terms, this means that mimetic rivalry is constructed by humans out of their relationship with God.[5] In the crucifixion God reveals a full understanding of mimetic violence and also reveals God's capacity to abstain from its full implementation from the divine side. In a sense, this means that God has the potential to engage in mimetic violence and the potential to abstain from it. Therefore God has the power to engage humans in either violence or nonviolence. This is what I mean by the relational, ambiguous God. Every good or evil desire and behaviour that is possible for humans is also possible for God. God is not, by definition, limited to being good all the time, but God has revealed Godself through history as one who commits Godself over and over again to be good. In faith we pray that God will be good, but we know that our lives could be snuffed out in a moment if God chooses to be evil. Never forgetting the holocausts of history is a reminder of the terrible power of God over life and death.

This image of God is very important for pastoral counselling with perpetrators of violence. In order to be an effective counsellor when I sit down with a perpetrator of violence, I must know that I am potentially capable of whatever violence that person has imposed on others. He and I are no different at the level of potential good and evil. I am capable of whatever good and evil he has done, and he is capable of whatever good and evil I have done. If this is not true, then there can be no empathy between us.

In actual practice, I have met several perpetrators of violence who so horrified me that I could not work with them. This does not mean that I am not capable of the violence they committed, but I was not capable of living for very long in the religious world they had created by engaging in such violence. One example was a paedophile who had been arrested for molesting a nine-year-old boy in Times Square, New York. After several sessions of therapy, I asked him whether he would mind if his own adolescent son (he was the noncustodial parent) were molested. He said he would not mind such an event. At that point, I bailed out and hoped that someone else could help him. My own moral strength was not sufficient to enter into his world for the sake of therapy. In a second case, I did an assessment with a man who had violently raped a woman in Central Park, New York in broad daylight. He had already spent eight years in prison for several rapes. I could not contain my own feelings of fear and revulsion enough to help him. As opposed to Scott Peck, who labels such persons as evil and beyond hope, I am cognisant of my own limitations. Given my own development and maturity, these men were beyond my ability to cope.

However, my theological view is that God is not beyond understanding such violent men. The crucifixion reveals the unanimous consent, including the disciples (Hammerton-Kelly), of the whole community to the death of God. God was not shocked by such a depth of evil, and God responded with non-violent love and power in a way that changed the world. I believe in the God of Jesus Christ, and in his act of salvation for all people. I commit myself to believe in and follow Jesus in my ministry of pastoral counselling, to try to be a relational, ambiguous presence for perpetrators of family violence.

Conclusion

I have engaged in dialogue with René Girard and his theory of violence and the sacred in relation to my clinical work as a pastoral counsellor with perpetrators of family violence. I have pursued five questions about sin, redemption, gender, race, and Christology. I think Girard's greatest contribution to pastoral counselling is his brilliant description of the role of power in human relationships. Pastoral counselling has much to learn about power as an aspect of theory and practice, and I hope that attending to issues of power will help pastoral counselling to become a resource for victims, survivors and perpetrators of family violence. I think pastoral counselling has a contribution to make to Girard's theory by insisting on the healing role of love and attachment in human relationships. In the end I hope for a new theory of pastoral counselling which understands both power and love. I thank you for the chance to stretch my own thinking about these matters and I look forward to our dialogue.

Notes

1 My views on these issues have been published in the books *The Abuse of Power, Deliver us from Evil*, and various articles.

2 I need to emphasise the limitations of my knowledge of Girard and his theories. I have read some of his articles and books, and I have read some commentaries on his thought. But I am no expert on the complexities of Girard and the social science context in which he works. *What I can do* is to test what I know of Girard against my experience as a practical theologian and a pastoral counsellor and hope that my questions will be useful to others in their work. My knowledge of Girard is based primarily on his *Violence and the Sacred* and the works by Hammerton-Kelly and Raymund Schwager.

3 I have chosen to keep Girard's non-inclusive male language because I believe it is a more accurate description of male reality under patriarchy than of female reality. Some of the implications of this will be clearer in the discussion of Question 3.

4 A consultant from the survivor movement, Linda, recently wrote the following on gratification as an aspect of abuse. "Satanic ritual has a long tradition of sacrifice of the child in the believe that the child's power can be harnessed for the group's use. I have no way to explain it, but I believe that my mother somehow wanted to drain my life force -- it was like she tried to suck out my soul with what she did." Lloyd DeMause writes: "...the psychodynamics of the full cultic ritual is clear. It is the same as with all sadist torture and the killing of children. First, the sadist terrorises the child to increase his or her fear, his or her 'power', watching the child's growing panic and agony in order to see the sadist's own fear 'injected' into another. Then he rapes the child at the moment he stabs with the knife, so he can have the sexual climax at the point of the death of the child and absorb all of the child's power."

5 I disagree with Hammerton-Kelly who seems to suggest that God is incapable of evil or violence, and that the whole sacrificial crisis is an invention of humans within history. "What about desire in God?" (D.D. Williams); Williams' insight needs to be restated and corrected in mimetic terms. The divine need arises primarily from plenitude, not lack and is therefore, the need to give. Since there is no envy in God, the one need God has is to give and to share. It is essential to maintain this self-sufficiency of God as the antidote to the mimetic misinterpretation of the divine as envious and rivalrous. However, the relationship between the divine and the human is mimetically constituted and, therefore, the divine needs the mimetic reciprocity of the creature for the relationship to succeed. When the creature misinterprets the divine desire as envious and turns to mimetic rivalry, the loss sustained by the divine is not ontological but mimetic. The divine suffers not diminishment but violence, as the Cross reveals. Thus the divine suffering occurs in the divine desire, not in the divine substance. In this way we maintain both the traditional doctrine of God's self-sufficiency, and the concept of the necessary reciprocity of love. (Hammerton-Kelly,

Sacred Violence, p.169).

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George Euling *Papua New Guinea, 1998*

Violence and victims of violence

Experiences from Papua New Guinea

topics

- *violence in Papua New Guinea's society*
- *reasons for violence*
- *theological perspective on violence*

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Setting the scene

Violence in Papua New Guinea can be seen from four different occurrences. The four occasions would define violence as having both the positive and negative objectives.

(1) Violence as the only voice that can be heard

The government of Papua New Guinea has not been very transparent. Its decisions do not reflect the concern for the welfare of the people. Its leadership on a number of occasions has been seen as possessing benevolent dictatorial qualities. The curtailment of the rights of the people to express themselves freely and the move to legislate against the freedom of the press has inflated the frustrations of the masses. In March of this year, the army gained wide support from the masses calling for the resignation of the Prime Minister. There was escalated violence right throughout the country in support of the call by the army for the leadership of the government to step down from office. Stores where looted, factories were burned, and there was confrontation between the police and the masses who had the support of the army. Scores of people were injured. The people can no longer put up with the government. They chose to voice their concern through violence. While violence can not be condoned it occurred as the only voice that can be heard.

(2) Violence as a form of ritual towards manhood

A tribe in Papua New Guinea practices verbal and physical abuse (what can be seen by outsiders as such) as a form of training of its male members. Such training begins when the child is weaned. The objective of the training is to have the candidate become a fearless warrior. The child is trained to be able to bear psycho-

logical and physical difficulties as he stands on the open field in the presence of the enemy.

(3) Violence as a form of payback and retribution

Daniel Miti was a village magistrate for more then ten years. He upheld the course of justice with both vigour and zeal. Last year he was punched to death by men who could not put up with his zeal to see that justice is done.

(4) Violence that does not see reason

Joseph Thomas was a car sales representative in Lae. He had the tendency of beating his wife each time he came home drunk. On one occasion he slashed his wife's arm with a knife. The wife did not have any food on the table for him. He never gave any money to his wife in the first place for food.

A Papua New Guinean perspective

(1) Emergence of violence

Much of violence that happen in Papua New Guinea can be blamed on the economic difficulties and political indecisiveness and corruption among leaders. People turned to violence with the hope that the leaders will at least hear them and their cry to be served with the basic necessities. They need lighting and power, improved sanitation and water for their household.

The inequality between the 'haves' and the 'have nots' left the 'have nots' no option but to turn to violence so that they too can share the wealth of the country even though its legitimacy is questionable. Violence becomes spontaneous. The masses need no persuasion. The frustration of having to pay a higher cost of a good or a service with money that they do not have in the first place drives them towards a unified stand against leadership and authority.

(2) Options toward resolving violence

Violence in contemporary Papua New Guinea is modelled and fed by the inequality in the distribution of wealth and services; the down turn in the economy; the instability within government; the high unemployment rate etc. The current government has boasted of devising economic reforms as the means by which much of violence can be prevented. In the traditional setting, compensation is the answer towards preventing repetition of violence. But compensation is now commercialised. People demand huge sums of money for acts of violence that they had been the targets of.

The foundational issue: the fallen nature

Violence is fuelled by the desire to have. Man throughout ages struggles with the problem of discontentment. "I do not have. Therefore, I must add to my lack even if the means by which I choose to satisfy that lack are illegitimate." We begin to see that as we turn to the first pages of Genesis. Eve was not content with what

she had. She must obtain that which was within the restricted bounds. Her quest to satisfy that desire proved to be futile for mankind. But the quest for more is only but a symptom of the fallen nature of man.

She walked away from God. This is the foundational issue – the problem of sin. Man in his fallen nature lacks self control. He must have. He must kill to have. The perpetrator of violence always justify the means by which he gets what he wants. But this is the cost of choosing to live within the bounds of the foundational issue. Man will always seek to justify his actions. For this is what man would always do when God is made to play second fiddle. We see this all the time when we turn the pages of the Old Testament. When people walked away from God, they acted within the bounds of the fallen nature. When they come back in perspective with God, they were able to experience Shalom.

The 'foundational sacrifice' [1]

(1) Jesus the immortalised victim?

The EMTV news each night would give accounts of rapes, day light bank robberies at commercial banks in Papua New Guinea, people die at the hands of rascals, women raped, house broken into, tribal wars, corruption at the high places etc. The embassies of foreign governments advice their citizens living within Papua New Guinea not to venture out when night falls. Violence seemed to escalate at an alarming rate. No one feels safe any more. Will I be the next victim of violence would be the question that people ask. We live in Papua New Guinea by looking over our shoulders.

When will all these acts of madness end? The "how" is a struggling question the government grapples with.

Jesus Christ died at the hands of a mob rule. He could be seen as a "victim" of anarchy. And therefore, that qualifies him as another "immortalised victim". But the only difference is that he was more than a victim. He did not just die on the cross as a result of human madness. Victims of any violence do not have the power to say no. They never chose to be in the predicaments they found themselves in. And because the power to say no is not theirs to utter or disburse, that invokes society's ability to act. Society immortalises its victims. It responds by putting into place social nets that would prevent the repetition of acts of violence. Jesus had the power to say no to the cross. He cried, "My Father, if it is possible may this cup be taken away from me. Yet not as I will but as you will." (Matthew 26). Jesus had a mission. He was set on fulfilling that mission. The foundational cause of violence must be rendered powerless. It must end. His was a sacrificial death that expresses authentic love. This invokes Him to act. He expressed the eternal love of God on the cross for us.

(2) Jesus is not the victim of sadistic passion

Each time someone dies a violent death in the hands of his neighbour, we are shocked and we experience the numbness of the soul. We ask why. This is because we experience violence that is devoid of reason. We say "no, it can not be

[1] *With "foundational sacrifice", the author refers to Rene Girard's theory on violence. Cf. the essays of R. Schwager and H.M. Gutmann in this workbook, pp. 56 and 302.*

real." With Jesus, we cry "thanks be to God, to the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." We are captivated by the glory of the cross. For it is there that the Love of God is seen and experienced. It was because of His mercy and compassion for us that Jesus Christ had to die. We are drawn to the cross. With any victim of violence we repel the occasion. "No, it must not happen again" as we lament. Jesus cried on the cross "Father it is finished." Jesus immortalised? No! His death was a calling. It was done within the bounds of reason and love. Jesus said "...I lay down my life ... no one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord." This is authentic love.

Violence is devoid of authentic love. Victims suffer as a result of sadistic passion where the foundational cause of violence fills man with destructive emotions. Reason becomes obscured as a result of rejection of the will and the power to love. In other words, victims of violence were at the receiving end of passion that had its base outside reason and love. It could be described as madness. For violence is devoid of meaning. Victims of violent acts had their liberty and the right to enjoy and live life taken away from them. They suffer meaninglessly. Reason however causes us to make moral choices. These are choices that build relationships. John the Evangelist writes: "Beloved let us love one another, for love is from God; everyone who loves is from God and knows God. The one who does not love, does not know God for God is love." Violence destroys the bond between reason and the ability to love. And the violator is filled with destructive emotion as he moves towards taking away the victim's liberty to make real choices. But it is quite different with Christ Jesus. We are reminded by Scripture that part of the work of Christ is victory over passion. They nailed Him at the cross by passion. He overcame passion with dignity and humility. Violence, passion or madness (whatever one chooses to call) was conquered at Calvary.

Victory at the cross enables reason to function. When this happened, there is reconciliation and peace. Love there and then begins to extend its borders beyond corruption. It can no longer be obscured. The foundational cause of violence is offered a new status at the cross. There is transformation. Jesus Christ died a meaningful death. He offered freedom for the violators. And on the same token he offered consolation to victims.

Let me conclude with a poem that I wrote after the trip to Auschwitz/Poland last year in the Seminar. I experienced the numbness of my soul. I hope that it will express the struggle I had when I came face to face with violence that was methodical and industrial.

For ever reason eludes me.
Where time stands still against the darkest hours of human experiences,
Faith and hope were their companions.

See and what do you see,
Hear and what do you hear,
were questions spoken from the depths of my spirit.

I looked to my friends
who were at the opposite borders
of the second world war;
Not of their doing, but was I not touched?

Humility clothed with modesty
Shines forth like a star in the twilight of the evening.

That in the darkest hours of one's experience,
Quietness and stillness before God
melts away the fury of the foe.

That a modest and a humble position
is a thousand words spoken with power
in the heat of a fury furnace.

An act of forgiveness
reaching out with understanding
open doors of hope of reconciliation.

And from within the aroma of unity rises
against tides of insanity.

And where was God in all this, I asked.
"I was there all the time,
Suffering with them, sustaining them.
My strength I gave them.
And my presence was ever there with them.
I love them.
Even death can not separate them from Me."

Hartmut Ruddies *Germany, 1998*

Aspects of the Christian approach to violence in society

A systematic theological approach

topics:

- *Biblical aspects on violence*
- *fundamental vs. contextual understanding of violence*
- *a realistic and responsible use of violence*
- *reduction of violence and reconciliation*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp 61-65

Violence seems to be on the increase all over the world: On our streets, in schools, between individuals and nations, parents and children, teachers and pupils. This has led to a public debate about how to understand and how to meet such phenomenons of violence. Shocking reports about the violence of young people in our country against foreigners, homeless, and disabled persons have shown that violence can also be a real threat to modern society.[1]

And there is another fear, which has been brought up in the international discussion on violence: Will the "cold war" of politics be replaced by a global battle of cultures in East and West, North and South, thus leading to a confrontation especially between the Euro-Atlantic and the Islamic cultures?[2]

Violence is becoming an important issue in the thoughts and beliefs of individual people, and the anxiety of violence is becoming a normal disposition. We know that brutal violence against others is often nurtured and accompanied by the violence of persuasive talk and strong arguments. It is also caused by distressing mental situations which arise from an incapacity to express feelings which are not allowed to be expressed or from an inability to listen carefully.[3] "Violence is the result of an illiteracy of the soul and the speechlessness of common sense", said Rita Süssmut, the president of the German parliament, in 1993.

Violence is everywhere, and it has been with us since the beginning of mankind. The diagnosis is not very controversial, but where is the cure if there is one? Some people have realised that there is a useful violence which fights evil, controls it or eradicates it. They are – rather simply – blamed as "Bellicists" (belligerents). Others have realized that all forms of violence are evil, because the practice of violence results in violence and where violence is sown, it is reaped. They are – again simplified – known as "Pacifists".

Violence shocks everyone, but strangely enough people are inclined to close their eyes to it. Political accusations sometimes have their rights but they don't touch the fundamental problem. The fundamental problem of violence is controversial, and therefore the types of violence are explained in different ways, and various solutions have been described. What must be considered when talking about violence in our society? Is it an abnormal behaviour of the individual, resulting from a distorted education? Is it a moral desert in the midst of our culture and society? Or is it rather an atavistic behaviour, cultivated with some difficulty? Is it the result of a disintegration of elementary social values? The decay of civilisation caused by the culture of consumerism which knows no moral standards?

In analysing violence we all tend to use eclectic approaches – and perhaps this is unavoidable, as the issue is so extremely complex. Christian comments on violence indeed take a share from all of these positions – although Christianity contains some quite remarkable traditions and approaches of *cultivating violence*.

II

Moreover, especially in the German language we have a problematic factual and lingual tradition in using the term violence (*"Gewalt"*). On the one hand, *Gewalt* means lawful power or rule, but on the other hand *Gewalt* can mean just the opposite of law and can be encountered by the principle of self-defence. In this way, the Prussian Common Law in 1794 allowed everyone to "combat violence with violence" ("*Gewalt mit Gewalt abzuwehren"*) if help from the Government came too late.[4] Notoriously, the term *Gewalt* cannot be defined accurately and, therefore, often leads to senseless discussions. In the German language the positive and negative aspects of violence/force are combined in one word (*Gewalt* as government, power, coercion), whereas the equivalent terms in English (violence) and French (force) more clearly refer to unlawful actions and methods destructive to the welfare of citizens.[5]

III

In Jewish and Christian theology both positions, 'Pacifism' and 'Bellicism', meet forcefully – but they have not led to a suppression of violence. The Old Testament describes experiences of violence from beginning to end, from Cain and Abel to the prophet Malachi. How does it deal with this experience? "Trust not in violence" (Ps 62:11) "God gives justice to those who suffer from violence" (Ps 146:7) "God is against those, who exercise violence and injustice" (Mal 3:5). But it also states: "Yours, Lord, is the majesty and violence" (I Chr. 29:11). "Yes, the lord God is coming with mighty power, and he will rule." (Is 40:10), and a little further on it is written: "He will tread violence as a potter tramples clay" (Is 41:25). In Joel 3:10 we find the words: "Melt your ploughshares into swords" – not just the well-known contradiction in Isaiah 2.

The insight that only God has the monopoly of power/violence causes problems to justifying violence exercised to human beings. To be truthful, there are many examples of terrible violence in the Old Testament (cf. the "Holy Wars") and these passages have not been rubbed out during the process of transmission of the Scriptures. The Old Testament does not deny the existence of violence, rather it admits that it is a problem. The story of Isaac in the Old Testament (Gen 22) not

being sacrificed is there to teach us that human violence can be superseded only by the presence of the power/violence of God. This is the reason why Israel, the people of God, is allowed to assert itself with *a legitimate form* of violence, even though the vision of a pilgrimage of all peoples to Zion envisages an eschatological end of all violence.

The Old Testament deals with the issue of violence in a way which ought to be of interest to people involved in Pastoral Care. Violence is not straightaway rejected, instead it is accepted as a problem. No therapeutic suggestions which deny the fact that the therapist himself is affected by the issue! And finally (and perhaps most importantly): Human violence has its effective counterpart in the *Almighty* God – not only in the *Loving* God.

One of the main aspects of the New Testament is the teaching of Jesus to his disciples: "I have been given all power (*Gewalt*) in heaven and earth" (Math 28:18). Consequently the disciples realise: "We have to fight the powerful rulers" (Eph 6:12) on the one hand, and "exercise neither violence nor injustice" (Luke 3:13) on the other – and all this must be lived in the pious consciousness that "the rulers have power (*Gewalt*) over us" (Rom 13:1)

The insight that Jesus holds the monopoly of power forbids *and* allows human power, and it does not hide the fact that we must live our faith in an world dominated by violence. Confronted with violence, we are required to differentiate. And the Sermon on the Mount, especially the commandment to "love our enemies" reminds us that the means to combat violence should not be borrowed from violence itself. In our fight against violence we should not allow ourselves to be infected by the virus of violence. Both in the Old and in the New Testament there is no denying that violence is real, but we are warned against overtaking it as if violence should be a theoretical and practical principle of history.

Christ says: "All power in heaven and earth belongs to *me*!" Therefore, Christians should not surrender to this real presence of violence; but they must not confuse their belief in the possibility of a world without violence with the claim that the ideal world without violence can be brought about by they themselves. There is still an 'eschatological reserve' for a world without violence, and Paul says very precisely that at the end *Christ* will destroy all ruling powers and violence – Christ, not *us*. (1 Cor 15: 24b)

So, this is the first important issue which we must mention when speaking of violence from a biblical viewpoint: Violence is a reality, an whoever emphatically denies it, is already a victim of violence because he must blot it out – thereby often treating himself or others violently. On the other hand, there is also a perspective of how to deal with violence: Violence should not exist, and whoever emphasizes only the reality and reason for it, is already a victim of it, because he blesses it.

Especially on the subject of violence, we are touching on the core of Christian belief: namely that we are living *in* this world like those who are not *of* this world, but who have hope *for* the world, which represents a surplus-value in comparison to all facts and values of this world. Christian hope for reality is *more* than realistic, and therefore it must be free to act – sometimes, and sometimes even categorically – *against* historical experiences and anthropological and psychological perceptions. If scientific anthropology would deduct the innate readiness to violence in human behaviour out of the genetic disposition of human beings, or out of the total amount of historical experiences, this could *not be ignored* as a perception of

human science. But even if this perception would be secured in general – which it is not – there is no reason why the Christian belief should readily *agree* with it, because Christian belief does not represent the total amount of human experiences in this world. Rather, it represents the insight that a person in the historical world can make *a new start*. According to Christian understanding, the pattern of history is not a cycle or circle but rather a line and arrow. History is open for the future, because the spirit of God interacts to break open the cycles of history and life circles. The circulation of violence in individual life-histories and in politics must not be *perpetuated* for ever, although they always *have been* present.

This brings the Christian belief into a difficult position when talking of violence. Let me put it this way: How should a Christian, whose aim in life is to control and avoid violence, relate to himself as a human being, who is constantly entangled with violence he cannot avoid? The Christian way of conquering violence, therefore, is always the way of conquering one's own violence and not only being aware of violence in *other* people.

One's own pacifism does not solve the problem of violence – and the violence of other people is disturbing to Christian pacifism. A person who chooses to live a peaceful life is confronted by the violence of other people, who violently take advantage of Christian pacifism – and to accept violence as a means of combating it conflicts with the basic Christian belief that it should not exist. Christian theology had to find a theoretical way of dealing with both of these problems, and after hundreds of years of debating this task is still unfinished. And some people believe that the problem of violence cannot be solved theoretically at all, but has to be discussed in every generation anew. Then, what are the leading theological viewpoints in this discussion?

IV

In the history of theological ethical discussions about violence we can find, roughly speaking, two main lines of argument:

(1) From the times of the first Christians to the Reformation and until the present day, the issue of violence was discussed in a fundamental way: Should violence exist or not?

(2) Especially in the realm of the Ecumenical bodies like the World Council of Churches (WCC) the problem of violence is discussed in a functional and contextual perspective: In fact, the Christian attitude to violence has changed throughout history, and still is changing. Doesn't this show how the attitude to violence is influenced by social-political structures? Can there really be one single ethical solution for this problem – for North and South and West and East alike, for men and women alike, for those at the bottom of the ladder or those at the top alike, for oppressors and the oppressed alike?

Reference to (1) – the fundamental debate on violence: Generally, Christians agree (and the Jews do, too) that individual self-willed violence should be rejected and that (as the Theological Declaration of Barmen has put it) "in the as yet unredeemed world in which the Church also exists, the State has by divine appointment the task of providing for justice and peace; it fulfils this task by means of the threat and exercise of force (*"Gewalt"*), according to the measure of human judgement and human ability." Especially in the German-Lutheran tradition there is the general conception that some force/violence (*Gewalt*) is necessary for

communal life, but it can and must be cultivated or civilised by the state. Beside this more Lutheran tradition, there is a more Calvinistic West-European tradition which either emphasizes the right of resistance of the individual against the authorities of the state (cf. the theologian Theodor Beza) or which tries to minimise state power through a separation of powers (cf. Montesquieu) or which desires to limit state power by including a guarantee of inalienable pre-governmental human rights (cf. John Locke). Both of these approaches were – and still are – strongly disapproved of by the peace movements and religious Pacifists. These people, understanding themselves as diligent followers of Christ, reject violence of any kind even for the best of purposes. This is the position of the so-called historical "Peace Churches" like the Mennonites and the Quakers. It seems that their position gains more and more acceptance in Christianity today.

Reference to (2) – the functional/contextual debate on violence: Today, more and more people support the thesis that it is important to know in which situation biblical statements about violence are read. No theological and ethical decision on violence is possible apart from a certain context! Two examples: In the churches of old, as soon as Christians took over official positions, they also got involved in cases of force/violence. This led to a tendency to ignore, more or less, the critical passages of the Gospel about violence. In the time after the second World War the conception grew, especially in the churches of the so-called Third World, that there may be common ethical principles, but that these have to be adapted anew in every specific situation. This should apply to the Liberation Movements as well as to the New Social Movement in old Europe, to Feminism and to parts of the Peace Movement.

Important is: Both the "fundamental debate" and the "functional debate" on violence have global and universal as well as a local and individual implications. If violence is everywhere, the solution must be sought on a global basis, even though there are only individual and local starting points at our disposal. What solutions of violence, therefore, do Christians have?

V

Our opinion about violence depends strongly on what sort of understanding of reality we, as Christians, have. And our understanding of reality is a consequence of our conception of the beginning, the development and the end of human history. To put it theologically: Our thinking about creation, about mankind and about our hope for the future is decisive in our attitude towards the problem of violence. Here, two basic models have been found worth considering in Protestant theology, and both have their implications with political and social scientific sides.

The "Realism of Creation"

Especially in the Lutheran tradition, the understanding of Creation and of Human Sin has led to the conception of a barbaric core in the human culture against which barricades must be built up, and which must be suppressed forcefully, so that humans will not harm each other. The forceful suppression of evil is the central point in this conception, and the political counterpart can be found in a conservatism, whose main political achievement lies in stressing the fact that humans have a potential for aggression which will stop at nothing, and which must be constantly kept "under control" – even by use of violence. Politically, this theo-

retical model manifests itself quite often in a pessimism that is critical towards progress. The utopia of a society without violence seems, from this point of view, to be a naive denial of the human character, that entered history in the fatal relationship of Cain and Abel. Even among people, who have accepted the Christian message, the power of evil can be kept low for a limited period only. Therefore, the use of power will follow human culture until its eschatological end.

The "Realism of Reconciliation"

In contrast to this we have a Christologically orientated human image, whose understanding is guided by the reality of the reconciliation of god with his people. Though violence is not denied as a part of this world, it can be seen in a quite different perspective. Where in the realism of creation evil (violence) can, at best, be kept under control the realism of reconciliation reflects on a world which is already reconciled through Christ. In this world which has been reconciled through Christ evil, in the form of violence, has been conquered in such a way that steps can be taken to practise non-violence to a certain extent – of course, in the knowledge that it is Jesus Christ who will in the end put a stop to all violence (1 Cor 15:24). This position favours a kind of Pacifism, which is practised not "principally" but "responsibly", that means: without disregarding the realities of the world. The *reduction of violence* would be the general rule of such a Pacifism, not the intention to overcome it completely. To keep track of violence, getting to the roots of it, to develop case studies and models to explain the source of violence, to help one another in our common readiness for violence and not to talk about it as if it was only something that affects others – this, indeed, is what is needed in the face of our crumbling moral standards.

VI

The Christian belief encourages such a *reduction of violence* in all realms of life. But from sociological and psychological studies we know, how difficult it is to put an end to violent relationships. Such relationships have a tendency to repeat again and again their internal violent structure – as Thea Bauriedl explains in a very interesting book.[6] Only a very conscious way of dealing with violence will be able to overcome this "chain reaction of violence". Here the Christian faith has a fundamental contribution to offer: A Christian knows that, through faith in God, he/she lives by a *salutary disruption* of his/her relationships to this world; he/she lives by reconciliation and God's will to be with him/her. He/she lives in opposition to the "fear of nearness" amongst humans.

In my opinion, the following results of my reflections are of importance for pastoral counselling:

(1) The Christian tradition compels us to discern the different forms of violence: Power is not just violence, ruling is not simply suppressing, there are positive and negative aspects to violence that must be differentiated.

(2) In order to deal with violence, pastoral counselling must accept it as a real phenomenon of human culture and society – as it is shown in the biblical tradition. At the same time, violence must never be principally accepted. Working for justice, freedom and peace is the *opus proprium* of Christians, the responsible use of violence is the *opus alienum*, which in turn must be derived from and must be

legitimised in front of this *opus proprium*. Therefore, the Theological Declaration of Barmen says that the State performs its duties "by means of threat and exercise of force" and not "by threat and exercise of force", because its *opus proprium* is to "provide for justice and peace".

(3) After the destruction of political "blocs" all over the world, we are no longer forced to side with one of the antagonistic parties. That means that we have a chance to get rid of our established *images of enemies*, and we should train our alertness to detect all new images of enemies wherever they are being formed. Indeed, we have the chance to expose in a self-critical manner the individual and social reasons, why people are infected by violence. This is especially important with regard to the many mechanisms of legitimising violence in competitive political groups. To initiate and to encourage contacts and meetings between such groups should be an excellent task for the Protestant church. Here counselling is of ultimate importance, because it enables individuals to soften their own stiff self-images.

(4) Theology and counselling should also reflect on the conditions which, in fact, allow them to exist. Unfortunately, in the Protestant theology in Germany there is still a certain "deficiency in democracy", caused by old antidemocratic ideas of "law and order" on the one hand and by utopian ideas of freedom on the other . Democracy is an open process. It must be secured by social institutions (which constantly have to beg for acceptance), and it relies on certain human traditions which provide for the ethical potential of democracy. A church in the democracy must care for those cultural traditions, which make democracy possible at all. Tolerance, sympathy, friendliness, politeness are some "pillars of orientation" for a democratic culture. Without it, the pastoral counselling of the Protestant church would be much more difficult.

Notes

1 On the new problems of violence among youth see (for the German context) the excellent book of Eisenberg /Gronemeyer (1993).
2 The contemporary debate on cultural violence is heavily influenced by Samuel Huntington's *The Clash of Civilisations*. For a lucid critique see the study of Thomas Meyer (1997).
3 Cf. Michael Strauß (1993), p. 572.
4 Wolfgang Lienemann (1989), p. 164.
5 Ibid., p. 165.
6 Thea Bauriedl (1993), p. 116.

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Part 4, Chapter B

Living in urban contexts

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Wolfgang Grünberg *Germany, 2000*

City – living space and form of life

topics:

- *aspects and assesments of worldwide urbanisation*
- *a structuralist (hermeneutical) "reading" of city structures*
- *the task of the church in the city*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 6, 2000; pp 3-8

Most of us come from one of our world's large towns – each of which has its own individual face. But what is the shared element the large towns of this world have in common? Their level of civilisation? Their cultural potential? Their economic elbow? Their size?

City - living space and form of life is the theme I have been given. There is a dual emphasis in the title itself, so let us begin by attempting to come to an agreement on what constitutes an urban place to live. We will then proceed to the second main section in which we attempt to come to an agreement regarding the urban or town form of living.

The bizarre nature of our task is made immediately clear if we compare two places – one of the smallest towns in Germany and one of the largest in the world. For a long time, Kappeln on the river Schlei up in the North was the smallest town in Germany. It has had a town charter for centuries, yet it has never grown larger than 2000 inhabitants. The largest town in the world is currently Tokyo-Yokohama, with more than 23 million inhabitants. What do these towns have in common with each other? How is it possible to compare them?

On a purely formal, statistical level there are, of course, points of comparison - communal self constitution, dependence on or independence of the surrounding land, relative crime rates, infant mortality per 100 births etc. But it is evident that all of that is comparatively arbitrary. We require first of all to agree at the outset on what makes a town a town. We have to state clearly what it is we wish to know. We have to disclose the academic interests by which we are guided.

The following questions are of primary interest for me today:

First of all, I want to know how we ourselves would formulate and substantiate our praise and our lament with regard to the towns we each come from - differently rooted, as we are, in our respective religious, cultural and national contexts. In doing so, I am starting from the assumption that each of us is able to raise a lament as well as a hymn of praise. What interests me is the variety of perspectives from which cities are experienced and described.

My second academic interest concerns the question of the interrelation between inner and outer spaces, in other words the question of whether a connection exists between the maps of our towns and the maps of our souls.

I intend to disclose my central assumption regarding this question at this early stage. It is as follows: Up until the end of the 19th century, the imagery by means of which emotional experience was visualised in a pre-scientific environment was determined by nature and by a form of village life which stood in close relation to nature. A change of matrix came about with the growing dominance of urban forms of living. The city is now our destiny, with the result that urban structures are increasingly taking over as the *dominant* matrix for subjective, or amateur, self understanding of emotional experience. Should this prove to be the case, then it will have fundamental consequences for pastoral work in an urban context.

Setting out from these preliminary considerations, my paper is structured as follows: I will deal with the complex phenomenon of the city as living space from three differing perspectives – from a literary, from a sociological and statistical, and from a structuralist, hermeneutical perspective:

- The city in lyric poetry – an exemplary controversy from the first third of the 20th century.
- The urbanisation of the world – a social sciences and statistical perspective.
- The city as text – a hermeneutical, structuralist perspective.
- I will close with some hypotheses for discussion.

"Sermon to the City Populace" by Richard Dehmel – an exemplary controversy

The distinguished lyric poet Richard Dehmel, who lived the major part of his life in Blankenese/Hamburg, published the following poem in 1909:

Sermon to the City Populace

Yes, great cities make you small
With stifled yearning I look
up through thousand human vapours to the sun;
My very father, who, between the giants
of his pine – and oak wood forest had
the appearance of a sorcerer,
becomes between these bragging walls
a mere rustic, aged manikin.
O, let yourselves be stirred, you thousands!
I saw how once, in starlit winter's night,
between gas lanterns' gloomy ranks
you wound, like some giant, multitudinous worm,
your way to find escape from your distress;
But then you crept into a rented hall
and heard, through smoke and beer fumes, ringing words
of freedom, equality and suchlike.
Go forth, go forth to see the growing trees:
all firmly rooted, all ready to be cultivated,

and each one rears its own way to the light.
But you, of course, have feet and fists,
no forester needs first to set up space for you,
you stand yourselves and set up penitentiary walls.
O go and take yourselves land! Land!
At the ready! Forward/ Advance![1]

Only a few comments – and no interpretation: Richard Dehmel's poem "preaches" what has become the classic urban critique of the German Youth Movement of the early 20th century with all the pathos and the high demands of a prophetic sermon – the city makes you "small", turns the forester 'walking tall' into a rustic, aged manikin. The city is extremely unhealthy, indeed, put more pointedly, it is in itself a sickness. It is nature which provides the yardstick for all that is natural or willed by God. Romantic – a Rousseauist way of thinking - retour de la nature – in other words, a concept of nature as essentially good is behind this attitude.

On the basis of this premise, a polemic is built up against proletarian revolt, which talks of revolution in beer and smoke filled halls, thus only exacerbating the unnatural chaos of the city yet further. The urban critique reaches its peak in the view that the city is not simply a "sickness" in the sense that it inverts all good, i.e. natural standards, but that, in so doing, the city becomes a penal colony: "You stand yourselves and set up penitentiary walls". Here, Dehmel refers indirectly to a humane asylum practice widespread in Medieval towns – "town air brings freedom" is a saying which still remains popular, and which refers to the legal practice whereby serfs or bondmen were able to regain their civil rights as freemen after one year's faultless residence within the walls of a town. This humane town concept is inverted to become its own opposite in the conditions of the city, which Dehmel sees reflected in Berlin's tenement blocks and back yards – the city as a sickness and as a penitentiary.

A whole rank of military commands are lined up at the end of the poem – "Forward!", "Advance!", "At the ready!", "Take yourselves land!". Dehmel's sermon, it seems, is ultimately a declaration of war, a call to battle against the cancerous growth of large towns which turn all their residents into penitentiary inmates. Can critique of the city be harder or more drastically formulated than this? It is possible to hear, behind all this, a eulogy on the colonialists, emigrating to America and "settling" in freedom, clearing and cultivating the land. Dehmel's sermon remained largely ineffective in practice, but it does reflect a pattern in a tradition, similar forms of which are also to be found in Rousseau and Tolstoy, where extremely radical critique of the town was already established. On a literary level, Dehmel's poem certainly created a furore. Rene Schickele wrote an "anti-text" a decade later, which is based directly on Dehmel's poem. I do not intend to withhold Schickele's poem from you. Its title is:

City Populace

No, here's where you should stay!
In these dejected Mays, in lacklustre Octobers,
here's where you should stay – the town is where

[1] *German Urban Lyric Poetry from Naturalism to the Present*. Reclam, Stuttgart 1973, page 211; Dehmel *ibid*, page 58f; Schickele, *ibid*, page 68

they celebrate the enticing feasts
of power and issue edicts – to make you pale –
of power, which like machines –
if we want it or no – drive us.
Because from here the weapon-laden trains dash forth
on murderous-gleaming rails,
repossessing day for day, the land.
For here is the source of the will,
boiling up in billowing waves, pressed million fold in napes of necks,
which source, in rhythmic million fold of backs
and million fold in to-and fro of limbs
surges, breaking, to the farthest shores.
Here's where you should stay!
In these dejected Mays, in lacklustre Octobers
no-one shall drive you out!
For with the town you shall subdue the earth.

Here, too, only comments, and no interpretation. Schickele analyses Dehmel's poem politically. He poses the power question. The town, according to his central thesis, is the centre of power. It is this power, and not the town as such, which is oppressive. And those who return to the countryside will never obtain freedom for everyone. Schickele very deliberately takes up the metaphor of the source and of water billowing and boiling up. He is concerned with the brutality of the power-centres in the towns, issuing edicts which steer people and have them under control like machines. Schickele was writing after 1917 and 1918, in other words, after the experience of the First World War and after the Russian October Revolution. And, while the May and October Revolutions are "lacklustre", yet "no-one shall drive you out!", and "with the town you shall subdue the earth."

As far as our interests are concerned, it is sufficient to realise that any analysis of the town without an analysis of social power and authority is naive. Put pointedly, the town conceals many prison walls, namely factories, in which the masses have to bend their backs to the rhythm of the machines, but the city is also the place in which liberation, namely revolution, is organised by the masses themselves – "Stay!" and take hold of (proletarian) power. "With the town you shall subdue the earth".

With regard to certain aspects of town praise and town critique, the two poems are not so far apart at all. The town is the scene of major conflicts. Town life is the more or less organised conflict of various powers with each other and between each other. The winners are the ones who always "have their say". What matters is winning. Only those who have power are free.

Schickele's and Dehmel's political analyses are diametrically opposed. But for both of them, the power or authority question is of fundamental importance. Allow me, in concluding this literary opening phase, to present and read to you a third literary sample - a city hymn in praise of the Berlin of the late *1920s* which fits in well with the present day New Berlin feeling. It is by Bruno Schonlank.

The City

You spring heavenwards,
You extinguish stars,

Your atmosphere sings.
The blackened chimneys tower upwards, upwards...
House crouches on house.
My blood is inflamed,
and from night to days
you are in me.
And are in me
when day addresses you
and your pool of light dies.
Drop of blood am I to your wild ecstasy,
Despair to your vague mourning
And jubilation to the drone of your chords.

Here, a completely different tone is struck. It is necessary to imagine the colourful nightlife of the late 1920s in Berlin. The city as 'theatrically' produced frenzy. The nightlife is one "wild ecstasy", although not always one of ecstatic joy. The city becomes the mythical subject of the poem – that great You, which is "in me": "Drop of blood am I to your wild ecstasy, despair to your vague mourning and jubilation to the drone of your chords."

Here, the city has become a mirror of emotional energies. Joie-de-vivre and despair, the awakening day and the dying pool of light. The individual exists "between day and night". The city as a magnifying glass for emotional forces. The town as a living stage where each and every thing is 'theatrically' produced – "My blood is inflamed".

In order to cool off, so to speak, let us now turn to a completely different approach to urban reality, taking comparatively sober stock from a sociological and statistical perspective.

The urbanisation of the world – a social sciences and statistical perspective.

Imagine for a moment that you are able to observe the earth through a powerful telescope from a space station in orbit around our planet. The course of your orbit is ingeniously calculated to enable you to recognise the world's largest "mega cities". Which towns would you see?

The UNO conference Habitat II, the subject of which was towns on our planet, took place in 1996 in Istanbul. For this purpose, 40 of the largest towns in the world were included in comparative statistics for the year 1990 and a prognosis for the year 2000 presented for them. You have these statistics in front of you, along with a ranking of the 30 largest towns in the world.

It is quite impossible to interpret these statistics here, and I am more concerned to draw a new, unparalleled historical phenomenon – namely that of the mega cities – to our attention and to let this impression sink in, so that we can take leave of our Euro-centric perspective with regard to this phenomenon too.

It is only necessary to take a brief look at history in order to recognise the dramatic growth of the new phenomenon of the giant towns. The most ancient of the world's towns all lay in the Mediterranean area. For a long time Jericho, with its 8000-year history, was regarded as the world's oldest town. The current estimate speaks of an urban history amounting to ca. 10,000 years. It is difficult to estimate

the population of these ancient royal towns. They probably amounted to something between 2,000 and 10,000 inhabitants. The largest town in the ancient world was Rome, which had a population of ca. 1 million in he year 100 A.D. Rome remained at the top of the league globally until the year 1800, when London's population crossed the 1 million mark. Up until this point, some 15% of the world's population lived in towns, and 85% lived in the countryside. The world population is estimated as having been ca. 1,000 million in the year 1800.

In the year 2000, 3,000 million people – or 50% of the world's population of some 6,000 million - will be living in large towns. There are currently more than 20 giant metropolises globally, each with more than 10 million inhabitants. In addition to these, there are 35 towns with more than 5 million inhabitants each (cf., for example, the population of Norway at ca. 5 million, or that of Israel, at 4.5 million).

Statistics can be boring, but we ought, nevertheless, to cast a glance at the map of the world with its 30 largests towns (based on 1990 fires). London ranks 13th, Moscow 17th, and Paris 22th in the list. The Euro-centric perspective, to which I myself naturally am also prone, is quite out of date as far as the future of urban living is concerned. This is made utterly clear if we look at the distribution of these 30 major towns throughout the continents of the earth.

16 of them are in Asia, 4 in South America or Central America, 3 in North America, 3 in Europe, and 3 in Africa. At this point, at the very latest, it should be plainly evident that we urgently require clearly defined terminology and internationally valid categories to differentiate between the specific types and sizes of towns. In Germany, as has already been mentioned, any town with more than 100,000 inhabitants is legally regarded as a city. A further practical differentiation is made between towns with a million or more inhabitants, and the megacities, which each have more than 10 million inhabitants. But these means of differentiation are far too imprecise, as well as working from the assumption that the number of inhabitants is the decisive factor for urban typology – a view which is highly disputed. Are the millions-strong towns London and Peking particularly suited for comparison, simply because they have a roughly comparable number of inhabitants?

Up until now we have pursued two differing perspectives – the subjective one of poetry and the objective one of statistics. Are they complementary? Or do they relativise each other? Or are they on such utterly disparate levels that they have no effect on each other?

Categories such as town and countryside, power-centres and authority, oppressed, normed existence and 'walking tall' - none of these had any role to play in the lists of statistical figures. Even if we were to make the effort to plough our way through the remaining columns of figures, in search of crime-rate or education, for instance, our view of the phenomena would still remain superficial! How, then, are we to find interpretative methods which have a chance of penetrating further into the reality of the matter? Let us attempt a third approach.

The city as text – a hermeneutical, structuralist perspective.

Each town is a text. It has narrative character. The question is, who can and who does read it? You probably know the *bon mot* "History is his story". Each town – at least this is a Biblical, as well as an Ancient Greek observation – defines itself in its foundation myth. There is no town which is not in a permanent state of change without, perhaps for this very reason, extolling its identity and its permanence in legends, myths and tales. These tales often adhere to ancient buildings, to individuals and to conflicts. But the same is true for the present and for present-day urban changes – communities are continually writing and formulating their self-understanding in the form of symbols, signs and tales. In fact, present-day Berlin, where we are holding our conference, is an impressive case in point. I am not talking about journalists and media experts with their continuously-produced commentaries. Nor do I mean the advertising on the street corner. I mean something more elementary. Each life leaves behind traces. Each trace is an interpretation. And each town is a phenomenally rich treasury of traces. Semiotics talk of sign systems, but for me, that is too formal. Let us orientate ourselves on an example from Berlin.

There is an interesting peripheral aspect which is seldom discussed in the debate about the holocaust monument near the Brandenburg Gate in the centre of Berlin. One particular trace of the darkest period of Germany's history lay, preserved but inaccessible, in the shadow of the Berlin Wall between Potsdam Square and the Brandenburg Gate – the site of the *Führer's* bunker in the Chancellery of the Reich. It was from here that Hitler issued his commands. It was here that he took his own life. Both the Chancellery of the Reich and the bunker were blown up and attempts made to level the site out. But anyone who knows where the site was can detect a slightly raised area - this is where the criminal centre of it all was to be found. The traces were there - and at the same time they were covered over. This is the rule, as everyone knows who ever searched for traces such as animal tracks. And those who understand how to read them will find tales and narratives opening up, so that they assume a changed approach to the place in future. They sense that there are no such things as a neutral places, but only those which have been marked or which bear meaning. And so each town has a topography of terror, a topography of pleasure, a topography of cultural and religious expression. All of these traces are no longer present in isolation, but are superimposed on each other.

The planned holocaust monument by Peter Eisenmann is directly adjacent to the site of the Chancellery of the Reich. The suspicion readily arises that here, by means of this central memorial in Berlin, the murder victims are to be belatedly given back their civil rights, thereby exorcising the looming shadow which even a mere heap of rubble in the immediate vicinity is still able to cast. At any rate, the aim is to prevent the *Führer's* bunker becoming a centre for Nazi pilgrimages. While on the subject, the prison in Berlin Spandau in which the *Führer's* deputy, Rudolf Hess, was imprisoned until his death, was blown up after he died. New buildings have been erected on the site. There should be nothing to bear witness to this prison or to this man. Here too, in my opinion, the justified fear of possible Nazi tourism had a role to play. Both of these examples not only bear testimony to the difficulties involved in reading tracks and traces, even if they are (supposed to be) covered over. They also testify, so to speak, to a "mythical" element behind town planning. One of the intentions behind erecting the holocaust memorial at precisely this site, I suspect, is to "exorcise" the Nazi shadow of Adolf Hitler.

The attempt to “read” a town as a “text” would then also be concerned not so much with reading it neutrally as with becoming aware of it – the town – as a mirror of emotional life forces which, depending on the school we adhere to and the terminology we use, we would term the death impulse and the life impulse.

If only we were to read the places we live in just as the archaeologists read Jerusalem or Rome!

Our towns are worlds of living and dying, built up layer upon layer. Beneath us, the levels of history are to be found, and the future will one day cover over our layer and our traces with new plans, signs, and traces. History is a resilient material. It is impossible to be rid of it. Just as consciousness is a single – relatively thin – layer within the much larger unconscious, so too, the currently valid structure of a town is only a single stratum or layer between the debris of the past and that of the future.

It is said of Hitler’s master architect Albrecht Speer that he not only drew up plans for Hitler of the New Berlin which was conceived of as the centre of the "thousand-year empire". He had also prepared some sketches of how buildings such as the vast "People’s Hall", which was to be erected in the centre of Berlin, would one day - after thousands of years - still bear witness as magnificent ruins to the splendour of the Third Reich for eternity. Hitler was furious (the conversation took place during the Second World War) and rejected the ruin sketches as an outrageous impertinence – “These edifices will remain standing for eternity!”

This story tells something of the dialectics involved in searching for traces. It provides hermeneutics with which to read a town. Towns are constructed worlds of living and dying. They are desires which have taken form, but they are also imprecations, they are curses and conjugations. They are constructed dreams as well as nightmares. Whereby it is important not to think in alternatives, but to use a species of additive dialectics in our attempts at decoding.

Once it is accepted that we always have built the niches we inhabit on top of earlier historic worlds of living and dying, then that alone ought to make plain that each town bears, within itself, multifarious history and interpretation, hidden as well as manifest, and fascinating as well as horrifying. The “text” of a town, in other words, is neither unequivocal nor merely ambiguous, but polyphonic, many-voiced. Yet it is not arbitrary.

It is therefore also possible to speak of a “musical score”, which we would have to reconstruct as the inner code of urban living or which, as far as the present is concerned, we would require to construe as an open ended process. Fundamental questions relating to constructivism, de-constructivism and hermeneutics ought to be discussed at this point, but they shall have to be omitted here.

Let us remain on the practical level. There is a decisive tool which assists the art of reading a town. It is a question of finding exemplary sites in the town, the piled-up layers of living and dying in which are able to tell of past hopes and fears, prides and pains, and by virtue of which they ‘provoke’ and inspire not only the invention of present-day tales of the good life and of warding off evil, but also the consequent translation of these dreams of the better life into stone, i.e. into buildings.

As far as I am concerned, such exemplary sites include churches, town halls, monuments, graveyards, but also hospitals, schools, in short “public buildings”. Such places are of prominent importance in the analysis of a town. They contain

within them the memory, the conscience and the aspirations of a community, as well as its sorrows and its failures.

Such buildings can be read as sites of concentrated symbolism in which the town as living space has especially found a characteristic form of life which can help us to decode the ABC of the town. The specific identity of a place is literally saved by such concentrated and usually highly symbolic buildings. There is a highly interesting theory, according to which historic or religious 'primeval' sites - when linked in line with each other - together represent a specific identity code for a certain district or a certain town, thus literally keeping that which is specific about this particular living space (its profile) "alive", in other words protecting and preserving the genius loci (Neddens).

I cannot expound this theory in detail here, but it is plausible *ex negativo*. - In the 1960s, new housing schemes and high-rise ghettos were "thrown up" throughout the western world, leading to orientation difficulties on the part of residents due to their visual uniformity and monotony. Everything was standardised and identical. There was no single house, no single block of flats with an individually recognisable text. Vandalism quickly became established. Graffiti appeared everywhere. And once again it had become possible to describe where you were: "I live in the house with the black-and-yellow dragon at the entrance. Press the burnt button in the lift. That's the 7th floor. Go towards the potted palm. That's where I live."

Could it not have been possible to achieve this desire for the concrete "legibility" of my house entrance by means of town planning more geared to human needs? It is, of course, and post-modern architecture is an answer to the functional urban development of these decades.

The hermeneutics for "reading" a house, a street or a district are everywhere analogous. – We first require exemplary code breakers in order to discover the ABC, and not only local traditions and individual persons, but also exemplary sites or situations which cry out to be "read" can assist us in doing so.

The town as a form of life and the role of the churches – some concluding theses

1. The city is our fate. There is no longer any 'Isle of the Blessed'. Communication technology and entertainment electronics (TV, PC, mobiles, fax, Internet, etc.) have made of us all inhabitants of virtual metropolises, no matter where we live.

2. Every town is becoming a sub-branch of the global village. In reality, the one world has open borders. And so the opportunities and the problems of all corners of the world spill over medially, emotionally and mentally into the remotest village.

3. Globalisation not only renders the globe smaller and more comprehensible. There will also be an increase in forms of resistance to global trends. In the ideological sector this is fundamentalism. (Nationalism can be interpreted as regional fundamentalism).

4. Cities are stratified spheres where village, small town, city and metropolitan structures overlap. These are matched by emotional, social and mental orientations of varied scope. (With the mind of a cosmopolitan, the heart of a villager, the actions of a petty bourgeois etc.)

5. Emotionally speaking, we are still very much strangers, insecure, out of our depth and homeless in the "global village". Nevertheless, the global village is increasingly becoming the matrix of emotional conditions. The homelessness of the "cosmopolitan" renders him vulnerable. Since autonomy is growing increasingly difficult, there is a desire for "obsession", to surrender one's individual self, to submerge oneself in collectivity.

6. The role of religion as a "transportable homeland" will become increasingly important, while the influence of Protestantism with its ethical orientation on an autonomous subject (conscience) will wane.

7. The city is a complex, polyphonic score/text, which, in principle, is analogous to an "emotional landscape". This is the moment of truth of the polis concept with its referral correlation between kosmos and psyche (kosmos, polis, anthropos).

8. The simultaneousness or synchronism of all epochs in a town landscape with its more or less repressed or consciously present traces corresponds, in its synchronism and in its repression, to the "emotional diary" of individual biographies.

9. Urban or city experiences can cause emotional traumatisation to break out anew, but they can also be balm for certain wounds.

10. Just as human beings undergo change throughout their life, so too towns are to be regarded as "living entities" which undergo change. A "finished" or completed town is a dead town. A measure of the vitality of a town is seen as being its ability to "self-transcend", i.e. its ability to grow, both outwardly and inwardly.

11. The question thus arises of identity amidst so much change. The search for identity as a never-ending process? Can a town "die" as a person does – or is the "processal" eternity of a town a new metaphor for human changes up to and beyond death?

12. Churches are "time houses". In them, past, present and future are symbolically present in equal degrees. They are likewise "world houses", since all four points of the compass are gathered in them – East (orientation towards Jerusalem) and West, North, South. They are memories and expectations (hopes) which have been given structure and shape. They are "clearing points" of the soul, points of asylum for repressed emotions and for the literally persecuted, places of remembrance and workshops for the town of the future.

Michael A. Mata *USA, 2000*

Reading from the urban text

Challenges and possibilities of diversity for pastoral care

topics:

- *the image of global urbanisation*
- *problems for children and youth in cities*
- *religions in cities*
- *the task of the church in the urban context*

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Introduction

I write this article as a third-generation American of Mexican descent who served for seventeen years as part of a pastoral team of a multicultural congregation in a highly diverse and mobile community in central Los Angeles and as one trained in urban planning. I do not assume that these experiences make me an expert but they afford me with an appreciation of and an approach to mission in the urban context that has proven useful in my own ministry. What I present is not so much any significant insights or information as an attempt to heighten our awareness about certain dynamics within the urban setting that can shape and expand our role as nurturers of the soul. I trust that you find something in what I share with you helpful and encouraging in your own endeavors to be effective and faithful nurturers of the soul.

A reading from the urban text: The 'global village'

Jaime Lerner, the ecologically-friendly architect and daring former mayor of Curitiba (Brazil), once declared, "If life is the art of encounter, then the city is the setting for encounter."

Once you start looking for them, these encounters are everywhere: That my wife and I should be sitting in a small restaurant in the historic Roman city of Bath (England) sipping on an Australian drink served by a Bolivian waiter to the strains of American jazz. Or eating breakfast one morning in a Korean-owned Mexican cafe in a Central-American neighborhood of Los Angeles only to return the next day to find it became a T-shirt shop the next. Mosques in Copenhagen. Elderly Russian emigrates huddled around a chess board enveloped by Turkish cigarette

smoke in a Hollywood park. These are no longer encounters with the exotic but the sights, sounds and smells of a new world reality; these local multicultural manifestations reflect powerful forces at play on the global scale.

The radical technological and economic changes of the last quarter century have transformed cities into vital links of an highly interconnected global village. With this global transformation has come the evolution of a cultural perspective that, for better or worse, is decidedly urban-oriented, technology-based, and market-driven and in turn raises provocative questions about role of pastoral care providers in this new context.

Cultural invasion and innovation

Cultural invasion and innovation is nothing new. It has been with us since before the first camel caravan ventured afar and certainly from the time Alexander the Great spread Helenism from the Nile to the Ganges. Where new ideas once advanced at the pace of wandering caravans or advancing armies, they are now spread instantly by satellites bringing Hollywood's fantasies and Madison Avenue's commercials to places as widely separated and isolated as the Alaskan tundra, Guatemalan highlands and Kenyan bush.

It has been said that the formation of culture is the process of the telling of stories. Today's far-reaching signals have new tales to tell of affluence, freedom and power--translating cities like New York, Los Angeles, London, Paris into worldwide symbols of the good life. The implicit message in all this is that it is possible to actively take control of one's situation and change one's fate in the city. Well-advertised air routes and cheap fares have turned far away cities into magnets for millions of people who leave their homelands in search of the more glamorous and exciting life they have seen on the screen or heard in the beat of a song played on the radio.

Far from uniform, the emerging global culture is a shifting mixture of experimentation and innovation in which more and less developed societies learn and benefit from one another. The old and new are mutually transformed, ignoring and adopting elements of one another, each mutating almost immediately in the process. Indeed, these transformations take place almost invisibly, without the conscious decisions of the people affected. Yet even under repressive governments – which are ineffectual in curtailing the flow of information – nearly all sectors of the village are subject to what can be called "cultural fusion" or in the curious parlance of social scientists "cultural synchronization." The fear is that Western – often rightly equated with American – influences will ultimately homogenize every cultural nuance into one big "McWorld".

Many changes wrought by this trend, such as the growing demand for freedom of expression and to experiment, can be positive. Other are less desirable: greater competition among people groups at the lower rungs of the economic ladder and alienation from nature. The price of a shrunken world is an uneasy balance between vitality and chaos, health and disease, enterprise and corruption, art and iniquity. This delicate balance always threatens to tip, and when it does, cities can spiral into an anarchy that defies all attempts at reversal. From Belfast, where religious hatred spawns terror, to Los Angeles, where beating of a black motorist by police triggered a rampage of looting and arson, city dwellers have paid a horrible price when ethnic and political tensions boiled to the surface.

Images of the city

These evolutionary and revolutionary processes and some of their repercussions that I have highlighted are visible in the spatial context of our global village – our cities. That is, within the urban built environment there are clear signs of the emerging (postmodern?) cultural reality. Admittedly, the term "city" conjures up a wide variety of images: grottos of slow moving vehicles; a medley of old buildings used in ways for which they were not designed; clean-edged, bland-surfaced rectanguloids; squalor as well as luxury; industry, offices, shops, artist lofts and houses of worship. There are, of course, all manner of cities containing a plethora of experiences. In addition, all sorts of factors-demographic, economic, ecological, theological and so on – interweave to form the living, vibrant and imperfect miniature world that is a city. In turn all of these dynamic variables interact with and are affected by its built substance: some of it is beautiful and good to be in, some of it aggravates the human condition. But the interplay contributes to the creation of new and intriguing patterns of social life and interaction. Cultural invasion and innovation, to what is happening on a global scale. It provides us as well with clues about conditions affecting human life within this emerging (postmodern?) urban world. Let me read from the text.

Since the founding of the first city some 6,000 years ago in the Tigris and Euphrates Valleys, cities have shaped the political, intellectual and moral character of our societies. They are the centers of communication, commerce, creativity and cultural life. At first glance, the complex design and structure of the city can be overwhelming. Once the grand cities were composed of elegant villas and imposing beaux arts office buildings, now gleaming new skyscrapers have shot up to crowd and jostle the skyline. On closer examination we find that the values, hopes, and struggles of those forming our new multicultural urban world are not only reflected on their faces and demeanor but are distinctively etched into the urban landscape itself. Architectural style and urban design have as much to say about the promotion of certain values and cultural perspectives as they have about the role and function of structures or neighborhoods.

Take for example, the Westin Hotel in downtown Los Angeles. When construction of this thirty-five storied, tri-cylinder structure was completed there was no doubt that the building spoke of power, privilege and prestige. Its style was to appeal to the kind of people who benefited from the emerging global economy and could afford to eat, stay and play there. Its mirrorfaced wall prevented those on the outside from peering in. The style and surface materials of the hotel intentionally established boundaries. Those without the means were to be satisfied with simply traveling on the external elevators up to the revolving bar on top of the building. Ironically, the fickle economy of the late 1980s forced a change in ownership and in marketing. Today, the hotel is a popular spot for secondary school events and attracts a more economically eclectic clientele--the former patrons have found other bounded spaces in which to recreate.

An example of urban design are the so-called suburbs or exclusive Cultural invasion and innovation. They were initially planned when cultural exclusion was an openly avowed goal of suburban development. None of those tracts has been unbuilt, and few of them are fully integrated. Except in the way that the suburban flats of inner cities have been integrated. We now have city neighborhoods designed as artificial suburbs or shaped by a singular idea plucked from a period in

history. Some have emerged as "gated" or "guarded" communities. Again, entrance is restricted and, in this case, physically as well as economically. Those "on the inside" are isolated not only from those outside the barriers but from one another. It is rare to get close enough to your neighbors to introduce yourselves, since in most instances the only common space is the street The lack of a public spaces or integrated commercial districts means that residents are utterly dependent on their cars for everything from church to sandwiches; moving from the house to the attached garage, then into the car, and away from the neighborhood, encased in a metal shell, to distant facilities, seldom encountering a familiar face. The older planned communities which were built on the edge or outside of the city forced many to endure long commutes to and from work leaving little time for family or community life. For youth there is often nothing to do and no place to do it. Isolation seems to have been a presupposed desired value. The consequence of this emotional starvation is stunted souls. The family values of those who don't suffer economically died of hunger somewhere during the long commute home or to sterile environments. It should come as no surprise that the youth of these communities are restless and frustrated.

Cities - places of human activities

Urban form is never innocent of social content: it is merely the grid within which we organize our daily lives. The built environment is part of the biography of what it means to be human; it contains the memory of events and ideas that help shape human life. At the same time, people infuse the city with life, they exude culture and they express it in distinctive and novel ways. In the same manner that the city can be an imposing amalgam of structures it is a place of human activities that can be just as complex and overwhelming. If there is one distinct feature about this social dimension of the emerging urban reality it is the increasing diversity of the city's residents. Immigration deepens ethnic diversity and sustains ethnic enclaves, regional migration creates geographic subcultures, and divisions along color lines reinforce their own kind of diversity. Communities forged along lines of generational or sexual preference have emerged and will increasingly strive to exert influence.

People in all parts of society strive to create a better life or sense of wholeness for themselves and their families; in the city they compete with other values to build the appropriate environment. The style of the structures erected or reconfigured for work and living quarters reveal that the emphasis is often on utilitarian and photogenic qualities rather than the nurturance of the human spirit. Nonetheless, people living in cities seem always to muster the needed resources to explore what lies beyond humanity's reach or understanding. It is no small wonder then that the creativity, color, brightness, and vibrancy of life that is found in the city take on kaleidoscopic dimensions that reverberate throughout the urban landscape.

A look within neighborhood shops or corner shopping malls reveals the cosmopolitan character of the evolving city. They are places where the material needs and desires of its new residents are clearly evident. Inviting and descriptive signage advertise what products are being sold. The products themselves, the types and costs, are indicators of who would most likely frequent a particular shop. Koreans transform neighborhoods into their own likeness in Los Angeles just as Indians and Pakistanis have in London. Immigrants from Asia have established col-

onies in virtually all the major cities. Indeed, this hypermobility has been a huge factor in the creation of an increasingly borderless world.

Whether they come to the city from across the ocean or border there are dreams at stake. Migrants bring dreams not only for themselves but their children and their children's children. The vegetation planted in the garden, the religious artifacts in the windows, the color of paint chosen for a shop can say much about the values, hopes and desires of those who live or work in the city. Some of these hopes are fulfilled and others shattered. In the day-to-day experience, the struggles and the pains of life are ever present and often become so much part of the landscape that we function as though they do not exist. Daily we walk pass the evidences of failed dreams.

Vulnerable groups in cities

To be sure, the struggle to sustain life – or simply to survive – takes on a creative but disparate edge in our new world. The presence of the consummate recyclers-picking up debris left in public places and rummaging through private garbage--reminds us that not all have found what they had sought to find in the city. (Nevertheless, our communities gain by their exacting labor; our streets and parks are cleaner and our dumps not as full.) The lines outside a Blood Plasma Center or the prostitute on the corner remind us that when legitimate and acceptable avenues of maintaining life are limited or non-existent, people find other ways of generating the means to sustain themselves. Increasingly scenes like these will not be restricted to certain parts of town. This is our world today struggling, conflicted, a world where people find themselves on one side of the prosperity-poverty fence, with most on the poverty side. Those without the means to move, the access to technology and information or the proper status are increasingly finding themselves subject to the dis-empowering affects of the rapidly changing and market driven world. These are the "new poor".

In the city they are vulnerable to being marginalized and forgotten. Cultures placing a high value in family or clan loyalty must now contend with changing priorities that blunt age-old traditions like caring for one's parents. Sadly, the elderly fear being abandoned on the streets by their adult children who have been caught up in the pursuit of material success. Ambiguity about the future wrought by new patterns of social interaction within this context can be unsettling.

Children and youth

Children are also vulnerable. They are politically and economically dependent; they don't have a vote, they cannot earn a living. They are at the mercy of adults for guidance, for a sense of security, and for love. (Are we able to provide that? Can we offer them safe and stimulating places to play and learn?)

One of the tragic specters of the pursuit of happiness translated into purely economic and material terms are the people living on the streets. Whether because of failed public policy, personal afflictions or exhausted resources homeless people do not have access to secure the lodging or care they need. Nevertheless, they as well desire a sense of identity and place – a sense of community and belonging. As such, they have at times taken over open space and transformed it into personal space. Their make-shift "urban camps" are considered an eyesore to some but

few of us would actually walk up to them and intrude into their space. The use of space by homeless persons is clear evidence that the steel and concrete urban landscape is invitingly malleable. Our use of space demonstrates that fact.

For example, youth are quite adept at modifying space. When sitting places prove inadequate they sit on other structures like low free standing walls. Once that act is executed that space is converted: the wall is now a bench and the bench itself becomes a footstool. Public space can become intimate space when a romantic kiss is exchanged. A blank wall on a building becomes the canvass of free-lance artists or the space to declare the territorial influence of a local youth gang. The patch of land in front of the house or apartment building is now a vegetable garden. We as urbanites are constantly changing space, freeing up space, converting space-working into it who we are and what moves us.

Religions in cities

Religious traditions, the spiritual dimension of the urban context, provide yet another and, perhaps, most provocative texture to the built landscape. Traditional and established Judeo-Christian forms of religion are still very present in Western Society. Their places of worship remain impressive in their architectural style but the activities inside are increasingly disconnected from the change around them. However, contrary to popular thought, the built environment testifies that religion is alive and well in the emerging urban world. It just isn't always Christian.

While historic forms of religion continue to attend to the spiritual needs of their traditional constituencies they now have to be understood in relation to a host of different and evolving religious expressions. As people move to a new land or city they carry with them their beliefs and understanding of the sacred. It should not be too surprising then to find even in the most ordinary of neighborhoods, transplanted expressions of world religions and sects. Asian architectural design may reveal a Buddhist temple in the community. A Muslim tower on the urban horizon testifies to the growing global presence of the Islamic faith.

The built environment further demonstrates that the religious community is not only about influencing how people conduct their lives but about transforming buildings and space as well. A neighborhood house in Central Los Angeles is now international headquarters of the Evangelical Holiness Mission Center of America just two houses up from a Buddhist Center. Who is evangelizing whom? The answer is not clear, but the evidence in the landscape suggests that buildings are indeed being converted. In the middle of Los Angeles, two blocks from an holiness church, one block from a former Sephardic synagogue (now a Korean Presbyterian church), four blocks from a historic Presbyterian church, three blocks from the founding Church of Religious Science, a vacated mortuary is transformed into an Islamic Center. Every Friday at noon the Islamic hour of worship the neighborhood becomes a Muslim community. Scenes like these punctuate the urban landscape – ever transforming, converting space into sacred place. A telling sign of humanity's yearning for spirituality sustenance.

New religious expressions proliferate in the city. They are as controversial as the Church of Scientology and as provocative as the selfrealization movement. Within the Hispanic landscape herbal medicinal shops sell religious artifacts. The "Botanica" as it is called is sometimes affiliated with Santeria, one of those syncretistic religions that have come from the Caribbean via Latin America. Charis-

matic or Pentecostal groups are aggressively competing with Santeria vying for the loyalty among Central Americans.

These "religious artefacts" in the built environment point to the irreducible fact of religious pluralism and other sources of cultural diversity. There as well hopeful signs of intercultural community building within the changing sacred landscape. Traditional forms take on new shapes as old-line churches open their doors to other ethnic and faith expressions. We see that different ethnic groups not only reside in the same community but even their respective religious expressions come together if not to worship in concert then to share the same roof. A Lutheran Church shares its facility with a Korean Reform church. A Hispanic Pentecostal church cohabitates with a Korean Presbyterian church. A Disciples' congregation shares it sanctuary with a Jewish congregation in order to celebrate the Jewish High Holy Days together.

The quest for hope and meaning

There was a time when virtually all of our European and American ancestors and missionaries could imagine no substitute for the church. Now the church must compete for attention with a host of alternative pursuits, not to mention the forces creating the new urban world. The Christian story as articulated in the physical landscape now seems to survive in random vestiges. Sometimes these remnants blend into the larger terrain and become hidden or lost.

In a kinetic and kaleidoscopic postmodern environment as the city, we as Christians must be concerned about who we are and what we are about. How are we to be defined? Do we stand for exclusivity or engender an attitude of acceptance? Do we foster ethnic or class reconciliation? Do we embody an ethic of service and caring? Do we bring a moral dimension to public life? Do we represent justice and mercy? Do we promote a deeper relationship to God? Do we reflect anything more than cultural ethnocentrism? Do we encourage economic and environmental responsibility? If these values are what define us as Christians, are they an integral part of the pastoral care enterprise?

Amidst the complexity and richness of the landscape of our new urban world – no matter the class, color of skin, cultural heritage or creed – the quest for hope and meaning is very evident. It is part and parcel of the human journey. To be sure, some continue to seek to find it in status and wealth, but all are somehow searching for something more, reaching for tomorrow.

Those who feel locked out of mainstream society, who feel and are vulnerable, may at time not feel that they free to be all that God created them to be. In the struggle for light in a setting of darkness, are the majority of the residents of the global village. These are my neighbors and yours; the grandfather, the recently arrived immigrant, the young, the unemployed, the troubled, the hope-filled, the depressed.

In the midst of the challenges posed by the new urban world can we express our faith boldly enough? Is there a place for it? Can we still bring light into a world of darkness? Ultimately, how will we bring the good news of hope and healing to the inhabitants of our new urban world – or simply to the boy next door?

A reading from the text – the mission of the church

The global dimensions of the contemporary urban world sets new challenges as new technologies and communications alter the way we live and relate. The polyethnic, multicultural character of the urban landscape raises some profound questions as to the locus and mission of the church. I am not trying to identify or advance particular issues nor suggest specific stands that Christians should affirm. I do believe, however, that as nurturers of the soul we can make a substantive contribution to this new era but in a manner perhaps different from the way it contributed during the past. A broadening of our understanding of pastoral care may indeed help us to address the fissures in society that we know all too well. Our intent being to infuse the world signs of hope and healing. Let me comment on some areas to explore.

Community-building

The quest for community will be increasingly difficult in the coming years as technological and communication innovations foster new patterns of social life. Certainly the rise of small groups or self-help groups reflects the need for community. Internet chat rooms as well affirm the impulse to link. So do youth gangs! But they are no substitute for community to which Jesus call us. Not discounting their benefits, sooner or later, people will discover that these groups, virtual communities and associations do not suffice. Nurturing the soul of an individual entails facilitating stronger networks of community that hold us accountable and helps to move outward.

The role of the Church *may* well go beyond community-building among believers. Admittedly, it may be tough going within a diverse and fluid urban culture and yet in the long run more rewarding for the Christian Church to effect coalitions with neighborhood groups, and civic associations to work for broad objectives of economic, environmental, social and cultural justice. More important, the community-building may prove to be a viable vehicle by which the message of the gospel can be clearly articulated and affirmed within the public arena.

Peace-building

But the pastoral care-provider will be faced with much more than the task of bridging individuals and groups. Racial, ethnic, and regional divisions continue

to be significant in the urban context, despite great opportunities for connection and exchange. The widening chasm between the “haves” and the “have nots”, both politically and economically, will only exacerbate divisions corresponding to ethnic and geographic lines of separation.

Significant change cannot occur without conflict. One of the lessons learned from observing the emerging urban world is that the fault lines are seldom static or easily discernible. For example, just when it appeared that boundaries between political and geographic rivals were beginning to erode new tensions have appeared. Ideological battles are likely to be waged on numerous fronts, challenging religious leaders, both lay and clergy, to be responsibly involved in these conflicts as peace-builders. Moreover, attention must be given to the smaller or less vocal communities whose importance may have been overshadowed by such tensions.

Mid-wives to a new people

The fact of the matter is that we are embarking on a global path that tests the notion of race and ethnicity as anthropological categories. Biracial and multiethnic families are no longer an anomaly but paradigm for human interaction. Contemporary social analysts are hard pressed as to what to call it. Jose Vasconcelos some seventy years ago gave us the term in his seminal work *La Raza Cosmica* (The Cosmic Race). In that book he wrote about *mestizaje* (from "mestizo", meaning "mixed" or hybrid). This mestizaje speaks of a "new people" originating from two or more ethnically disparate people. In fact, we only need to look at Latin Americans to gain a glimpse of what this mestizaje might look like. They reflect the biological mixture of European, Amerindian and African blood. But the pioneers of the new urban world, as the global marketing forces have already discerned, may well be our youth.

Our world cities have become incubators of a bold new mix of humanity. Our youth have created new social classifications for themselves: white chocolate, funky Aztecs and honorary homegirls. Such definitions in an ever-transfiguring urban world wreak havoc with stubborn conventional stereotypes and archaic notions about ethnic or national identity.

On one level, today's global teenager exemplifies the *mestizaje*, the new cosmic race of Vasconcelos' vision, in that they deny any pretense to "cultural purity"; and they integrate into one the existing races or ethnic groups. At the same time, as already mentioned, mere association does not make for community. Nor is a collection of people a community.

The message of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. reverberates in the urban village today: the beloved community must be lifted up. They shall know us by our love. The message is clear: we are to proclaim unity not uniformity, among our neighbors of the new urban village. In the spirit of reconciliation a new sense of peoplehood is being called forth. We must be prepared to nurture the progenitors so that a healthy birth is experienced.

Messengers of hope

Besides ethnic diversity and religious pluralism, the global village appears to be characterized increasingly by consumerism. The consumer culture so evident in nearly every billboard or commercial strip is driving people to work harder just to keep up, partly because they feel they need the material amenities of a comfortable life. They have confused standard of living for quality of life. Ultimately, the "American Dream," whether it be the domestic or international version, will reveal itself to be elusive for most people. At the same time, the problems of the needy and disadvantaged are likely to become even more severe and not so distant. These dynamics point out that the old questions about God and Mammon, about wealth and injustice, development and stewardship, undoubtedly, will resurface even more vigorously.

Clearly the challenges ahead require a sober assessment of the economic future. But taking our Christian faith seriously argues strongly for an optimistic appraisal of the future. Perhaps Christianity's greatest contribution lies in the very orientation it poses toward the future itself. The Christian faith has always included a

central message of hope; something learned from those who have struggled on the margins. As the world is being reshaped, that message will clearly be needed as never before.

Concluding remarks

As we enter the next millennium every aspect of what we call the urban context is indelibly marked by the powerful changes emanating from the globalization of our world and the advances within technology. The profound transformations in peoples, institutions, demography and topography are evident in the new urban reality. The continuous class and ethnic conflict, internal social disorder (communal, familial and individual), spiritual movements, and patterns of geographic mobility and economic stress have become part of the our urban terrain. Our mission of sharing the transformative power of hope seems never to have been more urgent.

Above all else it is not so much what we are to do in the cultural reality as what the context of globality does to us. My hope is that we will be able to experience acceptance, care and support as we come to grips with this new urban reality. In the hopes that in the process we discover more fully what it means to live as God's people. It is the context in which we can understand our lives and interpret our own stories and experiences in light of a common memory and vision. In the end, we are given the ability to act corporately and individually in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ in our lives – in every aspect.

Stephan de Beer *South Africa, 2000*

Nurturing and building community

The challenge of pastoral care in urban South Africa

topics:

- *theological method for an analysis of urban processes*
- *problems of urbanisation in South Africa*
- *responses of the church to urbanisation*
- *pastoral practise and community-building in urban context*

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Introduction

We live in a world that is increasingly urban – for the first time in history more than 50% of the world's population live in cities. More than 75% of the people of South Africa live in urban areas. I live in Pretoria, the capital city of South Africa, which is growing at a tremendous rate, as is Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town. Some of our larger urban communities have doubled within the past five years; yet, the church-at large has probably not yet come to terms with the reality of the urban challenge.

In Genesis 1 we are called into close communion with God and each other. We are called to be good managers of God's creation. But these relationships of intimacy and communion have been destroyed. Today, in the cities of the world, we are called to restore communion. All over the world there seems to be a new hunger for communion with God, for living in community, probably because this has become such a scarce item. And if we are called to be managers of God's creation today and in the new millennium, we better learn how to live and work in cities - because this is where the majority of people are.

We now live in a broken world of broken nations and broken cities and broken people. It is the same everywhere – in Berlin, in Pretoria, in Calcutta. Yet, God wants to restore communion to his people, and to the places where his people are supposed to live.

Community-building as pastoral response

In this paper I want to speak about the challenge of community – to nurture and to build community in the cities of South Africa. This refers not only to the community of Christians or disciples, but also to the secular community, the community

of citizens, the community of humanity, the communities in which we walk and live and work every day.

I want to suggest that this goal is at the heart of the pastoral challenge in our cities. Christ's death and resurrection, mediated in our pastoral work, should be understood not only in narrow individual terms, not only in private spiritual terms, but the death and resurrection of Christ should also be understood as actions of protest against death in all its forms : against the loss of communion and intimacy on a personal level, against the walls between different ethnic groups or nations, against the destruction of justice and creation. Our pastoral task in the inner city of Pretoria has to go beyond mere individual counselling or therapy; it needs to embrace the public challenge of pastoral care, mediating humanisation and social justice in dehumanised and exploited communities.

The theological method

My reflections come from inner city of Pretoria, and I will share from the perspective of our journey over the past seven years. I would offer the reflections and narrative by way of using a specific theological method. *Holland* and *Henriot* introduced the pastoral cycle, which has been used extensively by many other people since, often in adjusted forms. Their pastoral cycle offers a contextual approach and method to doing theology.

A contextual approach to theology is, as Segundo suggested, part of the liberation of theology. It is a new way of doing theology; a new way of understanding, of knowing (a new epistemology) which is more responsive to the context: it is doing theology not in academic classrooms alone, but from the bottom-up; not merely through the eyes of establishment theologians, but through the eyes of the poor; it is not about maintaining the status quo, but has as its goal transformation; it does not operate in a contextual vacuum, but takes the challenges unique to our contexts seriously; it is not a "pure" or objective science, but affirms that our subjective experiences, our stories, are valid; it is not concerned only with orthodoxy or the right teaching, but also with orthopraxy – the right praxis, the right actions to bring about real change.

The cycle of Holland and Henriot has four moments or phases:

The first phase is that of insertion. Insertion describes our entry into a community, as well as our observations, experiences and actions. In this phase questions are formulated which arise from the initial experiences.

The second phase is the phase of analysis or research. Whereas the first phase is a more subjective description, the second phase is supposed to be a more analytical exercise, dealing more specifically and thoroughly with the different questions introduced in phase one. The second phase has as its task to provide a broader and more in-depth understanding of certain critical issues in the context.

The third phase is the phase of theological reflection. In this phase different sources for reflection are brought to the table, i.e. the insights from the contextual analysis, the Word of God, church tradition, personal background, and so forth. Insights from these various sources are brought to bear on specific questions or issues under discussion, and in dialogue with these sources we reflect theologically and develop a theological or pastoral perspective on the issue at hand.

The last phase is the phase of planning for pastoral praxis. On the basis of earlier descriptions, facts gathered in the analysis and research, and new insights gained in the theological reflection, a pastoral plan is now developed.

This cycle should he understood in a flexible way, as the user can go back to prior phases for greater clarity and more in-depth inquiry. Furthermore, the cycle is not to be understood as complete in itself, but rather as an on-going cycle, facilitating ever increasing insight, growing knowledge and understanding, and continuous improvement in our praxis of ministry. It facilitates a theological process or journey, rooted in a particular context of ministry.

Insertion: describing our context, marked by brokenness

Our cities

The cities of South Africa have been marked by planning and design that superficially hindered black South Africans from establishing themselves in the cities. South African cities were designed intentionally in ways that restricted black people and the poorest people to the urban periphery. Our cities were structured against community and interdependence, and facilitated by its very nature the potential for division and conflict. In the new South Africa since 1994, amazing changes have occurred in the urban landscape which at the same time implied new challenges and great pressures for the infra-structure and governance of our cities. The question has become : how do we transform our cities to become inclusive communities of all its people, with equal and fair access to all its opportunities.

Socio-economic change

Socio-economically our inner city communities have become catch-basins of very poor people after 1994 – they flock to the streets of the inner cities to be closer to the concentration of economic opportunities. Children on the streets, refugees from central Africa, homeless people from rural areas or urban townships, all move into inner city areas, and place huge demands on the existing infra-structure and services. On the other hand established businesses disinvest from the inner city at an alarming rate, exchanging it for suburban shopping malls.

The cultural transition

The cultural dynamic after 1994 needs to be managed in order to facilitate and ensure a creative, peaceful and diverse community, that will indeed model the miracle of South Africa's transition. Most inner city residential buildings now accommodate people from all racial groups, who until 1994 have never lived together in the same residential areas. This is still very new and still requires hard work. But this is our challenge: to translate hope into action and to witness the miracle of what Archbishop Tutu coined "the rainbow nation".

The "God"-experience

Different people in the inner city experience God in different ways. Many black people have rejected the God of "white South Africans", the God who condoned

apartheid cities and who supported apartheid rulers. Millions of black South Africans rejected the Western models in which Christianity have been offered to Africa. Single mothers in high-rise buildings in the inner city might call themselves Christians but by and large seem to be distanced from the institutional church. The poor on the streets of the inner city struggle to worship God in authentic ways in local churches, because very few, if any of the churches, have been able to incarnate ministry to the point of becoming ministry (or churches) of and with the poor. Homeless inner city dwellers and children on our streets, both find themselves on the margins of the institutional and new churches.

It is indeed a challenge to find new ways in thinking about God and in making God's presence known. It is also a question whether those at a distance from the church is necessarily distant from God, or do they experience God in unique ways that we need to learn from as churches. Have God indeed been revealed to those on the margins in ways that we do not yet understand? And how can we discover that God whom the poor have encountered?

The churches

The churches of the inner city are at different places of transition. In the past most of the traditional English-speaking churches were suburban, middle-class churches who just happened to have their buildings in the centre of the city. But most of their members were commuting from wealthier suburbs to worship on Sundays. These were not inner city churches in the real sense of the word, since they have not accommodated the people of the inner city – the inner city was not on their agenda. With the changes of the past five years inner cities have become multi-racial and multi-economic communities. For many of the churches it meant serious financial constraints and even resulted in some churches closing their doors in inner city areas. At the same time *many* new churches have started since 1994, but often they serve an exclusive target group of young professional black people, and a large percentage of inner city people are still on the outside of the church, looking in. The huge challenge for inner city churches is to become inner city communities, small enough to care, close enough to people to understand, open enough to facilitate diversity, reconciliation and healing at the grass-root level.

Analysis: The development of the South African city from 1948 to 2000 and the church's response

The second phase is that of analysis. It tells the bigger story of what happened to our cities.

Development of the South African Urban Structure

Cities were structured in the past to keep different racial groups separate.

1910 - 1948: The Segregation City

Already in this time and especially in the 1920's laws have been introduced that had separate areas for separate racial groups in mind. This era was also marked by

the influx of black workers into the city, influx control measures and the development of slum communities and squatter settlements in and around urban areas.

1948 - 1990: The Apartheid City and The Separate City

When the National Party came to power in 1948 the apartheid policy was implemented with great force which also led to the formation of apartheid cities. Urban slums were cleared, but in South Africa slum clearance programmes were nothing but the removal of certain racial groups to separate racial areas. Black people were seen as temporary sojourners in the city, who actually belonged to the rural "reserves".

This process of separate cities was intensified in the 1950's when the so-called homelands were introduced. These were separate areas with superficial independence and the previous government envisaged that black people would now concentrate in their own cities in the "homelands", away from white areas, with their own industries and infra-structure. However, these industries were never developed and people were basically dumped. This could be seen as the full implementation of the apartheid ideal.

The irony is that all of these sophisticated and often dehumanising measures have not altogether succeeded in keeping black people out of so-called "white" cities. Millions of black people lived as "sojourners" in white areas, sleeping in back yards and working as domestic servants, gardeners, and cleaners in buildings. The need of black people for jobs and of white people for cheap labour, contributed to the reality of black people living in what some call the "sub-city", the hidden city.

1990 - 1999: The quasi-integrated city

Since 1990, even before all the legislation has been changed, shifts have taken place, especially in inner city areas. Not only have inner city areas become more multi-racial, but urban informal settlements (squatter areas) are now not restricted to the urban periphery any longer, but have moved in and around the Central Business Districts of most of our large cities. Suburbanisation or urban sprawl is another characteristic of our time as middle-class people, especially white people, but also black, rush away from the city. Security villages are also mushrooming in suburban areas, almost exclusively accommodating white people. A last characteristic is the growing number of legal and illegal immigrants who make the city their home.

Cities, urbanisation and the poor

Between 1970 and 1980 Durban has had the fastest growing population in the world at a 100% growth rate. The Johannesburg Soweto-Midrand-Pretoria urban complex could be amongst the twenty largest urban complexes in the world in the early 21st century. Our cities grow and they often grow with poor people coming from rural or peri-urban areas. In 1990 the city engineer of Cape Town has said that 5000 families were moving into Cape Town monthly from the rural and poverty-stricken Eastern Cape. Inner city housing was attractive to these rural migrants with an obvious effect on infra-structure and services.

Pretoria had a population of 1,584,098 in 1993. By the year 2000 our population will be 2,368,230. And by the year 2005 it would have doubled to over 3,000,000. More than 2000 people are currently living on the streets of Pretoria's inner city.

The poor on our streets are increasingly women and children, which happens to be a global phenomenon as the face of poverty has changed over the past few decades.

Where and how do we position ourselves as churches in growing urban areas, where rootless and powerless people move in daily from impoverished rural parts of the country ? Where and how do we position ourselves in European cities where refugees and immigrants move in daily, as rootless and as powerless? How do we offer community, how do we become inclusive communities as churches?

Cultural Shifts and Lack of Community

When we moved into our apartment in 1996 there was only one black family on our floor. Today we are the only white family. In the three buildings that we manage, 75% of the residents are black and 25% are white. About 15% are people from Francophone or North African countries. We recently made an inventory of small businesses and shops in our neighbourhood and realised that 20% of the shop owners were people from the Far East (Korea, China and Japan). In Marabastad we minister with homeless people, predominantly black and some coloured, in a community where the formal business sector is dominated by Indian people who belong to Islam. The huge cultural and religious shifts in our communities require careful analysis and rigorous reflection. How do we help build bridges of understanding and mutuality between people who have been divided for the past 300 years or more?

How do we build bridges within our churches, but also in the public arena where different cultures meet and decisions are made for the good, or the bad, of our shared communities?

Cities and governance

The process of democratisation has been quite intense and intentional over the past 5 years. Local community forums have emerged all over the country and all over our city. These forums are recognised in terms of a certain act (the Development facilitation Act of 1995). It is supposed to have certain powers in terms of local government and local development. The church has a definite role to play in these Forums. These Forums set the frameworks for future developments. These Forums make decisions on matters of policing and crime prevention. They also have an impact on public policy and local government budgets.

Those people most affected by lack of community in society, are often the poor and the vulnerable. And they are often most ignored in processes of democratisation, public decision-making, and so forth. They are often not organised, nor articulating their issues well, and not invited to make inputs to important processes. In the multitude of community forums these groups are often not represented. Yet, the table has been set for democratic processes and inclusive decision-making. What is the role of the church in impacting upon the governance and public policy of our cities ? How can the church ensure that the voice of the poor is heard ? In what way can the church's involvement in the public arena contribute to the nurturing of new communities in a country that has been so divided and still bears the scars?

The church's response

Whilst some of the traditional mainline churches have closed their doors and left the inner city, or combined with other churches, many new churches have developed in the past few years. In 1993 there were only 11 churches in our community, whilst today there are 26 churches, 6 years later. Most of these are independent Pentecostal or charismatic churches led by black leadership. There seems to be a hunger to belong to God and to the church, and this is reflected in the spontaneous growth of churches. The on-going diversification of churches, however, and the lack of cooperation or dialogue amongst some of these churches, are still reasons for concern. I believe that the prayer of Jesus in John 17 is unnegotiable as an imperative for our day. We need to find ways of bringing greater unity and co-operation amongst believers, because unless we can facilitate closer communion amongst ourselves, how can we – with integrity – facilitate healing and community in the sphere of the secular city or humanity at-large.

The churches have responded to the increasing cultural diversity and social dynamics in varying ways. Some churches made radical changes, the change in other churches only touched the surface, while still others have hardly seen change at all. A group of churches from different denominations have responded to the social challenges in 1992 and started a journey to work in partnership, through establishing the organisation in which we work, Pretoria Community Ministries. We formed an ecumenical community development trust in 1993 , facilitating various community development and urban ministry projects.

Theological reflection: community and pastoral care in urban South Africa

I would like to summarise some of the key challenges that our inner cities present in terms of our theme of community and pastoral care. How do we interpret the specific challenge to the church coming from the multitude of challenges outlined above?

Firstly, there is the challenge to the church as "community of disciples" to rediscover its role in changing inner city communities:

- we are called to move away form rigid institutions to becoming small communities – diverse, responsive and accessible, demonstrating sharing and caring;
- we are called to create a visible presence as communities of Christians within some of the most desperate human communities, incarnating ourselves in appropriate ways.

Secondly, there is the challenge to be a healing community shaping the community of humanity. There is the challenge of healing and reconciliation, crossing the boundaries of race, language, class and religion:

- we are called to discover each other anew within the body of Christ, and when we do so we are charged with the task of serving the community of humanity, helping individuals to discover themselves as created in God's image, restoring people to communion with God, working against prejudice and violence, enacting neighbourly love practically in the lonely and fragmented communities of our cities and towns;

- we are called to build a new and inclusive community, within our church and outside, re-creating a broken nation and a broken people, and humanising dehumanised people and places.

Thirdly, we have to move beyond our sacred spaces to affect the "community of citizens" (Barth), and "communities as places". This is the challenge of urban development and public policy. How to build an inner city that will accommodate all its diverse people, including the poor, yet be viable and healthy as a community, as community of citizens who can work towards the restoration of communities and cities? How can we become the salt- and yeast-like presence of the community of disciples who could be the trigger in this process?

- we are called to participate in the transformation of the city, making informed and constructive suggestions with regard to social, political and economic processes and policies, being in solidarity with inner city communities and the urban poor, searching for viability and wholeness;
- we are called to seek the well-being of all inner city people, being pastors not only of our own parish but making the city our parish, encouraging people to take responsibility and ownership of their communities, and helping communities to act collectively towards their common good, and to participate in the shaping and recreation of their neighbourhoods;
- we are called to be servants of fragmented cities, helping people to understand their need for each other, for collective planning and actions, and for a shared journey towards wholeness.

In Genesis already we are called into communion with God, each other and creation. As body of Christ we are mandated with the restoration of such communion. In Romans 8 we hear the current cry of humankind and the whole of creation for redemption and liberation. In the Gospel story we witness the trinitarian response of God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer, and the Spirit, the Builder of Community. And in John 17, just before Jesus departed, He left a community of disciples to incarnate his presence on earth, and He left them with the prayer for unity in their communion.

There is a clear Biblical imperative to nurture the Christian community, but also to respond to the cries of humankind and creation by building the community of humanity, communities of citizens, and the different geographical communities which we represent here today.

Towards a pastoral praxis envisioning a new community

The Potter's House is a small community of women in crisis. Women in The Potter's House come from a diversity of backgrounds and they have experienced different forms of crisis - rejection by their family, divorce, abuse, addiction, and so on. Some women have intense emotional problems, but for many the main problem is that of unemployment. Often they lack proper education or skills to secure a proper job. At The Potter's House women are supported in a holistic way. There is a real attempt to assist women in all the crucial areas of their lives, helping them to a point where they can stand on their own feet again Training needs, family relationships, employment support, spiritual development, counselling, and other aspects of their lives, are enhanced. The staff of The Potter's House want to model in practical ways basic principles such as respect, acceptance, forgiveness, and encouragement. For many women this is the first time that they are really val-

ued, and the message of God's love and respect is often experienced very strongly and very practically.

Lerato House is a transitional facility for young girls in crisis and on the streets of Pretoria. "Lerato" is a Sesotho word which means "love". A Street Outreach Team is on the streets three nights a week, and their purpose is to build relationships of rust with young girls in prostitution. They speak to them of alternatives and support them where necessary. A drop-in centre serves the girls with medical services, such as HIV-tests, the treatment of sexually transmitted diseases, and so on. The residential facility is a community such as The Potter's House offering basic care and love, but also opportunities for schooling and the possibility of reintegration with their families. In working with children the principles of community building are even more important. These girls are extremely vulnerable, but they have not yet erected walls around themselves the way adult women do when they are hurt by life. The need for love and attention are much more intense, as is the possibilities for disappointment. At the Lerato House discipline plays a central role. The children need boundaries and feel secure when they know what the consequences of certain behaviours are. Values and norms are taught in many practical ways and the focus is on character building.

Before 1994 *homelessness* was not on the agenda of the city and local government in the past. There was no policy on homelessness in South Africa - in national, provincial or local government structures. There was no budget for homelessness. Through sustained lobbying, good research and proper proposals, homelessness was adopted as one of the strategic issues to be dealt with in the inner city of Pretoria in 1999. A budget of R 900,000 and then R 700,000 was awarded over the past two years, while in 1997 only R 48,000 was approved but never given. A policy for homelessness was written and adopted by the City Council of Pretoria, which is now the first local government with a policy on homelessness. Homelessness has become central on the agenda of many inner city and even suburban churches. Homelessness and advocacy with homeless people has become an important pastoral issue.

The *community of Maeabastad* was affected by forced removals in the 60's and 70's when people of colour where moved to their own areas outside of. Churches were also affected and demolished and the mosque and the Hindu temple remained. In the past 10 years people started to move into Marabastad and here are currently a squatter community of 2000 people and it is ever increasing. There is no physical presence of the church except for the homeless help centre that opened in June of 1999; but there is no established church. Addiction, child prostitution and unemployment are some of the real problems of the area. This community has been forgotten for forty years, forgotten and ignored by local government, the citizens of Pretoria and the churches of Pretoria. In the past 6 years churches were made aware of the problems of Marabastad. How and why is this community a pastoral challenge? Ministry in this area requires solidarity with the poor, lobbying for their inclusion in urban plans and policies, in future development plans and projects.

Salvokop is an old railway community with 400 houses. The previous church left the area because of changes. There was not much of a relationship between the church and the community. In 1998 our six partner churches brought the church

building and adjacent house together. We decided to call it the Salvokop Community Centre. Eventually there will be a community church at the heart of the centre. The centre will facilitate various community projects, such as child care, study space, hobby centres, skills training, and so on, at the point of the community's need.

Yeast City Housing is a church-based housing company that we launched in 1997 to ensure affordable and decent inner city housing, that will also include the poor and at-risk people of the city. This company takes on bad buildings, working closely with the residents to restore them to safe and healthy places for people to live in.

Community Business is a special task for care. The inner city is characterised by disinvestment from the business community, a growing number of informal traders and unemployed people, vacant shops, and so forth. Some of our churches have opened their doors for the community by transforming certain spaces into small community businesses.

Our ministry is heavily involved serving *the civil society* and co-operating with *governance* for the vulnerable groups of the city, i.e. women and young girls in crisis, homeless people, inner city residents at risk, and so forth. In terms of governance these people are often side-lined from democratic processes. It has been vital for us to stimulate the development of civic movements to include grass-root people in inner city development and decision-making processes.

Summary

1. The church needs to rediscover itself as a servant community of disciples, that will establish an incarnational, serving presence, being visible and available to people and communities in crisis.

2. The church as a servant community also needs to work for greater inclusivity within the body, allowing people like Zacchaeus, the rich exploiter, and Mary Magdalene, the marginal woman, to enter into fellowship with one another, united because they were set free by Christ and healed in their communion with each other.

3. The church as a servant community can and should play a vital role in the public arena, contributing to the common good, and having a salt and yeast effect where it is required. Orlando Costas spoke about the church outside the gate. We have to move from our small liturgy on Sunday to the larger liturgy of the week, where we work with the people of our communities towards their shalom. It implies moving from a private theology to a public ministry, helping our members to be good neighbours and good citizens.

4. Community is not only the goal of our ministry but also the means. We need to discover community as means of evangelism, community as place of healing and reconciliation, community as place of affirmation and empowerment, community as reconciliation, community as demonstration of social and economic justice, community as place of advocacy, and community as a celebration of the redemptive work of Christ.

5. Lastly, a reminder that this is a life-long process of working with Christ in building a new city and a common humanity; it is a life-long process to advocate

for just economics and politics; our role will be to advocate and conscientise and serve continuously, being present and available in the communities of this world.

But within these life-long processes we have opportunities to erect small signs of hope – tokens or promises of what is still to come...; signs of God's new city!

Part 4, Chapter C

Economy and globalisation

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Globalisation, social exclusion and the politics of New Labour in Britain

How can this mean good news for the poor?

topics:

- *critical assessment of New Labour politics in Britain*
- *"social exclusion" as a new analytical tool of social politics*
- *employment or social welfare?*
- *the concept of communitarism*
- *the role of the church in Great Britain*
- *a liberating theology*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 6, 2000; pp 29-38

Abstract

Over the past seven or eight years the notion of social exclusion has grown in prominence within European social policy. Increasingly, it has supplanted "poverty" as the major index of deprivation and as the major target for welfare reform. Its abolition is a key element of New Labour's policy agenda in Britain.

Social exclusion is multiple and complex, requiring radical measures. It calls forth from New Labour the prospect of "joined-up" government pledged to attack causes, rather than a return to the Old Labour solution of "tax and spend". In effect, however, it seems that current policies are actually doing little to interpret social inclusion in terms other than the work ethic. Despite the view that social exclusion will best be cured by improving people's employment prospects, the changing nature of global capitalism and the profound fragility of labour markets makes it unlikely that the job market will be able to render such an expansion of opportunities. Yet at the heart of social exclusion and inclusion are important issues about the nature of citizenship: a serious and long-term approach to "joined-up" government would take the opportunity to look at the connections between welfare reform and constitutional reform, regarding the relief of poverty and social exclusion as matters of empowerment and participation in the democratic process.

The churches are in a critical position in relation to campaigns around social inclusion. They proved to be valuable advocates and allies for many marginalized urban communities during the Thatcher/Major years, and the present government clearly regards the churches as significant agents in helping to implement New Deal programmes and other initiatives. Yet the moralistic approach of Blair-

ism/New Labourism makes it all the more imperative that the churches look to see how theology is used to political ends. The re-injection of moral discourse into public debate may well turn out to be a wolf in sheep's clothing for the Christian Left if it simply brings about the stigmatisation, rather than the empowerment, of those in poverty.

It is necessary to ensure that the voices and perspectives of those most affected by poverty in all its forms are given consideration. This is a fundamental commission of the Church: to counter the invisibility and marginalization that really constitutes social exclusion. I shall argue that a liberating praxis which embodies a contextual, transformative and humanizing theology is an essential tool in the churches' response over the next few years. In the way in which it models community and participation, the Church can express profound theological truths in its practices of solidarity and empowerment.

Introduction

In this paper, I want to take some aspects of current social policy in the United Kingdom and examine their moral, political and theological implications. I hope this will serve as a case study with which many people from different contexts can identify. Since the mid1980s the churches in Britain, and especially the Church of England, have been active participants in urban issues. The Church of England report, *Faith in the City*, was a landmark in Church-State relations, and established many programmes of the Church's partnership with communities in urban priority areas. But now a change of government, and a new discourse about poverty and inequality, presents a new challenge. What is at stake in this shift from "poverty" to "social exclusion" and what are the principles on which the churches should participate in future urban policy and social renewal?

Social exclusion

Social exclusion has been a feature of policy debate around issues of deprivation since the early 1990s. It has come to be the preferred term for describing and analyzing the nature of social divisions in European advanced capitalist economies. In Britain, it has become one of the key principles of the Blair government. In December 1997 a new Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) was announced which, it was said, would provide a coordinated and systematic approach to the phenomenon. The reason for this new Unit was precisely because "social exclusion" as an issue implied a more complex and interconnected analysis of social deprivation than the simple term "poverty".

"Social exclusion" has been defined as "a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown". Given the compound nature of the problems, the SEU was established precisely to co-ordinate the work of government departments, local authorities and the voluntary sector, with an emphasis on research into "the key indicators of social exclusion" and prevention. The SEU therefore symbolizes what has come to be called "joined-up" government: an attempt to co-ordinate services, to systematize welfare reform, and to adopt a more proactive, even preventative, approach to the problems of inequality.

It is interesting, however, that beyond a general indication of the most vulnerable groups (the elderly, children and young people, ethnic minorities and the loner term unemployed) and the multiple symptoms of social exclusion, the SEU is remarkably imprecise about its deeper causes and characteristics. Undoubtedly, social inequality, exclusion and deprivation are serious problems in Britain today. By any measure, inequality has grown markedly over the past twenty years.

Qualitatively, too, there is cause for concern. The journalist Nick Davies paints a picture of an entire sub-culture of deprivation that has been contaminated by the fall-out of unemployment and poverty: drug abuse, high crime, fractured and demoralized communities and family breakdown. No wonder then, that many, including those in the churches, hoped that the incoming Blair administration would make social equality and redistribution of wealth a major priority. The announcement of the Social Exclusion Unit and its accompanying programmes may certainly be seen as a key measure in all this; but it is also part of a much wider scheme of welfare reform. In order to understand where the language of social exclusion is coming from, therefore, it is important to look at some of the other influences on New Labour.

From equality to social inclusion

Tony Blair's speeches reflect an understanding of poverty as a threat to the very fabric of our society. What we have here, therefore, is a campaign against social exclusion mounted in the name not so much of social equality or social justice, as terms of social cohesion. As Ruth Levitas puts it, it reflects an essentially Durkheimian analysis of the dangers of social dislocation to the stability of the social order.'[1] For the French sociologist and political scientist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) society was founded upon systems of shared values. Institutions - including religion - functioned to protect that moral consensus and facilitate the integration of the individual into the collective. If anything threatened that process of socialization – a dislocation Durkheim termed *anomie* - then individuals and society would suffer. Critics of Durkheim protest that it is an inherently conservative model of society, in that any kind of conflict, pluralism or change are regarded as pathological, and that the values of consensus and unity are cherished at the expense of social change or protest against injustice. In its emphasis on healing the divisions of the Thatcher/Major years, therefore, has New Labour played the 'One Nation' card only to find itself commending a simplistic vision of social harmony - a vision that precludes any attempt to reintroduce the language of social equality and social justice?

In the rhetoric of social exclusion there has been a paradigm shift away from a vision of an egalitarian society, facilitated by the redistribution of wealth, to one of civic virtue and the responsibilities, as well as the rights, of citizenship. This is often expressed in the language of *stakeholding*, in which education and training, mentoring and the efficacy of paid work, are dominant: "... what underpins the fundamental idea of stakeholding is that social and economic, inclusion, rather than equality, should be the overriding objective for the contemporary left." [2]

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[1] Ruth Levitas, "The Concept of Social Exclusion and the New Durkheimian Hegemony", *Critical Social Policy*, 16:1, 1996, 5-20.

[2] Will Hutton, "An overview of stakeholding", in G. Kelly, D. Kelly and A. Gamble (eds) *Stakebolder Capitalism*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997, p.3.

This shift from egalitarianism to stakeholding as a route to social inclusion reflects a number of different ideological influences, all loosely converging on New Labour's celebrated "Third Way", an attempt to articulate an alternative to centralised welfare democracy and neo-liberalism But the prominence of social exclusion as disrupting the bonds of civil society and social consensus only really begins to make sense within the context of communitarianism. We can't understand the current emphasis on social exclusion – and its implications – without looking at the appeal to New Labour of communitarianism.

Communitarianism

Communitarianism is actually more of a philosophical movement than a political doctrine. It is essentially a reaction against the individualism of neoliberalism and the centralist socialism of the Old Left. Communitarianism teaches that individuals are not isolated creatures, but shaped by their environment and social relationships. Human nature is interdependent; and community is thus the context in which human nature flourishes best.[3] Communitarianism enables New Labour to retain the language of collectivism without any unhappy taint of the language of class or State.

At the heart of New Labour's rhetoric of social exclusion, fuelled by its discovery of communitarianism, therefore, is a plaiting together of three core principles: social cohesion, economic efficiency and moral renewal. The solution to social exclusion is founded on a reciprocal relationship between individual and State. Whilst poverty or unemployment *per se* is not condemned, the expectation is that the individual owes a moral debt to society to help themselves. Nonparticipation is fundamentally a moral issue; and constructive citizenship based on a contribution to society is the "social glue" that binds the civic order together.

Thus, we have seen in the past years the advent of "welfare to work", a clutch of programmes designed to reduce welfare dependency through paid work supported by incentive schemes, mentoring initiatives and training opportunities. Young people in particular have been targeted under a series of four options of work experience, training or careers advice. It reflects a commitment to welfare rights being conditional upon recipients fulfilling certain duties, such as accepting a training place. Similarly, in education, homeschool contracts between parents and teachers have been mooted, in which parents must agree to certain obligations – such as homework and regular attendance – in return for the child's inclusion in state education.

There is, undoubtedly, a measure of coercion in this: measures announced in February 1999 require disabled people and lone parents to attend job interviews or forfeit benefit. In order to shift the balance away from dependency to responsibility, therefore, the government has adopted a very interventionist and directive approach, which, as its critics have always said,[4] is a typical characteristic of communitarianism: the iron fist of obligation beneath the velvet glove of mutuality. For whilst all communitarians pay lip service to the interplay of rights and responsibilities, the degree to which policies expect individuals to observe prescriptive

[3] Exemplified by the Prime Ministers rather tortuous political revisionism: "... individuals are socially interdependent human beings... individuals cannot be divorced from society in which they belong. It is, if you will, socialism." (Tony Blair, *Socialism*, Fabian Society, 1994, p.4)

[4] Daniel Bell, *Communitarianism and its Critics*, Oxford University Press, 1993.

norms, and the extent to which such norms are mandatory or voluntary, will vary.[5] Thus, there are progressive/pluralist and conservative/conformist communitarians, the former celebrating community as the embodiment of liberty, multiculturalism, tolerance of difference, and the latter espousing values of homogeneity, order and authority. Therefore, "community" may turn out to be a synonym for State intervention.

But the highest virtue of the "third way" of social inclusion is economic participation. New Labour may reject market individualism, but it stops short of challenging capitalism – indeed, it depends on private enterprise as well as local government, on 'economic' as well as 'social' entrepreneurs in the business and voluntary sectors, to provide job opportunities and positive role models. Economic efficiency, and especially curbing the moral and fiscal drain on the economy of welfare dependency, is thus a crucial part of wealth creation and social regeneration. 'Stakeholding' means helping the poor and socially excluded obtain a stake in society by getting them back into the labour market. Fundamentally, therefore, employment is regarded as the primary route to social participation and cohesion.

We may well judge that this amounts to a dissolution of Labour's commitment to social equality and the redistribution of wealth, and its replacement with the expectation that individuals create their own opportunities by getting themselves into the labour market. But how realistic is this? What about those who cannot work – yet must still be available for work? What if the jobs simply aren't materializing? Is it not the case that, far from shifting the language away from work and poverty, social exclusion has done little more than reinscribe an outdated concept of the work ethic and reinstitutionalise a policy of "blaming the victim".

"Work is the best form of welfare"

Surely no-one could be content with a welfare system that concentrated on funding the ambulances at the bottom of the cliff without putting a fence at the top. Certainly, poverty must be attacked at source, and the most profound root of poverty for the majority of people is undoubtedly lack of adequately-paid work. Hence the emphasis on Welfare to Work and - let us not forget, the implementation of a minimum wage – as essential tools for tackling the corrosive effects of unemployment, and of putting people back to work.

However, is this sufficient? Can paid work deliver what is needed to tackle social exclusion? The basis of unemployment policy is that benefits are payable subject to people's availability and willingness to work. The anti-poverty strategies seem heavily committed to re-enshrining the work ethic, as this quotation indicates: "... work is central to the government's attack on social exclusion. Work is the only route to sustained financial independence. But it is also much more. Work is not just about earning a living. It is a way of life ... [W]e are reforming this welfare state around the work ethic. Promoting employability, adaptability and inclusion."

So, work may be the best way of providing an adequate income; but in stressing its importance as the basis of social inclusion, is there not a risk that exclusion is actually compounded? The implicit assumption that work is the panacea for poverty is the target of criticism made by Ruth Lister and other opponents of Welfare

[5] Driver & Martell, *New labour's communitarians*.

to Work, in their comments on the government Green Paper, summer 1998, "A New Contract for Welfare".[6]

The principle of "work for those who can; security for those who cannot" places all the pressure on jobseekers and no bonus on job-creation or income support for those made unemployed by no fault of their own.

These concerns reflect the limitations of such a scheme in its failure to address the needs of those who cannot work, such as those who care for young children, or assist a disabled or elderly friend or relative, or perform other forms of voluntary and community service. Alternative patterns of provision will still have to be made available, because "Welfare to Work"-schemes are not appropriate for their needs.

Even for the young unemployed, it is rare that short-term jobs will deliver long-term opportunities. Subsidies for young workers generally means that each new generation undercuts the last. Similarly, the government says that there are a million disabled people who want to work: but has the proper infrastructure been put in place to make this possible?

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the traditional capitalist economy of mass production, offering large numbers of low-skill jobs, has been replaced by a global economy in which the exchange and transfer of information, rather than manufacturing, creates wealth. Technology has rendered many jobs redundant; the nature of employment now is one of short-term jobs, down-sizing, insecurity, part-time and subcontracting. These mean fewer jobs, especially those unskilled labour. This is not the result of any individual's lack of will, but due to a structural shift in the nature of how and where wealth is created. Work can no longer confer a clear, stable, lifelong identity with a good network of expectations.

"Work for those who can, and security for those who cannot" seems something of an over-simplification in the face of an increasingly complex labour market in which job insecurity and unpredictability is as much a risk as unemployment.

And despite bold assurances that "the views of the socially excluded themselves" will be incorporated into the joined-up solutions, what seems to be emerging is an emphasis on punishing or rewarding the qualities, attitudes and behaviour of the socially excluded rather than pursuing structural approaches and resources to eliminate social exclusion. This is not too far away from the logic of the underclass, so beloved of New Right thinkers in the 1980s: of locating the problems of poverty in the characteristics of the poor, and systematically demonising them as feckless, irresponsible and incapable. Those who had no work are assumed to have placed themselves beyond the pale of compassion; by virtue of their maladjustment and pathology, the underclass had placed themselves beyond the pale of decent society. The poor really are different from "us"; and so policy makers were justified in applying principles which discouraged such a dependency culture in order to get the poor off benefits and back to useful productivity. It gave government permission to retreat from the post-war vision of relieving poverty back to a more Victorian ethos of regulating the poor; and the issue was no longer structural, in terms of wage levels, unemployment, transfer payments or redistribution of wealth, but personal: the behaviour of those in poverty.

New Labour prefers to talk the language of "social exclusion" to that of "poverty". The benefit of this is that it widens the scope to embrace the multiplicity of

[6] Ruth Lister, "Widening the poverty trap door", *Times Higher*, 7 August 1998,14-15

ways in which people may be marginalized and excluded. The risk is, however, that by treating the symptoms and not addressing the causes of poverty, this new language of social exclusion, will have a similar effect of demonising the poor and displacing structural explanations and solutions with individual causes, resting in the moral behaviour of a distinct and pathological underclass, "The Socially Excluded". In this way, the "problem of the underclass" successfully effaces "the issue of poverty".[7] It is imperative therefore that the joined-up thinking which acknowledges the compound and pluralistic nature of poverty is not submerged by a simplistic reinforcement of the work ethic. As a leader in the *Guardian* newspaper commented, "Labour's ambitious welfare-to-work programme is delivering the first half of its welfare mantra ('work for those who can') but it has still to follow through on the equally important second half ('security for those who cannot')".[8]

Admittedly, the Social Exclusion Unit is also committed to comprehensive policies to reform other areas of social policy, such as education, youth justice, local regeneration, housing need and public health. But the source of social cohesion is fundamentally equated with an efficient and accessible job market. But whilst poverty can be linked to low incomes, the time has come, surely to question the assumption that poverty or social exclusion can easily be cured by getting everyone back to work. Certainly, evidence suggests that the vast majority of those unemployed and eligible for work desperately want a job; but as I have argued, the nature of current economic trends suggests that vulnerability to poverty is not a question of whether or not one is out of work. I wonder whether we need to move to a rather 'thicker' and richer definition of social participation and inclusion than one that depends on access to the job market. Isn't it time to rethink our definitions of citizenship and community?

Social inclusion or Citizenship?

"Without skills and opportunities people become detached not just from work, but also from citizenship in its widest sense."[9]

It would be regrettable if New Labour were to endorse the, I believe, oversimplified notion that social exclusion can be constituted in terms of lack of access to the labour market. Not only does it cloud the situation of those in low-paid or insecure employment and of those undertaking unpaid caring work; but it prevents our moving towards more inclusive models of participation and social inclusion that are not tied into the primacy of paid work. But this is precisely the problem: we don't know how to build a community on any other forms of social belonging or value other than work! At a time when the labour market is fragmenting, and work is becoming less of an integrating factor, less of a source of enduring identity and esteem, our models of social inclusion and citizenship are so impoverished that getting back into a highly problematic and insecure job market is still seen as the universal remedy.

This is disappointing, because in other respects New Labour has set itself up as a socially liberal administration, committed to constitutional reform and to legisla-

[7] Zygrnund Bauman, *Work, consumerism and the new poor*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998, p.70.

[8] "Blair's Social Agenda: Can he win the war on poverty?", *Guardian*, 7 June 1999.

[9] Blair, *SEU*, p. 8.

tion that reflects an awareness of cultural pluralism – the lowering of the age of consent for homosexual males, for example, or the attempts to address institutional racism. Indeed, if all that social inclusion will address are economically-based measures of social stratification, then that effectively obscures issues of race, gender, sexuality or dis/ability as facets needing to be addressed in any revitalized discourse of citizenship.[10] Yet for all the talk of `joined-up' government, of participation and consultation in the early pronouncements of the SEU, the agendas of political participation and economic inclusion have yet to be connected. Yet there is a strong case for arguing that social exclusion entails more than deficient access to paid work, but is actually rooted in an inability to participate in all kinds of social and cultural goods: transport, local participation, community facilities or indeed access to information technologies, perhaps the most crucial source of wealth and power in the twenty-first century.[11] And surely, political reform is essential in order to enable people to participate in decisions that affect them, to overcome the so-called "democratic deficit". It is about more than a skills-based, competitive economy: it is about power. It seems that it may be time for a renewal of what Hilary Silver calls "the moral imagination" of citizenship.[12]

The language of social exclusion reveals how New Labour's solutions are still too deeply embedded in centralised control and state prescription and a conviction in the ameliorative power of work which is hugely problematic in our contemporary global economy. A vision of social cohesion founded on equity and participation is by no means synonymous with welfare to work; and the moral renewal of our civil society does not depend on top-down enforcement. The moral contribution of the individual is stressed, rather than fiscal or structural issues of redistribution and investment; a Whitehall vision of community is pursued, rather than attention to the stories and experiences of those at the sharp end.

The role of the church

So now I turn to the role of the churches. In many ways, the churches are enjoying more credibility than for many years, having exercised a ministry of solidarity alongside many of the most excluded communities in the 'urban priority areas' of Britain during the Thatcher/Major years (1979-97). The publication in 1985 of the Archbishops' Commission on Urban Priority Areas, *Faith in the City*, established the Church of England as one of the most effective opponents of the Conservative regime of the 1980s, and set in train more than a decade of church-related community initiatives. Undoubtedly, the Church of England has credibility for its urban strategy, although its continued presence in the inner cities – and therefore its championing, almost by default, of the most underprivileged and marginalized communities – probably has more to do with the parochial system than with any clearly-articulated commitment to Liberation Theology: an example of Anglican pragmatism, an accident of the Church's established status, with perhaps a modicum of incarnational theology thrown in.[13]

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[10] Ruth Lister, "Vocabularies of citizenship and gender: the UK", *Critical Social Policy*, No. 56, Vol. 18/3, August 1998, 309-331, p. 324.

[11] Neil McIntosh, "The New Poor", *Guardian*, July 22 1999.

[12] Hilary Silver, Social Exclusion and Social Solidarity, p. 531

[13] Elaine Graham, "Theology in the City: Ten Years after Faith in the City", *Bulletin of the John Rylands Research Institute* 78, No. 1, March 1996,179-197.

With the election of a New Labour government, however, the churches retain a degree of credibility in urban policy. The fact that many members of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, are practising Christians, has given the churches a higher profile in political debate; and this greater affinity between Christian values and New Labour, in contrast to the more hostile relationship under the Conservatives, has been welcomed by many. Church-related organizations are becoming accepted as significant agencies in many of the emerging regeneration partnerships. The Social Exclusion Unit is actively promoting the involvement of the churches in New Deal and other schemes. SEU solicits opinions on social exclusion and its policies from many church-related pressure groups: the Church of England Urban Bishops' group has been consulted, for example. The Anglican Diocese of Liverpool employs its own New Deal Officer. Recently, Church Action on Poverty held a training day on Mentoring for church-based workers and volunteers. Arguably, however, the advent of SEU, New Deal and welfare to work constitutes more of a danger than the good old days of opposition, because now church-related groups have to decide how far they co-operate with these schemes, and how they take responsibility to steer the future of marginalized communities. If they opt into New Deal and all the other schemes, do they risk colluding with this potentially authoritarian trend? What are the alternatives? So at this point, I have chosen to draw some lessons from Liberation Theology, to see whether some of its principles might guide us in establishing priorities and criteria for authentic faith and praxis.

Liberating theology and the Gospel of the poor

"Liberation theology is not an ideology or academic theory, but an attempt to explain the renewal of Christianity which has come about through the Church's rediscovery of the poor".[14]

The situation in Britain and the First World is so radically different from that which first gave birth to it that I am wary of assuming that Liberation Theology can be imported whole scale from its historical context. Nevertheless, it seems that there are three defining characteristics of a *theology that liberates* which may help. Authentic theology, first and foremost, is that which preaches good news to the poor: and for liberation theologians it is necessarily *contextual* and *political* in that it reflects the voices and aspirations of the poor. Secondly, theology is a body not of right belief but right action: and primarily, it seeks to humanize those whose basic human dignity has been violated. Thirdly, theology is always *practical theology:* the way in which the people of God live out the Good News is not a matter of 'applied' theology derived from a pre-existent body of knowledge. Rather, the reality of the Gospel is primarily manifested in living communities of justice and hope and only derivatively in propositional truth-claims.

Theology begins with solidarity alongside the poor and marginalized.

Liberation theology speaks of God's "preferential option for the poor", and this is fundamental to our method. The writer and campaigner Bob Holman has been an energetic advocate for the people of Easterhouse, an estate near Glasgow. As he has pointed out in a recent pamphlet on social inclusion, an attack on poverty was for socialists and Christian socialists always combined with a commitment to

[14] CIIR, *Brazil: Democracy and Development*, Nottingham: Russell Press, 1992, p.20

greater equality in terms of redistribution of wealth and "the *participation of poor people* in shaping society's services and values.. ."[15] The heralded involvement of those in "socially excluded" communities has yet to materialize. The Social Exclusion Unit "has excluded the excluded".[16] "It is not tackling poverty. It is not reducing poverty. It is not giving greater power to the powerless. It is not pursuing these objectives held in common by many Christians and socialists".[17] And, as he rightly says, these principles are, at heart, principles about the nature of a democratic and just society. There is a link between welfare reform, material prosperity, and ideals of justice, participation and democracy: the economic and the political/civil cannot be disentangled.

For Holman, therefore, the fundamental issue is about power to the powerless. The invisibility of the poor is, for him, exemplary of the dehumanisation that accompanies social and economic marginalisation. The greatest social exclusion of all is the silencing of these ordinary lives, especially by the media, so that issues such as crime, social exclusion and poverty are diagnosed and debated by outsiders. Those with the most acute experience of these phenomena are "treated as specimens to be examined and displayed, not as human beings with the rights and capacities to participate in the public debate." Holman has recently edited a book of stories and testimonies by residents of Easterhouse In so doing the top-down emphasis is subverted.

As Holman says, "'Those at the bottom cannot silence the mighty. But, wherever possible, they should seek to release and propogate the words of those who are most precious to God ... the words and perceptions of the weak could be one means of undermining the values and assumptions by which the strong justify their ownership of too much of the resources which God intended for others".[18]

The testimonies of those Holman calls "the right writers" – Carol, Bill, Erica, Denise, Cynthia, Penny and Anita – who actually experience the daily realities of poverty, illustrate a number of things:

Poverty is not exaggerated: benefit levels are not over-generous, and a life on low income involves constant juggling, sacrifice and monotony.

The social fund and the shift from grants to loans has depressed people's incomes still further due to deductions, or driven people into the arms of loan sharks.

Poverty does not just consist of material deprivation, but psychological distress as well. Those in poverty have to battle with feelings of inadequacy, failure and low self-esteem. This is a new dimension of relative poverty and exclusion: worthlessness and depression.

Listening to lives of hardship but also of resistance and endurance, it is impossible to conclude that the people whose lives are recorded here are really "...an underclass whose difficulties stem from their wickedness, neglect of children and a rejection of work. Rather they have to be regarded as people born into many disad-

[15] Bob Holman, "A Voice from the Estate", in G. Smith (ed.) *Joined-up Writing: New Labour and social exclusion*, Christian Socialist Movement, March 1999, p. 11
[16] Holman, "A Voice from the Estate", p. 15.
[17] Holman, "A Voice from the Estate", p. 17.
[18] *Faith in the Poor*, p. 23.

vantages and whose efforts to survive are handicapped by conditions of deprivation and poverty. Far from creating poverty, they were flung into it."[19]

This kind of experience undoubtedly calls for joined up thinking: but it feels as if the moral certainty behind the language of social exclusion already thinks it knows all the answers without consulting those who have actually been through it. And if the churches are really to opt for a transformative theology that truly empowers and re-humanises the socially excluded, it must challenge this neglect, and the likely proliferation of what I have termed the "social exclusion quangos" emanating from the top-down policies of Whitehall.

It would take a rethink of citizenship indeed, and one which effectively amounted to a new social contract between government and people. The social policy writer John Friedmann talks about a "decalogue of citizen rights: ten major entitlements necessary for a full and participatory life"[20]:

- Professionally assisted birth
- Safe and secure life space
- Adequate diet
- Affordable health care
- Good education
- Political participation
- Economically productive life
- Protection against unemployment
- Dignified old age
- Decent burial

Cradle to grave indeed! These criteria go far beyond paid work, and begin to articulate basic privileges that might be granted to everybody. The vital nature of these kinds of social goods, at an accessible level to those who need them, points up the importance of strengthening civil society through new or renewed social networks and relationships. If these rights were placed at the heart of economic and social policy, then priorities might change. "The task is to transform the claims of these discarded citizens into rights and to give the multiple voices of the poor a chance to be heard in democratic deliberations through powerful organizations of their own."[21]

Theology is not about "orthodoxy" but "orthopraxis"

The task of the theologian, like Marx's philosopher, is not simply to interpret the world, but to change it. Theology is rooted in orthopraxis, not orthodoxy. Right believing, as Johannes Baptist Metz reminds us, reflects the Enlightenment rationalist captivity of religion. Rather, theology is the account of faithful and transformative *praxis*, or value-directed and value-driven action. And as Gutierrez has argued, the contemporary challenge to the Church's mission – of how it proclaims and embodies the Gospel anew in each generation – is not a matter of the problem of nonbelievers, but the scandal of *nonpersons:* "... the question in Latin America

[19] *Faith in the Poor*, p.169

[20] John Friedmann, "Rethinking Poverty: empowerment and citizen rights", *International Social Science Journal,* Vol. 48,1996,161-172.

[21] Friedmann, `Rethinking Poverty', p. 171

will not be how to speak of God in a world come of age, but rather how to proclaim God.. in a world that is inhumane. What can it mean to tell a non person that he or she is God's child?"[22] The commission, then, is to bring life, right relation, justice and full humanity.

As the recent Church Action on Poverty 'manifesto' argues, the future of a concept such as 'community' rests upon it being realised in day-to-day decision-making.[23] This, surely, is at the heart of a commitment to the issue of social exclusion as about resisting the dehumanisation of which Gutierrez speaks: about basic human rights, of decent material living standards and democratic entitlements of a say in one's own future.[24] An example of the expectation within marginalized communities that they will not be consulted comes from a report of a recent survey commissioned by Manchester University Settlement amongst young people (mainly 14-18 years old) about facilities and quality of life, comments in this way: "Nearly all the young people approached for surveys were keen to take part but expressed their surprise at being asked for their views and concerns about the area. A high majority of young people believed their opinions were unlikely to be taken seriously, but would give them anyway."[25]

This takes us back to fundamental issues of how we are governed – especially in a nation where we are still subjects and not citizens – the distribution not just of wealth but of power is crucial. Resistance to the corrosive effects of poverty often works best at local level, because it involves people who know what might work, although local action cannot be separated from the inequalities of power and wealth on a national and global level. However, those who live in poorer communities are already experimenting with such forms of empowerment, via diverse points of collective action at the grass-roots, such as neighbourhood groups, extended family and churches. Communities are renewed and people empowered by agencies such as a credit union, food co-ops, tenants' groups and family action/playscheme schemes – features absent, so far, from the agenda of the SEU. When asked, users' groups speak of the importance of accessibility (of staff and premises); facilities for children; participatory structures and local involvement. These factors are vital in delivering services that were needed and valued, and in building up confidence and skills locally. Indeed, some social policy analysts are convinced that such grass-roots activism is an essential part of a healthy infrastructure of genuine citizenship.

The Church embodies its liberating theology in a praxis of solidarity

Liberation theology, in its commitment to praxis, also articulates an important principle, namely the performative and incarnational nature of theology. Liberat-

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[22] Gustavo Gutierrez, The Power of the Poor in History, SCM, 1983, p.57

[23] Niall Cooper (ed.) Agenda For Change, Manchester. Church Action on Poverty, February 1999, p. 24

[24] An example of the expectation within marginalized communities that they will not be consulted comes from a report of a recent survey commissioned by Manchester University Settlement amongst young people (mainly 14-18 years old) about facilities and quality of life, comments in this way: "Nearly all the young people approached for surveys were keen to take part but expressed their surprise at being asked for their views and concerns about the area. A high majority of young people believed their opinions were unlikely to be taken seriously, but would give them anyway." (Beswick, *Detached Project Survey Report*, Manchester, 1999, p.2).

[25] Beswick, *Detached Project Survey Report*, Manchester, 1999, p.2

ing theology emanates from communities that embody the Gospel; a Gospel that is made flesh in lived reality, then pronounced in word and deed. Theological truth lies, as Duncan Forrester has put it, in the "quality of relationships rather than in abstract principle, or a divine edict."[26] This emphasis on embodied and enacted theology means that our truth is always contingent and provisional, constantly put to the test by its ability to bring hope and life; constantly judged against the lives of the non-persons. It also means that the language of theology is in the vernacular of human fellowship and unconditional Divine love; and Christian teaching is a human parable, rather than a set of moral prescriptions.

How might the Church achieve this? By being a particular kind of community, embodying a vision of service and support. For the people in places like Easterhouse, for example, 'Church' can become more than a body of propositional doctrine, more than empty ritual, but a place of vitality and hope, rooted in mutual respect and service. There is a moral vision here, in that people know and observe shared principles of right and wrong; it is not a romanticised view of community, but it is nevertheless rooted in precepts of justice, not charity and an understanding that it is worth organizing collectively in order to achieve greater participation, education and empowerment. Church-related renewal of community organizations might represent "new forms of popular democracy and participation in economic production and community governance ... many of them sustained by a spiritual vision of different faith communities working for social transformation at the grass roots."[27]

Similarly, styles of being church that stress the eucharistic community emphasize the unconditionality and concretion of inclusion. The centrality of grace in this theology means that the open table is the basis of community, upon which individuality is then posed. Eucharistic community also places the question of sufficiency and distribution at its heart, expressing in sacramental and symbolic terms that all who wish to receive will do so equally. The grace of God does not require a Task Force, nor is it 'targetted' towards some groups and not others. It is simply offered in the form of human fellowship and divine *kenosis*.

This divine generosity does not confer a special status on any particular people, or set them apart as 'special' kinds of believers. This requires the Church to use its power and privilege wisely: as a human institution, no more and no less. It is also essential to be self-critical of structures of power and exclusion within the Church itself. Gender, homophobia, racism, moralistic judgements about family life – churches have frequently colluded with the strategies of blaming the victim and corroding self-esteem. It is simply about living out a commitment to human dignity, interdependence and insufficiency: and in that respect, it is, as Gutierrez says, about helping people to be more fully *human*. An Anglican priest I know, who has recently taken up a parish on a large public urban housing estate on the edge of Manchester, said recently: "Sometimes we may have to forget about being the Church and get on with being good local residents and good citizens."

At its best, however, Christian concern for social issues is rooted in the theological convictions of creation, incarnation and redemption. It seeks to found models of civil society that reflect the renewal of citizenship, individualism and community: perhaps a place where theological traditions fuel models of equity and em-

[26] Duncan B. Forrester, *Christian Justice and Public Policy*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.209

[27] Northcott, p. 192

powerment. Congregational life in a modest way serving as models of ecclesial polity that prefigure renewed community.

If a liberating theology is to appear in Britain, it needs to begin in partnership with those who have experience at the sharp end of the dynamics and complexities of social exclusion. The churches will only be credible bearers of such theology if they are seen to practise what they preach, and in particular to embody a common life which enlarges our models of citizenship and community. But increasingly, the credibility of the Church's witness to the potential of such teachings in a fragmented and divided society will rest in its willingness to render words into flesh and become an incarnational community of vision and generosity.

Jung Mo Sung *Brazil, 2001*

Evil in the free market mentality

topics:

- *theological critique of "Free Market"-mentality*
- *concepts of justice and solidarity*

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The strange logic of the market

"Wall Street Celebrates Rise in Jobless." This headline from a major Brazilian newspaper is a typical example of the new mentality that dominates the market. Unemployment has ceased to be an economic and social evil and become, in many cases, an economic benefit. So, over the last few years, major corporations have made great efforts to introduce 'downsizing' programmes to reduce the numbers of their workforce, and the more they make redundant, the higher their share value rises, enriching their shareholders and executives. The pride and strength of companies no longer resides in the number of their employees but in the number of workers they can remove from their employment. This number serves as an index of increased efficiency and productivity, today's absolute economic criterion.

Those not accustomed to this strange logic of the market will find it difficult to understand this 'celebration'. This difficulty stems not only from their scant knowledge of economics, but from the fact that there has been a profound shift in the way of judging unemployment and other social problems. In the past, unemployment was always seen as an economic and social scourge. It was a scourge often impossible to foresee and difficult to control, the fruit of economic cycles, bad management, wars, or natural disasters – a sort of 'social plague', and, as such, an evil to be combated. For a long period, economic policy after the Second World War made maintaining a low level of unemployment one of its prime objectives. Inspired by Keynesian theories, states intervened in the economy to generate employment and advocated social policies designed to mitigate the consequences of unemployment and reduce social inequality.

Today, on the other hand, high levels of unemployment are viewed as inevitable, the fruit of the new technological revolution and of economic globalization. Even the social exclusion of a significant section of humanity, the most glaring social fact of our day, no longer moves society. This social insensitivity shows that unemployment and social exclusion are no longer regarded as social problems but as individual ones, and as a social cost, a sacrifice worth making for the fantastic technological progress supplied by the free-market system. Therefore, the main

objective of present-day economic policies is control of inflation, no longer job-creation and reduction in social inequality

The market and the theology of sin

In order to understand this huge transformation a little better, we need to go back to the 1970s. At the beginning of that decade, Europe and the United States found themselves faced with a major economic crisis, characterized by a rise in inflation and unemployment coupled with economic recession – "stagflation". This crisis deeply shook the optimism born of the longest period of growth and economic expansion the world had ever known, following the Second World War. This growth was interpreted by neo-classical economists as the natural fruit of the market, conceived as a harmonious and balanced system that 'naturally' generated economic growth. This optimistic concept, born of a mechanistic view of the world, led the neo-classicists to stop worrying about the problems of economic fluctuations and unemployment, as classical economists had done. Keynesian economists themselves shared this mechanistic view of the world and the economy with neo-classical ones. The difference between them consisted in the fact that the Keynesians believed that state spending played an important role in the process of generating higher employment.

When a crisis such as that of the 1970s occurs, of such magnitude that it is impossible to deny its existence, and puts the basic consensus of society in check, we have to find new explanations for its causes if we are to be able to find means of overcoming it. Let us not forget that in those days the notion that high levels of unemployment were a social evil still prevailed. A theological review is not the place for detailed discussions of economic theory. I propose to concentrate on the philosophical and theological questions that form the kernel and basis of the theory that emerged victorious from the debates – neo-liberalism. But let us look at one preliminary question first.

Speaking of philosophical questions in economic theories is no longer so strange in economic and philosophical circles, though there are still some who regard it as heresy. But to speak of theological bases and questions in economics is far more polemical. Many theologians completely deny the possibility and make a radical separation between theology and economics. Others reduce the relationship to a simple application of the social teaching of the church to the field of economics, denying the existence of theological questions lying within the economy itself. Meanwhile, and with increasing frequency, we see politicians, economists and other social scientists using expressions such as "neo-liberal dogma", "orthodoxy", "faith in the market", "*laissez-faire* theology", "necessary sacrifices", and others deriving from theology, in presenting their arguments and analyses.

Some would discount the question by saying that these terms are being used in a purely analogical sense. But their abundance, in authors either favourable or opposed to the present economic order, obliges us to take the matter more seriously. The length of this article precludes numerous quotations, but one has only to read newspapers, reviews or books to find them. Take Paul Ormerod's book *The Death of Economics* as an example:

It contains such statements as, "The economists of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank preach *salvation* by means of the market to the Third World... An intellectual *orthodoxy* arose... *The intensity of faith* demonstrated by

the majority of economists... Many years ago in economic theory the *fundamental belief* was in vogue that the price of a merchandise – be it bananas or people – is determined by the relative levels of supply and demand" (my italics).[2]

'Salvation', 'faith', 'orthodoxy' and other such terms are not new in economics. The basic nucleus of such theological language was already present in Adam Smith. His famous concept of the 'invisible hand' derives from the theological concept of divine providence. This view of the market as a supra-human entity capable, on the basis of individual egoisms competing in the market place, of producing a non-intentional effect of common good, has always been present in the various theories and ideologies of capitalism. But in the 1970s, with the advent of neo-liberalism, it came to assume a specific and more radical form.

The speech given by F. A. von Hayek, the 'pope' of neo-liberalism, when he accepted the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1974, provides a synthesis of the philosophical-theological nucleus that concerns us here. Its title alone is significant: "The Pretension to Understanding".[3] Basically, it consists of a re-reading of the myth of the original sin of Adam and Eve. All economic theories develop, in one way or another, consciously or unconsciously, a theology of sin, since they try to explain the causes of evils to be combated and put forward means of achieving what they consider the (economic) good.

In his acceptance speech Hayek defined the challenge of the economic crisis of the early 1970s as: "How can we liberate the free world from the serious threat of galloping inflation?"[4] It is important to note that he reduced the crisis to the problem of inflation, discounting unemployment as a serious problem. Having posed the question in these terms, he replied to it by saying that the crisis was brought about by economic policies recommended by the majority of economists, who shared the belief that we could achieve full employment on a permanent basis. This economic theory, inspired by Keynes, presupposes, in Hayek's view, the possibility of understanding all the complex phenomena that make up the market. In other words, the basic evil that originates the harm of galloping inflation and the resulting imbalance and instability of the market – the original sin, in theological terms — is the desire to promote the social good consciously and intentionally, which presupposes the pretension to understand the market.

Against this pretension, Hayek defends the idea that the market is an essentially complex structure. As such, he argues, we cannot understand it fully, and therefore we should not pretend to replace the spontaneous processes of the market with conscious human control through economic and social goals. On the basis of this, he says: "To act according to the belief that we possess the knowledge and power that enable us to plan the processes of society entirely to our taste, knowledge that in fact we do *not* have, will probably cause us great harm."[5]

From the correct understanding of the market as a complex system and from the consequent recognition of the impossibility of understanding it fully, he deduces the impossibility of directing it according to our wishes, that is, the impossibility of intentionally achieving full employment or other consciously-set economic goals. This intentional and conscious quest, according to him, will cause us great harm. It is clear that, in the context of his critique of pretensions to absolute understanding of social reality, he cannot state categorically that these desired goods translated into political and economic actions will necessarily cause great harm. So he presents it as a strong possibility.

Harm as a non-intentional effect of an action that seeks the social good comes about, he maintains, through the fact that this action of coercion on other persons or social groups by an authority impedes "the functioning of those forces of spontaneous disposition through which, without understanding them, man is in fact so fully assisted in the quest for his objective";[6] that is, it impedes the free functioning of the market.

Once social actions planned on the basis of good intentions are seen as generating socio-economic crisis, only two courses are open. One is to take a radically nihilist stance and defend the impossibility of ever having a better world. This type of social theory is, however, frustrating by its nature and doomed to political failure. The other is to believe and hope that the solution to economic and social problems will arrive through the actions of a god or through the non-intentional effects produced by an intrinsically beneficent economic system-that is, the market. As it is impossible to prove empirically that the market system produces only and inevitably social benefits, we have to have faith in it. That is why Milton Friedman, recipient of the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1976, claims that "underlying most of the arguments against the free market is a lack of faith in freedom as such".[7]

The alternative to the nihilist position and faith in a transcendentalized market is to take on our human responsibility to work out, democratically, our social goals and to try to put them into effect. This clearly presupposes not only our capacity to understand the dynamic of the market, at least in part, but also the legitimacy of a certain social and legal coercion on sections of society, such as, for example, a progressive tax system to ensure a better distribution of wealth or control over certain types of production or consumption that pose a threat to the environment - ideas abhorrent to neo-liberals.

Neo-liberalism starts from the epistemological principle of the impossibility of fully understanding the way the economy and trading relationships function and comes to the conclusion that the basic evil, or original sin, is the desire to make the benefit they presuppose the object of understanding. Given the impossibility of doing good, the only thing left is the choice to try not to do harm. And the basic harm to be avoided is "the temptation to do good". This, incidentally, is the title of a novel written by Peter Drucker, the 'high priest' of business management. In this, a Bishop O'Malley says that the only fault of Zimmerman, the protagonist, "is to have exercised a little Christian compassion", in that "he did not resist the temptation to do good".[8]

This is the reason why unemployment is no longer seen as an economic and social evil to be combated, and why economic policy has been reduced to the struggle against inflation, so as to maintain confidence in money and in the market. The 'In God we trust' stamped on the dollar shows that trust in money and in the market is as basic as trust in God, since basically the market has been elevated to the status of a god. This is what liberation theologians call the idolatry of the market.

Justice and solidarity?

This central core of neo-liberalism, established in a 'probabilist' fashion by Hayek in 1974, has today been raised to the level of dogmatic certainty. It is not by chance that so many economists and sociologists make use of the concept of dogmatism in analysing neo-liberalism and the present dynamic of globalization. Fundamentalism is not only a problem relating to religious groups. The most pre-

dominant and perverse fundamentalism today is economic. Social, cultural and historical differences are left out of account when the orthodox prescriptions of the IMF and the World Bank are imposed on undeveloped countries. Social disasters have no effect on belief in the universal validity of their orthodoxy. They claim that increases in poverty and social exclusion are the results not of applying their dogmas, but of not applying them rigorously enough.

When the search for good is considered the basic cause of harm, and when unconcern and cynicism in the face of social problems are seen as the best ethical approach, it is no use preaching social justice and solidarity in the abstract. This is because social justice has been reduced to the efficiency of the market. Efficiency measured by competitiveness in the market is today considered the best criterion for discerning social questions. Therefore, as J. K. Galbraith has shown, one of the main characteristics of our societies is the belief that those who enjoy the riches and benefits brought by the market 'are doing no more than reap their just reward', and "if good fortune is deserved or if it is a reward for personal merit, there is no plausible justification for any action that may come to prejudice it or inhibit it – that will come to reduce what is or could be enjoyed".[9] Which means that the poor and unemployed must suffer the 'just deserts' of their own incompetence. This perverse culture is the most dominant version of the theology of retribution in our time.

Solidarity, a concept so dear to Christianity and so important in our days, has not been immune to this inversion either. The speech given by Michel Camdessus, the director general of the IMF, to participants in the National Congress of the CFPC, for owners and directors of Christian firms, in Lille, shows this inversion clearly. He said: "You are men of the market and of business, seeking efficiency for the sake of solidarity. The International Monetary Fund was set up for international solidarity in the service of countries in crisis which try to make their economies more efficient. The search for efficiency is in and through the market, and you and I both know how related efficiency and solidarity finally are: we stand on the same ground."

The statement that the IMF is in the service of solidarity will strike many people as being as strange as the headline on celebration at the start of this article. Anyone with even minimal experience of the social consequences of the forced implementation of IMF programmes in the countries of the Third and Fourth Worlds will be indignant at such a claim. But, beyond indignation, we need to understand the logic behind such. a statement.

The key lies in the relationship between efficiency in and through the market and solidarity. For the dominant economic school of thought, it is possible to exercise solidarity with the poor only through economic growth. This is because this school identifies quality of life with the quantity of economic goods provided by the Gross National Product. This is seen as the only way of obtaining this growth and, therefore, of exercising solidarity and increasing economic efficiency through free competition in the market. Outside the market there is no salvation!

Once this dogma is adopted *a priori*, one can only practise solidarity by denying solidarity – by, that is, imposing programmes of economic adjustment which increase unemployment, social inequality and other social problems in the name of increased market efficiency. When the IMF is presented as an agent promoting solidarity, all those groups which work in solidarity with the poor, fighting for greater social justice and so upholding alternative political and economic policies,

are seen as bringing about the crisis and, therefore, fomenting evil. They are those who fall into the "temptation to do good".

According to this school of thought, social inequality is no longer considered a social evil. On the contrary, it is seen as something inevitable, just and beneficent. Inevitable, because it is the necessary outcome of the only possible economic system, the market system. Just, because it is the fruit of the wise distribution of wealth by the market, according to the efficiency of each individual. And beneficent, because it is social inequality that drives people into competition, the engine of economic growth, and is the proof that the state is not intervening in the economy.

Solidarity and critique of idolatry

If we fail to unmask this inversion brought about by the market mentality, our works and actions in favour of social justice and solidarity run a serious risk of falling into a void or, worse still, of being interpreted in the sense given them by the neo-liberals. This unmasking has to be done through the process of theological critique of market idolatry. It is this idolizing, this transcendentalizing of the market, which makes the inversion of good and evil possible and legitimate, and which presents the sufferings and deaths of human beings and the destruction of nature as sacrifices necessary for salvation.

In this struggle it is vital for us to re-establish the true meaning of good and evil, of solidarity and cynicism. This is a challenge that does not stop in the economic and ethical fields, but reaches to the heart of theologies and religions. When we talk of the economy today, we are talking of faith, beliefs, dogmas, sacrifices, transcendentalized systems, gods and anthropologies. The problem of evil in the market is, basically, a problem of the theology of sin, of original sin. Sin, grace, salvation... are themes that need reflection by theologians within the complexity of contemporary economies and societies.

In the struggle for greater social justice and solidarity, we must take care not to fall into the temptation of trying to build a perfect society, one with no evil in interpersonal and societal relationships, a society in which it is possible to foresee, control, and avoid everything we consider harmful and in which people are completely unselfish and generous. This, besides being epistemologically impossible, would be a negation of our human condition. Criticizing the idolatry of the market does not mean absolute denial of the market or of trading relations as such. As Hugo Assmann says: "Among undeniable facts, in the field of human interactions in complex societies, is the existence and working of dynamic, partially self-regulating systems in what concerns human behaviour. In the economy, this fact has a name... the market." In other words, our critique of the inversion born of absolutization of the market has to be complemented with a critical but positive acceptance of the market, coupled with a strong emphasis on goals of solidarity.

However well we are able to construct an alternative society – and we have to make the maximum effort to do so – economic and social problems will not disappear completely. One of the reasons for this is that the sum total of human desires will always be greater than existing or future economic goods, so generating conflicts, envies and other evils. Besides this, there is a multiplicity of human, social, and natural factors outside our control. This being the case, we have to struggle, in the political field and in civil society, to make solidarity take root as a so-

cial value. And this is not an easy task, since solidarity is not the only impulse moving human beings; it is rather the fruit of conversion, which is often a very difficult personal process. Without the establishment of solidarity as an objective social norm and value, the suffering of the poor will be seen not as a social evil, but only as a necessary sacrifice or debt due to the sin of economic inefficiency. What makes a correct perception of economic-social evil possible, looking beyond the inversions of the market system, is not only a correct understanding of economic theory but, and most basically, openness to others, solidarity with those who are suffering.

Translated by Paul Burns

Malcolm Brown *Great Britain, 2001*

Risk and reward

The changing economy and the social fabric

topics:

- *influence of economy on the social fabric*
- *economic flexibility and personal insecurity*
- *economic risk and corrosion of character*
- *civil society and the "solidarity of the shaken"*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 40-46

Economy, personhood and market

My starting point is the observation that economic affairs have never been taken particularly seriously by the churches as part of an analysis of human wholeness. My experience is based particularly in the churches in the UK and Europe, but contacts with practitioners in other pastoral and therapeutic communities suggests that they too find themselves somewhat out on a limb when pursuing the links between people's roles within the economy and the conceptions of personhood and identity which are commonly used in pastoral situations. To be sure, there have been plenty of studies of the impact of unemployment on health, and there is more and more work examining the impact of long working hours – especially here in Britain where we have the longest average working hours in Europe, one in five persons regularly putting in more than 48 hours a week. But the Integration of disciplines has not gone very far. Statisticians are opening up new knowledge about work. Counsellors and therapists are picking up more work-related problems. But the wider debate about how economics affects persons in community, and what it means to be a person or belong in a community under our present economic dispensations, is less developed.

This is, of course, not a weakness unique to pastoral studies. Western cultures have moved on a fair way since the Clinton campaign team were able to say "it's the economy, stupid!", as if economic questions were the only issues of any political importance. As Ian Markham argued a few years ago, the focal questions seem to be shifting from crude economic grounds into wider questions of culture'[28]. But it seems that the end of the cold war has left us without the conceptual tools to discuss the morals of capitalism in the public realm. So the increasing in-

[28] Ian Markham : "Tapping Alternative Traditions: Culture not Economics", *Crucible*, Jan-Mar 1997, pp 2-14.

terest among economists in the connections between morals and economics[29] is not yet infiltrating public discourse at a popular level nor is it yet taking off in interdisciplinary terms. The debate in economics continues to be largely concerned with the moral arguments for or (to a much lesser extent) against the concept of the market. I want to return to those arguments, but first I think it is important to establish that economic issues impact profoundly on the daily experience of being human.

And I am particularly concerned here with issues of work and the labour market. Much more could be said about the related question of our increasing self-definition in terms of consumption. But it is as beings who sell – or try to sell – our labour that I am most exercised.

Flexibility and insecurity

The vocabulary around 'flexible' employment has always tended to leave unexamined the question "flexibility for whom?". At periods of skill shortage in particular industries flexibility has worked for employees – a good example is banking in the late-80s when all kinds of family friendly policies were being implemented by some high-street banks in the UK – but that was before the rapid take-off of telephone and Internet banking and the latest generations of ATMs. Mostly, however, flexibility has been about reducing labour costs. And this kind of flexibility has developed rapidly. Only about 15 years ago, I remember a German industrial missioner telling me about the introduction of zero-hours contracts – staff called in only when required, paid only for the hours they work and obliged to wait by the phone on the off-chance of being needed. Within a very few years, zero-hours contracts were appearing in the UK and now they are quite common. Flexibility as control of labour costs is also reflected in the UK's reluctance to sign up to European standards of employee protection. The argument used to be that transnationals could choose to locate in the country with the lowest costs in terms of labour. But as we have discovered recently in the cases of Ford and Rover/BMW, transnationals find it easiest to withdraw from countries with low standards of employee protection for just the same reasons.

Flexibility and casualisation have greatly magnified the sense of insecurity among people at work. It is becoming clear that our long working hours in the UK are not just about contractual obligations but result from two other cultural/economic factors. At the bottom end of the labour market, long hours are the only way to earn a decent wage. The National Minimum Wage (and the miserly arguments against indexing it to average earnings) has not alleviated the pressure to extend hours in order to get off the bread-line. But at virtually every level of the workforce an increasingly competitive ethos, engendered by the culture of flexibility, leads to the phenomenon of 'presenteeism' – being seen to be present; being seen to be committed. Unsurprisingly, long working hours are not closely correlated with higher productivity.

Some recent research[30] has cast doubt on the actuality of job insecurity. The average male job lasted 10 ½ years in the 1970s and lasts 9 ½ years now. Not a star-

[29] See, for example: Samuel Britlon and Alan Hamlin (eds), *Market Capitalism and Moral Values*. Edward Elgar, 1995; D. Hausman and M McPherson, *Economic Analysis and Moral Philosophy*. CUP, 1996.

[30] See the work of Prof. Francis Green (Univ. of Kent), reported in *The Guardian* 21 June 2000.

tling decrease. But what is not measured in that survey is the perception of insecurity and the changing balance of power in the workplace. We know from the study of crime that fear of crime is a more debilitating factor than any increased statistical incidence of crime. It would be surprising if perception of insecurity at work was not equally potent.

What the same research shows is a steep rise in what is called "work intensification" – the measure of how hard people have to work. Britain comes at the top of the work intensification league in the European Union. What is clear is that, for very many people, the interstices in the working day – the small gaps to draw breath, to chat for a moment, or clear the head – have largely disappeared. Workplaces are driven spaces.

There are, of course, issues of personal health, good relationships and emotional well-being here. It may be, however, that the empirical research is more ambiguous than simply demonising modern working practices. It is at least conceivable that, whatever the deleterious effects of flexibility and work intensification, there are some pay-offs in terms of personal identification with work. Whilst over identification of oneself with one's work doesn't sound healthy, neither does the idea that our work is only to pay the bills and our 'real' selves exist outside it. But here I am staying from my areas of knowledge or expertise.

Talking about risk

What interest me rather more is the wider social dimension of these labour-market changes, which means giving some consideration to those who are *not* subject to the new insecurity. To put the issue at its simplest, it appears that risk in social economic relations is shifting rapidly down the scale – and that our vocabulary of morals has failed to keep pace with this.

For example, the vocabulary of the capitalist ethic treats the gain accruing the investor as a reward for taking a risk with his or her capital. Whenever the level of such 'unearned' income is called into question, the justification gives in reply is that risk-taking must be rewarded so that there is an incentive for people to take risks – for without risk-taking nothing new ever happens.

It's not necessary to disagree with the latter part of that argument to want to raise some fairly important questions here. First of all, how risky is the game? How big a risk is involved when we hazardous wealth in the economic system? For those of us who invest in a small way through Building Societies and so on, the answer has to be that the risk is negligible. Interest rates go up and down, but we don't jeopardise our capital. What's it like higher up the economic tree? The pension fund investors are pretty risk-averse, and that both reduces the riskiness of the stock market and cramps innovation considerably[31]. Insurance is a good deal more risky. But what happened to the Lloyd's 'names' when times got hard? These were, on the whole, wealthy people who staked their wealth as surety in the insurance market and happily pocketed a substantial income as a result over years. And when the market was hit by a succession of unforeseen catastrophes, and Lloyd's called on its 'names' to back up the situation, the cries of anguish were pitiful. There were calls for compensation so that these 'investors' didn't lose out. Investment had been seen as a one-way ticket. The very lucrative returns were a

[31] See Will Hutton, *The State We're In*, Jonathan Cape, 1995. p 56 ff and passim.

'reward' for a real risk – but a risk which was not considered to be part of the game. If Las Vegas was organised on these lines it would perhaps still be a desert.

The scandalised reactions of the Lloyd's names was only the most extreme manifestation of the dissonance between our vocabulary of reward and the reality of risk. In practice, the investor's risk is negligible. Like bookmakers on a racecourse, the financial markets are able to lay off high risks in other parts of the market. The big crashes of recent years like Barings, or even the Church Commissioner's 8 millions British Pounds losses on property investment, are traceable back to system failure within the company concerned – failure attributable to the arrogance of bending the rules or the naivete of misunderstanding how the market worked.

I am not arguing that there is no risk involved in capital investment. I am arguing that rhetoric continually exaggerates the risk involved as justification for otherwise unjustifiable rates of return.

And this is going on simultaneously with the increasing riskiness and insecurity of working life for very large proportions of the population. The chance of losing everything is much higher for a manual worker than for an entrepreneur. There is a rhetorical basis for this trend as well: one which underpins the mantras of flexibility. Exponential change, it is claimed, makes structures and institutions redundant. A friend's son, 18 and just left school, is spending his gap year with a firm designing web-sites. He is earning more in that year than I do (not, perhaps, that difficult!). He comments that unless there are plenty of 'pre-pubescent schoolkids' around the firm, the clients won't take it seriously. The rhetorical wisdom is that only the very young can cope with the rapidity of change. And – importantly – this does not have to be verified empirically in terms of them (or anyone else) proving what they can do. It's about image and expectation and a culture of short-term results. But meanwhile the structures and institutions that once made work our passport to citizenship are becoming moribund. Where the path of a career was mapped out in institutional membership, there is now little concept of corporate loyalty. Where trade unions once sought to even up the balance of power at work there is now no intermediary between the individual and the corporation. That doesn't mean workers have no power - it means that their power is not intrinsic to themselves but reflects only the market value if their skill at one particular moment.

The corrosion of character

Richard Sennett has studied the effect of the new insecurity in the working environment in his book *The Corrosion of Character*[32] - tracking the way in which concepts, such as loyalty, become impossible to sustain and, most importantly, impossible to transmit to the next generation. The family context cannot be shielded from the morality of the workplace. What's more, the vocabulary of the former – of trust, of united goals – has been annexed by the corporation and has invaded the workplace in such a way that conflict of interests is denied articulation. "The good team player doesn't whinge". And, as Sennett points out, the concept of leadership is wonderfully slippery – a 'leader' is, by definition, on 'our' side.

[32] Richard Sennelt, *The Corrosion of Character,* W W Norton, 1998.

Put all this together and you have a very heady brew. The 'slippage' between the capitalist vocabulary of risk and reward, and the reality (of big rewards for small risks and vice-versa), may be no less accidental than the 'slippage' in corporate managerial vocabulary which removes the conceptual possibility of conflicting interests whilst the reality of capital and labour goes on as before

Now at this point I think there has to be a change of gear. It's one thing to rail against the excesses of global capitalism; rather another to offer any way beyond it. In church circles I have got somewhat bored with hearing devastating analyses of the failures of a market economy (and, indeed, of a market society) and then – nothing. To expose an evil is a manifest service to humanity, but to go on exposing the same evil again and again raises important questions about compromise and the persistence of evil. If the only alternatives we can put forward turn out to be Utopian councils of perfection, with no indication of how to get from here to there, maybe we need to revisit the theological truth that the Kingdom of God is inaugurated but not yet realised! In other words, human affairs in the current dispensation are characterised by contingency and moral ambiguity. We have seriously to ask whether modern global capitalism is, as its protagonists claim, the least bad option – and its abuses of truth and human dignity the prices to be paid for avoiding something worse.

I don't think we have to go so far as to fall in behind political economists like Hayek or theologians like Michael Novak who take that kind of line. But what we can do is to shift the emphasis of our own responses somewhat away from pronouncements and move toward processes. What, in other words, would it mean to seek a direction which moves away from an all-enveloping, but untruthful, grand narrative of global, managerial market economics but (taking consideration of our own moral wilderness) stops short of naively presenting alternative visions as realities?

Bishop David Jenkins used to say that when you are in a wilderness the first thing to do is to acknowledge that you *are* in a wilderness and stop running. The moral wilderness of late modernity seems to me to be both cause and effect in terms of the dominant vocabulary which so shapes working life and distorts our morality of risk and reward.

Sennett notes that: "Being continually exposed to risk can... eat away at your sense of character".[33] And he points out that risk has about it an inherently random character ("every particular role of the dice is random"[34]) which the vocabulary of rewarding risk seeks to deny. There is, as Sennett says, "no narrative which can overcome regression to the mean, you are always starting over"[35].

The divorce between morals and economic outcomes

This fundamental dislocation between economics and working life, and the narrative that shape character ought to be deeply disturbing. And it is precisely that dislocation which MacIntyre has been exploring over the last twenty years or so in the philosophical odyssey which began with *After Virtue*[36]. "I can only answer the

[33] Sennett, *ibid,* p. 84.
[34] *Ibid*. p. 53
[35] *Ibid*. p. 54
[36] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. (2nd ed) Duckwonli, 1985.

question 'what am I to do?'" says MacIntyre "if I can answer the prior question 'of what story or stories do I find myself a part'"[1]. Market economics has been, quite overtly, the attempt to settle the problems of distribution in a pluralistic world where there is no widely shared teleological narrative by which justice can be determined. Because we are unable to say of which moral narratives we are part, the market steps in to adjudicate amorally between our competing claims. So markets are a consequence of moral fragmentation and the loss of unifying narratives. Yet they are also a cause of fragmentation, since the market is also a historic phenomenon which depends upon a moral inheritance which it denies, denigrates and, ultimately, destroys. In its insistence on the lack of shared moral narratives, the market closes down the possibility of there being shared narratives of injustice, of any kind. In consequence, the detachment of character and community from the workings of the labour market; the hightening of risk as the dominant economic experience; and the rhetoric of reward which illegitimately seeks to reconnect risk and character in a selective and fictitious manner, are all trends for which the tools of resistance are being systematically and intrinsically destroyed.

MacIntyre, of course, is celebrated for exposing the vacuous nature of moral discourse under late modernity. And it is revealing that he epitomises this situation in the three characters of the manager, the therapist and the aesthete.[37] And it is the manager who he describes as the "dominant figure in the contemporary scene". MacIntyre comments that: "among the central moral fictions of the age we have to place the peculiarly managerial fiction embodied in the claim to possess systematic effectiveness in controlling certain aspects of social reality" *(ibid).* And effectiveness is, for MacIntyre, emphatically not a morally neutral value. The point is that the manager – and managerialism – has become cut off from any defining narrative of 'the good'. Managerialism thus works hand-in-glove with the parameters of a market economy which celebrates and reinforces exactly that divorce between morals and economic outcomes. It is not surprising that the driving force behind the new insecurity and the celebration of risk for the most vulnerable comes from a managerial ethos which lays claim to comprehend corporate effectiveness in a market which has no place for shared conceptions of 'the good'.

There is a profound unsustainability about all this which many sense instinctively, others have explained conceptually, but few have discovered how to avoid. We know that the market economy depends for its functioning on the remnant of a pre-market social fabric – without that moral legacy fundamental market requirements of, for instance, honest transactions would be absent, since the market itself does nothing to promote truth-telling. It is quite clear that, to paraphrase the scenario with which MacIntyre opens *After Virtue,* we are working with the "simulacra of morality", the "fragments of a conceptual scheme", but we have "lost our comprehension, both theoretical and practical, of morality"[38].

MacIntyre's way forward is, as is well known, "the construction of new forms of community within which civility and the intellectual and moral life can be sustained through the new dark ages which are already upon us"[39]. That sentence, and *After Virtue* itself have been widely taken as a new communitarian manifesto.[40] The return to communitarian values, the enforcement of a teleological

[37] *Ibid*. p. 73

[38] *After Virtue* p.2.

[39] *After Virtue* p.263.

[40] See, for example. *The Economist,* Dec 24 - Jan 6 1995. "Freedom and Community: The Politics of Restoration."

ethic somehow recovered from the past, has proved a highly seductive package to authoritarian on both left and right and, not least, to the churches. Often accompanied by a snide anti-liberalism, political gurus like Amitai Etzioni[41] and theologians like Stanley Hauerwas[42] seek to affirm a narrative of community (especially in terms of responsibilities rather than rights) either for society as a whole (Etzioni) or for the church as a counter-cultural community (Hauerwas).

In expressing some of the nonsenses and contradictions of the liberal mode of detaching means from ends and of treating ethics as essentially relativistic, they have a point. But whilst this is not the place to expose how seriously the new communitarians misread MacIntyre's subtle position, the gaps in the communitarian response are manifest when we come to return to questions of the economy and the labour market.

Scarcity and abundance

It is not surprising to find that communitarians – whether political or theological – tend to be very neglectful of the economy and the labour market. For it is the economy which, ever since the rise of mercantilism, has challenged the autonomy of closed communities and has exposed established ethical traditions to other, equally coherent yet incompatible, narratives of the good life. Once people began to trade beyond the boundaries of their own community, the necessity for dialogue between ethical traditions became impossible to ignore. Present day communitarians tend to sweep this under the carpet, having little to say about the economy or, when they do, positing alternative economic models which are simply wish-lists.

A common communitarian response to economic matters, especially from the point of view of religious traditions, is to attempt to challenge the economic paradigm of scarcity. Consumerism, work intensification, world poverty and so on all transmute into non-problems if the notion of scarcity is replaced by one of abundance. This is, as I say, an especially potent idea in the churches[43]. But the theological point is that scarcity is an intrinsic condition of a world in which the Kingdom of God is inaugurated but not realised in its fullness. Scarcity in the economic sense is not just about having too little to go round – it is about the opportunity cost involved when a good is employed for one use and another use is forgone. As long as matter is finite, the economic paradigm of scarcity holds. The market has grasped that point clearly. Any alternative to, or modification of, the market model will require a comparative grasp of the notions of finitude and, hence, of contingency, and a comparable model of dialogue and communication between ethical traditions. In that sense, economic questions become serious test cases for ethical models – especially communitarian ones.

So the retreat to the small-scale, ideological community is little or no help in restoring a coherent vocabulary of social inter-relatedness in a world where a rhetoric of risk and reward has become so distorted as to be almost an inversion of reality. The bleakness of that judgement may, perhaps, be alleviated a little if we look

[41] Amitai Etzioni, *The Spirit of Community*, Fonlaua, 1993.

[42] For example Stanley Hauerwas: *A Community of diameter*. Notre Dame, 1981; Stanley Hauerwas and Charles Pinchor, *Christians Among tile Virtues*. Notre Dame, 1997.

[43] See, for example: M Douglas Meeks,. *God the Economist*. Fortress, 1989. Hauerwas also makes use of the concept of abundance as a contrast to the economic paradigm of scarcity.

instead to a revived conception of civil society as the place where a re-invigorated investigation into truth can take place.

I think it is significant that the contemporary theologian who handles the concept of civil society most creatively is Andrew Shanks whose thinking has been influenced by much time spent in the Czech Republic both before and after the momentous changes of the late 1980s.[44] Shanks puts his hope in the idea and practice of civil society. It is, he says, "what provides a space for politics independent both of the state and of political parties; the politics, that is, of groups which do not aspire to any direct share in state power, but which are as a result set free to raise the sort of awkward and unpopular questions it is in the interests of political parties, seeking votes, to avoid"[45]. Shanks recognises, that the associations that constitute this kind of civil society can exhibit all kinds of prejudices and intolerances but, rather than calling as some communitarian apologists have done,[46] for "the right kind" of associations to be fostered. Shanks stresses that despite these failings, the very nature of civil society provides "the environment in which these (problems) may most rationally be combated"[47].

He identifies three aspects of a way forward:

1) "solidarity of the shaken: solidarity on the basis of a shared commitment to anti-ideological thoughtfulness and the values of isonomy (direct spontaneous participation in public affairs).
2) The virtues of sanctity: living a life which perfectly embodies the values of one's own culture.
3) The virtues of transgression: crossing over the boundaries between one's own culture and other cultures, in order to interpret each to the other, as effectively as possible".[48]

In these three principles, Shanks captures the essentially tradition-constituted nature of ethics, stressing what MacIntyre calls "being well-versed" in one's own tradition. Yet remaining within the boundaries is insufficient in a global society, so transgressively crossing the frontiers is a principle with equal weight. But this is not the 'open house' of traditionless liberalism – the kind that gives us the unfiltered market – it is important to be discerning in the choice of dialogue partners, hence "the solidarity of the shaken".

In this, we can begin to discern quite a comprehensive set of principles for a renewed idea of civil society – and indeed for the emergence of churches and other moral communities as 'players' in public life.

My *locus classicus* for this idea is perhaps a slightly trivial one. But I take great heart from the strange alliance forged between the wealthy burghers of Wilmslow and Mobberley in Cheshire and the diggers, tunnellers and tree-people protesting against Manchester's Second Runway. Their economic status was wildly disparate, their appearance even more so, their political, cultural and religious worlds almost totally incommensurable. But I will never forget the cut-glass accents of one lady speaking on the *Today* programme who said "They are people like us". Two groups of shaken people had discovered a small, maybe temporary, certainly

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[44] Andrew Shanks, *Civil Society - Civil Religion*, Blacked, 1995.
[45] Shanks, p. 8.
[46] For example, Diaries Leadbeater, *Civic Spirit*, Demos, 1997.
[47] Shanks p. 8.
[48] Andrew Shanks, *Soul-working Within social Movements*, privately circulated paper, 1995, p. 22.

very limited, window of solidarity. Maybe they had also discerned whose tomorrow it might be if they pressed ahead together.

Risks and reward are both intrinsic features of human life and both, in some kind of balance, essential components in our well-being The settlement between them has been grievously distorted in the present circumstances of late capitalism, and restoring meaning and truth, in the context especially of people's working lives, requires a new sort of ethical project in which conceptions of civil society must, I think, play a central part.

Nevertheless, the capacity for the determinative effect of economic trends, not only to erode concepts of meaning and truth but to destroy the social capacity for alternatives and resistance, remains extraordinarily strong. If we return to the analysis of risk in working life with which I started it is also becoming clear that those very factors are profoundly influencing people's ability to participate in the varied institutions of civil society itself. Research by my former colleagues Alison Peacock[49], shows how pressure of work is increasingly cited as a reason for people's declining rates of church attendance. This is not just about Sunday working (though that is significant) but about the pressures that leave people exhausted, passive and unwilling to take on the additional risks of voluntary sector responsibilities. Indeed, this is not just a phenomenon in the churches but across the voluntary sector – the very sector on which government increasingly relies to deliver welfare provision. The contract culture's infiltration of voluntary groups has, of course, been another, simultaneous, factor in raising the perceived riskiness of even the way we use our leisure. If civil society is to contribute a way forward - and I believe it is the only sure guardian of public truth and meaning – we had better hurry up before the space for its existence is squeezed to nothing.

It is rather a new thing for me to end a paper on a note of such pessimism but that is the consequence of this exploration in risk and reward. The inverted relationship between those two concepts is symptomatic of a profound social dislocation which is driven by propaganda and renders people's perception of their experience confusing and unnerving. The only crumb of vicarious hope is that the market's undermining of the social moral fabric renders the market itself increasingly unsustainable. But that is cold comfort. Better, rather, to use the remaining interstices in our risky existence to explore together the meaning of the good and restore to our discourse the correlation between analysis and truth which market propaganda would destroy – to do what we can while there is time.

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[49] Alison Peacock, "Employment and the Future of the Church". Paper presented at *Soundings: A Day Conference on Church Membership*, Stirling, 14 March 1998.

Manfred Linz *Germany, 2003*

Chances and dangers of the globalisation

topics:

- *the characteristics of contemporary "globalisation"*
- *chances and dangers in the globalisation*
- *possibilities / motifs / actors to counter disastrous effects of globalisation*

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The great Austrian satirist Karl Kraus once asked an author: "What are you presently working on?" He answered: "I am writing an ethics of the economy". Kraus reacted nonplussed: "O, then you will have to choose". Maybe, this short reply can serve as an introduction to the next 45 minutes.

Let me try to make good use of the time given to me. This is by far not easy because the topic of globalisation is, as you know, so vast and so complex that one can easily miss the expectations of the audience, especially when it consists of people from different countries and therefore different cultures, and when the speaker wants, as I do, to relate this all overarching topic to the everyday life and work of pastoral counsellors.

I shall subdivide my remarks into four point.

- Firstly being a German I cannot abstain from giving a kind of definition of globalisation as I see it and stating the main characteristics of this process.
- I shall then dwell a little bit on the title of this talk which I didn't choose myself. It was assigned to me.
- Thirdly, and this will be the largest part, I shall consider some of the chances and the dangers of globalisation.
- And then I would like to close with some reflections on the feelings of helplessness, of powerlessness, feelings the process of globalisation evokes in so many people, and how – hopefully – one can overcome this frustration.

Globalisation and its characteristics

The present globalisation is a process through which the operative political and economic forces mainly of western societies shape and design the whole globe as their field of action. Inevitably the relationships as much as the dependencies between nations and societies grow closer and become deeper. Crossing boundaries including international trade – this has been going on for a long time. The epoch-making feature of the present globalisation is the scale and the speed in which this

happens, so much that the quantitative changes, as the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel puts it, pass into a new quality which means: The present globalisation is not an enlargement of what we know and have, it is something hitherto untold, and to a large part its consequences are still unidentified.

This definition goes beyond the usual description of globalisation. Quite often it is understood merely as a huge market, on which the same products in the same way can be sold and bought everywhere. Not long ago on an academic panel I have heard a well known economist saying "The international integration of markets – that is what globalisation means in short". Such a shortsightedness will miss what is happening today. To understand what is going on we have to apply a wider view.

Let me name *seven characteristics* of the present globalisation. I also start with the economy but I shall not quit there:

- Spreading of production, trade and capital-investment far beyond national and even beyond continental boundaries;
- Globally operating financial markets based on speculation and completely unconnected to marketing real goods and with a highly destabilizing potential;
- Worldwide possibilities for communication almost without delay and at low costs;
- Considerably weakened national governments as regulating powers over against multinational companies, which so far are not tamed by global institutions;
- Intensive and inevitable cultural cross penetration exposing people to foreign value systems and ways of life;
- High mobility of people, goods and services through fast and cheap transport;
- Drifting apart of winners and loosers of a globalised economy.

Is the "integrity of creation" given a chance in global economy?

This is the title the organisers of this conference have attributed to this morning session. It makes me think. Has there ever been an integrity of creation after the Fall of Man? And if so when did the disintegration of creation begin? With the ancient empires and their nature consuming wars? At the age of discoveries and its global outreach? With modern industrialization? With capitalism? Or right now with globalisation? We feel: We feel: it is a question without an answer. This world is Gods creation – such is Christian belief. But this world is man's world too. And we all know that in the creation man has been given a double mandate: to cultivate the earth, which means to put it to his and her use, and to keep, to preserve it. These proved to be portentous sentences. Christianity has been blamed for creating the spiritual basis of natural sciences and dominating nature through science and technology. Maybe rightly so. Carl Amery has spoken of the "merciless effects of Christianity". And I don't dare to wipe this out. But there is some other truth too: The belief in creation makes mankind responsible for the earth – the earth as it is as God's and man's world. Which means for us: We are responsible for the globe as we face it today.

Chances and dangers of the present globalisation

What counts for chances and what for dangers depends very much on ones preconceived outlook on the economy. Those, who expect all blessings from the unrestricted workings of the so called invisible hand of the market, will contend that globalisation spills a cornucopia of all good things: prosperity, freedom, overcoming of hunger and want.. Not many here today will belong to this faction. Nor do I, as you will soon discover when I turn to the dangers of globalisation. But nevertheless I can detect some advantages of globalisation. They are connected with some of the characteristics I have listed at the beginning.

Worldwide communication almost without delay and at little costs could contribute to the openness and possibly to the democratisation of societies – not immediately but in the long run. Dictators can no longer rule unobserved and unquestioned. International courts have begun to prosecute them. It has become quite difficult to hide atrocities. There will be witnesses who put them into the Internet and the other communication media. Discrimination of minorities will find accusers within a society or outside of it. The German Democratic Republic fell for its economic incompetence but also because its citizens through Western Television knew too much of what happened inside and outside its boundaries. Interfering in national affairs was in former times outlawed. Today there are beginnings of an international judicial system, even if we are far from an open globe. In politics and economics we depend too much on each other to let alone the public affairs of neighbouring or even farer away countries. The Balkan is the most recent case.

One more example: I regard the intensive and inevitable cultural cross penetration also as a chance for a peaceful and enriched life together. I don't believe in the clash of cultures, into which Huntington sees us move. It surely isn't affection what draws cultures together. It is the inevitable necessity that we either learn to live together or shall perish together. In this regard even capitalism may play a preserving role. I hesitate to say that. The internationally invested capital will not allow cultures to divide the world any longer. Surely, this does not work unfailingly and it does not exclude regional conflicts. But in my understanding a worldwide capitalistic economy will lead to a better acceptance of strangers. The encounter of cultures may at first create tensions, as we in Germany experience with our Turkish co-citizens and our Muslim communities. But in the end enlightened self-interest will hopefully produce the minimum understanding necessary to enable tolerance.

When I now turn to the dangers of globalisation I shall refrain from a lamentation of all the evil, the rudeness, the mercilessnes attributed by its opponents to the globalisation and its turbo-capitalism. I shall instead a more sober approach and state what cannot remain as it is now and has to be changed. And I shall at least in part indicate means by which it can be changed. You will understand that this can only be a very short and perfunctory overview. I shall touch upon four fields: economy, especially financial markets, global governance, ecology and third world countries.

Taming the markets

I remind you of the statement I quoted at the beginning: "The international integration of markets – that is what globalisation means in short." This indeed identifies the dominating power of globalisation right now. But the global market is not

this benign invisible hand turning crude egotism into the common good. The global market is distorted. There are some powerful players who set the rules for the weaker partners. And the rules benefit the industrialised economies above the developing economies. And then we observe an economizing of politics. Local, provincial national governments are lenient to companies in order to lure them into their territory. Companies in turn evade taxes by shifting their profits to low tax countries thus refusing to pay their share for the social functioning of society.

And then there are the global financial markets having got completely out of control. Formerly financial businesses were mainly conducted to invest in production or in marketing goods. Today only five percent them are at all related to goods. Ninety five percent are pure financial transactions crossing borders and speculating with currencies. They have reached the sum of 1.6 trillion $ per business day.

What has to be done? Financial speculation has to be curbed and can be curbed by applying a tax on all speculative transactions. Such a tax has been drawn up by James Tobin, an American Economist and Nobel prize winner. Next: There are more than a hundred so called tax paradises, where money is not or little taxed and where it can be stored unmolested. The G 8-Nations could demand a strategy to dry these money havens up. Next: An international agreement could make tax evasion more difficult. And politics should and could take the lead over the economy.

But even within the economy important changes can be observed. Right now as a rule there is one supreme yardstick for all entrepreneurial decisions: the shareholder value which means the profit a firm can pay to the share owners. In the Anglo-Saxon discussion it is gradually confronted with a similarly sounding notion: the stakeholder value. This is a considerably larger group: Surely, the capital owner belong to it, but also the employees, the customers, the community where a company is located, and in a wider sense all those who benefit or are impeded by the acting of a business. A considerate management will therefore include ecological necessities into its decisions. If all these requirements are taken into consideration, then the shareholder can expect a reasonable, a fair profit, but not the maximum profit.

This is hard on conventional economic reasoning. For it nature is a subsystem having to submit to the ruling system, the economy itself. Nature was and still is to a large degree merely the supplier of raw materials and energy, the surroundings of production and the wastebasket. The use of nature therefore has to be cheap or at best free. Those who use nature do not have to worry about regenerating it or compensating for it. All costs arising from pollution to this thinking are to be paid by the general public. If nature is cheap you can squander it. Now, this is going to change. More and more economists discover that producing and trading contra nature will destroy the very foundations the economy lives upon. Not a few companies have realized that an ecological management creates no disadvantages and mostly no additional costs. On the contrary often enough it saves money, wins new customers and strengthens the company over its competitors.

Nevertheless the insight that for its own survival the economy is inseparably bound to ecology, is a tremendous ethical effort. Because it opens up only to long-term considerations. And in the present economic system such a longterm perspective is not encouraged. The prospective view of a normal enterprise is limited to one year, at the most to two years ahead, and the stock exchange judges companies by their quarterly record. A single company cannot change that, at least not easily. It takes a combined effort of business associations, banks, stock exchange,

political authorities, customers, NGO's to implement longterm assessment of economic conduct.

Strengthening global governance

It is the global community which has to set the rules for the markets and not vice versa. It has to be the states and the international institutions which determine the legal framework for the international commerce. But the global community so far lacks appropriate instruments. The existing institutions in their present shape are barely equipped for this task, neither the UN nor the WTO. And too often they are directed towards the interests of the wealthy countries. In the UN the industrialized nations have a preponderance. The GATT-agreements of WTO benefit the rich countries. The patent regulations shield the advantage of the North and create a further dominance in genetic engineering, seeds and animal breeds. And also the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are dominated by European and North American thinking even though there have lately been happy changes. No one in his or her sane mind wants to set up a central world government But we need badly institutions, regimes which for the burning issues can establish and enforce binding agreements and treaties among the nations and the players of this globe. We need global institutions for curbing money speculation, for trade regulations securing fair competition and a minimum of social standards, for more equal chances between North and South and also for the protection of our natural foundations.

And the beginnings are there – though they are feeble, hesitating, sometimes stumbling beginnings. A permanent committee regulating global finance flows is called for. Banks shall be observed in their credit allocation. The Tobin tax is accepted as a working tool even in larger circles of economists. The rules of WTO are widely criticised for neglecting ecological and social standards. It is urged to strengthen the rights of the small over against the big.

All this is a long way. The neo-liberal thinking sticks like glue to the mainstream of economic theory. But this can change. The catastrophic course world trade is steering becomes visible to some of its formidable supporters. And when one asks who can push forward the necessary changes, I see above all two forces: One force are the national governments themselves and the reasonable faction within the economy. Neither of them can profit from Chaos and rampant growth. The other force is the growing vigour of concerned citizens. To them we shall come back in the last paragraph.

Protecting the natural foundations of life

The environment, I rather like to speak of nature, suffers especially from the present globalisation. Materials, goods are hauled across far distances by truck, ship and air because transport costs are minimal and can be neglected; electronic communication is very energy and material consuming – contrary to the expectation; physical travel, especially by air has intensified enormously; global competition pushes environmental considerations to the back and so on.

What we need is a World Trade Organization more aware than it is now of the big challenge: that unconsidered short-lived gains will greatly endanger our own fundamental interest in a liveable natural environment as the unchangeable basis of all human wealth. Once this has become a firm insight, the regulations enforcing

the minimum ecological standards while still remaining an arduous task should be negotiable. Also in this field, there are three actors who are able to achieve something: governments, the considerate part of the economy and the international civil society who can push that ahead.

Reducing inequalities in North-South-relations and terminating gross injustices

Permit me to dwell a little longer on this field, since it is one of my main concerns in the Wuppertal Institute. The Human Development Report 1997 of the United Nations has shown, how vast the difference in wealth has become between North and South. Surely, there has developed a global middle class and is still growing in numbers and in wealth. At the same time the distance to the poor is widening. Between 1960 and 1991 the richest fifth of the world's population expanded their share on the monetary wealth from 70 to 85 percent, while in the same period the share of the poorest fifth fell from 2.3 to 1.4 percent. For a good dozen countries in Asia and Latin America the distance between South and North is shrinking, for a hundred more it is increasing. A whole continent, Africa, is pushed to the margin, in a country like India the upper fifth of the population is hailed for its way up, the remaining 800 million are put offside. Similar proportions apply to Latin America. One striking figure: According to the above mentioned report 358 billionaires own as much in money worth wealth as 45 percent of all mankind. Such a figure is incomprehensible and it surely is unbearable. It nevertheless makes no sense to wield the big hammer. Accusations will change as little as Sunday sermons do – exceptions granted. But it makes sense to appeal to the enlightened self-interest of those on the sunny side of the street. And the enlightened self-interest can teach the well-to-do the following:

In a world, divided by such grave inequities, there is little prospect of peaceful conditions where the wealthy can enjoy what they have acquired. Wealth is not endangered only under at least one of the following three conditions: Either it is unknown to the needy, or the needy take their lot as self-inflicted or as fateful, or the wealth is inaccessible to them. None of these presuppositions is valid any longer. In this webbed world too many know too much. And they also know the means to fight their lot, be it by terrorism or by migration. There is little chance that great parts of the world's population will submit to their growing misery. Decided actors have already given proof of their power to create chaos, not seldom in the name of religion, as there is hardly a more explosive mixture at all than the connection between poverty and religious fanaticism.

Therefore the rich of the world must take a vital interest in mitigating the inequalities. Already the industrialized countries alone overburden the natural foundations of our globe. Even this one billion inhabitants of the North use more materials and energy than the earth can replenish, and they burden the air, water and soil beyond their capacity. But now the nature consuming civilization spreads over the whole globe, which means, that the really dramatic development will take place in Asia and Latin America. There our careless consumption of the treasures of nature is repeated – only on a much larger scale. Just a few figures. In the USA live five percent of the world population, but these five percent use up 20 percent of the world's energy. Germany consumes per capita six times as much energy as China, fourteen times as much as India. But this will not remain so. The threshold countries of Asia and Latin America are busy catching up with their northern models. In China and India alone lives more than one third of mankind. If these countries

together with the other climbers continue their chase after our standard of living and if they will have succeeded some decades from now – than the atmosphere, the seas, the soil, the drinking water systems will be heavily overused – so much that the consequences for the then living generation, its health, its food, its well being is incalculable.

The course for tomorrow is set today. Even the poor countries begin to realize what they are worth. Turning again to the international negotiations: Without their consent a viable climate protection is not attainable, and the big developing countries like India, China, Brazil, Indonesia use their potential to upset the global climate quite efficiently as a threat. To sum up this line of thought and sticking to the energy example: It is in our own best interest to care for the development of the poorer countries, to see to it that they do not use up their forests, that energy from sun and biomass is produced decentralized, that they advance ecological building materials and so on.

And I will not spare the European Union to which I belong. Regarding the Third world it shows a double face, a Janus head. With the one hand it gives development aid, contributes to nation building, grants custom preferences, trains professionals. With the other hand it takes what it has given: It subsidizes the export of surplus grain and meat thereby ruining indigenous markets in Southern countries which can't compete, it signs fishery treaties favouring its strong vessels and leaving the small boats of African coast fishers without catch, it pays the cheap world market prize for raw materials and puts levies on processed goods thereby restricting imports. All this is a well known feature, one of the ambiguities of North-South-Relations and cannot be left in the dark. And to close this point: There has to be an urgent and complete debt relief of the highly indebted countries.

Now then: Having named so much what has to be changed, having referred to insight and enlightened interest, having called on so different actors:

How can be done what has to be done?

You don't expect me to give a full answer to the tasks I have listed above. But I shall try to answer this question in part and in doing so I would like to reflect (a) on motives for action, (b) on possibilities, whereby I mean the scope of what reasonable pondering can hope to achieve, and (c) on the actors we can hope to take part in tackling the tasks.

And before I go on to that I would like you to participate in an exercise I have to undergo from time to time to convince myself that it still makes sense to continue working for a bearable, a tolerable globalisation. The developments we have touched upon not seldom make me doubt whether they are still in our reach, whether I as a person or together with my friends can influence the course of events. That, what goes on – isn't it too big, too far away, too high up and therefore beyond my capacity? But the uncertainty goes even deeper: Is there anybody who is in command of the events and developments? The people on top, the national and international helmsmen, are they able to steer the global boat? Or has it moved out of control? Has mankind with all its power, with all it inventions, all its technological and organisational skill created more problems than it now can solve? Does every remedy create unknown side effects, more difficult to handle?

When these doubts enter my mind, I turn to the old Greek legend of the Titan Atlas. He waged a war against the gods und was defeated. For punishment he was laid on his shoulders the whole globe which from then on he had to hold.

And then I am glad that I am not Atlas. I don't have to hold the globe. What can I do? That what is within my power; that what I am responsible for; that what I can change. Not more and nothing else is expected from me. And nobody knows what ensues from my small actions. You will know the famous thought of the Chaos science. The wing-beat of a butterfly can trigger off a later storm somewhere far away. Who knows what results our personal and common actions have?

(a) Motives

Strengthened by this encouragement let me now first consider possible motives we can enlist for moving people to work for the necessary changes. Care for the far away neighbour, sharing ones wealth, caring for the weak – this surely is the realm of ethics. And ethics, morals are indispensable if we want to arrive at a tolerable globalisation. But by themselves they are weak, as I don't have to tell you. They are divertible, seducible, can be overruled and on demand they retreat into the background. So I would like to combine them with two more motives. The one is reason or insight. This motive is self-evident. We don't have to dwell on it right now. The other is enlightened self-interest. I have already mentioned it several times. But I think it justifies a few more remarks.

Undisputedly self-interest is one of the strongest urges of man. But in ethics it has no good reputation, since self-interest has two quite dissimilar faces. The one is selfishness, self-assertion on the cost of others. The other face is self-interest as elementary impulse of all living beings. Life is anxious to preserve itself. This specific self-interest can be formed and made an to a constitutive part of ecological ethics. Up to now life-preserving self-interest was – perhaps as an inherited feature of evolution – short-sighted. In this it was so successful that mankind is now endangering its continuation. I like to cite a sentence from the Club of Rome: Only when the inhabitants of this earth acknowledge, that they are threatened by the same immediate dangers... only then the cooperation necessary for survival can develop. This is exactly what self-interest has to learn today. It must enlarge itself in order to be able to include all humanity, and it must prolong itself in order to exchange the short-lived interest for the long-term interest. It means that the worn out notion of solidarity acquires new significance. Solidarity in its original sense is a combination of self-interest and altruism. It has nothing to do with benevolence.

Solidarity generates because and when I realize, that I need the others as much as they need me, that I can achieve my advantage only together with them. Climate policy is the most striking example for this connection.

(b) Possibilities

Making globalisation liveable, bearable, tolerable is a project for more than one generation. And it will proceed rather in small than in large steps. People motivated by an ethical impulse are prone to expect too much from themselves and from those whom they want to win for their cause. Changes in personal lives may sometimes take the form of a rapid conversion, social changes take time. People have almost everywhere mixed motives, which means that ambiguities, habits,

heavy pressures have to be overcome. Societies learn step by step, in a process of trial and error and sometimes they proceed like the "Echternacher jump procession": Three steps forward, two back. In the face of all what has to be done impatience is nearly unavoidable but it doesn't do any good.

(c) Actors

For globalised problems there are no personal solutions. All has to be done together. None of us here in this room has a seat in a national government, or in an international organization, or in the WTO or on the Board of a transnational corporation. What can we do? We can join and support an NGO. NGO's play a leading role in creating a climate of change. They create networks, participate in movements, seek public awareness, build coalitions, exert pressure on governments, on multinational companies, denounce partial interests and so on. The most recent example is the movement *Attac*. It came into being together with the WTO meeting in Seattle, has grown tremendously since, was and is physically present where the big meetings are held, demonstrates peacefully in large numbers, and it under girds its presence with reasonable and workable proposals like Tobin tax, shutting the tax oases and so on. It has brought the ugly features of globalisation to international attention as no one before. And it doesn't look like a day-fly. Hopefully it matches the two prerequisites for an effective promoter of change.

These two prerequisites I found when I visited the Hamburg harbour. There – and with this experience I shall close my remarks – right in the middle of the harbour two compact tug-boats are stationed, to be brought into action in case of a ship collision. They bear curious names: They are called "Energy" and "Endurance". We need both when we work for a liveable globalisation.

Thomas Koester *Germany, 2003*

Money and humanity – how do they relate?

Free competition as the basis for a humane economy in the age of globalisation

topics:

- *central ideas of the "Social Market Economy" in post-war Germany*
- *Social Market Economy as "programme for safeguarding freedom"*
- *competition as a necessity for a humane economy*
- *impact of globalisation on economy*

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More than two hundred years ago, the French publicist and politician Mirabeau, who was much feared for the sharpness of his tongue, said that he knew only three ways to survive in a society: "One must beg, steal from one's fellow men or be paid for producing one's own goods."

A society acting strictly according to the "categorical imperative" of Immanuel Kant, or according to the commandment of Christian love – who wouldn't want this paradise on earth! But we have been expelled from paradise for once and for all. And instead of angels, we feel more and more that we are surrounded by thieves who are making their way through life using violence and cunning at the expense of others. Since we cannot live in a society of angels, and we do not want to live in a society of thieves, the only alternative is to rely on Mirabeau's third "strategy for survival" as the moral basis of the economy. This was the course adopted by the founding fathers of the "Social Market Economy" in Germany after Second World War.

However, the principle alone does not determine behaviour. Everyone has a capacity for good and a capacity for evil. On the one hand, there is the honest businessman who feels committed to the principle of performance and counter-performance and who draws on the moral reserves of integrity and loyalty, fairness and a sense of justice. On the other hand, there is the unscrupulous cheat who is only interested in seeking his own advantage and trying to increase this by taking from others.

According to the economist Wilhelm Ropke, the principle of performance and counter-performance is a very sensitive and fragile artificial product of civilisation. The founding fathers of the Social Market Economy believed that this prin-

ciple was only truly realisable in free competition, which for its part can only exist on the basis of certain moral standards.

Free competition borne by basic moral values and convictions is therefore the axis of our economic order. Its institutional guarantee vis-à-vis the private, collective and public quest for power was the central concept of the founding fathers of the Social Market Economy. According to Walter Eucken, another German economist, they set out to "create a humane and efficient economic order" which recognised the self-determination of the individual, i.e. his dignity and personal freedom. "Without freedom, without spontaneous independence", says Eucken, "the human being is not 'human'. Freedom is a precondition for all morals, as only those who have the freedom of volition and are free to act are faced with decisions, only they can really choose. (…) Only free decision allows the recognition and realisation of the binding moral world order. (…) Only the free individual, thinking independently, can come closer to the truth. Only the free individual is capable of an act of will." At the centre of the concept of the Social Market Economy, we thus have the concept of securing freedom as the precondition for realising the humanity of the individual.

"Everything", says Eucken, "leads to the question: What forms of order allow freedom? What forms of order at the same time also delimit the misuse of freedom? Can the freedom of the individual be determined in such a way as to find its limits in the freedom other others? And are these forms of order applicable in the industrialised world" – and today we must add: in the globalised world?

It was in free competition – and in free competition alone – that the founding fathers of the Social Market Economy saw the basic principle of a free, humane and efficient economic order. As a result of the interdependence of the various orders, this would in turn influence all areas of human existence and the organisation of the state system as a whole.

According to their thinking, democracy and the market economy formed an inseparable unit. Both depend on ethical preconditions which they cannot establish themselves. Röpke writes that "the world of economics draws from moral reserves with which it stands and falls." The market, competition, the game of supply and demand do not produce these reserves, but consume them and must obtain them from sources outside the market. Justice, honesty, self-discipline, willingness, moderation, public spirit, respect for the human dignity of others – all these are values which the individual must furnish himself when he is active on the market. Such values 'beyond supply and demand' are essential pillars of society. They prevent the less good inclinations in people from gaining the upper hand. But most of all, without such values, it is difficult to imagine any meaning to life or any joy in participating in society. Smaller human circles, such as families, neighbours, communities, firms, clubs or action groups play an essential role here. Human warmth leads to a sense of responsibility and responsibility needs warmth. A community which is only held together by material interests will lose out in the future. And it is essential to ask whether we have not already been carelessly drawing on our moral reserves for too long without worrying about their replenishment.

Free competition is an essential form of personal freedom and thus a necessary precondition for every non-collectivist social constitution. It exists when, against a background of equal opportunity and fair competition, it is the better performance which is rewarded. It is the task of state competition policy to ensure free competition. According to Eucken, "the state must influence the forms, the institutional

framework, the order in which economic activities are conducted and must establish the preconditions under which an efficient and humane economic order can develop."

Eucken states the following as essential constituent elements of a functioning competition order:

1. free competition as a basic principle,
2. the primacy of monetary policy, i.e. a stable monetary constitution,
3. open markets-a demand which is not only directed against state measures to segregate markets, but also against attempts by private power groups to use their strength to deter outsiders, or to manoeuvre them out of the market,
4. private ownership,
5. contractual freedom,
6. personal liability as a precondition in the field of competition and as an instrument to counter the depersonalisation of industry, and finally
7. consistency in the field of economic policy in order to ensure that companies have planning certainty.

These seven principles form a single unit and are so closely inter-linked that the isolated use of one of them can miss its target completely.

But the strict observation of these constituent principles alone is not sufficient to keep the system for regulating competition in working order. Flank protection is needed particularly controls on monopolies-in order to safeguard the regulating principles.

Eucken urgently warns against isolated measures in the field of economic policy and, in view of the strong interdependence of all parts of society, urges that an eye should always be kept on the overall regulatory context. He says that "anyone who does not observe the overall context of the economy is playing with fire and can cause an explosion by taking what may seem to be a harmless measure – often without those involved noticing who is to blame."

Our free social order and system for regulating competition appear a very fragile construct against this background. And nevertheless, we can say without reservation: The Social Market Economy is the most successful economic and social order of the 20th century. It is the system for regulating competition which brings us all a maximum of economic advantage and social justice. It contrasts with the system of a state commando economy as well with the laissez-faire economy of classical liberalism. It is the order in which freedom and efficiency, justice and humanity can' coexist best of all.-But, we must ask critically: Is it still a valid concept for the future?

In the nascent age of globalisation, many people consider that, as a regulative concept, the Social Market Economy has been overtaken by reality. Its divisions are disappearing. It is claimed that globalisation countermands the basic principle of the Social Market Economy, i.e. the regulation of competition by means of a state competition policy. And in any case, they maintain, the role of the state as the rule-maker and referee in the field of competition is obsolete. In its current form, the Social Market Economy is an obstacle to the innovative ability, efficiency and competitiveness of German industry in the field of international competition and makes it difficult to implement essential structural changes. Furthermore, they continue, it is not even really social. It hinders the development of those who are efficient and willing, whilst at the same time not offering any per-

spectives to those who are really needy, for example large families and the long-term unemployed. From the point of view of these fierce critics of the Social Market Economy, it is therefore time for a change of paradigm.

Are we now on the threshold of the renaissance of a biological explanation of the economic process? An explanation which depicts the increasingly uninhibited expansion of the strong-as a result of internationalisation and globalisation-as necessary for prosperity in the longer term? Is the classical liberalism which we thought had been overcome now the new forward-looking paradigm in the field of regulatory policy?

I believe not! And I should like to present the following four arguments to counter the current pessimism concerning regulative theory-which is threatening to turn into fatalism:

Thesis 1

The Social Market Economy is a "programme for safeguarding freedom". Anyone who abandons it is opening the door to an economy dominated by power and lack of freedom.

Anyone wishing to abandon the concept of the Social Market Economy must be aware of the consequences of his action. He must realise that his actions can have the same effect as the snowball that sets off an avalanche. Due to the interdependence of the social orders, one must always expect three kinds of effects: the immediate effect, the triggering of a trend leading to a different economic order, and finally the effect on other orders, e.g. the ethical code of a society.

- He must know therefore that by abandoning the Social Market Economy, whose central principle is to protect free competition against private, collective and public concentrations of power, he is opening the door to what Eucken calls the "universal tendency to form monopolies-a factor for which all economic policies have to be prepared".
- He must know that he is encouraging the transformation of the market economy into a power economy – a "might economy".
- He must know that as far as the freedom of the individual is concerned, it is completely irrelevant whether the moving force behind this "might monopoly" is a private individual, a company, a collective or the state.
- He must know that-and here again / refer to Eucken – the constitutional state can only fully assert itself in those areas where its legal system has established a suitable economic order, and that monopolies of all kinds are incompatible with the principles of the constitutional state.
- He must know that any change of paradigm in the economic order necessarily has an effect on society and on the prevailing values in society.
- He must know therefore that he is thereby influencing, changing and possibly also endangering the existence of the individual in all areas of his life.

As Goethe said in Faust: "The first is free, the second's slaves are we."

Eucken called the Social Market Economy "the programme for freedom". The question of the continued existence of the Social Market Economy is not, therefore, just a question of the continued existence of the market economy and competition. It is a question which presupposes clear decisions on values, decisions for or against freedom, for or against the limitation of power, for or against decentralisation, for or against responsibility.

Thesis 2

In an age of intensified processes of concentration, abstinence in the field of competitive policy is capitulation before the problem of excessive power.

For many people, the current wave of mergers in the industrial and financial markets is the symbol of the process of globalisation. Large parts of political and public life are paralysed, awe-struck by the icons of great and modern economic power. How else can one explain the crushing comments made by large sections of the German media about the decision of the American courts in the Microsoft case, and the claims that the judges were trying stab technical progress in the back by employing a law from the century before last? The fact that the American courts had described Microsoft's business practices as "predatory" because, according to the findings of the American anti-trust proceedings, Microsoft ousted competitors out of the market, prevented rivals from gaining access to the market, impeded innovations and abused its power on the market met with a widespread lack of understanding on the part of the German media. Influential schools of economic thought, such as the Chicago school and the neo Austrian school, administer further sedatives. They give assurances that there is no cause for concern as long as it is possible for potential competitors to gain access to the market. They claim that free competition will ensure that the temporary monopolistic position of the innovators is levelled out by competitors moving into the market. And this despite the fact that recent American surveys have clearly proved that the cost of market access for new competitors is very often so high that the counter-strength of potential rivals does not have a chance, or at least not in the short term. But this realisation has not yet taken hold. here. Blinded by the shining icons of economic power and trusting in the wonder weapon of potential competition, or simply fatalistically believing in the inevitability of the economic process of concentration in capitalism, people prefer not to recognise the situation, trivialise it or see it a result of economic determinism. The founding fathers of the Social Market Economy knew that economic concentrations of power harbour the danger of transforming the "economy of the market" into an "economy of the mighty". The collapse of the concept of an economic order leads irreversibly to capitulation before the problem of a concentration of power. The wisdom of Confucius would seem to ring true: "When thought collapses, orders collapse".

Thesis 3

The Social Market Economy is the compass for regulatory theory in the 21st century. There is no responsible alternative.

Eucken claims: "To establish conditions in the economy which do not inadvertently trigger disastrous trends of economic policy is not only a central task of economic politics, but is our decisive historical task." This task presents itself again and with even greater relevance at the threshold of the 21st century with its important challenges.

In our search for a new compass according to which we can set our course of action, we must also take a closer look at the Social Market Economy. This is necessary and fruitful, but also presupposes that we are able to differentiate between the theoretical concept, on the one hand, and the form in which it manifests itself, on the other.

The Social Market Economy is not a unified theoretical concept but a dynamic, extended practical model and, as such, has had a decisive influence on the economic policy of the Federal Republic. Nevertheless, the various governments have repeatedly deviated from the principles of the Social Market Economy in important areas-be it intentionally or be it as an unintended reaction to changes in general conditions. Declarations of their belief in the principles of the Social Market Economy have sometimes been little more than mere lip service. The Federal Republic has accordingly strayed further and further away from the guiding principle of the Social Market Economy.

Anyone therefore who sees the way in which the Social Market Economy manifests itself today as the concept itself, anyone who does not critically ask in how far political decision-makers in the Federal Republic perceive competition as their responsibility, and in how far they have deviated from the course of the Social Market Economy in their perception of this task, is simplifying the problem with disastrous results: The Social Market Economy is being abandoned because of its alleged failure, whereas in actual fact it is economic policy which has failed because it has departed from the concept of the Social Market Economy.

I am absolutely convinced that the Social Market Economy is a forward-looking regulatory model that can be applied outside Germany and Europe, and that it can serve as an inner compass for determining a future world economic order. The Social Market Economy is the Third Way between Socialism and Capitalism. It is therefore the greatest challenge in the age of globalisation to continue to develop the regulatory concept of the Social Market Economy under changing economic and social conditions, to balance reality and the model more carefully, and to safeguard competition and thereby prosperity both at home and abroad.

Thesis 4:

We need a renaissance of competition policy and we need it in almost all fields of politics – both national and international.

The regulatory concept of the Social Market Economy, whose pivotal role is to secure free competition, can thereby serve as a compass and as a valuable corrective. As a concept which was originally developed as a national solution, it must, of course, prove its compatibility with the regulatory systems of other states in the process of liberalising and internationalising markets, and must demonstrate its

competitive strength. Allow me to mention some of the conclusions a politics of economy should draw, following the principles of Social Market Economy:

Conclusion 1:

Competition policy is a policy of freedom in the field of economics. One must therefore counter the current wave of mergers taking place within the framework of globalisation and the accompanying danger of a concentration of power by introducing suitable controls on competition in order to secure this freedom.

This includes: (1) establishing cartel and monopolies authorities at the German, European and international level, whose independence must be absolutely guaranteed-for example, along the lines of the German Federal Bank. These authorities must be able to work without interference from "special" ministerial exemptions and without the risk of becoming involved in considerations relating to "industrial policy". In so far as multi-lateral approaches can pave the way to an international authority with responsibility for competition, for example within the framework of the OECD, these approaches must be welcomed as steps in the right direction.

These steps include (2): amending German and European competition laws in line with American law to include the possibility of deconcentrating economic conglomerations. This also has an important deterrent effect.

Conclusion 1:

The fact that the significance and implications of entrepreneurial decisions as a rule correlate with a reduction in the personal liability of the decision-maker describes a disastrous development which needs rectifying.

The fully liable owner-entrepreneur is the model on which the Social Market Economy is based, not the manager-entrepreneur. Unlike the manager-entrepreneur, the owner-entrepreneur has a very close, personal relationship with his firm. The economist, Joseph Schumpeter, put it rather melodramatically when he said that the owner-entrepreneur would, if necessary, be prepared to die on the threshold of his firm rather than to betray its interests for a handful of silver.

It may be that these criteria are no longer appropriate in our matter-of-fact day and age. But it does make one wonder-and it is difficult to understand why it should be that personal liability for entrepreneurial decisions diminishes the larger the firm and the more crucial the resulting significance and potential implications of such decisions. Eucken states that the positive effect of the principle of liability lies in the individual's fundamentally more cautious disposition of capital, which is more independent of his personal interests. It is precisely in this area that liability could be most beneficial. Responsible entrepreneurial decisions can hardly be expected without personal liability on the part of the decision-maker. Personal liability is the brake on entrepreneurial decision-making-a brake which seems more important than ever in view of the current wave of mergers and take-overs and the resulting global concentration of economic power. Many negative effects of the current wave of mergers, with their numerous flops, could probably have been avoided if company chairmen had been personally liable. The whole logic of market-economy steering mechanisms demands personal liability-and demands it

from everyone. The fact that many manager-entrepreneurs do not want to accept this key principle of a market economy, and are fighting against it tooth and nail-preaching others water and drinking wine themselves-is psychologically understandable but absolutely unacceptable. The introduction of the principle of liability is a precondition for a competition order. What is more: It is the precondition for a social order in which freedom and self-responsibility prevail.

Conclusion 3:

The state should not favour large-scale concerns and corporations.

Free competition depends on equal opportunity for all competitors. It is the task of the state to safeguard free competition. Free competition is impossible without absolute neutrality on the part of state policy towards companies of all legal forms. In the power game, politicians are repeatedly tempted to stray from this principle of neutrality, to make themselves guardians of the interests of large-scale concerns and corporations, or even to assume the role of a player. This does not serve the interests of competition-on the contrary: a policy which furthers such concentrations of power weakens the position of small and medium-sized enterprises, which form the backbone of our economic and social order. The re-establishment of equal opportunities in the field of competition is therefore a basic pre-requisite for strengthening the Social Market Economy.

This includes, for example, abolishing the tax privileges for corporations which were introduced during the recent corporation tax reform and which mean that such concerns have an advantage over individually-owned firms due to the different taxation of sales of shares. No competition policy-however efficient-can offset the resulting flow of capital away from investments in the capital holdings of small and medium-sized enterprises and towards concerns which are listed on the stock exchange

Free competition also includes the revoking of the so-called Basle Accord on the reform of own-funds rulings for banks, and the threatened rise in the price of loans for people setting up in business as a result of a higher risk assessment. This would restrict access to the market for new small and medium-sized enterprises in a most contra-productive way. This approach would mean that the state authorities responsible for the supervision of credit institutions would impede the financing of business start-ups, whilst the same state would grant tax privileges to help concerns listed on the stock exchange.

Free competition also includes resolute measures to oppose the tendency of public sector principals to award tenders to general contractors instead of awarding contracts to individual companies, thus undermining the Contracting Regulations for Services in the Building Industry (VOB). What is more, a number of empirical examples show that this practice is. more expensive for the public sector than awarding individual contracts.

Finally, in order to restore equal opportunities in the field of competition, one must also reverse the role of the state as an entrepreneur by continuing the policy of privatisation. The far-reaching privatisation of public sector enterprises, particularly at the local level, and the introduction and strict observation of competition in this sector can strengthen small and medium-sized enterprises. Private companies currently have little chance against the multiple role of local authori-

ties as tax authority, regulation and planning authority, contract-placing authority, and rival.

Conclusion 4:

Instead of worshipping the icons of economic power we should take small and medium-sized enterprises as the model for the 21st century.

The claim that technical progress favours the advance of large-scale companies, or that such companies are even the sine qua non of technical progress, seems virtually not eradicable.

This is absolutely not the case, however. The founding fathers of the Social Market Economy already knew that the fields in which large-scale companies have the optimum operating size are more limited than is generally believed. This is particularly true today in view of the historically unique, cheap and decentralised availability of information and communications technology. Huge hierarchies are nonsense in the knowledge society.

According to Biedenkopf, a student of Franz Böhm, the next few years will see an increase in the number of virtual companies, which in tum will be made up of a larger number of linked, independent, individual companies. Biedenkopf believes that such companies, consisting, of a number of independent small and medium-sized enterprises co-operating with one another, will be infinitely superior to hierarchical large-scale companies. The economic future will thus be considerably more decentralised than it is today. The age of globalisation is not therefore based linearly on the formation of world-wide concerns, but is characterised by two opposing trends: Concentration on the one hand and decentralisation on the other.

Here lies the great opportunity for small and medium-sized enterprises in the age of globalisation. And here also lies the great opportunity for our competition order. After all, small and medium-sized enterprises are not just one of many factors promoting growth and prosperity. Small and medium-sized enterprises are much rather the sine qua non of any policy aimed at prosperity and growth.

They oppose monopolistic and oligo-political trends and thus fulfil an important function in the field of competition policy. Compared with the structures of large-scale companies, they are much more flexible and dynamic, quick to discover new market niches, which they occupy and exploit, thus generating additional income. Small and medium-sized enterprises act as links between the different sectors of the economy and thus assume a central structural role. As a rule they produce more labourintensively, require less capital in order to provide jobs compared with large-scale companies and react to fluctuations in the economy less procyclically. They thus fulfil an important function in the field of employment policy. The fact is: Only entrepreneurs-and nobody else-certainly not the public sector-can create permanent jobs and jobs which finance themselves. Small and medium-sized enterprises offer wide sections of the population a broad spectrum of economic activity, and thus not only contribute to a better distribution of income and opportunity, but also encourage the development of new, additional entrepreneurs. Small and medium-sized enterprises are furthermore the “school of the market economy”. They promote the culture of independence; they are the “seeding bed” on which entrepreneurial “talents and virtues”, such as a sense of responsibility, the willingness to take a risk, the will to lead, the ability to organise and to intro-

duce innovations, can flourish. The fact that such values cannot be state-ordered, but must be learnt in daily business practice is painfully demonstrated by experiences in transformation countries, where for decades bureaucratic patterns of behaviour were encouraged and entrepreneurial virtues punished.

Apart from these economic factors, small and medium-sized enterprises are also an important social factor for developing and safeguarding the democracy. Self-employed persons are not dependent on others, either economically or personally. They bear the risk, act independently and on their own responsibility and thus help to firmly anchor the rules of the market economy and democratic awareness.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are the bastion of family businesses. Here independence and responsibility are learnt in the family context, with parents setting an example for their children day by day.

One thing becomes clear when we take a look at the whole spectrum of the positive effects of small and medium-sized enterprises: A policy which is aimed at growth, prosperity and the development and protection of democratic structures must attach central importance to the promotion and strengthening of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Small and very small enterprises are one of the great hopes of the 21st century. This applies both for developed as well as developing countries. But entrepreneurs do not appear out of the blue-and it is a great mistake on the part of macro-economic social and economic policies to believe the opposite. Experience shows that the introduction of a market and competition can quickly encourage new entrepreneurs, but these new firms are usually concentrated primarily in the commercial and service sectors. The foundation of new companies in the manufacturing sector, on the other hand, is more difficult since such enterprises require a combination of commercial and specialist skills. The ideal way to encourage enterprises in developing countries therefore is a combination of independent, interworks structures and the provision of micro-credits. Sometimes a sewing machine is all that is needed to take the first step towards entrepreneurial independence.

If the Social Market Economy is to develop its beneficial effects in the 21st century, one must return to and revitalise the values and convictions of the bourgeois society on which it is based. The middle classes form the backbone of this society. They not only encompasses key players in industry, trade, commerce, the professions and the administration, but also all citizens who shape or wish to shape their own lives on the basis of their own performance and their own responsibility, be they employed or self-employed. These middle classes must become the symbol of the 21st century.

Conclusion 5:

The guiding principle for formulating important areas of policy must be the own responsibility of responsible members of the bourgeois society.

In almost all fields of politics, a "re-evaluation of all values" (speaking with Nietzsche) has taken place. Anyone seeking a reference to the own responsibility of the citizen or to his autonomy or independence in the current regulations concerning labour law, social policy or education policy will instead find only bureaucratic rulings and restrictions on individual freedom. The bourgeois state has degenerated into a paternalistic welfare state. Worse still: This degeneration is not

even seen as reprehensible since society too has seen a transition in values and has developed a "fully comprehensive insurance mentality". This correlates at an individual level to a "welfare mentality" instead of a "work mentality". Necessary changes and decisive shifts in the field of labour and social policy thus meet with resistance from large sections of the population and are considered unsocial, unjust and unfair.

The Social Market Economy is a value-oriented order in which the "social" aspect is not only an accessory, but an integral part of the competition order. It is the antiprogramme to all forms of economic and social Darwinism. And just as its prime interest in the field of competition is the survival of the less strong, socially its aim is for social justice. The Social Market Economy embodies the three values of maximum freedom, free competition and social justice. It is in the field of tension of these values that it develops its dynamism. And it is the politicians' task to balance and adjust this field of tension according to the given situation and possibilities.

Please do not misunderstand: I do not think that the field of politics has failed fundamentally in the past. I do believe, however, that-parallel to the changes in values in society and under pressure from these changes-it has strayed a very long way from the original concept of the Social Market Economy and from the principles on which it was founded. How else can one explain the paradox that social benefits and social redistribution apparently increase proportionately to the prosperity of society as a whole? According to Thuy, it seems that the more wealthy citizens become, the more state support they require.

One could claim that the wealth of a nation says nothing about the gulf between rich and poor, and that increasing prosperity has been solely to the advantage of the rich. But is this true of a country like the Federal Republic of Germany, where employees can be included among the ranks of the "middle classes", both compared with the past and particularly compared with world standards? The Social Market Economy is a success story-also and particularly for the working population. It has not widened the gulf between rich and poor. It has reduced it and has helped large parts of the working population to join the middle classes.

One cannot speak in terms of a move away from the principle of equality and social justice, but of a return to the right measure. In other words: Away from an unjust guarantee of high living standards which can no longer be financed, towards securing the existence of those who are truly needy in our society.

To help those who really need help is and remains the task of the state-nationally and internationally. It can be proved that the constant increase in social benefits has been at the expense of the development aid budget. So in the end, it is the poor and the needy in the world who suffer as a result of the mistakes of social systems in highly developed societies, particularly in western Europe.

In the subsequent discussion, it will perhaps be possible to talk about the central issues of such a return to the basic social principles of our competition order in more detail. I should for now, just like to emphasise that in order to implement the long needed structural reforms, it is of key importance to make it clear to the population that a policy which is based on reducing state dominance in the field of social security does not represent a cut-back in social security, but the strengthening of the position of the individual. It does not take anything away from him, but gives him back his money and thus offers him an opportunity to accumulate assets, to become 'self-sufficient' instead of being able to claim questionable social

insurance benefits. The individual must recognise that autonomy, independence and own responsibility are worthwhile, that they do not only harbour dangers but also offer opportunities-opportunities to shape, determine and secure one's own life.

Conclusion 6:

In order to secure a future in freedom and prosperity, against a background of democracy and a market economy, we need a return to moral values beyond supply and demand.

It seems that we have all drawn on moral reserves for too long without worrying about their replenishment. For some time now, the social microcosm which surrounds us has been showing signs of collapse. In our cities, every second marriage ends in divorce. The prevailing reality in many schools is not the family but single parents. Egotism, self-realisation and the maximum development of one's own personality are today's realities and objectives. It seems only a question of time before our moral reserves will be permanently exhausted and with them the source from which our community is fed.

It is therefore imperative and of supreme importance for securing our future in freedom and prosperity that we should counter the individualistic and materialistic tendencies in our society with values which help the individual to find his way. The endowment of life with meaning and a return to old values are central tasks which we must tackle. And here our social circles, the family or the neighbourhood, the. community or the firm-but particularly the Church, which is often closely connected with these circles-must play an essential role.

The world around us is becoming colder. We need warmth, for only warmth produces responsibility, solidarity and a sense of public spirit. To return to Walter Eucken, we must become aware again that "striving for the implementation of economic precepts is only one side of the competition order. The other side consists of trying at the same to achieve the will for a social and ethical order. This linkage is its greatest strength." At the moment, this linkage (or to be precise, the lack thereof) is its greatest weakness. For the sake of freedom and prosperity, we are all called upon to summon all our energy to remedy this situation.

The founding fathers of the Social Market Economy always had more than just pure economics in mind. They. always viewed economics as just one part of a larger social reality which it was their task to shape. And they gave their ideas a secure foundation outside the field of economics-in moral values "beyond supply and demand" – the title of a book by Wilhelm Röpke, written in 1958. By doing this they were able to balance the laws of economics with the dignity of mankind.

In this current time of disorientation, we should remember this principle and should use it as a guide to take us into a humane economic system in the 21st century.

Solomon Victus *India, 2003*

Ecological problems in rural Indian communities

topics:

- *people in rural South India facing ecological problems*

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Introduction

India is known for her ancient cultures and temples. In recent decades, India is known for her atomic bomb explosions and huge industrialisation process. The understanding of progress, development and growth was defined only in terms of material production since the 1950s. Consecutive economic revolutions such as Green, White, Blue and Grey Revolutions witness to such growth models as well as ecological degradation.

Mega Dams like Sardar Sarovar Dam on the Narmada river, have become the modern shrines of India. Nuclear plants, satellites, missiles and atom bombs are considered to be the prestigious modern symbols of India. This sort of growth indirectly tells us that there is over exploitation of land, water, minerals, ores and creation of enormous waste. The industrial production of rayon, synthetic fibre, leather, chemicals, energy, and motor cars have contaminated the soil and the atmosphere. The disposal of waste plastic bags has become a daily problem to most of the Municipal Corporations.

The situation in Madurai City

Madurai is called the Temple City and in 1336 became the capital of the Pandiyas after Pandian, a feudal king. Today it has become an industrial city. Madurai district alone has 1452 primary schools, 349 middle schools, 138 high schools, 112 higher secondary schools, 25 arts colleges, one medical college, one agricultural university and many engineering colleges. The Literacy rate is 63.72%.

It has only one river known as the Vaigai River, which has a lot of religious connections to it. This Vaigai River except in rainy days has a very narrow amount of water flow. Therefore water shortage is very frequent in the City. If we study the problem deeply, we may come to understand how cities have neglected traditional water sources and solely depended on external solutions.

In and around the city, 25 traditional water collection ponds existed. Now only a few ponds are left untouched and the rest of them have been filled and made into housing plots, government offices, play grounds, bus stations, radio station, auditoriums etc. The average rainfall is 887mm and so it is a necessary to collect this rain water in these water collection ponds in order to raise the ground water level.

The ground water level has been going down because of two reasons - one is the rain water is not collected in ponds but runs off with effluent water and is contaminated. Secondly the ground water is over exploited without any controls. The private companies and individuals go as deep as possible with bore wells and take ground water to the maximum for their own use.

The City Corporation has only now realized the seriousness of this kind of absence of regulation. They are trying to find some solutions to collect and retain rainwater in and around every new house. This attempt also fails to impress the people because of non-observance of the rules.

There are local ecological groups who are trying to make some serious efforts to collect and retain rainwater through small collection ponds. Our Seminary took some serious effort to improve ground water level and has succeeded with the help of its students.

Now our Seminary has enough water for both domestic use and the irrigation of bananas and coconuts. Our Seminary also encourages incoming people as well as the local people not to use plastic bags but to switch over to cotton bags. We have succeeded in getting the government to pass a law banning plastic bags.

The case of a specific village: Parambupatti

It is a village situated next to Madurai Airport with good fertile land producing jasmine flowers, onions, chillies, green gram, brinjals, dhal etc. But the failure of the monsoon rains for the last two years has affected agricultural production.

Nearly 1000 people of one caste live there. This village has one primary school with 3 teachers. Today the village is undergoing several problems, apart from monsoon failure. The main problems are: (1) The new ring road; (2) The airport extension; (3) The huge irrigation canal.

(1) *Ring Road* – It is a 50ft by-pass road to link Madurai City with different ports and exporting zones, cutting across the village. This ring road has become a 24 hours busy road producing much noise, destroying the calmness of the typical village. The people have lost their agricultural land without any compensation from the Government. The number of accidents involving humans and cattle is increasing.

(2) *Airport Extension* – Since Madurai City has been increasingly playing an important role in industrial and commercial activities, the State government of Tamil Nadu is trying to promote the Madurai airport into an International airport. The extension is planned exactly over 20 acres of agricultural land where deep wells, houses and gardens are situated. Everyday airport authorities and revenue officials are coming and measuring the village without giving exact information about their plan and rehabilitation to the people. The people are divided over this issue for the last 5 years, whether to fight or not.

(3) *New Irrigation Canal* – It is true that the village people need more irrigation facilities than existing ones, but the government policies are promoting new installations which undermine local traditional systems. The village ponds and waterways are neglected but the state plans big irrigation canals flowing outside which will ultimately take away rainwater from the villages. The new canal which is 20 metres in width and has high walls built over the remaining agricultural land of the village. The compensation for this canal land is Rs.30 per cent against the market value of Rs. 1000.

Other impacts upon the people

(1) Employment

The overall life of the people in this village is at stake. The farm activities are slowly coming to an end due to water shortage. As the agriculture does not provide hope, the villagers start to despair of it and compare it unfavourably with other works. Many move away to work in well digging and water collection pond deepening elsewhere. The young people go for carpentry that is entirely new work, but it gives regular employment, good payment, extra benefits like travel, tea etc.

The Women go into the knitting industry in the neighbouring towns. Thus agriculture slowly becomes an employment of poor esteem. The middle class suffers mostly due to their loss of status. They do not have enough work and are not willing to change their caste status to work in other occupations.

(2) Arrival of Money Lenders

The new phenomenon of money borrowing is increased. The money Lenders are available at any time both, morning and evening in the village. They give Rs. 900 for six months and get Rs. 1000 from them. If the people can't pay the money on time, the money lenders will resort to harassment. Thus there is a growing debt crisis in the village, particularly in the section who find difficulty in finding employment.

(3) Shop Keepers

The settlers from neighbouring villages installed few shops at this village which thrive. The local villagers do not have this profit making skill compared with the new trading community. The shop keepers bring mineral water, soft drinks, hair tonics, perfumes etc. which are new to their culture. The shop keepers encourage the people who consume such products and sarcastically humiliate those who do not consume them. However the lack of ethical trading practices amongst the villagers indirectly helps others. The hard earned money is spent on new consumerist goods without any critical outlook.

(4) Entertainment

Local group games are slowly vanishing but cricket gains popularity. Cable TV decides and motivates people towards a new consumerist culture. The hard earned money is spent on domestic gadgets and luxury products. Fashionable dress wear-

ing is growing and the traditional dhobis (washermen) now demand a piece rate for washing whereas in the old days they bartered for an annual share of the grain harvests.

On the whole, despite new problems, the involvement of money in the village increased without creating any improvement in their livelihood. No higher education, no new houses, no savings but the money flow is carried away by the modern consumer products.

This sort of village problems ends up with people's migration to urban areas. The migrated villagers live in urban slums and lose their village identity once for all. Ultimately they lose their roots for they are neither accepted by the urban people nor have they any employment in their own villages.

Alternative attempts

The Parambupatti villagers do not simply watch over the incidents but many times they have met among themselves and discussed strategies. They conducted demonstrations in front of the Collector's Office (The Collector is equivalent to a "Prefect" in France, and has the legal and financial responsibility for the District), met the members of the Parliament of the Union of India and local Legislative Assembly of the State of Tamil Nadu. The people have conducted awareness programmes among villagers about the airport extension. So they are struggling to combat such policies and demand new land both for farming and housing. The struggle continues.

Some of the lands of this area have been newly reclaimed with Social Forestry Schemes. There, with the support of Rural Theological Institute, fruit trees – sapodillas, pomegranates and mangos are planted by providing two bore wells. The Landholders meet one third of the cost of the total expenses.

James R. Farris *Brazil, 2003*

Ecology, economy and theology in Brazil

Highlighted by a case-study

topics:

- *economy vs. ecology in Brazil*
- *theological aspects of ecology*
- *ecology and the life-situation of poor people*

source (printed German version): Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung No 11, 2003; pp 21-26

In this short article I want to touch on three overlapping themes: theology, economy and ecology. I am going to start with the problem of water pollution in Brazil and then discuss the theological implications of this reality. Believe it or not, I am not going to deal with the deforestation of the Amazon. The reason for this is that the Amazon is already being discussed in almost every corner of the world. As such, I would like to look at both broader issues and at another specific ecological problem in Brazil that is of urgent importance.

I will begin with a few short comments about ecology in Brazil and its relationship with economy or the market. Then I will take a closer look at the problem of water pollution in and around the city of São Paulo. Next I will touch on relationships between theology and ecology. I will close with a short case study that relates ecological and economic questions in a Brazilian context.

Ecology and Economy in Brazil

The impression exists, possibly because of problems with pollution and deforestation in the Amazon, that Brazil has practically no environmental consciousness or infrastructure. I disagree, and believe that the facts prove otherwise. The first environmental law in Brazil was passed in 1797 in order to control the cutting of trees within 10 kilometers of the coast. To be honest, though, what apparently motivated the law was not environmental consciousness, but economic concerns. The Atlantic Rainforest was being cut down at such a fast pace, even in 1797, that there was a deep concern for loosing a crucial source of income for both private businesses, raw materials, and revenues for the state, export taxes. Whatever the motivation, as early as 1797 there was at the very least an awareness of the need to protect the environment, or natural resources, on the part of both business and government in Brazil.

The first far reaching, or national, effort to regulate what we now understand as pollution took place in 1934 with the enactment of a federal Water Code that regulated norms, rights and limits of water use. Once again, at first glance this would appear to be a giant leap forward in terms of environmental protection in Brazil. However, it appears that the reality of the situation was more complicated. Brazil derives a great deal of its electricity from hydroelectric plants, and prior to the turn of the century producers of hydroelectric energy exerted considerable influence, if not control, over water resources. At the beginning of this century the National Department of Water and Energy was profoundly influenced by these hydroelectricity producers. The intent of the Water Code of 1934 was both to wrest this control from the hands of such producers and return it to the Federal Government, and give priority to domestic consumption and local communities due to the growth of Brazilian agriculture and increasing urbanization. What happened, in fact, was that the National Department of Water and Energy continued to be profoundly influenced by key electricity producing companies. My interpretation is that the argument was essentially that of protecting national interests. Without energy, Brazil would not develop, and then, as now, the word "development" is extremely powerful.

Why am I spending so much time talking about Water Codes and political realities in the 1930's in Brazil? It is not because I am compulsive about history. It is because I learned something of importance doing the research for this presentation. I read various reports, magazine articles and academic publications on Brazilian pollution regulation and, specifically, problems with water pollution. What I learned was that Brazil has a history of environmental regulation, and a huge environmental infrastructure. However, governmental environmental agencies are also generally under-funded and inefficient, even according to internal reports of the Brazilian National Development Bank, and laws and monitoring procedures related to the environment have been and are frequently influenced by economic concerns and interests. Lack of funding for governmental environmental regulation agencies is, without a doubt, due in part to a limited tax base, but it is also due, at least from my perspective, to an implicit desire to minimize the impact of these agencies. For example, a 1987 survey by the Brazilian National Development Bank found that the state regulatory agencies responsible for pollution control, SEPA's, were under-staffed and under-funded. Two agencies, in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, accounted for almost half of the total national staff. Four states had no more than ten staff members. Ten states did not have boats, three states did not have cars, and six states did not have testing labs. Only three states had the capability to provide air and water quality analysis. In 1987 three states did not have state pollution control agencies, in spite of Federal laws requiring such agencies. While this situation has improved since 1987, environmental problems have become more complex, and regulatory agencies have not advanced markedly. It is enough to say that many of the agencies I researched continue to be under-funded, under-staffed and lack the basic equipment necessary for environmental regulation. For example, the federal agency responsible for overseeing an immense tact of Costal Forest in the area which I live, São Bernardo do Campo, until three years ago did not have long-range radios and only a dozen cars, none of which were off road vehicles actually capable of going into the forest. It is also interesting to note that in spite of considerable research I have been unable to determine the current status of this agency in terms of basic equipment.

One way of interpreting these dynamics is to say that if you want to prove that you are environmentally conscious it is necessary to create agencies for environ-

mental protection. However, you do not necessarily have to fund those agencies. This leads me to the conclusion that these agencies are often little more than symbolic, even though there is a growing sense of environmental awareness in the broader Brazilian public.

One program that I have been able to find considerable information regarding is PROSANEAR, an environmental program funded by the World Bank. The focus of this program is on water pollution around major rivers in the central and south of Brazil. From all indications this program has been quite successful in defining sources of water pollution and regulating both industries and communities that are the source. My interpretation of why this program has been successful is that it has the force of an international funding agency, the World Bank, behind it. Since the funds come from outside of Brazil there is less internal concern with costs. Further, the World Bank is capable of applying political and economic pressure on both federal and state governments, which greatly aids in the process of implementation and enforcement. Another strength of this particular program is that it does not simply identify sources of pollution and then levy fines. The program includes funds for connecting individual homes and neighborhoods to sewage systems, building new waste water disposal systems in urban areas and making pollution control technology more affordable to small businesses and industries. As such, the program seeks to do more than punish offenders, through fines that are frequently less than effective. It is just such a balanced approach that is often lacking in internal Brazilian environmental policies.

Water pollution in São Paulo

The River Tietê and its tributaries form a semi-circle around the city of São Paulo, a metropolitan region with between 16 and 20 million inhabitants. No one quite knows how many people actually live in the region. The Billings Reservoir is part of the Tietê river system, and provides water for approximately 6 million persons. The Tietê River and Reservoir system also come into contact with one of the most industrialized areas in the world, the corridor between São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. According to some estimates the Tietê is one of the most polluted rivers in the world. A very pragmatic example is that when I drive by the river, which is about 20 minutes from my home, I often have to roll up the windows in the car because the smell is overwhelming. Since 1994, some 4 billion dollars has been invested in cleaning up the river, mainly in terms of building new sewage treatment plants and connecting homes and small industries to the city's sewer system. Progress has been slow, but is being made.

Why is the Tietê so polluted? The problem is complex, but put in simple terms there are four central issues. First, many homes in the region around the river are not connected to the city's sewer system. These homes frequently release their waste directly into streams or drainage systems. This reflects the reality of poverty in São Paulo. Second, many small industries do the same. Larger industries are more closely regulated, but small and medium industries often escape inspection and regulation because they are “informal” or “unregistered”. Or, in other words, they do not legally exist. In 1996 it was estimated that between 70 and 80% of water waste in São Paulo was treated in water treatment plants. The other 20 to 30% was released directly into river or lake systems. In a city of between 16 and 20 million inhabitants this is a huge amount of waste release. I could not find specific figures for wastewater release, but on average 6,2 tons of industrial solid

waste are produced daily in the city of São Paulo, and 20% goes untreated through the official sanitation system. Third, while the city of São Paulo has a functioning wastewater treatment process the volume involved frequently overwhelms it, and untreated or partially treated water is released into rivers and streams. Poorer municipalities around São Paulo often do not have well-developed wastewater treatment plants, and this worsens the problem. Fourth, while large industries are inspected and regulated there are not enough inspectors to effectively measure and regulate water pollution. Plus, fines for breaking Water Codes are generally negotiable between the industry and the state or city. As such, the payment of fines is often delayed for years due to legal processes.

The river Tietê has its source in the interior of the state of São Paulo. There, the dominant source of income is sugar cane. Until the mid 1960's, this region relied on the production of coffee as its major agricultural product. However, with the end of the so-called "coffee cycle", coffee was no longer lucrative. One reason for this was depressed prices in international markets. Another reason was that coffee plants require high levels of nutrients in the soil. After a period of between forty and seventy years the soil in coffee plantations is effectively exhausted, or requires high dosages of specific fertilizers, which are very expensive commodity in Brazil.

The crop that replaced coffee was sugar cane, for the production of alcohol. Brazil is now one of the largest exporters of alcohol in the world. The environmental impact of this new crop is due to a byproduct of the process of refining alcohol. Vinhoto is a highly toxic sludge that has no known use, and is very difficult to degrade. Transportation, storage and treatment of Vinhoto is quite expensive. There are a myriad of laws and regulations regarding the storage and treatment of Vinhoto. However, due to the vast distances, under-staffing of rural environmental protection agencies and, most probably, the political influence of the owners of refineries these laws are often ignored. The Vinhoto is often released either onto the ground or into small streams close to the alcohol refineries. The result is the degradation of the land, the death of small streams and the introduction of Vinhoto into the Tietê. Once again, this points to the intimate relationship between economy and ecology.

Ecology and theology

There are two theological issues that I believe are crucial to this discussion. The central theological issue related to ecology and economy is that dominant Christian theologies are andocentric. Our theologies begin and end with models of God and creation based on human categories. The categories of I and Thou, to use the idea of Martin Buber, relate only to God and human beings. Nature is not a Thou. Nature is an It, and as such rarely enters into our theological discussions because it is of secondary concern. We fail to see the connection between human beings, nature and God. As such, nature can be dominated or used as an It, with little thought of the consequences either for nature, human beings or God. God is generally seen as immanent only in the person of Jesus Christ or the presence of the Holy Spirit. God is not seen as present or expressed in the natural world, or God's presence is seen as indirect. As such, we can use and abuse nature with little or no theological or ethical reflection. As such, our theologies become highly selfish and self-serving.

I believe that this attitude or understanding of the relationship between God, human beings and creation is changing. There are an increasing number of publications and general discussions regarding theology and ecology that recognize this intimate relationship. One of the theological issues that these discussions are identifying as fundamental is how we understand God. This discussion is identifying models or images of God as crucial to our understanding of creation.

Our dominant models of God are often based on images of total power, authority and control. God is the ultimate authority, and is in total, or near total, control of history. This often leads to an implicitly or explicitly passive theology where human responsibility is limited in comparison with "the Will of God". Such an attitude is easily translated into a selfish theology where the domination of the world, or the use of the natural world according to human ends, is understood as "the Will of God". Little or no relationship is seen between God, human need and the natural world. Such fragmented or andocentric theologies are inherently destructive.

This reality is reinforced in Brazil because of 500 years of history where the physical world as well as its human population has been seen as resources to be exploited. This historical practice or reality has been translated into an attitude in modern day Brazil of "take what you can get today and let tomorrow take care of itself". This attitude of thinking in terms of short-term gains or needs has a high price. One result of such an attitude is that my comfort, my profit margin and my desires become foremost. What suffers is the environment and quality of life. What suffers is the web of life.

The river Tietê and the Billings Reservoir are excellent examples of this. In recent years the immediate utility of the river has been as a convenient sewer. The river itself, as a life form, is of no consequence. The river is an It. The medium and long-term consequences of turning a river into a giant sewer are of little or no concern. What seems to have mattered are short-term utility and profit. In terms of the Christian faith or religion, what seems to have played a key role, in terms of recent Brazilian religious attitudes and practices, is either the "salvation of souls" for the world to come or "prosperity", in economic terms, and not what it means to live a full and abundant life. The Tietê may be a part of God's creation, but what really matters is "salvation", as a transcendent reality, or "prosperity", in terms of immediate economic success. So the Church has either spent its time saving souls or fighting poverty and oppression, as is the case in Liberation Theologies, or creating so-called "Theologies of Prosperity". Little thought has been given to the web of life that includes all of creation, including rivers. As I noted before, this seems to be changing due to discussion about images or models of God and the relationship between theology and ecology. However, these discussions are still in their infancy, and have not yet left the "academy" to enter with any force in the local church. The hope is that ecology and theology does not represent one more theological discussion that is popular at the moment, but that will disappear in the near future. Only to be replaced by another religious topic that is "in" at the moment. What are needed are deep reflections on how we understand God, self and world. Only then will discussions regarding "salvation" or "redemption" leave the realm of individualism and include the whole of God's creation.

The case of Maria in São Paulo

To begin with, let me say that one of my fears about offering a case study is that what I am going to offer should not be understood as a universal truth regarding ecology and poverty in Brazil. It is a case study, and as such reflects one concrete reality or situation. It offers a picture or a photograph of a specific situation in modern day Brazil. I believe this case study honestly reflects a reality that is not uncommon, but I hesitate to say that it reflects "life in Brazil". As in any country, life is incredibly diverse and complex. As such, I do not want to make any generalizations that cannot be supported. For example, my life or my reality in the Brazilian middle class is very different from the case that I am going to present. However, I believe that my life or my reality in the middle class is not representative of the majority of Brazilians. I do not directly experience the reality of poverty, and poverty, or marginalization, is much more descriptive of the lives of the majority of Brazilians than is that of the relatively small and fragile middle class.

Today, Maria is a middle-aged woman of more or less 45 years of age. She arrived in the city of São Paulo as an adolescent with her family. She was the third of five children. She has two older brothers and a younger sister and brother. Her family, including her father and mother, moved from the extreme north of Brazil "in search of a better life" after her father had been fired, or downsized, from his position in a small leather tanning company. When they arrived in Brazil, approximately 32 years ago, they moved into a two room "house" in a slum on the periphery of São Paulo. The "house" was constructed of tin and cardboard. It had electricity and running water that were illegally connected to the municipal system. That means that an intermediary controlled the illegal connections with the municipal systems, and, as they came to discover much later, charged considerably more than the legal rates charged by the municipal systems. Electricity was "acquired" through illegal lines connected to the local power grid. Every three or four months, Electro Paulo, the local energy company, would "discover" and cut the illegal lines. The next night the lines would be reconnected until Electro Paulo returned the next time. The water and sewer systems were much the same. Water was "stolen" from the local system through illegal connections, and the sewer system was basically a series of pipes that directed waste into a local river. While there was informal garbage collection, solid waste was discarded in a large hole dug in the ground on the edges of a forest approximately two miles from the neighborhood, or slum.

The family lived in these conditions during eight years. At some point, and Maria is not clear on the date, she left school and went to work. This had something to do with her father's drinking and inability to hold a job. She began working at approximately 15 years of age in a local paderia, or shop that sold bread and other food items. She worked in similar circumstances until she was 23, and earned on average 250 Reais a month for 50 hour work weeks, roughly 3 Reais an hour. When she was 23 she met and moved in with a man who repaired refrigerators in the same area. They lived in a house with similar characteristics to the one she was accustomed to. After three children and five years, she separated from this man because of his drinking and physical abuse.

She moved into a house, with her three children, that was basically one large room with a bathroom attached. There was running water and electricity, but neither was legally connected to the local municipal system. Once again, garbage was discarded in a large hole in the ground close to a forest and a reservoir, and wastewater was directed into a local river. It was all that she could afford. Every-

one in the neighborhood knew that the person who really ran the slum, or the neighborhood, was a local politician. His middleman was responsible for maintaining peace in the neighborhood, and seeing to the continuation of basic services, such as electricity, water and garbage collection. These, of course, were never officially registered as existing. As such, they served as an ongoing source of income for the middleman and the politician.

With the passage of time, Maria managed to work for several families as a maid. This source of income provided her with the financial resources to leave the slum and move into a simple house in a relatively established neighborhood. In this neighborhood all services were legally registered. However, she lived two blocks from a factory that produced some unknown product that constantly left a black residue on everything. The residue would always appear in the early morning. Nor was she aware that the majority of the sewage from the house went untreated into a local river because of the limited capacity of sewage treatment facilities. She continues to live in this neighborhood with her two sons and one daughter who work long hours in various low paying jobs in the area.

Maria has lived in several houses in the same neighborhood during almost twenty-five years. She is currently waiting for housing in a public housing project in the same area. The factory that produced the unknown black residue is still in operation. Maria and her three children all suffer from chronic lung infections and skin rashes.

When asked about the environment, it is as if you are speaking a foreign language. Maria simply accepts the situation as it is. Questions of health and environmental awareness do not make sense, or are not of immediate importance. What matters is that she has a “safe” home, is employed, and that her children are “safe” and employed. The central question for Maria, and her family, is that of physical and economic survival. She appears to accept the physical situation as it is. Environmental consciousness does not enter into the picture of her life. While she is concerned with the black residue produced by the factory, she treats the issue with a clear sense of resignation. There is nothing she can do about the factory. It has always been there, and it has always produced the black residue. The family simply makes sure to close all the windows in the house at night and in the morning.

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"Much madness is divinest sense"

Meaning and ministry in mental illness

topics:

- *mental illness and dignity*
- *mental illness, religiosity, and art*
- *report about an art-project in a psychiartric clinic in London*
- *enhancing human dignity through pastoral care*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 13-21

Prelude

Persons with psychiatric disabilities experience the violation of their dignity commonly, publicly, and profoundly. Yes, there are a few cultures around the globe where psychiatric illness and the persons who suffer it are unabashedly respected. Significantly, though, the greater a culture's respect for so-called "mental" illness, the more likely that culture is to be denigrated as "primitive" by other cultures that pridefully consider themselves civilized.

"Dignity" – which is defined as worth, honor, nobility, or excellence[1] – has at least two critical dimensions when considered from a pastoral theological point of view: dignity can be both *inherent* and *ascribed*. Ascribed dignity is socially attributed when others recognize a being's or groups' worth, honor, nobility, or excellence. Because of the predominance of both their existential suffering and the social stigma levied against them, persons with psychiatric illnesses rarely have any experience of ascribed dignity; the majority rarely bestows on them worth, honor, nobility or excellence. In contrast, inherent dignity is, theologically, a godly gift to all humanity through creation: though their illnesses inflict upon them suffering that is often undignified, the inherent dignity of persons with psychiatric illnesses is a given, essential, irrevocable part of their human nature.

This is the finding of my research that constitutes this paper's thesis: *though because of stigma and suffering it is constantly under siege, the inherent dignity of persons with psychiatric illnesses is all but indefatigable* and in it can be discerned a pastoral theological heuristic through which the resilience and cultivation of human dignity in general can be better understood. Thus, my presentation shifts the focus to "listening to the dignity in the voices of those who have been violated."

[1] *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 1971 ed., s.v. "dignity."

In some cases, psychiatric illnesses themselves violate inherent human dignity by eroding essential human capacities for relationship and meaning making. Historically, the inherent dignity of persons with psychiatric illnesses has been violated by inhumane treatment: warehousing and unregulated research experimentation, for example. In the United States (U.S.), the inherent dignity and rights of the disabled have been advanced recently by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but it is crucial to note that, in practice, the ADA provides more protection to the physically disabled than to the psychiatrically disabled. Inequities regarding psychiatric illnesses in insurance coverage, research funding, and ADA compliance are widespread and legal. Like society at large, religious communities and professionals in the U.S. are similarly guilty of violating the inherent dignity of persons with psychiatric illness. There are notable exceptions, but for the most part, institutional religions, theologians, and pastoral caregivers in the U.S. have tended, at best, to ignore the psychiatrically disabled and their loved ones or, at worst, to punish and shun them with theological moralization. The suffering, stigmatization, and neglect of the psychiatrically ill is not an isolated problem: statistics suggest that one in 7-10 persons suffer at some time in their lives from diagnosable psychiatric illness and that 1 in 4-5 families has at least one member with a psychiatric illness.

Both the ignorance and the moralization are mainly attributable to dynamics Ann Belford Ulanov discusses under the rubric of "the Christian fear of the psyche." Though she is focused on the effects of this fear in Christian life, Ulanov's description of it allows that persons of other religions might also be vulnerable to this compromising fear of the psyche.

Christians, deeply aware of the goodness of which men and women are capable, the possible moral stature, but also aware of the sacrifices involved, the dedication, the lonely struggle, fear the psyche. They sense in the psyche's life and its disclosures to them something almost impossibly alive and demanding, existing in us but different from us, which, if paid proper attention, will summon our conscious selves to submit to a greater allegiance than mere inner or outer comfort, to wholeness and to the presence that ordains wholeness. When we feel the commanding strength of the psyche we see through its several layers the burning light of a presence that is not only not ego but is also more than human.

In short, religious people fear the psyche because it starkly evidences one of the most poignant existential paradoxes: the simultaneity of our perpetual desire for God and our ultimately insurmountable distance from God. It is tempting to moderate Ulanov's scathing generalization. After all, many Christians have invested countless hours in our own therapy and healing confronting this natural fear of the psyche so that we are not dominated by it.

However, Ulanov's argument is significantly bolstered by the indisputable fact that, at least in the U.S., fear of mental illness and fear of those who suffer illnesses of the psyche are epidemic in religious communities and among religious professionals. Indeed, it can be argued that churches and the theological academy, through silence, ignorance, and moralization, have enabled and provided rationalization for the social shunning carried out by society at large. The heyday of liberation theology has come and gone in the U.S., and there have been a few prophetic voices crying in the wilderness on behalf of this oppressed group. But though there is a burgeoning liberation movement underway among persons whose dignity has been violated by psychiatric illnesses and prejudices against them, neither church and nor theological academy have added much to it.

Even in the disciplines of pastoral theology, care, and counseling (PTC&C), there has been relative silence about psychiatric illness and those degraded by our fears of them. This is especially dishonorable, since one of PTC&C's esteemed founders, Anton Boisen, who taught us to value the text of the living human document, was himself a courageous survivor of psychiatric illness. There are notable exceptions in contemporary English-language literature in PTC&C: Joseph Ciarocchi, John Foskett, Wayne Oates, Stephen Pattison, Jennifer Shifrin, and others.[2] However, despite Boisen's example of leadership in the spiritual care of persons with psychiatric illnesses, especially so that their religious experience be respected and utilized for their healing, severe and persistent mental illness, and the people who live with it, have gotten little attention in the literature of our discipline.

I hasten to confess that I would doubtless be among the silent ones except that mental illness has struck my family several times, most dramatically in an uncle and one of my parents. Before I was 10 years old, I had experienced severe psychospiritual suffering and the disregard of church and other dimensions of culture toward it. Stung by both silence and rebuke by my religious community, I fought to retain my respect for my parent and other sufferers, my self, and my religion. I fought to make spiritual sense out of the suffering and stigma. Hearing weekly in worship the affirmation that "the earth is the LORD'S and the fullness thereof," I came to believe that severe psychospiritual suffering might be part of the "fullness" that belongs to YHWH. Indeed, I came to believe that it is my vocation, in part, to search for what might be learned about holiness and justice from human experience of, and resistance to, madness. The poet Emily Dickinson articulates the theology, psychology, and politics of madness that guide my work.

> *Much madness is divinest sense*
> *To a discerning eye;*
> *Much sense the starkest madness.*
> *'Tis the majority*
> *In this, as all, prevails.*
> *Assent, and you are sane;*
> *Demur--you're straightway dangerous,*
> *And handled with a chain.*[3]

"Divinest sense" cannot be made of all madness, of course. Some madness is so destructive that it is senseless. Neither do I argue that where there is divinest sense, there is no madness. Divinest sense and madness can co-exist. However, from theological arguments regarding the sacrality of creation, the immanence of God, and the transformative potential of Incarnation, it follows that there is in some madness some divinest sense. Moreover, because of the suffering and stigma, and the resulting need for care, I take it as a pastoral imperative to seek and make more accessible what bits of holiness are embedded in madness. Given the worth, honor, nobility, and excellence that is both inherent in and ascribed to the

[2] Joseph W. Ciarrocchi, *A Minister's Handbook of Mental Disorders* (New York: Paulist Press, Integration Books, 1993); John Foskett, *Meaning in Madness: The Pastor and the Mentally Ill* (London: SPCK, 1984); Wayne E. Oates, *The Religious Care of the Psychiatric Patient* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1978); Wayne E. Oates, *Behind the Masks: Personality Disorders in Religious Behaviors* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1987); Stephen Pattison, *Pastoral Care and Liberation Theology* (London: SPCK, 1994); Jennifer Shifrin, *Pathways to Understanding: A Manual on Ministry and Mental Illness* (St. Louis: Pathways to Promise, 1995).

[3] Emily Dickinson, "Much Madness is Divinest Sense," *Emily Dickinson* (New York: Dell, 1960), 53.

divine, it follows that whatever divinest sense we find in madness will provide clues to the nature and care of dignity.

For all these reasons, I am researching narratives produced by persons and families suffering from psychiatric illnesses and other forms of severe psychospiritual suffering. While today their experiences tend to be understood primarily as mental illness, their texts regularly nuance a more complex reality, what ancients referred to as the "dark night of the soul." Unfortunately, superstitious and racist connotations still attributed to darkness obscure its value to the soul, and contemporary people tend to see in severe psychospiritual suffering little more than unnecessary and treatable pain. In contrast, first-person narratives of severe psychospiritual suffering make clear that nights of the soul are comprised not only of pain but of kairotic moments of insight and joy, moments craved and yet seldom known by the psychiatrically healthy majority. First-person narratives of severe psychospiritual suffering and healing offer intriguing and largely unexplored insights for theological discourse, religious communities, and spiritual maturity. I utilize three primary methodological approaches common to pastoral theology, care, and counseling: clinical case study; feminist and other liberation theological method; and, narrative theological methodology.

In my presentation we will explore the features, fruits, and facilitation of human dignity as revealed in one therapeutic program and one person coping with psychiatric illness. From among the many dignified texts in the literature of severe psychospiritual suffering we could study, I have chosen this text for two main reasons. First, this text is especially rich and nuanced. Second, I have chosen this text because both the program and the patient are extraordinary. This would be a strange quality to seek in data if I were a scientist: in scientific method, commonality and replicability have significant value. But in pastoral theological research, uniqueness and unpredictability in data is quite desirable, insofar as they mirror and thus might suggest the extra-ordinary presence of the holy.

The text offers two excerpts from a 90-minute documentary filmed at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center, in the Queens section of New York City. Creedmoor is in most ways like other state mental hospitals, except that in the mid-1980s, two iconoclastic clinicians who had gone to art school together began a remarkable program in the arts that has come to be called The Living Museum. They turned a crumbling warehouse space on the grounds of the hospital into a 20,000 square-foot art studio and exhibition space. In 1999, Academy Award-winning director Jessica Yu spent a year shooting film at the Living Museum.[4] The patients and staff viewed the film before it was completed and gave their approval to the final product.

In the opening minutes of the film, Dr. Janos Marton, one of the founders and current manager, describes the Living Museum:

"It is a place where people come and create art, and the people happen to be people with mental illness… It is an oasis where it is alright that you have symptoms of disturbances… That gives great comfort. Also, there are no rules here. Modern art is about breaking the code. And that is a fertile ground for creating new and interesting work… This is just straight-up art. And the trick to it is that if you produce art here, it becomes therapeutic in that you change your identity from that of the mental patient who is hospitalized, locked up, to that of an artist. And very

[4] Dawn Parouse, prod., Jessica Yu, director, *The Living Museum* (Filmworks, 1999). Except for minor editing to translate conversation to the printed word, quotations and excerpts are verbatim.

few therapies can claim such a tremendous leap towards health… Whoever comes is accepted as a friend and colleague… The mentally ill have only one advantage, as far as I can see, and that is they are extremely *blessed* with creative potential… Anybody who has a mental breakdown, psychotic experience, comes out of it and creates great work [sic] of art. One of the reasons is that when you have a psychotic breakdown, you communicate with the powers that artists are striving for, the powers out there somewhere in the universe. And the second reason is the pain that people go through – it is a very fertile ground for creativity. Of course you don't want to romanticize mental illness. You have to acknowledge that it is the most horrifying experience a person can go through. Everyone here has very severe illness… The people who come here to visit – I want them to appreciate the *artwork*. I want them to have the same experience as when they go to the Museum of Modern Art or the Whitney or whatever. And I don't even think that there is a difference, except that we are better, because we are more honest. You won't find one artist here is pretentious, and I couldn't say the same thing about the Whitney."[5]

The film introduces viewers to six of the artists who work regularly at the Living Museum. The excerpt I will document for you is most of the interview of David Waldorf, a long-time patient at Creedmoor. Waldorf's narrative is incredibly stimulating, so I suggest that you prepare yourself to receive it like a dry sponge soaks up water. Try to soak up as much as you can of the dignity found in the words.

David Waldorf: "enchanted" by life [6]

David Waldorf:

As a kid, I was kind of like the class clown. If anybody were to tell me I would suffer from severe depression and become suicidal, I never would have believed it. I grew up in Howard Beach. There were two brothers, my mother and father, and we were a beautiful family. We really got along. It was really a time of beauty.

I always drew, but I never took it seriously. Somehow about 18 years old I started doing sculpture – realistic sculpture. And I was actually fairly good at it, I think.

It began, my illness, about the age of 25. I think what really brought about my illness was my father being diagnosed as having cancer. It seemed to be the first real tragedy I had to deal with. I guess I always thought of life, life, life and I didn't think of death at all. And when my father was…dying, that's when I started dying, too, mentally.

Also I think it's a result of posttraumatic syndrome. That's another symptom I suffer from. Which is… I was attacked physically, I was raped I guess, about the age of 23 at gunpoint by… some kind of lunatic. It was kind of nightmarish because… it was… really my first physical contact. With my fathers dying, and the rape, and that I faced death at gunpoint, I felt this great blackness, this great void, take a bite out of me.

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[5] Janos Marton, excerpt from *The Living Museum*.
[6] David Waldorf, excerpt from *The Living Museum*.

I went to these friends' house and they were doing LSD. The numbers hit me, all kinds of things hit me, and I was completely gone for about ten years.

I was first hospitalized in 1977. I was *severely* psychotic. I mean, I believed I was god himself. Right after I was hospitalized, the depressive side came back. I used to stand on the end of the train tracks every morning, and I would try to have the strength to throw myself in front of the train. What would give me the strength to *not* do it was the thought that my mother was still alive and that she would miss me. And there were many times that I had a great hatred for my mother, simply because she was the impetus to my living.

I have suffered through every single aspect of mental illness. That's why it's very hard to diagnose me. I've been through *everything* – psychosomatic, suicide, manic-depressive, schizophrenic – every single aspect of mental illness, I've been there.

The symptoms of my schizo-affective, bipolar, or schizophrenia or whatever they want to call it, is *extreme* metaphor, that's all I can describe it, that everything seems to be a great metaphor for something else. There are great allegories running through my mind. Like I saw great movements of history. And I felt that I am involved in some kind of historical drama on a spiritual level, and that I could change it. When I am not in an episode I view it from a detachment and I realize that it is ridiculous. But while it's happening – that seems to be the distinguishing point between madness and sanity, is that I believe in the fantasy – and it's a real thing to me. There is a great euphoria to these episodes that makes them so *hard* to give up. I used to tell my mother that I felt like I woke up today and someone poured a bottle of whiskey down my throat, because I'm flying high on all this stuff – these great movements of humanity, somehow I feel the very flight of life itself. I think that's the allure of madness, that it's very hard to resist.

I definitely see art as *the* bridge between mental illness and the rest of the world. I think a place like the Living Museum is a mediator where our creativity, or our heightened creativity, can be put to some purpose. Riding that edge of creativity, with all its dangers and this deathly, ghost-like madness that goes with creativity, it helps produce it and I don't think art will ever be produced away from madness. I think all the great artists will always be mad. Beethoven, they say, was mad.

I got into classical music in a big way during my illness. I had nothing to do most of the time during the day but face this dull consciousness of pain that was my life. And…Beethoven somehow became a very noble figure to me, his suffering, the fact that he had deafness and could still write the greatest music that anybody has ever written (as far as I'm concerned), somehow it gave me courage to go on.

Sometimes I'll imagine Beethoven's Quartet Opus 135. A certain movement in there that's just so beautiful. It reminds me of … heaven – it's the only way you can describe it, that he has captured heaven down on music. And I … I still think of that piece some days…

Art is very prayer-like for me. I see no difference in praying and art because I try to celebrate life with prayer. I mean I was an extremely suicidal person. Every moment of life is a potential well of divinity to me. I mean it's just so beautiful to me that I didn't give in. I could be dead in the bottom of some lake somewhere, I mean, who knows? What changed all that was that I heard a TV preacher – I was switching the channels around – and he said, "before you give into despair, thank God for every little thing." So I began to thank him for cigarettes, and for coffee, and small things like that, and it really helped.

We talk about art because with just the illness as a bedmate life is pretty horrendous. To be able to think about beautiful art is a true gift. I think a person talking about a ballgame to another person is expressing a great art. The abstraction in order to get his points across is a beautiful work of art. I think all an artist does is show us that. I think that's all that art does. It reminds us that our lives are beautiful, that our lives are spiritual, that our lives have meaning. I think that's what art is all about. I think its just about living.

Art helps me to see the trial and error of living, the trial and error of spirituality. In art there is trial and error. It's the whole process of making something out of nothing, or good from evil. My artwork is an attempt to show the beautifulness of ugliness. I try to get a raw edge and yet I try to somehow make an aesthetic of beauty out of it.

Beauty is always involved with ugliness, and life is always involved with death. We have to find out the harmony and the balance to make it … artful. The ugly poor person, the old ragged woman, is really a beautiful thing. There is good from evil. The sinner should be forgiven.

I view my illness, rightly or wrongly, as a punishment for things that I did wrong. Like, I used to *beg*, on *every* conceivable ground, to know the truth of existence. And I think my illness was my first step toward learning the truth of existence, that I was punished for my wrongdoing. It was something that I didn't do to myself. I didn't fast. I didn't go to church. I didn't practice any form of worship. I wasn't thankful. All I wanted was to *know* God, I didn't want to serve God. And I think my illness was the first step in teaching me: if you want to know these things, you have to pay the price. If you really want to know the truth you really gotta pay some dues. And I think I've started. I don't know whether I'll be able to finish that path. But I've taken some humble tuna [sic] with me.

I don't know if I'll ever find god. I really don't know. I mean, I've been searching for so long. And there's an old saying that if you drop a ring in the water in a pond if you go scurrying about you're just going to dirty up the water and you'll never find the ring. So sometimes you gotta let the water settle and that's something I never seem to be able to do. So I don't know if I'll ever find God.

I finally decided there's going to be no miraculous cures, and that I'm always going to have a mental illness till I die but that life is still worth living even with it. I've never really loved life as much as since I've been ill, since I've been hanging on by my thumbs. Though it's a hell, I appreciate life so much more. All I have to do is listen to a bird or look at the trees blow in a summer breeze. I feel all souls passing across those trees.

Art, to me, is an exploration of these processes of living and in many ways life is heaven and we just have to awake ourselves to it.

One of the fantasies I had regarding Beethoven was that if an angel came up to Beethoven at the height of his deafness and said "Beethoven, I have good news: you can be cured of deafness but you can never write such beautiful music again, you can never again fly." And I think if an angel came up to me and said, "David, you can be healed of mental illness, but you'll never again know the worth of life again like you did when you were ill," I think I'd have to pick the mental illness. 'Cause that's just how I feel, that it does show me a beautiful, enchanting side of life that I never saw before.

Dignity contextualized by psychiatric illness: an analysis of the text

The violations of David Waldorf's dignity revealed in this text are instructive regarding the range of indignities human beings typically experience. At the age of 23, he endures violence intentionally imposed on him by a fellow human being, a kind of degradation that, according to many theologies ought to be preventable and, yet, is all too typical. The mortification of rape brutally destroys this religious young man's virginity. The humiliation of rape brusquely deadens the privilege to which a young white man is at least unconsciously accustomed. Rape would be trauma enough, especially in the country that teaches its schoolchildren that it is the "land of the free and the brave", but the attacker also holds David Waldorf's life in his hands with one of the countless guns made easily available in the U.S. by law. Especially when considered from the perspective of the study of dignity, "stress" is a ludicrously mild word to use to describe post-traumatic anguish and its assaults.

Remarkably, Waldorf dates the emergence of his psychiatric illness not to rape at gunpoint but to an even more common, existential degradation: untimely and incurable illness. David assesses that his father's ultimately failed battle with cancer was the "first real tragedy" with which he had to deal. David's hierarchy of values exposes that, especially where confidence in modern medicine is high, the indignities of terminal illnesses can be even greater than those of interpersonal violence. How can this be? Cancer, like other untimely, terminal illnesses, toys with human illusions that we can predict and control the span of our lives; cancer's prevalence shadows our very personal dying with ordinariness; even where physicians successfully treat cancer, it not infrequently kills relationships; in David Waldorf's case, his youthful sense of immortality—"life, life, life"— probably exacerbated by modern and middle-class optimism, is shattered. A death-denying culture has groomed a 25 year-old man to be shocked by his father's dying, and David Waldorf "started to die mentally." The indignity of human arrogance costs us emotional lives.

With the combination of these three indignities – his father's death, being raped, and facing his own death at the point of a gun – David recounts that "a great void (took) a bite out of (him)." Note the paradox in David's experience of indignity: the tormenting substantiality of trauma coexists with a "great void" – nothingness. If we can imagine even an echo of such suffering, our compassion is likely for the next step David reports: seeking to be among friends, he joins in their use of LSD. While clinicians might characterize this behavior as "self-medication," David is more focused on its untherapeutic effects: "All kinds of things hit me, and I was completely gone for about ten years" – completely gone, ten years.

The majority of David Waldorf's narrative, however, is directed to the exploration, not of these violences, these indignities, but to exploring the interplay between his art and his illness. Throughout that exploration, I will argue, viewers are treated to a demonstration of remarkable dignity. Indeed, in my view, the most informative and challenging aspect of Waldorf's narrative is that this man who has suffered all his adult life from a disabling psychiatric disorder requiring hospitalization is himself, at the same time, so very dignified. Not only does he seem not to view either his long illness or his treatment as a source of indignity, it can be argued that he has constructed a remarkably dignified self. Whether he is speaking of the indignities that preceded the emergence of his illness, the illness itself, or the interplay of his illness and his art, he is all at once understated and

yet thoughtful, circumspect and still radiating authentic presence. Perhaps with me you wrestle with the temptation to dismiss the importance of this narrative: David is atypically functional; the therapeutic model used is anarchic, or utopian; the benefits anecdotal and impractical. But as I implied earlier, pastoral theological method that turns away from the atypical, anarchic, utopian, or impractical risks turning away from transcendence. If we allow this narrative to instruct us in the matter of human dignity from within the context of psychiatric illness, what is revealed?

Perhaps most stunningly, David's dignity is composed in part by his cultivated, respectful awareness of both the restrictions and the benefits of his illness. On the one hand, he is articulate about his suffering: "this dull consciousness of pain that was my life." "With just the illness as a bedmate, life is pretty horrendous." In a word, David describes his illness as "hell," as does nearly every other narrative of psychiatric illness I have studied. It is tempting to defuse this common characterization by treating it as merely metaphorical. To do so is theological folly, though, since these narratives of psychiatric illness relentlessly enumerate evidence that the concept of hell may indeed name an actual dimension of human suffering and not either a mere metaphor or a future threat. In the experience of severe psychospiritual suffering, "hell" is less a place of the soul's possible punishment after death and more the everyday and endless pain of a psycho-spiritually sick soul with no hope that suffering will ever end *except*, ironically, in death.

On the other hand, another aspect of David's dignity is his mature capacity to acknowledge the "allure" of madness and other benefits of his illness. For example, David unabashedly discusses how hard it is to give up the experiences of euphoria – "flying high," he calls it – that are one aspect of his illness. Indeed, the capacity to feel "the very flight of life itself" could be argued to be an advanced and sought-after goal of spiritual practice that none of us would give up, if only we could achieve it. On a mundane level, David's *candor* about the pleasures of getting high is in remarkable contrast to the psychiatrically healthy majority, who use not just whiskey but all manner of dangerous pursuits in our more or less *surreptitious* efforts to get high. Moreover, because his illness sometimes reduces him to despair, his appreciation of the rudiments of life has increased. Many ostensibly more dignified religious people might rush by the TV evangelist with disdain. But David takes a few words from the preacher – "thank God for the small things before you give in to despair" – and uses them to reverse the direction of his suicidality: "I've never really loved life as much as since I've been ill, since I've been hanging on by my thumbs." Precisely because he is "hanging on by his thumbs," the life-saving potential of little things – thumbs, cigarettes, coffee, birds, breezes – is made more compelling. He is even allured simply by his survival: "I was an extremely suicidal person… I mean, it's just so beautiful to me, that I didn't give in." Most psychiatrically healthy people are oblivious to the everyday miracle of human dignity that manifests as simple persistence.

David Waldorf's dignity is deeply rooted as well by his refusal to remain only a victim of violation and illness. He is acted upon by circumstances but also rallies personal agency amid the hell of tragedy, violence, and illness and insists that, under specific circumstances, he would *choose* his illness over healing.

I think if an angel came up to me and said, "David, you can be healed of mental illness, but you'll never again know the worth of life like you did when you were ill," I think I'd have to pick the mental illness. 'Cause that's just how I feel, that it does show me a beautiful, enchanting side of life that I never saw before.

Akin to the distinction made between being a victim and being a survivor of interpersonal violence, David Waldorf is not simply a victim of mental illness but is a survivor. But he is not only a survivor, either. His astonishing assertion that he would pass up a cure if it meant that he would never again know the worth of life is credible only because, in his illness, he has found a way to not just to survive but to thrive. He would choose his illness, but only because through his illness he sees the worth of life. He would choose his illness because in it he has both been given and ascribed to himself the inherent dignity of understanding the *full* value of life – euphoria and hell inextricably entwined.

David Waldorf's dignity seems augmented as well by a now-mature realism regarding the costs of wisdom to human ease. The Genesis narrative reminds us that this is an ancient human dilemma: Eve and Adam are like delighted adolescents when they claim their freedom to eat from the tree of knowledge but, like most teenagers, they are stunned by, and somewhat under-prepared to pay, the huge price of freedom and wisdom: the loss of the Garden of Eden and all its naïveté. Many healthy humans court the truths of existence, only to become petulant about or overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the knowledge we gain. As pastoral caregivers we may cringe to hear David say, "I view my illness, rightly or wrongly, as a punishment for things that I did wrong."[7] Yet, David seems to be wrestling with the ancient human tendency to pray for things we can't handle when they come:

I used to *beg*, on *every* conceivable ground, to know the truth of existence… didn't fast. I didn't go to church. I didn't practice any form of worship. I wasn't thankful. All I wanted was to *know* God – I didn't want to *serve* God. And I think my illness was the first step in teaching me: if you want to know these things, you have to pay the price. If you really want to know the truth you really gotta pay some dues.

We will not comprehend Waldorf's dignity if we sidestep his honest and discomforting self-assessment. It is important to note the self-compassion in Waldorf's voice even as he seeks to articulate a deeply felt awareness of, and sense of responsibility for, his youthful hubris. This self-scrutiny requires our respect and close consideration, however, because it is a variation of an assertion found in most first-person narratives of severe psycho-spiritual suffering: seeing too much of life's complexity overwhelms the average human psyche. People with mental illnesses are stereotyped as being "out of it" or stupid, but the opposite is more often true: in part, many people get emotionally sick because they understand too much, too well. People considered psychically healthy have more developed defense mechanisms from which come the capacities to filter out excessive, toxic, and destructive psychic stimulation. Significantly, though, whether healthy or ill, most persons confronted with the high cost of wisdom often don't turn back but rather intentionally cull from their inner storms a sense of perspective and even gentle, wry humor that spurs them forward toward the holy. David puts it this way, and many religious professionals can probably identify with his words:

"I think I've started [on the path to knowing God]. I don't know whether I'll be able to finish that path. But I've taken some humble tuna [sic] with me. …There's

[7] Moral pastoral care practice requires that Christian caregivers not simply refute his interpretation – it is, after all, an entirely orthodox position taught him by the tradition we have vowed to represent. Someone as dignified as David doubtless would not accept such cheap grace anyway, knows well the commonness of his human fallibility, and desires a discerning ministry of presence that will facilitate heartfelt confession.

an old saying that if you drop a ring in the water in a pond, if you go scurrying about, you're just going to dirty up the water, and you'll never find the ring. So sometimes you gotta let the water settle, and that's something I never seem to be able to do. So I don't know if I'll ever find God."

Finally and most obviously, David Waldorf's dignity is rooted in an extremely high valuation of the aesthetic. This valuation was not always a part of his life: "I always drew," David says in describing his earliest years, but "I never took it seriously." But all that changed at a state psychiatric hospital in Queens, New York – a most unexpected place for encountering the transfiguring power of the aesthetic. Early in the documentary, Janos Marton zeroes in on the enormous benefit to the patients of the change of identity offered to patients working at the Museum: "if you … produce art here, it becomes therapeutic in that you change your identity … from that of the mental patient who is hospitalized, locked up, to that of an artist." The artwork on display at the Museum is ample testimony that this is, indeed, a "tremendous leap towards health."

However, in the dominant culture of the U.S. and perhaps generally, a person who identifies as an artist is considered only slightly less mad than a so-called mental patient and only slightly more capable of dignity or worthy of respect. We can only conclude that the therapeutic value of art, and its contribution to human dignity, is something more, maybe even more important than, a shift in identity. This "something more" is referenced linguistically by the differences between "art" and "the aesthetic."

Dictionary definitions condense but also abridge the transfiguring power of the "aesthetic": certainly, aesthetics has to do with "beauty" and that which is "pleasurable to the senses." However, because of common romanticization of beauty, pleasure, and the artistic process, our examination of the role of the aesthetic in Waldorf's dignity rightly begins with his articulation of its dangers.

I definitely see art as *the* bridge between mental illness and the rest of the world… Riding that edge of creativity, with all its dangers and this deathly, ghost-like madness that goes with creativity, it helps produce it and I don't think art will ever be produced away from madness.

But neither is the dignity in aestheticism rightly understood if we are intimidated by it. Listen to Waldorf:

"Art helps me to see the trial and error of living, the trial and error of spirituality. In art there is trial and error. It's the whole process of making something out of nothing… My artwork is an attempt to show the beautifulness of ugliness. I try to get a raw edge, and yet I try to somehow make an aesthetic of beauty out of it."

Though art is to many of us intimidating, the dignity gestating in the aesthetic has humble beginnings: "trial and error," making "something" from "nothing," upholding the "beautifulness of ugliness." His words remind me of my grade school art projects which were, without a doubt, ugly. Though I am surprised that words from an artist like David Waldorf should evoke my memories of those embarrassing efforts, it is right that we be prodded to regard all aesthetic efforts—including our own—with less intimidation and judgment. Through David, I can see that, though they were not art—as I have always known too well—my grade school efforts were aesthetic and, therefore, inherently dignified: creative, growth-enhancing, nourishing. If words from mad artists like David had been accessible earlier to me and to others, perhaps aesthetic creativity would not be so intimidating to so many adults. If words from mad artists like David were more accessible,

perhaps the average adult who feels awkward when invited to dance, or draw a picture, or sing, or play with children would not feel so undignified.

Intimidated by art, many of us belittle aesthetics in everyday life, calling it, for example, a waste of time. The valuation of the busyness of contemporary life over aesthetics can be understood as one of the reasons that much of the spiritual, theological, and religious significance in contemporary everyday life is simply overlooked. We can speculate that if we are intimidated by art, it is likely that we will also be intimidated by spirituality. "Art is very prayer-like for me," Waldorf tells us, and his words suggest that to the degree we are intimidated by art, our experience of prayer might be compromised. Waldorf's openness to the aesthetic seems closely related to his apparent lack of intimidation in regard to spirituality:

"I think a person talking about a ballgame to another person is expressing a great art. The abstraction in order to get his points across is a beautiful work of art. I think all an artist does is show us that. I think that's all that art does. It reminds us that our lives are beautiful, that our lives are spiritual, that our lives have meaning. I think that's what art is all about. I think its just about living."

The more we are intimidated by art and larger spiritual, theological, and religious meanings, the more likely we are to approach artwork plaintively asking "But what's it about?" For Waldorf, the aesthetic is about adventure, not answers. As an artist, he tries to lure viewers into adventures within:

"I try to make my drawings mysterious. I try to make them so that you are drawn in, like you're not sure what you see, and you have to search further. And the further you search you realize its really nothing but your own mind that's being worked upon, that it's a free-floating kind of infinite thing that just goes on forever from clue to clue, from metaphor to metaphor, and from puzzle to puzzle."

David Waldorf makes plain that there is much complexity in the relationship between illness, art, and the aesthetic. How does he maintain his dignity while standing on such constantly shifting ground? While his life story makes clear that there is no easy answer to this question, either, he seems to seek a path sought by countless other human seekers of meaning through the ages, the path of balance.

"Beauty is always involved with ugliness, and life is always involved with death. We have to find out the harmony and the balance to make it … artful … Beethoven, they say, was mad … Beethoven somehow became a very noble figure to me, his suffering, the fact that he had deafness and could still write the greatest music that anybody has ever written (as far as I'm concerned), somehow it gave me courage to go on."

Beethoven, who "captured heaven down on music", is a soulmate for Waldorf not because Beethoven rose above his deafness but because in his maddening deafness Beethoven "[found] out the harmony and the balance to make it artful", aesthetic. For Waldorf, Beethoven's nobility and Waldorf's own dignified courage to go on, are both found in fighting for equilibrium amid waves of ugliness and beauty, in the tensions between heaven on earth and hell on earth, maintaining a life worth living. Inherent dignity is rooted in spiritual poise on the common human journey between birth and death.

Beyond madness: enhancing human dignity in other contexts through pastoral care

As concluding remarks, I offer a few questions and observations that might aid our efforts to build bridges in theory and praxis between the world of madness and the nature and cultivation, in other contexts, of human dignity. If the distinction between inherent and ascribed dignity is theologically accurate, what theologies and practices of care most empower humans to refuse to be victims only, to be thriving, dignified, survivors? If human dignity is rooted in a capacity to embrace the unavoidable ambiguity of life – as Beethoven created music in silence and Waldorf creates an aesthetic of beauty out of the raw edge of his madness – what theologies and practices of care are needed to sustain, guide and reconcile humans beings to ambiguity? If aesthetics is an integral part of healing and human dignity, what theories and practices of pastoral theology and care can help us build on our expertise in the aesthetics of language to include of other aesthetics that nourish the soul, for example, visual aesthetics, tactile aesthetics, or kinesthetic aesthetics? Finally, if there is ever any dignity in madness, what theories and practices of pastoral theology and care might most help us not to romanticize but to dignify everyday human madness? Anton Boisen, whom pastoral caregivers willingly claim as intellectual ancestor, devoted his life to this question. In his autobiography, he offers us a guideline and a challenge:

Sanity in itself is not an end in life. The end of life is to solve important problems and to contribute in some way to human welfare, and if there is even a chance that such an end could best be accomplished by going through Hell for a while, no man worthy of the name would hesitate for an instant.[8]

"The end of life" – its purpose and goal – is not the hell of insanity, but neither is it sanity. Rather, the purpose and goal of life is the solving of important problems and making a contribution to the common good. Boisen asserted a radical value: "If there is even a chance" that the common good might be served by going through the hell of insanity for a while, the person worthy of being called human does not cling to sanity. Without the encouragement of a Janos Marton, or Living Museum, or David Waldorf, Boisen dignified psychiatric suffering by exploring how insanity can be a pathway to such problem-solving and human welfare. In order genuinely to dignify the "living human document", pastoral theologians and caregivers will have to find our own way to do the same.

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[8] Anton Boisen, *Out of the Depths: An Autobiographical Study of Mental Disorders and Religious Experience*. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960.

Wilhelmina J. Kalu *Nigeria, 2001*

Human dignity for youth and women

Reproductive health care practices in Nigeria

topics:

- *traditional culture and fertility-patterns in Nigeria*
- *traditional and modern forms of maternal health care*
- *challenges for pastoral care in Nigeria*

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Introduction

Continued high fertility is recorded in Sub-Saharan Africa. Groups cover this area whose culture places a high premium on the child. A common greeting in West Africa „How are the children?“ which is a reference to the child and acknowledgement that the function of procreation is fundamental to identity definition in adulthood.

Renne (1995) emphasised that the importance of preservation of family name, lineage, a share in ownership of family and kin compounds, farmlands perpetuate the desire of people to have many children. Polygamous marriages make such competitions fierce in many places. The need for male issues to preserve continuity of patrilineal descent groups heightens the problem of persistent high fertility (Olusanya, 1989). Family owned houses and land continue to represent family political vitality in rural places, village or indigenous areas. They also serve as a means of economic commitment to a community, and a safety net for family members resident in urban and other areas, when there is failure in the economic activities they are engaged in (Berry, 1985). In the recent Nigerian experience of economic hardship many families relocated to the villages or segregated into sending all or some of the children and their mothers to the family homes, while the father alone or with the mother endure the hustle for survival in the urban areas. High fertility therefore remains critical in securing land tenure rights and engaging in economic activity in such lands, prospective old age income security encourages the desire to have many children, especially in a region of high infant mortality thus there continues to exist several persuasive economic and cultural reasons why people desire many children in the Nigerian and West African context (Renne. 1995).

The average number of children desired by Nigerian families has remained 6.7 for over four decades (Oppong, 1989; Kalu, 1987; Aryee, 1989). Thus women with an average life span of 50 spend majority of their years between 15 and 50, con-

ceiving, carrying, delivering and suckling infants (Ware, 1983). Women expect to spend 20 years of their lives bearing a child every third or fourth year. Women between 20 – 45 years of age are therefore subject to the continual stresses of heavy reproductive and productive schedules. Maternal mortality is high and these women who survive to 50 years bear children through their 40's (Oppong, 1989). Studies in developing countries (Pebley and Millman, 1987; Omran 1987) also show a high infant mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the fact that children are more likely to die if they were born less than 2 years after a previous birth, too early/too late in the mother's life span, rather than if they were born after a longer interval. These mothers are also placed at risk. Thus there is a linkage between maternal mortality and infant mortality. It is estimated that 75 000 Nigerian women die in pregnancy and childbirth every year, that is one death every 10 minutes. For every woman that dies 20 more are disabled or health impaired as a result of childbirth, an estimate of 1.5 million. A Nigerian woman therefore has one in twenty one chances of dying in pregnancy, and faces this situation about six or seven times in her lifetime. The chances are estimated at one in 10 000 for a woman in Europe or North America (Kisekka, 1990). Where the woman in Nigeria is illiterate, malnourished, and poor or has had more than four births rapidly, the chances of death and deformity are more. Where she is under 18 or over 35 years old these chances are worsened (Kisekka, 1990; Harrison, 1990).

Health factors related to women make the issue of high fertility a great concern in west Africa and Nigeria. Risks, physiological stress and health practices accorded to the pregnant woman need to be examined to understand underlying forces, influences and consequences that continue to impact on a Nigerian woman of reproductive age. This paper focuses on these and highlights ways in which situations constitute violation o the human dignity of women, both youth and adults.

Statement of the problem

The persistence of high fertility and the attendant maternal and infant mortality is considered a complex problem, a combination of several factors. The fact that it is protracted even though awareness and consciousness have been raised about it within the last decade makes it a culprit of human dignity violation. Rudimentary health measures have been identified as solutions. These have neither been properly undertaken nor have some of the reasons for high fertility been given intense scrutiny. Major factors that influence fertility include economic, political, social, technological, cultural, religious and psychological. These also influence healthcare practices and service delivery. Some influence can be negative in the sense that they constitute threats to human or female reproductive well being and rights. A particular focus of this paper is to highlight the role of religious and cultural factors.

Traditional culture and fertility

The concepts of reproduction and fertility speak of fruitfulness and multiplication. These are concepts many nations and societies can identify with, especially agricultural groups. In traditional Africa, reproduction and fertility or procreation are associated to life giving functions. Thus, barrenness or involuntary childlessness is a reproach. There is a plethora of fertility gods and goddesses worshipped

throughout the land of Africa and in Nigeria. Fertility gods are the most common class of gods. Some fertility gods especially water based deities are pantheon gods. They receive elaborate worship with well-marked festivals or a season of rituals, sacrifices, and celebrations in various parts of the country. They are covenant gods of various communities and families. Male priests or female priestesses lead worship. The altars and shrines are located in mountaintops, near or inside streams, rivers, sea and pools of water. Apart from receiving wide based worship in the population, there are additional dedications of children and youth to these fertility gods as offerings for childbearing, fulfilment of requests or as part of a particular generational covenant. Specific families in their generations are dedicated to their service or serve as custodians of the worship places. With the spread of influence of these gods, indigenous churches are located often near waters, with a local Nigerian reference as "waterside" churches.

Thus most families in Africa and in Nigeria have some ancestral linkage or tradition of relationship to fertility gods. A number of rites in childhood especially at puberty are an acknowledgement of fertility god relationships. Many puberty, maiden dances are fertility dances and are sexual in orientation. Fertility and sexuality are sacred! This limitation of sexual activities in many African communities is hindered by these spiritual influences and by a sense of tampering with the works or blessings of the gods. Most rural couples when confronted with the need to control birth respond that their children are blessings of the gods and they cannot reject what they are given by the gods. Carvings and representation of fertility gods called fertility dolls abound in West Africa.

In such an atmosphere filled with fertility consciousness, worship and sacredness, young girls and boys become interested in active sexual life, even where male-female sexual relationships are not openly discussed in parent-child interactions. A study in Nigeria found that half of female students at both secondary and university levels have been pregnant at one point and have terminated their pregnancies. In a five-year review of patients treated for illegal abortion in the Lagos University Teaching Hospital, about 90% of them were unmarried adolescents (Nichols, Ladipo, Paxman, Otolorin, 1986). Abortion is widely practised and has often resulted in untimely death among the adolescents.

Safe motherhood and maternal health

In a culture of strong tradition in kin relationship and supportive network, even in the midst of rapid urbanisation, migration and mobility, the prevalence of motherless babies homes constitute an embarrassment. It testifies of a failure in the system that has not been adequately dealt with. Motherless babies homes serve babies whose mothers died in childbirth. Fertility gods worship explain some of the causes as a punishment of unconfessed sexual infidelity of a woman, violation of sexual or other covenant requisites and taboos. There are explanations covering the anger of the gods (Kalu, 1992). Thus such women are often deprived of the usual lavish funerals. They may be hurriedly buried and their husbands remarry within a year.

Their new-born babies are sometimes considered sources of curses for those undertaking to care for them in the household. The infants may be exposed to enough carelessness that leads to their deaths. Even when placed in homes, they may remain without visits from family members and fathers (Kalu, 1990). Motherless babies homes also serve infants who are abandoned in hospitals, roadsides,

bushes or places where they are expected to die from exposure. They are placed in such homes when rescued. These unwanted babies are products of unwanted pregnancies from unmarried mothers who may have other children already kept with families in the villages, or adolescents who want to continue attempts to etch out a living without the additional burden of premature parenthood.

These homes therefore expose some of the negative elements of fertility worship, cultural emphasis and the influence on reproductive health. A spectrum of problems are known to lead to the death of Nigerian women at childbirth but many communities remain silent about them, largely restricted by religious beliefs. Meanwhile, there is no evidence of postnatal treatment or health care for the mothers of abandoned newly born infants who simply disappear. There is no hesitation in adoption of such infants from Motherless babies homes (Kalu, 1992).

Awareness on reproductive health care practices within the last decade led to the concern for maternal health or safe motherhood. Safe motherhood describes pregnancy, birth and infant care activities where the mother's health is safeguarded. The discussions focus on the health culture surrounding pregnancy and childbirth. The emphasis is on reduction or elimination of risk of damage or death in women who are in the process of having children they want or avoiding having children they do not want (Ilumoka, 1990). Safe motherhood generally is linked to three main factors:

- Provision of basic professional ante-natal care and contraceptive technology.
- General living standards and health practices.
- Establishment of measures that ensure effective and immediate treatment is given, including operative intervention, when major complications develop in antenatal, delivery and postnatal care (Harrison, 1990b).

Without adequate provisions in these areas, motherhood is unsafe. A good measure of these provisions can be made available to women by the combined efforts of willing groups and government. Harrison (1990b) explains that current statistics on maternal mortality in Africa (6.4 per 1000 births) is what was obtainable in Europe in the 17th and 18th century. There are midwives in Europe today who have never seen a maternal death in over 20 years of practice, while this is close to a fortnightly or monthly occurrence in the practice of Nigerian midwives. He therefore considers maternal deaths as the best indicator of the standard of health care, social, economic, and political development. The disparity in socio-economic or health indicators between the least and worse affected places in the world sum the situation. In all places of high maternal morbidity, more than 80% of fatalities occur in the presence of eight (8) pregnancy complications. These are anaemia, abortion, ecclampsia, haemorrhage, infection, obstructed labour and its consequences, effects of abdominal deliveries and overriding influence of harsh conditions of living when pregnant. Such conditions of living include looking for water, working and walking for long hours, distances, under the hot sun, meagre and undernourishing meals, strenuous child and home care chores, little or no medical attention and physical rest. These are familiar features of economically troubled, deprived areas of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Case of Mrs. C

Mrs. C. was a young mother in her late thirties. She had five children and died during the delivery of the sixth child. The family lived in a two-room accommodation in the town. She had intermittently attended an antenatal clinic, but had taken care of her health based on the experiences of earlier pregnancies. Her husband is a low paid salary worker. With three of the children in secondary schools, she had to expand her trading activities in the market in order to procure enough income to pay for school fees, food and home bills. Her labour started on the expected date. She presented herself as someone in good health and expectant of the new baby several days before the delivery. At the onset of her labour in the early hours of the evening, the husband took the decision to send her to a trained birth attendant whose fees were low. When labour difficulties were presented she was transferred to a midwife. When the midwife could not handle it there was a search for a vehicle to transfer her to a doctor. The doctor did not have the equipment necessary. She needed a blood transfusion and an operation. On the way to a hospital that might of had the required facilities Mrs. C. died. She was unable to deliver the sixth baby.

Maternal health practices

Maternal health practices include those that deal with avoiding conception and those that deal with pregnancy and birth. They are practices and technology that are traditional African or Western medical based.

Traditional maternal health practices

Prevention of conception

Traditional Nigerian society has pronatalism as a cultural value. However, there is a specific interest in spacing birth and cessation of child bearing when the desired number of children has been reached. Thus there is a wide range of methods for achieving these objectives (Aryee, 1990). These include the use of: herbs / traditional chemicals / abstinence / coitus interruptus / douche / charms / amulets and belts worn around the waist / kin membership persuasion.

Failed contraceptive devices

Where the methods failed to prevent conception, other practices are brought into use. Some are mild while others are harsh. They include: abortion / infanticide (killing of deformed, disabled or ailing babies) / giving away children, to guardians or adoptive parents from the wider kin group.

Pregnancy care

Pregnancy care is the work of: older women / family / traditional herbalists / traditional priests / birth attendants.
The pregnant woman and the baby in the womb are considered vulnerable to spiritual influences and therefore certain rituals and observances must accompany whatever care they receive for protection. Depending on the pervasive beliefs in the area, many women would attempt to fulfil these religious requirements before attending to nutrition and other forms of care. Traditional birth attendants use a combination of ritual observances, pronouncements, and a choice of instruments,

herbs, and oil in the prenatal delivery and post delivery care of women. Older women and family members explain pregnancy ailments, advise on herbs, meals and activities, as well as enforce observances where possible. This way, the woman receives counselling and support. In the absence of this, the woman is left on her own to experiment on how best to take care of herself during pregnancy. Although fees may or may not be charged, gifts are expected to be given to such counsellors and birth attendants in accordance with the tradition for showing appreciation. There is no limit to the amount and types of gifts offered. But there are specifications on what is reasonable in communities. Some women therefore find the use of a conglomeration of priests, women counsellors and birth attendants' service ultimately more expensive than trips to a local clinic where this is available. Others may choose to use prayer houses of indigenous churches where prayer regimens are intended to ensure protection and safe delivery.

Postnatal care

Safe delivery calls for celebration from all women, family and neighbours, even in urban centres. This is in the form of visits, prayers of praise to God or the gods, songs, dances and use of the white chalk of victory. The woman is encouraged to rest, given herbal and peppery hot drinks and meals to aid internal and external healing recovery. She is attended to by those who cared for her during the antenatal period. She receives a special herbal wash, massage, use of a local girdle for the sagging stomach and dips in hot water or sleeping in hot rooms. Some of the latter have been known to lead to burns or worsen cardiac problems in these women with fragile health. Family encourages long term and intense breastfeeding, as well as observance of postpartum sexual abstinence rules in order to promote child spacing and safeguard health of the woman. Thus, in the absence of such as environment (which occurs in urban centres), there is an increase in frequency of conception.

Traditional maternal health practices have not yielded perfect results but remain widely practised in the Nigerian population. Where there are medical facilities like hospitals and clinics, some women combine these with some traditional services. Hostility between traditional birth attendants and midwives, the two main maternal health providers, may lead to the pressure to abandon one in favour of the other. There is evidence that traditional birth attendants do not recognise symptoms of pregnancy complications until they are severe. They are also not aware of the appropriate treatments. For example, they do not associate edema with blood pressure or ecclamptic fits. They attributed this to "bad blood, bad water, an indication of a big baby or baby's gender." They attribute convulsions in pregnancy to witchcraft and infidelity. However, their diagnosis causes with spiritual overtone women to prefer traditional treatments for pregnancy ailments instead of formal care. Their treatments include: appeasement of gods, use of a particular leaf juice in the eyes, nostrils, legs and mouth of the woman, herbs and holy water drinks and baths. (Okafor, Rizzuto, 1994).

Moreover, the choice of use of any or combinations of traditional maternal health practice depends on the husband in a culture where paternal authority prevails. Permission to change services or go to the hospital in the face of complications comes from the husband or husband's family as a last resort. Husbands therefore influence decisions on maternal health care to a great extent in Nigerian women (case of Mrs. C., Okafor and Rizzuto, 1994; Oppong, 1989; Kiseka, 1990). Where complications are not well-handled, they lead to diseases which impair fecundity. The observance of traditional postpartum abstinence period and long periods of

lactation (between 14 – 20 months), is largely dependent on husbands. (Oppong 1989) The degree of conjugal authority experienced by women is limited.

Formal medicine in maternal health practices.

Within formal medical practice, all levels of maternal health service delivery, prevention of conception, failed conception, pregnancy and postnatal care are handled by established institutions. They are: Hospitals / Primary health care centres / Private midwives clinics / Communal Antenatal clinics.

A wide range of trained and specialised personnel including doctors, nurses, attendants, technical staff, midwives and health care workers operates these.

Prevention of conception

A wide range of family planning technology which is common in Europe and N. America have recently within the last two decades been introduced with great intensity into Sub-Saharan Africa. In Nigeria and several West African countries government and communities have questioned the motives. The original objective to limit population and fertility was abandoned after a decade because it contends with basic beliefs on sacredness of fertility. The preferred concept of child spacing was adopted. However, the use of birth control devices in the population remains limited, often to educated men and women and to urban dwellers (Oppong, 1989, Maudlin and Segal, 1988). Studies found that most women in Sub-Saharan African countries do not know about these foreign contraceptive methods. Majorities of the women want more children. Thus 60% of contraceptive users are those who want to increase gaps between births (Oppong, 1989). Others express concern about the side effects like inter-menstrual bleeding and heavy menstrual flow. This for instance affects wifely services like cooking, a function which is a taboo to those menstruating in some groups. Some women also expressed fear of infertility and possible side effects of contraceptive use on future ability to conceive (Oppong and Abu, 1987). This fear has led to deliberate interruption of contraceptive use, resulting in unwanted pregnancy and causing an abortion. The most commonly used contraceptive devices in urban Nigeria are rhythm, pill, foam, vaginal tablets, condoms and withdrawal.

Pregnancy termination

Women and teenagers handle failed contraceptive use and unwanted pregnancies frequently through pregnancy termination. Abortion is legally restricted and so avoided by medical personnel and the hospital (Ilumoka, 1990). The Nigerian law allows for termination of pregnancy for the purpose of preserving or saving the life of a woman. Women practice self-induced abortions using drugs recommended through the grapevine or subject themselves to unqualified personnel who use dangerous instruments and often practice under aseptic conditions. Some doctors handle private and secret arrangements for abortion. They charge high fees because of the risks involved. Families who are desperate for a termination of an unwanted pregnancy seek out such services and the women involved have no protection when things go wrong.
Complications from spontaneous and illegal abortion are cited as among the most frequent reasons for hospitalisation of women and girls of the reproductive age (Oppong, 1989). There is a high level of sexual activity and abortion among teenagers for several reasons. These include limited information about safe contraception. The high birth rate leads to closeness in the ages of children. This means that many Nigerian families with limited incomes have to cope with provision, care

and education for four or more dependent youth at the same time. Adolescents may thus be sent to live with a relative as a house-help in exchange for education or skill training. Those who stay with their biological parents have to operate with meagre resources and so may share the limited clothes and school materials available with others. These teenagers therefore succumb to the lure of acquiring personal wardrobes in order to improve body and self-image. Thus, many young girls explore early sexual activity as an avenue to acquire material needs and money. Some move on to urban or international prostitution and use this revenue to support parents, siblings or help the family acquire property (Kalu, 2000). Young boys may join in illicit items: trading, and cults that specialise on extortion, violence and armed robbery in the society as well as educational institutions.

The culture frowns on young girls having children out of wedlock. They bring disgrace to the family name, ruin the chances of marriage for themselves and their sisters as well as opportunities for completion of their education. Thus, parents who want to protect the family name secretly encourage abortion of unwanted pregnancy in their teenage girls (Gyepi-Garbrah, 1985). Many young people simply see through the inconsistencies in family and societal beliefs on sexuality and the practices that prevail around them, and so exploit the situation. There are adult men who indulge in setting up young girls as mistresses. Unfortunately, these teenagers become vulnerable to problems of abortion and sexually transmitted diseases.

Pregnancy and post natal care

Hospitals and midwives clinics provide pre-natal care for many Nigerian women. Many seek these services two to eight months into the pregnancy and often out of fear of not being eligible for emergency treatment when necessary, because they are unregistered. Trained personnel and use of appropriate equipment lend to efficient services. However, long periods of difficulties in the country have left many clinics and hospitals with inadequate and malfunctioning equipment. Women who seek the services complain of perennial shortage of drugs, and high cost of drugs where available. Transportation may be expensive and there are crowded conditions coupled with long waiting hours at the clinic. They face harsh bureaucracy in service delivery. In addition, they consider many nurses and midwives impersonal, and hostile. They are often publicly scolded, humiliated where they do not follow instructions, have the information necessary at intake interviews, have money to pay for the drugs or bring all the required items for the delivery. They are neither told their rights nor the expectations from them. They are not allowed to pay the fees charged by instalment. Comparatively, the traditional birth attendants are seen to be friendly and kind enough to allow fees payment instalmentally. (Okafor and Rizzuto, 1994)

However, most women are aware of the fact that traditional birth attendant's use rusted or dirty instruments, poor hygiene practices, are medically weak and therefore transfer patients to midwives where there are delivery complications, like retained placenta and haemorrhage. They may also lie on bare floors at delivery. They are therefore willing to bear ill treatment for the sake of safety and relative comfort in order to be delivered by midwives at clinics and hospitals. Where government hospitals are not well-equipped women at delivery may be presented with an extensive list of things to supply like soap, dressings, infusion sets and liquids and surgical gloves. Hospitals may demand some payment before certain services are provided. Thus the period of delivery may constitute a harrowing experience for women.

Hospitals and clinics however tend to give women necessary information on life style changes, hygiene, nutrition, personal and baby health care that facilitates maternal health. Antenatal care has been associated with a 22-fold decrease in maternal mortality rate, 7-fold decrease in perinatal mortality rate and a 3-fold decrease in the proportion of babies of low birth weight in Nigeria (Harrison, 1990b).

Early teenage pregnant women

Early teenage pregnant women are found in various portions throughout the Nigerian society. They come from affluent and impoverished groups. There are some key reasons for the existence of early teenage pregnant women. These are religious, socio-cultural and economic reasons. Religious socio-cultural institutions in the Northern and other parts of Nigeria support early adolescent marriages, between 10 to 17 years of age. Household surveys of a sample of 878 married Muslim women in villages about 80 kilometres from a major national Teaching Hospital, revealed that 86% were illiterates and 44% engaged in income earning activities by using their children as intermediaries because they can only leave the compound with the approval of their husbands. Over 54% had their first pregnancy between 15 to 16 years of age and about 75% when they were 14 to 17 years of age. About 14% married at the age of 12 or below and 58% at 13 and 14 years. In this sample only 41% reported prenatal clinic attendance and 20% delivered in a hospital (Kisekka, 1990). Many reported going to hospitals only when there were delivery problems. Comparatively the mean age of delivery of first child in the Southern parts of the country is 21.4 (Kalu, 1987).

Teenage pregnant women therefore swell the number of unbooked pregnant women given emergency admission into the hospital. The mortality rate is high (29 per 1000) because of arrival at hospitals in serious conditions. The diagnosis takes some time to determine (Harrison, 1990). Harrison (1990) also found that an impoverished group of early teenage pregnant women suffered high rates of problems of eclampsia, anaemia, operative delivery, obstructed labour, obstetric fistulae (VVF) and foetal loss. When some of these women were given malaria and anaemia prevention treatment together with antenatal care, they grew faster with growth spurts of 2 cm and 16 cm, and childbirth became safer with a reduction in delivery problems. Thus, early marriage and the effect of poor economic conditions on lifestyle and nutrition, rob a considerable proportion of teenage women of the rights to growth and development, education and safe motherhood.

There are also early teenage pregnancies that occur from the vulnerabilities in child labour, especially street trading. Young girls are sexually assaulted (Akao, 1995). Street trading by youth is a means of family survival for most Nigerians (Kalu, 2000).

Some societal remedies for safe motherhood and maternal dignity

In the comparison of pregnancy outcomes with and without antenatal care, antenatal care was associated with a 22 fold decrease in maternal mortality rate and a 7 fold decrease in perinatal mortality rate (Harrison, 1990b). The rates are comparable to current European figures. Choice of antenatal care services has been associated with education in women and improved incomes or standard of living (Oppong, 1989, Kisekka, 1990). National Policy on population for development sup-

ports this and the fixing of an optimum number of children for women (Ilumoka, 1990). Antenatal care practices should therefore be encouraged especially by primary health care workers throughout the country.

The delay in treatment can be reduced with improved levels of development in terms of roads, telephones, power, water supplies, ambulances, high maintenance culture of hospital – clinic infrastructure, managerial and technological competence and well paid trained staff (Harrison, 1990b). Reform in abortion laws has been advocated toward criminalisation and not total deregulation. This will regulate the practice of abortion in the interest of women's health, eliminating procedures that lead to dangerous abortion.

There is need for bold steps to be taken in articulating aspects of socio-cultural beliefs and institutions that are detrimental to the dignity of women and maternal health practices in the country. Some of these are: husband dominance, that leads to male control of use of family planning, thus the psychological dependence of married women on their husbands for health practises. Such a relationship is deliberately cultivated in the marriage of young girls to much older men, whom they have to give the traditional respect of a father. Such psychological dependence makes women timid and unable to take decisions in emergencies. A combination of psychological and economic dependence also tends to restrict freedom of expression and ability to articulate problems properly at hospitals and clinics. The restrictions on money received from the husband and the absence of the woman's own income put several women under great stress where medical bills are concerned. Thus in the attempt to be silent over several issues, many women expose themselves to indignities in maternal health practices and mortality. These situations must be continuously publicised and discussed in health forums and the mass media.

Socio-cultural dictates on heirship and inheritance of land puts pressure on women to have male issues. Many Nigerian women want more than one male issue. The result is excessive childbearing and the risks involved in deliveries under traditional birth attendants. Planned Parenthood Federation of Nigeria (PPFN) posters and jingles encourage education of women. The implementation of appropriate plans by the government will ensure increase in women's income earnings and ability to utilise the system to address property, widowhood and other issues (Kalu, 1989).

The continued use of the traditional birth attendants is encouraged by World Health Organisation as a means of alternative medical practice. The level of training given to them does not qualify them to be considered as trained personnel. Their level of understanding of issues is low and proper midwifery training is intensive. Harrison (1990b) notes that schemes for their retraining started as far back as 1904 in India and 1921 in the Sudan. These schemes have led to a reduction in deaths from neonatal tetanus but not in overall maternal mortality. In addition, they still make referrals to midwives. Thus an increase in Primary Health Centres across the nation accompanied by intense health education campaigns by their workers on antenatal care and pregnancy complications would provide an acceptable alternative. Existing traditional health attendants should be allowed to practice only after having gone through extensive traditional birth and medical training and have their premises linked to clinics and hospitals approved by government public health officials. Their use must be gradually discouraged through effective medical health service deliveries to pregnant women. Women organisations throughout the country must devote time to seminars and information blitz,

targeting rural and urban women, teenagers, on responsible parenthood, safe motherhood practices, dangerous abortions, and signs of pregnancy complications. They must work to encourage female school enrolment and educational attainments as well as help to dispel misconceptions on family planning methods. They can also give pregnant women substantial support (financial) to enable them relieve them of heavy workloads during pregnancy and to assist them seek medical help promptly. Women must be educated on how to handle hostile medical and paramedical personnel and understand their rights to handle their bodies and to conduct their affairs with dignity. Women organisations in the country have also begun to establish centres for pregnant and nursing teenagers that encourage them to return to school and complete their education.

Pastoral care challenges

Some of the indignities of maternal health practice can be handled within structures that exist in Nigerian churches. For instance, Christian education programs have family emphasis week and couples forum, where education in maternal health can take place and childbearing issues can be discussed. Churchwomen wings can establish funds for assistance to impoverished pregnant women to enable them attend clinics and buy drugs. Some mother's day celebration themes can focus on safe motherhood, family planning, and education of women. Churchwomen can effectively influence and supervise women's health-seeking behaviour in the course of pastoral visits.

Youth and young girls group meetings serve as context for education on problems of early marriage, teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions, utilising nurses and medical personnel in the church membership. This will expand their educational activities beyond homemaker and childcare training and make them relevant to current societal changes.

Pastoral counselling services in the church must be backed by the acquisition of leaflets, fact sheets, and magazines, books and materials that provide information on nutrition, fertility and maternal care practices. This should be made available to membership and wide readership encouraged. Church workers and representatives must be sponsored to attend community – wide based health education programs. The church continues to receive encouragement on rediscovering elements of African culture, which are not in opposition to the gospel. It must not however, shy away from discussions on negative elements of traditional practices that impact on family and marriage life. It must sensitise members on vulnerabilities of women and youth as well as document pregnancy problems in order to get adequately involved in safe motherhood projects in the community.

Conclusion

There is a general need to raise awareness and sensitisation of Nigerian population and societal institutions to new heights that would assist the break with negative maternal health practices. The importance of women education and the connectedness of maternal mortality to cultural practices, poverty alleviation, and communal health programs and facilities need to be reassessed. Community and church leaders need to document problems in order to exercise pressure on officials for a change. Current practices in maternal health have often violated women

rights to life, personal liberty, and dignity. Nigerian women have faced great distress, embarrassment and sometimes harrowing experiences in the course of childbearing and yet have been unable to deal spiritually and physically with affinity to fertility and the risks involved. Women need to become watchdogs on policy change and implementation programs.

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Stuart Bell *Great Britain, 2001*

Contribution of health to social inclusion

topics:

- *health and social inclusion/exclusion*
- *caring for individuals vs. caring for groups*
- *pathologising of social diviancy*
- *the system of "National Health Service" in Great Britain*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 37-39

The importance of health for public wellbeing

The relationship between the health of the people and the wellbeing of society has now been acknowledged for some time. As the development of science and technology gave mankind some significant opportunities to influence its own health, beginning in the 19th century health became even more overtly a social and political issue. The 19th century British Conservative Prime Minister, Benjamin Disraeli, remarked "the health of the people is really the foundation upon which all their happiness and their powers as a state depend". The significance of the poor physical health of recruits to the British Army at the very beginning of the 20th century in stimulating national insurance for sickness has been frequently noted, and ill health was one of the five giants Sir William Beverages' welfare state was intended to slay.

Today, around the world the importance of health as a means of tackling social exclusion is widely recognised, either explicitly or implicitly. From World Health Organisation projects to eradicate infectious diseases, to the acknowledgement, even in the United States of America of the need to provide State subsidised health care to the elderly and the poor, to the explicit targets for the reduction of inequalities in health in the National Health Service in Britain the point is accepted. We know that chronic disease and disability go hand in hand with poverty, unemployment poor social and living conditions, and compound them to produce further social exclusion and isolation to individuals. My own organisation, an National Health Service (NHS) Trust specialising in mental health, operates a number of services whose aim is to enable those who have experienced mental illness to return to employment and wider social networks. It is well know that they have great therapeutic benefit and that their absence increases the risk of relapse.

Health and social inclusion

The contribution of health to social inclusion would then appear to be clear – the promotion of one supports the other, and they combine together to produce a virtuous circle. This indeed was one of the proverbial assumptions underlying the foundation of the National Health Service – availability of good health care to all, free at the point of use would, over time, reduce demand as the health of the population improved. We now know the reverse to be true. Indeed the relationship between health and social inclusion is historically rather more ambiguous. A major contributor to the availability of healthcare for the poor in the 19th Century was the development of Infirmaries linked to poor law workhouses. These sprang up as adjuncts to a system whose purpose was a form of social exclusion in the most literal sense – the identification, separation and repression of the pauper. Illness and infirmity however proved subversive of the principles by which the poor law was founded; within seven years of its enactment Parliament decreed that the smallpox vaccination, though administered by poor law medical officers did not pauperise the recipient. By 1867 the Metropolitan Poor Act which in London lead to an explosion in the provision of general, specialist, isolation and mental hospitals broke this principle for good. Nevertheless the stigma associated with care derived originally from the poor law remained lodged in the popular memory and many of those institutions were unable to shake it off even after decades of the National Health Service. My own grandmother was adamant that she would not be treated in a former poor law infirmary even in the 1990s.

Today the ambivalence is expressed rather differently. There is certainly an important strand in current thinking on the future development of health care which emphasises the importance of addressing inequalities and tackling social exclusion. The poor are more likely to be ill, and the ill, especially those with chronic diseases, are more likely to have difficulty in obtaining the benefits of social integration, particularly work, which is in turn a major contributor to recovery and rehabilitation. Another increasingly important strand however is responding to the needs of individuals when providing health care, as opposed to blanket treatment of social groups or cohorts. This is accentuated by the emphasis on providing care for the individuals in a way which suits the increasingly diverse circumstances of their lives. Its most obvious manifestation spells the end of that traditionally British collective activity, the queue, by the declared intention to abolish waiting lists.

The "two tier" system: collective and individual care

Both of these strands have been present to some degree for many years in British health care, although the importance of responding to the individual has become more pronounced lately. The previous Government's reforms of the NHS saw the introduction of general practitioner fundholding as a means of allowing the individual General Practitioners (GP) to meet the needs of their individual patients more flexibly by giving them the ability to pay for treatments either within the practice or in hospitals of their choice including those in the private sector. This arrangement was seen by some as being socially inequitable, allowing the patients of GP fundholders to get a better service than those of non-fundholders – the so called "two tier" system. The emphasis of policy under the present Government is on creating a universal system which is nevertheless capable of meeting the needs of individuals. It is indeed the case that at times over the past 20 years the two strands have worked well together. For example the sustained policy emphasis on

the replacement of large long stay institutions for the mentally ill and for people with learning disabilities by community based services has both responded much more explicitly to the needs of individual patients and fostered a much greater sense of social inclusion with access to real employment opportunities, social integration and the whole range of opportunities associated with ordinary life. The only sinister dimension to this change has been the growing public hostility, fuelled by some sections of the media, to the acceptance of mental illness within society. It is nevertheless true, I believe, that stigma was greater, albeit less apparent when the mentally ill were consigned to remote institutions.

The most recent statement of policy, The NHS Plan published in July 2000 is emphatic about both strands. Amongst the ten NHS core principles its states are:

"The NHS will shape its services around the needs and preferences of individual patients, their families and their carers – the NHS of the 21st century must be responsive to the needs of different groups and individuals within society, and challenge discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability and sexuality. The NHS will treat patients as individuals with respect for their dignity. Patients and citizens will have a greater say in the NHS and the provision of service will be centred on patients needs."

Also: "The NHS will help keep people healthy and work to reduce health inequalities – the NHS will focus efforts on preventing, as well as treating ill health. Recognising that good health also depends upon social, environmental and economic factors such as depravation, housing, education and nutrition, the NHS will work with other public services to intervene not just after but before ill health occurs. It will work with others to reduce health inequalities".

Are these two strands however at some more fundamental level irreconcilable? Can health care geared to the needs of the portfolio worker, laptop in hand, not rooted in any one community, citizen of the world living an irregular and unregulated 24 hour lifestyle still address the needs of an excluded underclass, locked into the poorer parts of town, denied access to, all or failed by the education system, unskilled in the modern job market? The absolute health of the poorest and the richest has improved over the past few decades, but the gap between them has not reduced it has grown, and it continues to get wider. Can health services realistically expect to meet the needs of these two groups together?

How to find the balance?

This is in many respects a particular version of the perpetual dilemma that characterises the bargains between individuals and society at large. The tension manifests itself in all sorts of ways in the daily experience of an NHS mental health Trust. For example we are in the process of developing new units for mentally disordered offenders which will improve their treatment, offer a much more effective and civilised alternative to prison, reduce re-offending and increase public safety overall. Despite the well-evidenced benefits of such plans there nevertheless provoke strong opposition from some of the local communities where they will be built. At a more obviously more clinical level there exists a constant dilemma for doctors and nurses admitting people who are very ill and disturbed to a ward which they will share to some degree with others in the same state. There are obvious advantages and disadvantages in that circumstance both for the individuals involved and those responsible for their care. The dilemma inherent in this,

incidentally, is not overcome by the provision of individual single bedrooms, but increasingly our practice is geared wherever possible, to looking after people in their own homes – assuming of course that they have them.

It is not of course a dilemma that is unique to the field of mental health – a wider debate has developed across the whole field of disability. The social model of disability places the onus on society to allow individuals a real life by adapting its patterns – access to buildings, constraints around employment etc. to their needs as opposed to well intentioned, but nevertheless isolating exclusion by providing artificial alternatives to real life.

In all of these cases practice resorts to striking a balance rather than a straight choice between the triumph of one principle at the expense of the other. The nature of the balance is constantly refined – we have moved on from the closure of long stay institutions to attempts to tackle the first onset of mental illness in a sympathetic, individualistic way which will avoid the exclusion of the individual both from their schooling or employment, or even family, precisely because we are able to adapt more flexibly to their particular needs and not process them through some gigantic and alienating mental health system. It would be foolish to pretend this is yet the norm, but it is the ideal, and it represents our latest approach to the reconciliation of the two. I believe that the development of a vocal and active user movement in mental health services has been instrumental in this development, and has compelled the system, sometimes regrettably against its own better judgement to listen and to go to meet people on their own ground. It is a road down which we still have much further to go, but it is a way in which mental health services may have stolen the march on health care as a whole.

Conclusion

My overall conclusion therefore is that it remains possible for health services to address, indeed to be major agents in tackling social exclusion, whilst embracing the consumerists temper of the times and responding to the needs of individuals. However we should never forget that this involves striking a balance, not in some magical reconciliation of two principles which remain potentially at odds with one another. There are two dangers in particular of which we should be wary. The first is the pathologising of exclusion to the point where all social deviancy or wrongdoing is seen as the consequence of illness – ”you must be sick”. The loss of the ability to distinguish between wrongdoing and disadvantage can only be to the detriment of the disadvantaged. I am loath to see a reversal of the civilising effect of health care on the Victorian Poor Law. Linked to this is the second danger, in my view the most serious of all. It is the risk that all of those offering health services let society at large off the hook of its responsibility for tackling social exclusion by over exaggerating the ability of health care to take the responsibility for itself. A similar risk exists for many public servants – teachers, policeman, social workers; that they paradoxically find themselves the victims in the curious *menage a trois* between social inclusion, consumerism and public service.

It is therefore vital that health care remains modest about its contribution to social inclusion and that political society as a whole shoulders its responsibilities for this vital dimension of the relationship between individuals and society.

Julian Müller *South Africa, 2001*

Human dignity: A South African story

topics:

- *methodology of pastoral care*
- *"re-authoring" the own story*
- *constructing identity*
- *racism in South Africa*

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 8, 2001; pp 47-52

Looking for personal dignity

Disqualified?

I am using a narrative approach in this lecture and therefore will be starting with my own story. When talking about human dignity in South Africa, I firstly ask myself the question: do I have dignity? What gives me the authority (audacity?) to address such a topic? What is the basis on which I allow myself to present this paper?

Before trying to tell any other story, I must, in the first instance, be trustworthy to my own narrative.

When I consider my own story in retrospect, I find that I am not qualified. I am disqualified. I have an apartheid background. I went along with the system, and therefore I ask myself the question: how can I participate in this conference with dignity? How could I prepare this paper and continue this morning with its reading, and talk about human dignity in South Africa, with honesty and integrity?

As a young minister I associated more with my own people (white Afrikaner), than with members of the black community, or even the non-Afrikaans community. I became a member of the Afrikaner Broederbond, and I remember well how, in many conversations, I vehemently defended the cause of the Afrikaner and the moral justifiability of apartheid. After I was appointed as pastor to students in 1978, at the Universiteitsoord-congregation in Pretoria, a gradual change in my orientation took place. Obviously, I was under the influence of more young and fresh thinking and began to disassociate myself gradually from conservative, ideological Afrikaner thought. I remember accompanying a group of students to Soweto during one winter holiday, and the wretched living conditions of the people there made a deep impact on me.

Today, when I think back, I am ashamed that 1 did not come to other insights sooner than 1 did. In 1997, when 1, along with a group of ministers, co-signed an open letter, which we submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, I

had exactly this reluctance to accept change and blindness to reality, in mind. I had wasted valuable years as a pastor to students and did not do enough to promote a social-ethical conscience under young Afrikaners.

Soon after I had been appointed as a lecturer in the Dutch Reformed Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria in 1990, I had opportunity to attend a consultation in Nairobi, Kenya, along with a number of lecturers from Stellenbosch and Pretoria. We entered into dialogue with a delegation from the All Africa Council of Churches. I was greatly impressed by their intellectualism, genuine spirituality, and general attitude towards us. This happened before Mandela was freed. We were still not able to obtain visas for Kenya, and therefore special arrangements had to be made to allow us to enter the country.

During this visit to Kenya, I developed, for the first time, a deeply felt need to apologize for my involvement with the apartheid structures. I had had already realized intellectually that we had made mistakes and that change had to happen. As a member of a group of Christians in a strange country, this became an emotional confession, which I expressed in a group meeting. I believe that this was a watershed moment in my attitude to - and view of - the situation in our country.

Afterwards, along with a number of my colleagues, I began to speak and preach differently. I wholeheartedly aligned myself with renewing thought, and when attending synods and meetings, I defended consequent non-racial and inclusive positions. I pleaded that the Dutch Reformed Church needed to make a full confession of its role in the apartheid structure, and that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission should serve as the forum for this. I used more than one of my columns (Church and Media) in "Die Kerkbode" to state this point. I was deeply disappointed when the General Synod Commission declined to take such a decision, and therefore, I decided to sign the open letter, which was circulating amongst ministers. In this way I expressed my deeply felt need to confess my guilt for my part in the apartheid- ideology. During this period (1997), and after years of inactivity, I allowed my membership of the Afrikaner Broederbond to lapse. I do not have feelings of guilt regarding my involvement with the brotherhood. Sometimes, it was precisely in these circles that I discovered some of the most liberal thinking. However, as a servant of the gospel, it slowly became clearer to me that it was no longer appropriate for me to associate myself so strongly with the Afrikaner- establishment.

For too many years I had found myself in the role of the one in charge. Naturally, the development of a political system such as apartheid is a complex issue. Many factors contributed to its development over many generations. The little black friend of my youth, Daniel and I were both products of social patterns, which had been established a long time ago. I was a part of the "haves" and he a part of the "have-nots" and it was neither of ours' fault that it was so. It was neither's fault that we were born into the roles of "boss" and "servant". However, I can never plead innocent to the charge that for too long I was insensitive to the position in which he and his group found themselves. I too easily accepted my privileged position for granted, and did not seek to empathize with them enough. Therefore I am ashamed, and once again, would like to confess my guilt for my part in an inequitable and unjust situation.

"Telling a past and dreaming a future"[9]: the basis for qualification

I believe that the qualifying authority for anyone to speak does not lie in a faultless past, but in a story of integrity. The wholeness of the story, the renewing flow from past to future, are the qualities that provide a story with integrity, and not a past without errors. A re-authored story, a story dealing with the past in such a way that it again becomes the basis on which new story development can take place, can be a story of integrity.

No story has a fixed content. Stories are interpretations. Stories are not about what happened, but about what is developing on the basis of what happened. I can become qualified, not because of the *content of my story*, but because of my *story itself*. The qualification lies in the *process* of telling and dreaming. That means, a process of re-authoring.

Telling a past

While I was working on this paper, two things happened to me, which helped me in the re-authoring of my story. I read an article in a newspaper and I had to accompany a group of Americans to the Voortrekker Monument.

The renaming of a German military base.[10]

According to the *New York Times,* a German military base was recently renamed. The name of a famous army general, Günther Rüdel was replaced by that of a soldier in Hitler's army, Anton Schmid, who disobeyed orders, and by doing so saved the lives of hundreds of Jews. The Nazi's executed him during the war for his actions.

Indeed, a brave decision to make, and one with many consequences. As could be expected, not all in German society were in favour of this renaming. In his speech at the ceremony, the German minister of defense, Rudolf Scharping, defended the decision and said: "We are not free to choose our history, but we can choose the examples we take from that history."

I was moved when I read this story and it struck me again that re-authoring is a never-ending process. Sixty years after World War Two, the German people are still struggling to interpret and re-author that part of their history.

Some people in South Africa feel that the past has been told efficiently and sufficiently enough. Perhaps the majority of white people were skeptical about the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and they feel that they have heard enough of the shameful stories of apartheid. Even one of the leading feminist theologians, Christina Landman, professor at the University of South Africa, said in a lecture at the Afrikaans Arts Festival[11] that the time has come for the Dutch Reformed Church to end confessions about apartheid and move on. According to her, the church should now start to take a more active role in the dis-

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9 Brueggemann, W. 1993 *Biblical Perspectives on Evangelism*. Nashville: Abingdon, p.120.

10 According to an article in *The New York Times* of May 9, 2000, p. A3.

11 The paper was presented on March 28, 2000, at the Klein Karoo Nasionale Kunstefees, Oudtshoorn.

courses about morality. I think she verbalizes the feelings of many white South Africans.

It is ironic that during this same time, Pope John Paul II did the opposite and made an apology of wrongs committed by Roman Catholics centuries ago (during a Mass of Pardon at St. Peter's Basilica). He implicitly talked about the Crusades, the Inquisition and the terrible inaction and silence in the face of the Holocaust. Of course, one can be skeptical of this confession. As *Time*[12] pointed out: "It is awkward: How does infallibility own up to its fallibility and yet remain infallible? The Pope's solution: by being vague about the actual sins and by attributing them, in any case, to men and women who are Catholics and not to the Catholic Church itself." *Time* also referred to the insufficient attention given to the wrongs done against women and homosexuals, but it gave credit to the Pope and said: "In the apology, the Pope does what a leader ought to do. He sets an example."

To my mind, the challenge of the church in South Africa is to create a dream for the future, but not by terminating of the telling of the past! The future must be created by, and through the telling of the past. There is no way to imagine a better future without the telling and the retelling of the past. The pastoral challenge is to facilitate a situation where re-authoring can take place. The stories of the past, although gruesome and shameful, must be told and told again until the new dream can take form.

Re-authoring is not a quick fix method. A premature ritual, as was proposed by Landman, cannot bring about re-authoring. To re-author the story, in order for the two South African tales to become one, takes time. It is a lengthy process in which the church and church leaders should take the lead. At the moment, not even all the mainline churches in South Africa have joined in the confessing on the sins of apartheid. The Dutch Reformed Church has only recently come to a full confession of the sin of apartheid. This same Church is involved in a difficult struggle to create structural unity among the so-called Family of Dutch Reformed Churches. While there are so many uncertainties about the future of the church, and while other churches are still debating about the need for a confession, it would certainly be untimely for the Dutch Reformed Church to establish a final ritual of confession, and try to stop the continuing telling and therefore, re-authoring of the story of the past.

On the other hand, it is definitely a pastoral challenge to move on to the task of creating a vision. The telling of the past must also contain re-authoring, and therefore the ability to imagine a better future. The pastoral challenge is to facilitate dreams about better things for the future. In his book, *Helping People Forgive,* Augsberger[13] warns about a forgiveness that is only a *returning.* That can be dangerous and harmful. It can be "a restitution of an old order, a backward movement, a regression to the previous situation with the old injustices that motivated the original action or injury." When forgiveness and reconciliation are mistakenly seen as a "forget and get on with your life", there is this real danger of conveniently returning to the old order.

To forgive and to reconcile is a painful process. It is painful because it consists of the telling and the retelling of the painful past. But there is no way around it. When we try to prevent the pain, the danger of merely returning becomes a real-

[12] *Time*, March 27, 2000, p. 41.

[13] Augsburger, D.W. 1996. *Helping People Forgive*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, p. 21.

ity. In South Africa this is a real danger. Sometimes I am afraid that things are simply falling back into the old order.

Taking the group to the Voortrekker Monument

On July 6, 2000, we, at the Faculty of Theology at the University of Pretoria, were honoured by a visit of colleagues and students from the Columbia Theological Seminary in Atlanta, USA. Unexpectedly they asked me to accompany them to the Voortrekker Monument. The request came from my friend and colleague, Professor Erskine Clarke, whom I accompanied a few years ago to the same monument. I immediately agreed and we left for the monument. It turned out to be a painful experience for myself. It was the first time in about three years that I went to the shrine of Afrikaner nationalism. While I was taking the group around and trying to explain the history of Blood River and the religious meaning that was given to the victory of white people over black tribes, I realized that I had changed. Although there are still meaningful story examples I can cherish, I don't want to live on the basis of the main examples found in the Voortrekker monument any longer. In the process of the re-authoring my own story, I started to choose other examples from the South African history more than I did previously.

When driving home that evening I was in a state of shock. The situation caught me in a double bind. On the one hand, it was my history and I found myself telling the story of the Afrikaner people and the struggles of the past, in the same language with which I grew up. I had the feeling that I was expected to tell *that* story, and I tried my best to tell it as I was taught. On the other hand, I could no longer identify with that particular old story. I have the desire to re-interpret the story of indigenous black groups and their struggle against the white people invading their land. But to the group of foreigners I felt obliged to try and explain and even defend the past in the old language.

In the days after the visit to the Voortrekker monument I thought once more of the story of the German military base and its renaming. I tried to give an account to myself of my own choices and my own interpretations of our history. I tried to think of names, people I would like to remember as examples on the basis of which I would like to build my own future. And although there are many examples in the history of South Africa, of which Mandela would be the most obvious choice, I decided to choose names out of my own immediate history and out of my own group. Two names came to my mind: Beyers Naudé and Ben Marais.

The choosing of examples

Beyers Naudé

When I was in grade 12, in 1963, my father was a delegate elder to a synod meeting in Pretoria, which was held in the old synod hall, called the *Voortrekker Gedenksaal.* It was school holidays, and on one afternoon I went with my father to the meeting and sat in the public gallery. I listened to a debate in which Beyers Naudé, the moderator of the synod, was accused of all kinds of negative things because of his involvement with the new monthly journal, *Pro Veritate,* launched by him. He and a group of supporters to try and lead the church away from apart-

heid used this journal[14]. It was a heated debate and one of Naudé's main attackers was a minister, Dawie Beukes, who was a high-ranking *Afrikaner Broederbond* member. At the end of the debate a voting through the raising of hands was held, and a motion was accepted by the synod, which condemned *Pro Veritate*. I remember my father voting against the motion and from the gallery I saw the uneasy situation in which my father was, voting against the minister delegate sitting next to him. I still remember how proud I was of my father taking his own stand, even against his pastor sitting next to him.

In later years during my university years and in the early years of my ministry, I became involved in the ideological thinking, which formed the basis of the apartheid policy. For many years I was convinced that the policy of "Separate Development", as it was called, could be defended theologically. In this process Beyers Naudé became a name that symbolized anti-patriotism and the enemy of the Afrikaner. During that time I personally chose to forget the afternoon in the synod hall and how impressed I was by both Naudé's contribution to the debate and by my fathers decision to vote in his favour. I was taken away by the stream of popular thinking in the ranks of my church and cultural group. Today I regret it.

History has proven that Beyers Naudé was a man who was ahead of his time. He saw the unethical elements in the foundations of the apartheid ideology, when nationalism and fear for a black majority blinded many of us. He was willing to take the risk of going against the group to defend a minority point of view. In the process of re-authoring my own story, I would like to honour him and choose him as one of the examples for my life.

Ben Marais

Ben Marais was my professor in Church History. When I came to the Theological Faculty at the University of Pretoria in the sixties, he was already held in disregard under a large part of the Dutch Reformed Church, because of his political and theological point of view. It is interesting that Beyers Naude was at an early stage influenced by the minister of the congregation where he was a member, Ben Marais. Marais wrote a book, *Die Kleur Krisis in die Weste (Colour, the Unsolved Problem of the West),* and Naude was disturbed by the book which challenged him to re-examine his understanding of race and human dignity.[15]

Ben Marais managed to remain true to his convictions, and at the same time be accepted as an honored member of the church. He was controversial, but loved. As a student I was impressed by his humanness, friendliness and by his great intellect.

I remember his classes vividly, but there was one incident, which stands out in my memory. On that particular day we received a visit by someone from a missionary organization from the United States. The man pleaded a cause, of which I forgot the contents, but I remember being very convincing. After the lecture, professor Marais thanked him, and in a very friendly manner, explained to him and to the class why we do not agree with his theological position. I was impressed by his firmness and by the friendly way in which he showed self-assertiveness. I suppose it is precisely this characteristic that made it possible for him to decide on his own independent theological position against that of colleagues and friends.

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[14] Roy, K. *2000. Zion City RSA*. Cape Town: South African Baptist Historical Society, p. 151.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 150.

I cannot choose my history, but I can choose the examples from that history. These two men, Beyers Naudé and Ben Marais are persons I would like to choose as some of my examples. With them in mind, I would like to reshape my future as minister and theologian. I believe they also provide examples for many South Africans in the re-authoring of our stories.

Dreaming a future

I dream of more human dignity for South Africa, and I would like to use a metaphor in order to give content to this dream. I found a metaphor in the wonderful book by James McBride, *The Color of Water. A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*[16]. The following is a part of the conversation between the black son and his white mother:

> *Does he (God) like black or white people better?*
> *He loves all people. He's a spirit.*
> *What's a spirit?*
> *A spirit's a spirit.*
> *What color is God's spirit?*
> *It doesn't have a color, she said.*
> *God is the color of water. Water doesn't have a color.*

To my mind, the challenge to find more human dignity in the South African society will only be accomplished when we can more truly worship the God who is spirit and therefore the colour of water. When we truly worship this God, we will not be satisfied with a situation where people are still judged according to the colour of their skin.

Although we have moved away from the legalized system of apartheid, the attitude of racism is still deeply embedded in society. The task of the church is now even more difficult than it was during the times of apartheid, because there is no longer an evil system to address, but attitudes, the fixed patterns of society that is not ruled by law, but by custom. These are difficult issues to address. The church must regard it as its task to teach people to think in terms of the "color of water".

The white churches find this difficult because their members expect mainly comfort from the church, and with good reason. Many members of the white middle class have suffered because of affirmative action, which causes the loss of jobs and privileges. Feelings of racism are just under the surface, and will come to the fore with the slightest provocation. Pastors and churches are thus under pressure to comfort and soothe only.

Black churches on the other hand also find it difficult to address issues of racism, because their members are still suffering due to social injustice. Black people often don't see any real changes and they are frustrated with the still widening gap between the "haves" and the "have nots". They are still longing for the message of "black is beautiful" and "black power". At this stage in their story, it seems more appropriate to emphasize Blackness rather than unity.

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[16] McBride, J. 1998. *The Color of Water. A Black Man's Tribute to His White Mother*. London: Bloomsbury.

It is a real challenge for the South African churches to make progress towards structures of unity. In theory, we have made progress, but in practice, we are often hampered because of distrust and fear.

We continue to make our interpretations on the basis of the South African tales, the black one and the white one. The challenge for South African pastors and churches is to work towards wholeness, to promote the "colour of water" instead of the colour of skin. Pastoral workers and church leaders should rise above the common wisdom of their church members and facilitate the forming of a new vision.

Human dignity is not to be found in achievements of the past, but in the integrity of the story being told. Dignity has to do with the telling of the story and not with the purity of the story as such. And for a story to be told with integrity and dignity, it also needs to flow into a dream for the future. When the story of the past becomes the basis for the future dream, it has been told with integrity and we have moved closer to dignity.

The South African story is, in many instances, a shameful one. But if we can make progress in re-authoring our story by choosing new examples from our rich history, we don't need to be ashamed. In the act of re-authoring we can find human dignity, and therefore, we will have to continue with our task of "telling a past and dreaming a future".

Part 5
Case studies

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Charles K. Konadu *Ghana, 1996*

A 35 years old wife in conflict with her husband and her family

The case of Mrs. Afua Nimo, Ghana

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 40-41

The setting is the office of the presenter which is situated at Osu a busy suburb of Accra. It is the official residence of the Christian Council of Ghana where both individual and group counselling is provided by professional staff. There is a Unit especially designed for dealing with Family and Marriage concerns. Afua Nimo got to know about the counselling facilities through one of the qualified workers of the Council whom she met while executing a national assignment.

Afua arrived for the first interview one afternoon and provided the counsellor with this information:

"At age 35 I work as a bilingual secretary, my dream-come-true job. I have wanted to be a career girl all my life thus I studied hard in school in order to become professional I met my present husband about eight years ago when I was in my final year at the University. We got married while I was serving the nation at Nsia, where he worked. After National Service, I was allocated a two bedroom house in Accra and found my new job and position a dream one: very fulfilling and challenging, one that makes an educated person proud and respected.

My widowed mother found my new position to be God's smile on her grieving after the death of the husband and her struggle to educate me and my sisters. Probably, the reason why I feel excited about my current professional status is that our father died early and his relatives took little or no notice of us, making our future seem gloomy during our school years. Watching mum struggle to pay our school fees and provide other needs was quite overwhelming. When I look at my mates, they seemed to have everything they needed. Next to them, I felt very poor and neglected.

After my National Service, I got a job in Accra about 250 km away from my husband, with one of the prestigious governmental institutions as a Bilingual Secretary. I started negotiating with my husband to seek for a transfer from his employers and join me in Accra, since his employers had their head office in Accra. The decision to join me in Accra took my husband years to make. During this period, I invited my mother and two sisters to live with me in my two bedroom house. I was lonely and considering the poor conditions under which my family lived in

the village, I thought city life would bring some relief to my ageing mother. Another major reason I invited my mother was the care she would give to my two small children while I was away to work.

Most evenings, I shared with my mother, the days experiences and on occasion, marital problems I had with my husband. Mum, mostly during my absence (I spent the weekends with my husband at Domiabra where he lives) discussed these problems with my sisters. I realized later that all of them spoke ill of my husband and quickly jumped to conclusions."

Subsequent interviews revealed that Afua was able to convince her husband Yao to move into the city only to be abused and tortured emotionally and subsequently, physically abused by his sisters-in-law in full support by the mother-in-law. The family split and Afua's depression and guilt feelings worsened.

"Yao finally agreed to my proposal to come and live with me in the city, to my utmost excitement. So he moved into my two bedroom house, already occupied by me the children, my mother and sisters. My difficulties started then. At age thirty-five I feel I have wasted most of my life. I have always dreamt of a degree and good job and a happy family. But here I was with my husband on one side, quarrelling and fighting with my mother and sisters on the other. Several incidents of misunderstanding occurred within the period of two years. One day, while I was gone to work, my sisters with the approval of my mother abused Yao physically over a trivial incidence. (she sobs).

I was very hurt when I get to know of the abuse, especially since I was trying hard to keep my marriage, a job and family going, I reported the case to the police who arrested and jailed my mother and sisters over night. The case was however settled at home. The elders who were present at the arbitration ordered mum and sisters out of the house.

Mum lived with friends she had made in the neighbourhood. The sisters joined other relatives in the city. The biggest shock came within two weeks when Yao arranged with his employers for a transfer to Domiabra. He left with our two children. On occasion when this topic was discussed Yao was very adamant on his stand. He insists that he married me and so he decides where we will live.

One of my problems is that I am lonely, now that I live alone. I also get tired on Mondays when I travel to Accra very early at dawn in order to get to work early before my boss gets in. (He is very understanding though). I am scared of loosing my husband since my Absence for the whole week is telling on the family. I have seen some signs of other women in the house. Thus when I come back to Accra, I feel terrible anxiety much of the time, particularly at night. Sometimes, I get so confused, I feel like running but I just can not move. It is awful because l often feel as if l am loosing all that I have worked for - good job, husband and relatives. Much of the times, I feel guilty that l have not worked up to my potential, that I have been a failure to my mother and sisters who have not visited me for two years now. My mother consented to receive support from me after family elders mediated.

I am tired at feeling like a looser and I know that nobody is going to change my life for me, I must make a decision, a choice which is going to change my life for the better. My friends tell me I am dumb, because if they were in my shoes, they would have stopped the weekend visits if my husband who earns less than I do cannot swallow his pride and join me in Accra. I cry myself to sleep many nights,

feeling so terribly alone and filled with anger and hatred. I don´t know what to do with my life. Please help me. ”

Issues

After several sessions which have been merged into the above case, four major issues have become evident:

1. The extended family wields an enormous power on this marriage even in an era of technology advancement and changing role of women in families.

2. The Ghanaian culture expects the man to accommodate his wife and family, thus it was odd for Afua, the professional worker, to want to accommodate her husband.

3. Afua migrated to the city for economic, social and other reasons.

4. There is pressure on the professional woman/wife (Afua) in the developing world as a setting.

Explanation

1. Even though the nuclear family is gradually replacing the extended family in Ghana, there are still traces of the enormous power that it has over marriages that fall within it. Even though Afua may be educated and professional, she crumbled under that power when she allowed mother and sisters to live in with her. There were difficult times when she was torn between backing her husband and family. The family knew that Afua contributed far more to the housekeeping expenses than her husband. To them, he became a powerless, toothless husband who should be instructed and directed always.

Education, urbanization, industrialization, religious dogma and Western way of life and marriage are some of the factors that are contributing to shift the Ghanaian extended family and the relationships to the nuclear family systems.

In Ghana and elsewhere in Africa, marriage transaction and relationship are regarded primarily as an alliance between two kinship groups. Thus, traditionally, kinship ties are superior to marital ties. In contemporary time this dilemma creates conflict and stress for many people as they attempt to resolve the issue: The subordination of marital ties to those of kinships or vice versa.

Again in Ghanaian culture this caring of one’s parents in their old age is an enshrined responsibility. Hence the education of children is to afford children to look well after their parents in their old age. Afua’s therefore torn between her responsibility to the mother and husband.

Some years back, regarding conflicts among in-laws, the norm has been conflicts between a wife and her husband’s mother and sisters. It was assumed that these sons were the sole providers in the home (husbands were literate with high education and lucrative employments). Son’s education and employment were supposed to raise the status and conditions of the extended family. Conflicts usually ensued when the wife was seen to be enjoying what the extended family considered to be theirs. The reverse is now true with many married professional women, and especially with the case of Afua.

2. Gone are the days when women's work was confined to the home. In Ghana now, women are found in many professions even at the helm of leadership. Women are given accommodation just as their male counterparts as part of their benefits. If these accommodations are better, more comfortable, easily accessible, the best logic is to move in with the professional wife. Very few professional women are enjoying this privilege. There are many others who have to be content with the homes of their husbands. This is because some cultural practices are still strictly adhered to by even educated and some elite in the society. Yao felt intimidated, weak, useless and unsure even at his manhood. What worsens his position is the fact that he has two daughters, a sign of the woman being stronger than the man. The neighbours would usually show their dissatisfaction of female house owner. His colleagues at work may question, discourage and at times mock at him for succumbing to a dominant wife.

3. The third issue deals with migration of married people both internally and externally. Because of the economic situation in the country, many marriages have been affected by this separation. Most husbands (and at times wives) left their spouses to look for greener pastures. A lot of them ended up in other relationships which were referred to as temporary. Ghanaians went to Nigeria, Liberia, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, now Germany and Europe.

Families left behind deteriorated, children became wayward, pregnant and social misfits because the task of raising these children became the sole responsibility of only one parent - the single parent. Internally spouses leave rural areas to find better paid jobs in the cities despite government's efforts at decentralization. Some leave with hope of later inviting the other members of the family as soon as they got employed and found suitable accommodation. However, these dreams, often never come true when the migrators are hit in the face by realities of city life.

However, an unidentified factor, the migration of most educated or brilliant females in the rural areas who struggle on to become professionals is another area of concern. This group of women are increasing in numbers and have to struggle for the few men, jobs, accommodation and other facilities and social amenities in the city. Afua cannot get the type of job she holds in Accra in Domiabra, where her husband lives. And so are many other Afuas who have left the village to semi-educated or uneducated female lot.

4. The fourth issue deals with the pressure on the professional woman/wife and in this case pressure on Afua as a woman, wife, mother and professional. She has to fulfil her household duties of cleaning and cooking. So she spends most of the week-end making sure that she stuffs the freezer with soups and stews. She washes clothes for the family and tidies up the home. She has to do the children's hair and mend clothes. After all these, she must make time to be with her husband and fulfil a wife's role. Back in the city, she has another home to take care of and has to make sure that her work is not affected by any of these other pressures. What happens when her children are sick? when husband has to travel out to work? who imparts the motherly virtues as example for the children to emulate?

To help Afua, she has to reassess her values, needs, goods, aspirations and priorities. She must be helped to make a decision as to which of the priorities is most important right now.

Jürgen Huhn *Germany, 1996*

The severe fate of a man, who experienced war and the hard time afterwards

A case study from Germany

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 43-44

Background

A neighbour drew my attention to Mr. K., who is attending the parish men's group on an irregular basis. It was her impression that he is suffering from severe depression - and could I visit with him?

My first attempt to visit failed because of unfavourable circumstances. We made a new appointment at which we were able to talk in depth.

Life-story

Mr K. was talking about himself without further introduction and hardly interrupted by my few questions:

He was brought up in a strictly Germanic neighbourhood in the South of the then newly established Soviet Union. His ancestors emigrated from Germany in the 18th century. His was a strictly fundamentalistic Christian community that connected the group in its minority situation, as well as it formed its identity. The whole village seemed to belong to this fundamentalistic community and no one was able to escape it, even if they wanted to. It was my impression of Mr. K. that he participated in this fundamentalistic belief with utter conviction until the age of fourteen. After this point slowly distancing himself from this form of rigorous Christian existence. To me this seemed to be a first, rather harmless rupture in his biography.

A second all the more drastic rupture was his deportation. At the beginning of World War II the family was brutally split up. He was kept in the "Gulag" (a work camp, installed by Stalin), and he didn't know whether he would ever see again his wife, parents and siblings. He survived the time in the work camp fairly well, because he was able to utilize his craftsmanship as a wheelwright, since there was no shortage of repairs to defect wheels of horse drawn carriages. His skilled hands

soon brought the carriages to order as well as making the scarce life of the camp more bearable by using his skills for various repair works. Therefore he never seemed to be short of friends among the prisoners who in return supported him in emergency situations. It is also my impression that the Spartian life style of his home parish (no smoking, no drinking, etc.) in the end helped him to cope with the difficult situation of the camp.

After the war he was reunited with his family. Up to the beginning of the seventies they were able to live a relatively normal life in modest terms. Then came the third rapture: His immigration to East Germany. Mr. K. chose not to talk about that in too much detail. Judging from his scarce comments and my impressions of him, the following image revealed itself: For the sake of the children's future he had moved to Germany. But only a part of his "self" arrived here, the greater part remained in the expanse of the Russian countryside. He now mainly lives from his memories, and in talking to me he became more lively. For me listening to him was more exciting than any thriller or crime story.

But shortly after telling his story, he collapses like a weak shell. "Yes, his children are well; they also survived the fourth rupture, that is Germany's reunification." But they seem to be very busy with themselves, and don't contact him very often. He became a lonely man in a small one bedroom apartment.

An afterthought

I am bringing this example because it is my opinion that here we are dealing with a fate that is very common in our times. There are still Germanic families emigrating into Germany from the states of the former Soviet Union. But elsewhere similar human tragedies occur, and we encounter people with similar life stories. Bosnia, the distressing situation in the Balkans. Their refugees who are coming into the states of the EC all that is very present to us here in Europe.

The following question arises in a camp situation – a situation which is imposed on human beings and is extremely traumatic; a situation which Mr. K. and many other people in various different parts of the world have experienced (especially in the refugees camp).

How, is it possible to find the small path between adaptation and resistance, to walk it and not to be worn out by the inhuman conditions, and not to become cold, hard hearted and indifferent for the rest of one's life.

The other typical question which arises out of this biography is as follows: To stay or to leave?

What is proper for my family? On the one hand we are barely able to stay in our country, on the other hand we are not certain of what we will experience in the country we are about to move to. Young people have already returned to east Europe because they could not deal with our so called western civilisation The elderly have not moved since they are afraid and feel unable to deal with yet another change in their lives.

How can we help people to make the right decisions which are so relevant for their future? What are the focal points, when one has to decide whether to go or to stay? As a citizen of the former GDR, I know what I am talking about. Some left for Western Germany, others stayed. yet others are glad that they stayed after the change. Recently one of them said, "Had I known what to expect in the West, in

what kind of human and social conditions I'd find myself, I would have never applied for immigration." Subconsciously we projected all our longings and everything that was missing in East Germany into the West, which to us seemed to offer much more freedom and possibilities. Now we became much more sober and see that next to the freedom one also finds many social constraints and needs for adaptation, a fact which not only in the West plays a formidable role.

How, then do we deal with the ruptures in our lives? What is our conscious and subconscious involvement in all of this? How can we continue life despite of everything, and how can we accompany others and help them to discover new possibilities of living?

Hilary Johnson *Great Britain, 1996*

A 34 years old widow and mother in difficult living conditions

A case study from England

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 44-45

I have selected a client that I have had since December 1991 for this case presentation. Her name is Tina and the study also involves her daughter Sarah. Their story is complex and they have both needed a considerable amount of support and encouragement.

A) Interpersonal communication

Biographical situation

Tina is a widow, she is 36 years old and has one daughter Sarah who is 6 years old. Tina and Sarah live together in a ground floor Council flat in a large block close to the Hospital. Tina is unemployed and does a considerable amount of work for the parent teacher association at Sarah's school. She feels she has a duty of care for her mother, also a widow, who lives in an alms house near the school that Sarah attends. All three members of this family are receiving outpatient care in the hospital each under the care of a different consultant. Tina has a large number of friends locally many of who are single parents and live in rented accommodation. Generally their standards of nutrition are not healthy, many of them smoke cigarettes, though Tina does not, and alcohol is frequently abused among this group.

Biographical processes

Tina has a number of brothers and sisters with whom she has little contact. She has minimal links with her husband's family because two sons from his first marriage physically harmed both Tina and Sarah in a family fight just hours after his death. Tina finds making relationships difficult due to the traumas of her childhood, compounded by the early death of her husband just as she was beginning to trust him and to enjoy caring for their baby Sarah. Currently Tina is tentatively beginning a relationship with John who was widowed some seven years ago. Tina has a number of relationships with other health care professionals particularly a male social worker of whom she is very suspicious, a paediatric nurse who advises her on the care which Sarah needs as she suffers from chronic asthma. Tina

trusts these professionals with only a limited amount of her own feelings and experiences. She has healthier relationships with the other members of the chaplaincy team both men and women.

Emotional relations

Tina sometimes experiences great difficulty in coping with her emotions. She finds anger very hard to bear except from Sarah so she works hard to protect herself from her mother's anger, and will apologize to me before I know what it is she might have to apologize about. Tina was abused by a number of her brothers when she was a child. She continues to feel embarrassed and ashamed of these events and is inclined to blame herself for them. Consequently she has poor self esteem though she is gaining confidence through her work with me and through her friendships, especially with John. She and Sarah sometimes switch roles with Sarah making the adult decisions about how to spend their time and money. On two occasions recently Sarah has had to summon help when Tina has been in severe pain at home.

Roles

Tina's major roles until recently, have been widow and mother. Her husband was twenty seven years older than her, and died at the age of fifty eight, just two days after undergoing major abdominal surgery to remove a cancerous growth. He had worked for many years as a bus inspector locally, and Tina continues to receive free travel on the buses as part of his pension. She is constantly reminded of her state by the comments and questions of those who worked the buses with her husband.

Tina requires a lot of affirmation to help her believe that she is a good mother for Sarah. Sarah enjoys Tina's company and when Tina is free of pain they do many interesting things together. They met John on the first holiday they have ever had, last August, at a holiday camp. Tina tries to be a caring daughter, but feels she fails this because she cannot forget that it was her mother's constant absence from the house that left her brothers with many opportunities to sexually abuse her and her younger sister. Tina was frequently punished by her parents for misdeeds that were later found to have been her eldest brother's fault. Tina's mother has been a heavy smoker all her adult life, now it appears that her mother may have a severe lung disease, possibly cancer. Tina believes she ought to feel sorry for her mother, but actually thinks she is suffering her just deserts.

Tina is tentative in her relations with professional people, both at the hospital and at Sarah's school, though she is gaining confidence and is beginning to articulate her own and Sarah's needs more clearly. She was reluctant to accept a proposal that she be the Chairman of the PTA at Sarah's school, but is fulfilling that role adequately, with support of staff and friends.

B) Personal context

Historic conditions

Tina was the seventh of nine children, two of who died in infancy, leaving four older than her and two younger. She feels that she was never seen as an individual person in that family and made many attempts to run away from home, usually

being found by her eldest brother. She also tried several times to take her life but her attempts went unnoticed.

Tina experienced most affection from her maternal grandmother and later from her father.

She suffered repeated abuse from her eldest brother, sometimes with his friends joining in. When she was sixteen she was assaulted in the street by a stranger who then ran away. The next day a police officer called at her home when she was alone there, saying he had some information about her attacker, but he also sexually assaulted her.

Tina did not achieve very much during the time she was at school, and left at the earliest opportunity to work in a local baker's shop. Her future husband was a regular customer there, and he gradually began to protect her from the inappropriate advances of some of the other male customers.

After their marriage they had some difficulty with Tina's parents who seemed to resent her husband's good influence on her, and her happiness.

Sadly Tina's happiness was interrupted by six deaths in the families in the next three years, including the late miscarriage of Tina's first baby. By the time Sarah was born in 1989 Tina's husband was experiencing some pain from the cancer, and he died when Sarah was fifteen months old, while Tina and Sarah were visiting him in hospital.

Tina did not know how to handle her stepson's anger and after their attack on her she took Sarah to live in her mother's home, thinking this would be a temporary arrangement, but ended up spending four years and six months there, in very cramped conditions.

Economy

Tina's husband left her a share of his pension and the small house that they had lived in together. Tina soon sold this house realising that she could not live alone there as it was so close to the hospital where he died. The sale realized approximately £40,000, which Tina has still got in a Building Society account. Tina and Sarah live easily within Tina's weekly income at present, and Tina frequently buys presents for Sarah. They have meals out places like McDonald's rather than more expensive restaurants, Tina does not smoke, because of Sarah's asthma, and only drinks wine or sherry occasionally.

Societal and political relations

One of the tasks that I have seen as important for Tina, has been to enable her to play a full part in adult life, to make choices for herself and Sarah, to claim what is hers by right, and to use her talents. Tina remains naive politically, and uninformed about wider debates surrounding issues like health care.

Cultural values

I find this a difficult area to comment upon as Tina is not often interested enough to pursue any, conversation in this area except in so far as she takes Sarah to the cinema occasionally. Most books and magazines in their flat are also related to Sarah's needs.

C) Religious and spiritual forces

Tina spent some of the happiest hours of her childhood at Sunday School and later at Girls Brigade at her local Methodist Church. She still regularly visits one of the leaders, now retired. However even those leaders never followed through their promise to support her at home, and despite saying they would visit, they never did. Tina continues to wrestle with ideas of a God of Love who allows children to suffer as she did, and who "allows" her husband to die just at the time she was learning to trust him, and when their daughter was so young. Tina has begun to think about practising and nurturing the little faith she has, and Sarah has begun attending a local Sunday School regularly. I do not know what effect Tina's new relationship with John will have on her religious and spiritual life.

Nalini Arles *India, 1996*

A woman with five children is ill treated by her husband

A case study from India

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 1, 1996; pp 48-49

"Mrs. M" was 29 when she first came to work for us from a village in Karnataka in India. She had five children after which her husband took a second wife. They all lived in their one room house with a small kitchen, which perhaps would be about the size of your garage or cellar. The house had no electricity or toilet. The villagers used the large open space as their toilet. Mrs Ms husband supported his second wife and asked Mrs M to move out of his house with her five children.

M found employment in a nearby Christian institution. She had to walk 6 miles to work and walk back 6 miles as bus service was poor. She obtained a loan and added a room to the house where she and her children could live, leaving the other room to her husband and his second wife. She also borrowed money through the government to deepen the existing well in a very small plot of land which they owned. The husband started ill-treating their ten year old daughter. Ms defence of her daughter led to Argument and quarrels. His drink problem aggravated the situation. He used to come home drunk and abuse the family. With the help of the village elders, she asked her husband to live in a separate house.

The government threatened to take their possessions if hey did not return the loan. M rushed to the counsellor for help. The counsellor knew the local bank manager, and her husband - being the head of the Christian Institution - had influence and power. They approached the people concerned and averted the eviction. Later they gave a loan for Mrs M to clear her loan with the government. She was faithful to return the money to the counsellor later, though her husband who accompanied her to request the loan did not take any responsibility to clear it.

The husband continued to harass M and started abusing his daughter. She could not tolerate his abuse and being concerned for her daughter's safety M considered various options including separation. The counsellor spent time listening, discussing and clarifying the various options. After much thought M decided to move to another village. But the elders of the village advised her against migration and asked her to stay on and adjust with her husband. They accepted the second wife as a natural phenomenon. Her quarrels were dismissed as a natural part of life. M continues to live in the same house, though she proved capable of deciding, earning and managing her affairs. The final decision remained with the village elders in whom lay the locus of control.

Clarifications

1. In India people with status, power and position have influence to recommend people for jobs, admission in school college, hospital or an occupation. They can impose or avert a decision.

2. Not all villages can be portrayed as having no electricity, toilets and water supply.

3. M's husband was the eldest son in his home. In India the eldest sons are looked up to and not questioned, treated as though semi-gods. They make all the decisions in the family.

4. In the village council (panchayat), there are mostly men elders who decide and rule from a male perspective.

Methodology used by the counsellor

Both directive and non-directive counselling were used as M had the capacity for self awareness and self criticism. The directive method was adapted and used. She had a sharp mind and was asked to think and reflect on her problems. As she gained insight she assimilated new perspectives. The counsellor facilitated the counselling process but refrained from making any decisions for M.

The counsellor allowed the counsellee to vent her feelings of anger, fear and hate both verbally and non-verbally and to cry aloud.

The difficulties faced in non-directive approach was that M always insisted to sit on the floor whereas the counsellor sat on the chair. The counsellor always managed to sit in such a position which allowed sufficient eye contact.

Problems faced by the counsellor

The decision of M was overruled by her village elders who held the final say, not because she was a woman, but because the locus of control lay in the male patriarchal system or culture. Such culture enhances the dependence of women on male elders.

John Snehadass / Ulrich Fritsche *Fiji / Germany, 1997*

Conflict and reconciliation in the context of two different cultures

A case study from the Fiji: The ritual of reconciliation between a married couple

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 2, 1997; pp 52-54

John Snehadass:

In the socio-political, cultural and religious context of Fiji, the two major ethnic groups, (Fijians, the indigenous People, and Indians, brought in by the British 150 years ago), have various mutual concerns end conflicts. Racial tension had been a major issue which has erupted in political upheavals. Cross-cultural marriage is not the best way for racial harmony, many think. However, my case study shows it is possible. Mutual respect end sincere efforts to understand and appreciate one anothers cultural traditions and religious values have resulted in happy marriage and family life. How Christian Churches and Pastoral Care organisations can learn from this and provide support system.

When two cultures meet, from whatever world they came, a third culture is formed at the point of intersection. The encounters and experiences makes one a child of a new world. He/she has a unique perspective. He/she can discover his/her real roots, wonder at it and be enriched by it, although not without pain.

Ulrich Fritsche:

John Snehadass is hospital chaplain in Suva and CPE-supervisor on the Fiji Islands. He presents a case study in which there meet, or clash, not only the Indian and the Fiji cultures but also different religious and social backgrounds. A ritual of reconciliation helps out of an otherwise unresolvable conflict.

One day, John Snehadass has an unexpected guest. John is a Roman Catholic priest, raised in India. For some years he has worked as a parish minister on the Fiji islands, at the present he has the position of a hospital chaplain and is co-ordinator of the program for pastoral care and counselling of the Society for Pastoral Care and Counselling in the Pacific. His visitor is Vinod, a young man of 26 years, whom he knows from his former parish. Vinod had gone on a two hour bus ride to ask Father John for help. He starts: “I have got problems...”

Vinod is the fifth of a number of eight children (two boys and six girls) of a family of Indian origin. Both his parents were born on the Fiji islands, the father is a Brahmin (he belongs to the Hindu priest caste), his mother is Roman Catholic. Vinod's father had been working for the British government as a police officer and at the time is in a distinguished communal position. In spite of being a member of the Hindu priest caste, he values the faith of his wife. In the family he enforces discipline, obedience and submission to rules. The mother feels obliged to follow Indian traditions. She has a strong personality, was very strict with her children, and she expects that her children marry partners of Indian decent. The Indian family traditions are meant to be followed in the next generation also. She shows little of her emotions, but she is patient, sometimes a little bit stubborn.

For Vinod, childhood was not easy. Though being the elder one of the two sons, his younger brother had always been the darling in the family. Vinod's twin sister has a dominant personality and is much more outgoing than he is. Vinod seems rather restraint, even shy. He has a strong mother relationship. Sometimes he drinks. He regards himself as not especially religious.

Vinod describes his problem as follows: He works as an electrician in a large company. His assignments he receives by telephone through a secretary, Tokasa, a young lady of 32 years who had fallen in love with him and now is pregnant by him.

Tokasa is a Fiji woman; she is a member of the original Fiji population. Her family lives on one of the more distant islands. Tokasa is the second child out of seven (three boys, four girls). Her father stems from a chiefly family, and he has the position of a community leader. The mother also stems from a noble family. Tokasa's parents have made arrangements to marry off Tokasa in the traditional way to a Fiji man. Both parents are Jehova's witness.

Tokasa was born on the island but has gone to the main island for further education. In the city, living by herself, she has experienced much more freedom than Vinod. She is very outgoing, is well educated, talented in languages and is able to manage her life well. One of her sisters is married to a British man. As many others, she thinks of herself as belonging to the "better" people.

The situation is complex. Both the families of origin have done first steps to marry off their children in a traditional pattern. Premarital sex is forbidden, and the "normal" social solution in a case as such would be: Tokasa and Vinod are not allowed to marry. Tokasa's means are too short to raise her child; however, she will not be allowed to return to her family either. Vinod will be expelled from his family. And with the dissolution of their family bonds, both, Vinod and Tokasa lose all of their relations and the nurturing source of the society, and they would find themselves at the edge of the society. For in both cultures, the Indian as well as the Fiji, the families are constituents for a gratifying life.

Vinod had hidden his situation from his family for some time, but then had asked an aunt of his to inform his parents. Consequently, his sisters and brothers and his parents had turned their backs on him, and he had no other chance than to move in with Tokasa into her small apartment. In this situation he had remembered John Snehadass, and he had made up his mind to see him. At this first visit, John promised to help as best he could.

On his next visit, Vinod brings Tokasa along. They consent - as a first step - that John will pay a visit to Vinod's family. A few days later John goes to see Vinod's family at the house which he had visited often during his time as their parish minister. The welcome is friendly but somewhat reserved. When he talks about the reason of his visit, Vinod's sisters leave the room, and the mother points out clearly that - because of his siding with Vinod - John is no more welcome in this house. Vinod's father, with whom John had had many good conversations before, says: "I feel sorry. You know my family. We cannot accept this."

Back home, John reports only to Vinod how he has been treated by his family: "This is how your family received me." Tokasa may have a guess as to what had happened. However, she learns more when she visits the parish in which Vinod's family are members. She gets enough hints that his people don't want to see her. Even with John, because he further tries to help the two, contact is avoided by the family and others. For Tokasa and Vinod there is no chance of experiencing and receiving the help and shelter of a caring community any more. If one of them or both would be struck by misfortune, there would be nobody who would take care of the children. Meanwhile it becomes clear that Tokasa is pregnant with twins. In this period of time, Vinod feels more and more drawn to John, and they both seek strength and guidance through prayer. Then, John takes a second chance. He feels: If anyone in Vinod's family is capable of openness, it would be Vinod's father, the Brahmin. Thus, John contacts him and meets with him secretly. On this occasion Vinod's father shows his willingness to see Tokasa at least once and talk to her.

The crucial encounter and the ritual

When Vinod's father appears to the visit, Tokasa welcomes him in his language and calls him "aypa" (which is an honorary word for a father), she kneels in front of him and touches his feet with her hands. Because she knows how deeply he is rooted in his tradition, she adapts those elements from his tradition, that call on him als head of the family and let him stick to this role. Vinod's father is deeply touched, he lets all this happen and then answers: "You are my daughter." Then there is a long period of silence.

After this, John prepares everything for a ceremony that is known and performed in both the native Fijis as the people of Indian decent: the "Yaquona drink", a rite of drinking together out of the Yaquona bowl.

The Yaqona bowl is a hemispherical bowl out of dark hard-wood. The outside of the bowl and the edge are decorated, and the whole bowl is covered with a beautiful wickerwork which ends in a three feet long plaited cord. For the ritual, the host places the bowl in front of himself and arranges the cord in a way that it points to the guest who is seated opposite to him. The host prepares the drink, and an assistant on his left hand side passes the drink in a smaller bowl to the participants of the ceremony.

The ritual starts when the host calls on the powers of the heavens and the earth and says a prayer in which he prays for the benefit of the community. Then he takes some powder out of a box made from the roots of the Kawa bush, pours it into a silk cloth and squeezes the silk cloth with the contents and puts it into the Yaquona bowl which is filled with water. The cloth and the powder absorb some of the water, and are moved and squeezed in the water until enough of the powder substance is dissolved in the water. The host tastes the drink and fills some of it

into a smaller wooden drinking bowl, and the assistant at his side then offers the small bowl to the guest - with all signs of reverence. The guest claps his hands once, takes the bowl with both his hands, drinks until it is empty and returns it with both his hands to the assistant. Then he claps his hands three times and bows down towards the host. All this is done in silence. The drinking bowl is filled once again and then handed to the person next in rank to the honoured guest etc.

The time of the ritual is holy time. Nobody speaks or gets up or moves from his or her place. If there are children present, they are strictly advised to follow the rules. Nobody passes the bowl on the side of the host. If someone has to leave the room, he does so moving backwards and bowing down. If at informal meetings one passes the Yaqona bowl, one bows down and touches its edge respectfully with the fingers of the right hand.

With this ritual, John offers the father, the son and the young woman the chance of reconciliation. The four persons celebrate together. John prepares the bowl and the ingredients. The plaited cord of the Yaqona bowl points to the opposite side, towards Vinod's father. Tokasa is seated at John's left hand side, Vinod at his right hand side, and he is the one to assist John. With his consent to participate in the ritual, John's father has already indicated his readiness to reconcile. When John starts to call on the powers of the heavens and the earth, the realisation of reconciliation begins. Because Vinod's father as the head of the family readmits Vinod and accepts Tokasa, he binds the whole family into the process of reconciliation.

A few weeks after the ritual of reconciliation, Tokasa gives birth to two girls. Vinod's older sister who had played a major part in his expulsion from the family is the first one to come into the hospital for a visit. She brings the baby outfit as a present. The young family of four is assigned a living space in the house of Vinod's parents.

In the workshop, John shows a video that has been recorded shortly and which shows the family ten years after these events. John interviews the members of the family about the situations then and now – not only Tokasa and Vinod but also their respective parents, brothers and sisters and their children. Once again it becomes clear how big a burden the situation then had been and how happy the persons involved were, when the conflict could be resolved in a way, that was apt to clarify the relationships of the individuals with each other as well as those between the families. At first, the interview questions sound somewhat stereotype: "How did you feel then?" and "How do you feel now about these events?" Afterwards the questions become more specific and concentrate on individual persons. The answers are simple: "Good." "I feel good." "I am content, happy." What becomes quite clear is that on the Fiji islands, the family and the family relations have absolute priority over against the values of individual life. The family is the source of personal and social security. The family is the place, in which the identity of the individual is formed, nurtured and healed.

The perspective of pastoral care

Regarding this case study we ask: What is the pattern of pastoral care? For sure, pastoral care is brought about through the ritual, which forms the point of crystallisation in this helping relationship. Because in both cultures involved, the Fiji and

the Indian culture, Yaqona drinking stands for revering and honouring people, and for the experience of community life, this ritual is a means of reconciliation. In both groups people say: "During our traditional ceremonies we feel deeply connected with each other." However, it is not only the ritual itself. In this case study we see that pastoral care takes place in John's personal participation in the fate of Tokasa and Vinod. He not only listens carefully, shows his understanding and his acceptance, but takes side with these persons who are in danger of falling out of the sheltering community. In consenting with Tokasa and Vinod, John initiates problem solving procedures in which he himself becomes active and runs the risk of experiencing humiliating experiences and the loss of relationships.

The pastoral relation between John and the young couple is one of a common quest for the chances for reconciliation - in respect of the orders and structures of the Indian and Fijian society. The strive is not for the fortunes of individuals or the realisation of individual chances but for a life under the conditions of traditional social structures.

Rafalwen Saragih / Tetty Hutapea / Helmut Weiß *Indonesia, 1998*

Merdeka

A case study from Indonesia on traditional family counselling and organised attempts to help street children

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 4, 1998; pp 47-49

Medan has about 2.7 millions inhabitants and is the biggest and most important city of northern Sumatra in Indonesia. A brochure of the Department of Tourism, Post and Telecommunication writes: "Medan means 'field' or 'battlefield', and indeed Medan was once the battlefield where the Deli Sultanate and the Kingdom of Aceh were at war many years ago. Medan is the capital of the North Sumatra province and a trade centre and seaport of considerable importance." After these comments a description of the traffic connections to the other parts of Indonesia and the neighbouring countries by air and ship follows and the sightseeing attractions are praised: "Medan, a city which is hundreds of years old, houses many valuable historical objects which can potentially be restored and turned into tourist objects."

Medan, located in close proximity to the coast, is mostly populated by Muslims who belong to the Malayan ethnic group. But many people from other tribes and religions moved from nearer and farther regions into the city in the last twenty years. Among them are many Bataks, who originally settled about 70 km south east in the mountains around the Toba-Lake.

The case: Merdeka

The following case study leads us into this city, but far away from the tourist attractions, far away from the big business with its glittering stores and banks, far away from airport and seaport – nevertheless into the centre of the city where the daily battle of physical and mental survival is fought.

Merdeka is one of the Batak boys. He has two little brothers and two little sisters. His father is a man of 35 years old and works as a driver of a small bus in public transport.

Merdeka's father, Mr. Sihombing, comes from a poor family background. He moved into the big town Medan to find his living, because there was no field for him to work on. When he first came into town he got a job as a bus conductor and

he met a girl, Boru Sidabutar, who is the daughter of a bus driver whose family background is similar to his.

After her marriage to Mr. Sihombing she works as a dealer selling goods early in the morning. She has to wake up at two o'clock in the morning to look for and to buy vegetables to be sold later at three o'clock. After buying a big bunch of vegetables she carries it to other traders and sells parts of it to them. These traders start their business at 4 o'clock and are working until about 8 o'clock in the morning. People like these traders who sell vegetables to house wives and other people in Medan usually buy things from women or men like Boru Sidabutar. They bring the goods from the night market to their place. Boru Sidabutar practically works from 2 to 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning on average. This is called the "morning market". It is the lowest level on the working, as well as the social scale. Because of this, this kind of work is usually done by women.

Boru Sidabutar has to drive for about one hour to go to the market and back home. After finishing her work she reaches home at about 10 o'clock. Meanwhile her children got up, two of them make themselves ready for school without her mother's care. The two others stay at home without food until her mother comes home. The father left home for work at about 6 o'clock. He has breakfast as well as lunch and supper in the bus terminal or at other places. He always eats his food without the family. He comes home at 8 p.m. after one hour of taking a rest and washing the bus and having supper. Because he is working so hard all day he and his fellow drivers drink 'tuak' or palm wine and get drunk at the end of the day. He returns home in this condition – and that means that he does not bring money home, but rather he is drunk and causes anger.

This is the picture of the husband of Boru Sidabutar as he works and lives from day to day. And this is how Merdeka and his brothers and sisters experience their father. Theses conditions have caused that Merdeka does not like to stay at home and therefore he left to live out on the streets. He goes home only once a month or week to see his two little sisters – he misses them very much – and to give a small amount of money to his mother. He comes home in the morning to avoid meeting his father. Some days he takes his two little brothers along with him after school to work as shoe polisher from about 3 to 6 o'clock.

The work as a shoe polisher in the area of 'Olympia', the central market in the city, is very hard work. All people look down upon them as the "rubbish of the community". The children are always chased away so they have almost no place to polish the shoes of passengers. As they ask people questions, and talk to them, they polish their shoes.

The security men always hit or chase these children away and many jobless young men try to take some money from these boys since they are smaller and weaker than others. The police, the security men and those who work in the central market – nobody likes the presence of these children and their work of shoe polishing boys.

The two little brothers of Merdeka feel secure when he is protecting them. He has the responsibility to take care of them when they are with him and it is a big responsibility to save some money to give it to his mother in addition to his own food and clothing.

He has his three meals per day in the central market. He sleeps in the corridor of the street after all the security men are sleeping, or he sleeps in a quiet place

somewhere which is not controlled by the security men. All these places have no sanitary facilities.

The traditional counselling of the extended family

We experience a broken family in which the children do not have any external or internal safety. This is unusual, as for Batak families these virtues are of the highest value. The belonging to a clan ("marga") and to a closer family is basic for the existence of humans. The "Adat Batak", comprising all the organisation, orders and customs of life, are grounded in inheritance, familial bonds and the observance of traditions. Through "adat Batak" relations, roles and behaviour is regulated.

Each clan originates in a certain village – until today they have the names of their villages. So you can find out easily where somebody comes from. Families and clans form a tribe, tribes form the different Batak peoples, e.g. the Toba, the Karo Batak, the Simalungun, with their own languages and dialects. When two Bataks are meeting somewhere and do not know each other their first question is to which family they belong to. It is important to know that for defining the family relations. Through these relations the behaviour between persons is defined, which is regulated by a complex system of honouring family members through placing them into higher or lower ranks.

The whole family system which is the foundation of the Bataks does not function any more in the family of Merdeka. Through the uprooting of the traditions, through the very difficult working conditions of father and mother, through the poverty, through the individualisation of the family and the loss of the connections in the clan the parents and the children live in a "place of disorder". René Girard is talking of "loss of differentiation" in such situations and he states that this loss is causing violence, which explodes and finds victims. Here the whole family is a victim, especially Merdeka – he is the one who is the most distant from the family life.

There are several families and family members of the Sidabutar clan who live in Medan. They sense and see the difficult situation. Even in the present circumstances of being scattered around and living under the conditions in an urban surrounding they still feel their responsibility for Sidabutar, Sihombing, Merdeka and the other children. They can not withdraw from the responsibility for their relatives. But how can they take care?

The families of the clan belong to a Christian congregation – like all others. Once a month the clan is meeting in an other family's house to have a community, to eat together, to discuss problems and to solve them. The representatives have invited the family of Merdeka for several times, but neither father or mothers came. Because they are not successful they are ashamed – and therefore they do not dare to show up.

Now the elders of the clan have decided to invite the clan into the house of Sidabutar. Such a decision is appropriate, it is an honour for Sidabutar and the whole family to have the members of the clan in their own house. Through this invitation respect and helpfulness is being expressed.

Sidabutar will cook a meal for this meeting, Sihombing will be present. During the meeting the elders of the clan (three representatives of the "marga") will start

talking to Sihombing and Sidabutar after the meal. They will explain that they have heard about the situation of the family, they will mention the drunkenness of Sihombing and that he is not taking care properly for his wife and children. They will express their sorrows that Merdeka is not living at home and visiting school. They will urge to live a good family life and to stay together and they will offer help. They will say that the most important thing is to renew the contacts with the other families and members of the clan and to come to the regular meetings. There could be some financial help, but first they have to change their conduct.

After this speech of the elders the other women and men may talk too. They will confirm the words of the elders and relate to the difficult situation of the family. But they will say that they have already helped people in similar difficulties. After all these talking Sihombing and Sidabutar will thank them for theses words and promise to change. At the end of the day they will sing and pray.

This visit in the house of Sidabutar is a new beginning of family relations. And the visits will be repeated again and again. The members of the clan will continue asking themselves how the family of Sidabutar is doing and what they can do for them. Sidabutar and Sihombing have to show again and again what they have done to change their situation and where they need help.

Help and counselling is not happening on an individual level but in the family with very clear presuppositions which are helpful since centuries. In the Batak tradition there are methods of a "family therapy" – or with other words: there is counsel for people in need which is conducted by rules and methods. But this help for families by families is no longer enough in a setting where the traditional rural structures have broken down and the people live without material and mental insecurity. This situation is violence in itself and is producing additional violence.

Merdeka who is living on the streets because he has left home needs help for himself and he needs help for going back to his family. And his fate is similar to thousands of other street children in Medan and millions around the world.

Organised attempts of counselling to street children in Medan

The YMCA of Medan has started to develop a programme for support of the street children which now will be realised step by step if personal and financial means are sufficient. A student of theology started to get into contact with the children. That is quite a time consuming endeavour and therefore he has to pause with his studies. But he is sure that the experiences with the kids will help him in his ministry. For him it is his calling to do the work with the children. He gets a little payment by YMCA. The student goes every day to “Olympia”, the central market – in bad clothes as if he would live on the streets too. He spends there also many nights. He gets to know the attitudes of the people against these children and others who are completely ‘down’. He experiences the violence of the businessmen, the dealers, the security men and police on his own body. After living this way for several weeks he got some contacts to the group of shoe polishers to which Merdeka is belonging to. First they watched him very suspiciously, several times he was beaten by these children, but then they realised that he did not want to harm them. He never uncovered his real identity to them and he never told that he wanted to help them. First he wants to be with them, talk to them and to get to know them in their daily life – and express to them that he comes as a fellow human and not as a person who want to use or to exploit them.

The workers and representatives of the YMCA plan further steps: They have started to look out for a room, where these kids can come and meet if they want. This room shall be a shelter for them. They might use it to rest, to relax and talk to others. From there the next step could be to offer some counselling in this room. The purpose is to rehabilitate them into society and that means into their family, to offer them some work for earning a little money to educate them for finding a job. Because for many jobs the English language is required they plan to offer a programme in learning English. But all these plans are not in work by now but they show the direction. The overall purpose is to convey to these boys that they have dignity and rights. They must not become objects again, even if objects of helping agencies or families. The YMCA therefore is engaged in congregations, administrations and in other institutions to ensure that street children are not rubbish, but a part of society and symptoms of an unjust social structure.

Final comments

Support for Merdeka and other youngsters like him can only be granted seeing the context of the Indonesian society and the urban setting with broken traditions and the unstable social and economical structures. All these problems bear a huge potential of violence very soon. After the presentation of this case in the summer of 1997 riots broke out in Indonesia. The first month of 1998 were full of rebelling students, burning stores, demolition of cars and killing of people. It is not hard to imagine that for youth like Merdeka it needs only a little cause to join in such violence. What do they loose if they are in a shouting and violent crowd? The President of Indonesia had to resign due to these riots. Do the politicians and the society build up new structures which help all the “Merdekas” do survive easier?

Hannelore Deichmann *Germany, 2003*

"Paradise lost"

A case-study in marriage counselling from Germany

source: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling No 11, 2003; pp 26-28

In 1999 a couple, Mr. A. and Mrs. A., showed up at our counselling centre because of problems in their marriage relationship. They were facing the question of separating, while they were also wondering, whether it still could make sense to go on with their marriage. At that time Mrs. A. was 38 and Mr. A. 40 years of age and they had 3 children, aged 10, 8 and 5 years.

Mr. A had registered the couple for counselling and for the first session they both came together. Both came across as rather burdened. Mr. A. started by explaining why he would need help. His wife would be 'swamped' with the housework and the 3 children and she were very changed the last to years. She would lack almost any drive, were not able to manage the household and the older children had started to take the major share of the work. At some days Mrs. A. would not even get up from bed any more. When he were at home he would try to fight most of the untidiness, but he would not always succeed, since he were working abroad for longer periods. His wife were seeing their family doctor because of all this, but there had not been any improvement. The mood in the family had changed to lugubrious, with almost no noticeable friendliness among each other any more. This time soon after his coming back from abroad the quarrelling had started, with no amelioration in the meantime.

In the first session Mrs. A. was barely joining the talks, giving answers when asked only monosyllabically and scantily. Mr. A. stated that here would be only 2 possibilities left, as to his judgement: that either his wife would seek hospitalisation and that she would care for getting better again, in order to gain a 'normal' state again – or that he would separate. Mrs. A. came across as still and reserved, but her eyes were vividly interested. She was looking at me oftentimes and reacted with facial expressions, but not verbally. Mr. A. stated again that he would be convinced that his wife would suffer from depression worth calling for treatment. Since, at the end of the first session, not all anamnesis information was given, we scheduled another session for orientation. The next session Mr. A. was dominating the course of the talk, too, again sticking to his diagnosis of depression. I told him, that there might be a chance for a diagnosis like that, but that this would have to be inquired precisely and then diagnosed, since depressions would not show standardized symptoms, and besides, that each treatment would have to be defined according to the individual patient. When I explained further information about depression, Mrs. A. was looking at me every once in a while and smil-

ing. At the end of this session we agreed that we would schedule 6 sessions for the beginning, i.e. one more in the same setting, then two sessions for each single partner, and a final session with both partners again. They could also agree that for the time being they would not decide on the question of separating or not. In the following session with both partners we were looking at concrete situations, when conflicts used to arise. In every day life there were repeated difficulties in communicating with each other, always ending with mutual and personal degradations. Mr. A. was blaming his wife for being lazy, while she was blaming him for being irresponsible. These fightings used to escalate constantly, always ending up in frosty silence.

For a one-on-one session I first invited Mrs. A. Even now she was rather reserved, answering just shortly to my questions. I let her describe her present state. Mrs. A. was characterizing herself as being rather prone to access things, also being very sociable. Her condition had changed, after she had joined her husband on a trip to X-land 2 years ago. She said all had changed since then. A despair and sadness would be covering her up like a dark shade. On the one hand she would long for him once he were abroad. She always would be looking forward to seeing him return. But in the other hand, when he arrive, she would be paralysed. She would be blocked completely. She then would suffer from a kind of trepidation she could not describe. We agreed to take a closer look to what had happened during that journey.

When she came back to X-land again for the first time after the birth of their youngest child, she was appealed by the fact, that they had built a huge hotel complex at the very place where there had been pure and untouched nature before. Vast areas had been stubbed and cleared and oil pipelines had been built through the jungle. And her husband had become an associate partner of the company being in charge of all that.

It had been in X-land 15 years ago where they had first met each other. She had been a tour-guide there, he had been working as development aid volunteer. They both shared the enormous fascination by the beauty and the richness of nature in that country. They married 2 years after they got to know each other and kept on living in X-land at first. Later Mrs. A's mother fell seriously sick about the time, when the oldest child had to attend school. So for both of these reasons they decided to move back to Germany. Mr. A. got a job with an international company that was running projects in South America. Mrs. A. gave up her professional life in favour of taking care of the family. Shortly after she delivered her third baby, Mr. A. went back to X-land for working there about 3 to 5 months, coming home for one month after that. Financially the family was doing very fine. They were living in a family-house of their own, and Mrs. A. built up a larger circle of friends through the children. She was describing her family situation to be very satisfying up to that point. Since their vacation 2 years ago, however, she was experiencing an emotional change towards her husband. She said that from that time on she was sensing a gap between each other. Already when they were on that trip, they were quarrelling a lot. He was blaming her to be a romanticist of the nature, living a luxury life at the cost of others, whereas he would be adapting himself to realistic conditions of the economy as well as to requirements of the present times.

In the one-to-one sessions with Mr. A. he told me that he, too, had stated a change in their relationship during that journey with his woman. He had been very annoyed at how little she could share his happiness about his successes. He had been

putting in a lot of working efforts to provide financial security for his family, what was meant to be a compensation for the fact, that he could not be with his family for so often. He had intended to surprise his wife by presenting the completed and well functioning hotel-complex to her, with some plans even to enlarge it. He had had a lot of toil to become an associate in the company. In the course of the one-to-one-session further details of Mr. A.'s life's history came up: he had grown up as the only child in the family, he had had to show lots of achievements in order to gain appreciation. And now he was expecting to get this appreciation from his wife, too. He had an inner picture depicting his share to family life: if he were not able to be at home so often, then at least he wanted to work for the financial security of the family. Usually after a while of staying in X-land he would be longing for his family. When flying home he would be looking forward to experiencing his family again and to seeing how much they would be glad to see him return.

But at his last visits home he rather experienced rejection. He had been sensing a lot of disappointment, angriness and rage. Even after some one or two days he and his wife just would have been quarrelling or sitting in hostile silence to each other. So sometimes he would have been glad, when he could leave again. This would make him helpless and desperate.

In the next session with both partners we agreed on at first looking out for themes and fields being vital to each one of them. In order to do so I asked them to write down five such topics. Both agreed on the desire, that the family should be doing fine. This included pointing out that it would be important to them that the children should be well cared for as well as that the emotional well-being of the partner should be reassured. Both of them mutually were wishing that the partner might be well. Besides this both were wishing to show responsibility for and to contribute to the preservation and integrity of nature. They also stated the importance of taking care well of their circle of friends. When comparing their 'five points' and detecting the high rate of agreement among them it became obvious how their outer attitude towards each other changed. They seemed to me not to be so much rejecting in their body scheme and their sound of voices any more.

Our contract for the next two sessions was to focus on these common wishes, and not to centre on the disturbances. In order to do so they agreed on initially delaying the decision about separating or not for another eight weeks. The couple learned about constructive techniques of communication, which they applied during the next weeks.

When we were working on the issue "what is each one doing so that the family is doing well?" we stated very clearly what each one should contribute to this and what expectations towards the partner each one would have. Also when we were working at the issue "what is each one doing in order to make the partner feel fine in the relationship?" it become obvious how much motivation both had to save and refresh the relationship. In these sessions it emerged that Mrs. A. did not expect her husband to earn much money for her. Instead, she wanted to take her share of a common financial responsibility, and she wanted both of them to take a common responsibility for the protection of life and nature.

At this point again it became clear that Mrs. A. reacted to the destruction of the nature with heavy mourning and angriness, that she directed towards her husband. Mr. A. stated that this point did not attract his attention any more when planning the projects, because he had concentrated much more on the financial and technical realisation. When his wife were naming this point, he would have been realising the extend of the destruction for the first time. He on his side did not perceive

it so far. He started to realize the conflict and to watch out more carefully for his emotional responses. At his point we stopped and we started to discuss strategies of conflict management.

In the next sessions we were gathering ideas for conflict solution. Mr. A. became very active in that, since he had a great interest in change. He said that he had a great concern not to enlarge the damages any more (which would happen if the next steps of the projects would follow). He was very decided to get out of this work.

They started asking for legal advice that could help him find a way to get out of the project. They both were clearly envisioning that all this would come along with definitely changed financial conditions. And both could well agree with that. Finally both got a chance to work in an environmental program where they could built up a camp in the jungle providing tourists with a soft way for experiencing the nature, and providing a wildlife resort for endangered species at the same time. Both partners were very engaged working at the construction of this solution. During these sessions Mr. A. did not dominate the course any more. Mrs. A. contributed a lot of plans and ideas where her experience and information about the country could come into its own. Again and again she let us know, that she was concerned about the preservation of the resources of nature, and not its destruction, and how much she was suffering from experiencing this destruction when happening. Over and over again she offered her support to her husband at his various attempts, toeing the line together with him to share the financial risks, too.

In these sessions Mr. A. gave the impression to be obviously relaxed. He accepted to be inspired by some ideas of his wife for the concretion of his ideas.

The counselling ended after eight weeks when Mr. A. had to fly to X-land again. Meanwhile both partners had developed some good ways of communicating again. My last information (dating from summer 2000): the whole family is spending the summer vacations in X-land. Both partners are much engaged in a research project, dealing with the collection of treasures of wisdom of the indigenous people.

Translated by Klaus Temme

Charles K. Konadu *Ghana, 2003*

Everyday Life of a Poor Person in my Congregation (Ghana)

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Introduction

The following is an account of an individual person in my congregation at La, a suburb of Accra, regarding her economic situation. This factual account is true, however, for confidentiality, names are changed in the presentation. The background of the lady is given; migration to Accra to join the uncle is told; vocational training, employment , marriage and family life are shared here, church life and economic struggles are presented. Some Pastoral concerns are raised from her story and finally some Ghanaian and traditional practices are noted.

Background

Dufie, aged 45 years, is an Ashanti. Her Village is about 300km from Accra and 30km from Kumasi the principal city of Ashanti. Dufie comes from a Polygamous family. Both parents are dead now but at a period the father lived with two wives at the same time together, he had 13 children. Dufie's mother had 4 children and she is the first child. The average educational level for all the children was the Middle School Leaving Certificate (MSLC). Both parents were Cocoa Farmers and the MSLC was the limit the father could give to his children. Therefore after Dufie's completion of the BECE the mother requested her brother who worked as a cook in a firm at Accra to help her. In 1972 Dufie joined the uncle in Accra.

Dufie with uncle

Dufie joined the uncle when she was 16 years old. At that time the uncle had a wife and four children. The oldest child was 10 years and the youngest 3 years. In addition to his work as a cook the uncle had a Provision store. Before Dufie came the wife handled the store. She also sold other food items in front of the store. Dufie started a vocational training school in typing and secretarial duties in her first year in Accra. In addition she helped in the store and almost daily, early in the morning, go to the general market to buy foodstuff for the uncle's wife to sell. The uncle had a two-roomed living accommodation. Dufie therefore slept in the windowless wooden provision store. This arrangement served at least two pur-

poses: security for the items in the store and accommodation for her. The uncle and wife however had two major concerns with Dufie: Supposed pilfering and supposed interest in men. He would "patrol" around the wooden structure to check if any young men would go into the store at night. The arrangement to stay with Dufie was that Dufie's mother could take care of the vocational training, and other related needs like clothing and monthly pocket money. Regular money was monthly sent to the uncle for her. Often misunderstanding will result regarding the money sent. Mistrust also existed between her and the uncle's wife.

The first work

The vocational training took three years. She got her first job, which she is still with it, with one of the Ministries. She was employed as a typist. Conventionally in Ghana, one's first salary is given to the guardian or parents. It is a sign of respect and gratefulness. The money is usually given back to the young person. In the case of Dufie she feared that the uncle would not give the money back to her. She refused to present it to him. That was the beginning and end of their relationship. It brought a huge confrontation. In the heat of verbal exchanges the uncle slapped Dufie. She reasoned that she could handle her life and started to act independently. The uncle and wife were highly uncomfortable with this "grown" woman and therefore demanded that she found her own living accommodation. The intervention of the mother and others could not restore the relationship. She got a room nearby and almost immediately met the preset husband. They started living together without going through the normal marriage ritual.

Family life

In 1981 they had their first child, Kwame. The husband worked with a Distillery but lost the job in 1982. After a year without work the husband left Accra for Kumasi in search of employment. The case of infant Kwame became a bit difficult for her. She therefore took the child to the mother at the village. She sent regular support to the mother for the upkeep of Kwame. Unfortunately after a year with the grandmother Dufie had to go back for Kwame after a heavy fall from a high table. He was hospitalised for some weeks but no serious damage was detected then.

After almost 2 years fruitless search for work in Kumasi the husband, after some persuasion joined the wife in Accra. For almost a year Dufie worked to support the family. Yaw, the second child came a year after the husband came back.

The husband

Mr. Aboagye is 51 years old and he is currently working as a security personnel of a company. He has been with this company for about 15 years. His present salary is 290,000 (a little over US$ 40.00). He contributes 100,000 (US$ 15) a month to support the family. He is reserved and leaves the running of the home to Dufie. She takes major decisions about the children and the family welfare. He is not interested in religion. He reasons that the work does not give him the freedom to worship since he works 7 days a week and seldom gets a leave. Much of his money goes into alcohol. He contributes virtually nothing to the children's educa-

tion.

The children

Kwame is 19 years old and he is in the second year at the Senior Secondary School. The fall at age two seems to have affected him a bit. Re has frequent headache. He visits the doctor often. Though he is in a boarding institution he comes home to see the doctor at least 2 times during each term. He is a bit slow in learning and has a poor reading comprehension. Re is however a keen football fan.

Yaw has just finished the Junior Secondary School (JSS) and he is 4 years younger than Kwame. He is the very opposite of Kwame. Re is very outgoing and hardly stays at home. The mother sees him to be very stubborn boy. His Sunday school teachers confirm that assertion. About two months ago he contracted typhoid fever and a lot of money was spent on the cure.

Living arrangement

Dufie, the husband and two children live in a one-room accommodation in a compound house with other six families. They share the following with the other families; bathroom, piped water on compound and pit toilet on compound. They have all their property in that single room. They cook in front of the room.

Dufie's religious involvement

She got interested in Christianity in 1981 and joined the Methodist Church at La. She had a conversion experience in 1982 and got confirmed. Currently she's a lay reader, a Singing Band member and also a member of the Women's Fellowship. She helps at the vestry every Sunday to count the collection money and also serve refreshments to visiting preachers. She confesses that her trust in the Lord has greatly sustained her.

Dufies surviving strategies

Dufie's current salary is 350,000 (about US$ 50). She usually uses the whole amount to buy provisions to sell. They feed on the profit. The husband and children often help in the selling. They close sales by mid-night everyday. The monthly rent is 35,000 and they spend 40,000 on utilities. The JSS fees per term is about 300,000 but she spends about 700,000 on him each term (medical bills, visits, pocket money and others). The JSS boy spends about 3,000 a day on lunch and transportation. Her lunch and transport amount to 80,000. Average expenditure on other things like funeral donations, tithe, gifts, clothes and others is about 80,000 a month. The total monthly expenditure is about 510,000 (U$ 73). She does some borrowing to keep the head up. Currently she is owing a total of over 750,000 (a little over hundred dollars)

Some memories

She feels that if she had got an earlier better education it could have helped in her present condition. She has been very grateful to the mother but feels some bitterness towards the uncle and the wife. Her marriage and family life have not been what she anticipated hut she believes that things could be better. She hopes that the husband will turn to God. Her prayer is that the children turn out to be useful in the future. She prays that they could study outside Ghana. Her major concern is to care for the children. She wished that she could have enough capital to expand her trading and pay off the debt. The husband often dreams about farming and she prays that they get enough money to settle in the village to raise animals (sheep, goats) and other crops.

Areas of pastoral concern

- The need for the husband's involvement in the daily life of the family and some of his moral issues
- The eldest son's health situation and the need to be more assertive
- The need for self-discipline for the younger child
- How to service her debt and how to improve herself at work
- The uncle is dead – but the wife is alive. How does she deal with the bitterness?

Derrick Lwekika *Tanzania, 2003*

The challenge of poverty

The case of Kokulinda, Tanzania

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Twelve years old Kokulinda and her two younger brothers, Tayebwa and Ngonzi, aged 10 and 8 respectively, are orphans whose poor parents died of AIDS few years ago.

The orphans' relatives are poor, too. They live in a house that is almost falling down. All go to school at the same time. Kokulinda, Tayebwa and Ngonzi are in Std.V, III and II respectively. Kokulinda is the breadwinner of the three. She carries out casual and manual labour on their small plot of the family field (Shamba) before and after school lessons. All three work on their neighbors' fields during weekends and holidays to get food and little money to buy daily necessities like soap, kerosene, salt, and sugar. They have nothing to produce and sell for accessibility to cash returns. Kokulinda looks after her younger brothers, cooks food, fetches water and cleans the house. Kokulinda must toil and work hard as a mother of the two brothers to support them and herself.

It is here where we meet a situation of a man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fallen into the hands of robbers and left half dead! Who comes to his rescue? How does one behave as a "Good Samaritan"? Is it good enough one standing in a pulpit every Sunday and preach "peace be upon you" to a multitude of worshippers with empty stomachs living in misery, all types of dehumanization and abuse and want; or preach blessings of Jesus that he does not want to part with them under the state of starvation lest they die on the way? (Mathew 15:32) How does one go about it?

The church is challenged to respond to the consequences of poverty which produce deep physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual disruption in peoples' lives and well-being; and to tackle the root causes of poverty through advocacy, education, counselling and development projects. Investment in education is investing in human development, which has a multiplier effect.

We as counsellors are in difficult and problematic field. What we try to do to our best is to hear the command of Jesus Christ: "Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17 and John 4:1-30).

What is needed?

1. Availability

Jesus was there as the Samaritan woman came to fetch water at the well. Just to be there. The presence matters a lot. To share ideas and exchange views in a lovely and humble way, with shaking hands and hugging is not escapable. Listening, supporting, sympathizing and immediacy arc indispensable by carrying out duties. Our experience is often to postpone the vacations and off-days, because they need us – a person can take up to 5 to 6 hours and some even a whole day. This includes house visitation, e.g. the patient at home. Are we available for others?

2. Acceptability

Acceptance led to intimate direct conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. To be there and let the person feel being wanted, worthy and accepted as to be able to accept his/her own situation. The fact that there are times when we have to accept the situation which can not be changed – short cuts do not help at all. We use the text of Job of the Bible: „In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrong " (Job 1:22)

3. Alleviation

Jesus tried and succeeded to have dealings with Samaritans in order to alleviate the problem of racism between the Jews and Samaritans. To he there should not be a part of the problem or prolong it. Through discussing together we try to interpret the situation with an aim of leading the client to see the possible ways which may lead to a sound recovery and permanent solution.

George Melel *India/Germany, 2003*

A Tamil asylum-seeker and his fate in Germany today

A case study

source (printed German version): Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung No 11, 2003; pp 38-39

Siva is born in a Hindu family in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He is 43 years old. Siva comes from a middle class family. He has 3 brothers and 2 sisters. His father was working as a clerk in the government office. Being the oldest in the family, Siva has the responsibility to take care of his family members.

The political problem started when he just left the High School. He wanted to attend the College. Since there were limited seats allotted for Tamil students he could not be admitted in the College. Therefore, he was attending a professional School. Being a devoted Hindu, he did not like to tight in the "Tamil Tigers" (liberation fighters) even though the "Tigers" wanted to recruit him in their army. It was at that time he got the news that some of his friends were preparing to leave the country to Europe for fear of their lives. Many young people heard the story that in die west people arc living in economic prosperity and abundance of wealth. And it is easy to find a job and earn some money and support the family in Sri. Lanka.

Siva shared his plan with his family and his father had to somehow find the source of payment to the agent. Siva's father had to sell his property and borrow some additional amount to make it two lakhs of rupees (Rs. 200,000) so that he could leave the country with his friends for a better future without any delay. The selling of their fruitful land has really affected their source of income. However, the family stood together during this hard days thinking that Siva can help them in buying a better house and bigger land when he starts earning in Germany. Their family hardships would stand only for a short while. Even the sisters were dreaming of better education and rich husbands and making their future brighter. The brothers also dreamed of getting a degree and find a well-paid job in Europe or elsewhere with the help of their elder brother.

Siva left on 20th of June 1983 with five of his friends through different countries with great hardships. On the way, a gangster in Eastern Europe raped one of them. As soon as they arrived in West Berlin the young people were thrilled to see a modern city with all its glamour and prosperity. They thought their dream came true. They were sent to different refugees camps.

The reality hit them after 5 months of stay and German legal procedures. Siva and

his friends were eager to start working so that they could pay back their debts very soon. But he came to know that he was not allowed to work until his case is decided in the court. In reality it may need at least two years or more. He was not allowed to travel anywhere except in his own city. He was to stay in a refugee camp in Krefeld, where there were 230 other refugees living and sharing the common kitchen and bathrooms. He had to share his room with another Tamil man whom he had never seen before. All other friends were sent to different cities and he finally felt lonely and empty. In order to pass the time he started playing cards and started drinking alcohol so that he could forget his pain and loneliness. He has never touched alcohol before in his life. But now, Siva spent his monthly allowance, which he got from the government, with alcohol drinks and gambling.

In the beginning he used to send at least 3 letters home. But later he lost interest in writing to them because he was not able to send any money to them. His father often reminded the education of his brothers and soon coming marriages of his sisters who were ready to be married according to the Hindu tradition of the family. His father also reminded him in his letters of the exorbitant interest he had to pay for the village money lender, who is known for his cruelty, if the clients delay to pay the money back. It was becoming too much for Siva when he thought about home. He simply tried to forget the wonderful time he had with his family in those days.

Siva married a girl contrary to the tradition of his culture, hoping to be able to improve his situation. This was not a good solution. He continued his alcohol consumption and became an addict.

His case was accepted finally, so that he could get a job at a restaurant. He worked for 10 years in the restaurant, which enabled him to support the family. In the meantime, his wife begot him 2 sons and a daughter. Until today he has not been capable of sending money to his family as he still lives in debt. Last year his father passed away due to a heart-attack. Both of his sisters haven't married yet although they have passed the optimal arc for matrimony. Two of his brothers joined the Tamilian Tigers, one of whom died in combat.

Due to all this stress, Siva became an alcoholic, which cost him his job. He is living in an economically poor condition. He has become a psychological wreck. In spite of having moved to Germany with hopes of leading a better and easier life, he has lost sight of his goals and his will to survive. He hasn't seen his parents and native land ever since.

Miklos Kocsev *Hungary, 2003*

Illness and unemployment

A verbatim from Hungary

source (printed German version): Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung No 11, 2003; pp 18-19

The pastor makes an appointment with Family X., since he wants to get to know all the parishioners of his parish. From his information he knows that the husband (M) and his Wife (F) are about 40 years of age, the couple having two children, aged 10 und 12. When the pastor arrives at their house he realizes that both adults are at home. Soon after saying 'hello' the conversation starts like this:

M. 1: It is nice that you came for a visit. We had a good contact to your predecessor, too. Specially, when I was in hospital and in the following time he used to come and visit.

F. 1: Oh yes, during that time he was here almost every week.

P. 1: If I got it right, then you were sick and are on the way of convalescence now.

M. 2: I have some heart-problems, and I still have to be away sick. I should have surgery, but at the moment the doctors won't dare this. Now I got a new medication.

F. 2: I am very strained how it will work. Sometimes it helps, sometimes not. Often he is really sick. He then even doesn't have the strength to ride a bicycle.

P. 2: You must have gone through a lot during this disease, isn't it?

M. 3: Yes, that's what it is. The doctors first checked on my nerves. They told me: "you overexcite too much!" But I knew that it was something else. And then I got this heart attack.

F. 3: Partially the doctors were right!

P. 3: You were worrying about all this a lot, did you?

M. 4: Yes, and it started much earlier, - when my mother celebrated her birthday. Just then they told me that I was laid off.

F. 4: I remember the moment you came home. The way you looked, really scared me. Just said a few words: I got fired, too.

P. 4: That was a striking blow.

M. 5: Almost for 20 years I had been working with this company, almost 20 years. At first the company was performing well, but then the trouble started. I told the leading officers, that we did not perform well enough.

F. 5: One could tell from the payments, too.

M. 6: I predicted the troubles – I was a member of the leading staff for 4 years. We spent too much money on just luxurious representation, buying expensive cars for the executives and so on... And then this memorable day came on, when I was laid off…

P. 5: I can see how much all this is still upsetting you once you start thinking of it.

M. 5: And I have to think of it all the time. How often did I tell that it cannot go on this way! Since then my doctor keeps reminding me to take care of my heart. I also have to watch out for my emotions, otherwise something worse might happen. See, again I started talking about it. It is not so easy to get over it.

P. 6: Perhaps it helps when we talk about it.

F. 6: He always thinks that everybody is looking at him. People ask us "How do you do?" – and we cannot really answer, besides "fine".

M. 8: It is like people are avoiding me. But after the surgery I will face them more courageously again and talk to them. – But first the surgery!

P. 7: You are put to the touch hardly, isn't it?

M. 9: Yes, sometimes a have a very bad feeling. But if he up there requires me, then I am not afraid.

P. 8: I don't know whether it's right what you say. Since you have a family, too.

M. 10: Yes, imagining to leave my wife and my children behind, that scares me. We are so young, still. Even the children. We had to wait for the first baby for such a long time… and now comes the surgery…

P. 9: Do you think that you will be able to work again after that?

M. 11: I don't know, perhaps in a part-time-job… right mow my wife is working.

P. 10: And here at home, is everything all right?

F. 7: Well, it has to, doesn't it? I work only for half a day.

M. 12: Yes, my salary dropped by 25% since my disease started. Intentionally or unintentionally, it is a matter of fact now. Either your heart or unemployment. Yet for the children it would be good to be able to attend school for some more time.

F. 8: Sitting at home all day long, that matters, too. In former times I took care of a lot of things – now he has to do that.

P. 11: Surely, that must be hard.

M. 13: A while ago one member of our presbytery asked me, whether I would put the blame on God for all this. No, no, it's men who cause things like this – they act and they are causing it. That is the risk in a life full of race.

P. 12: I got the feeling, that you feel to be at life's mercy, don't you? I have the same feeling, too. But it is good, if the two of you can stick it out together. I will come back soon to see you again.

Adrian Korczago *Poland, 2003*

Call to a parishioner 'on the dole'

A verbatim from Poland

source (printed German version): Interkulturelle Seelsorge und Beratung No 11, 2003; p 19

Dr. Korczago is a Lutheran parish minister in a rural parish, a little south of the coal-mining district of Kattowice in southern Poland.

Cl = parish member; P = pastor.

Cl 1: Did you hear the latest news? It is getting worse and worse in our country!

P 1: Well, if you want me to be honest, I do not share your opinion, especially not in regard with our area here around! Many people are renewing their houses and flats, are buying new cars, and are travelling for vacation. As far as I know this is the same in your family, isn't it?

Cl 2: It used to be… It is only past any more by today. It is all over. One accident, and my life has ended!

P 2: You have the feeling that the accident made all the perspectives of your future tumble down and that your horizon is very limited now?

Cl 3: Horizon, perspectives… I am some creature that is of no use any more.

P 3: ...??

Cl 4: Well, I got fired! Quite a while ago I fell ill. So my doc wrote to my company that I couldn't work for some time. And since my illness went on, he had to write this again and again. One day they told me: "Bye, bye, Mr. X!" – Anyway, one day soon our pit will crash anyway… But in that case I would have got some severance payment. I could have repaid the credit, that I raised to renovate our house. But now I became redundant and I am sitting here in my awfully bad luck.

P 4: Are you still on the dole?

Cl 5: No, I am getting not a single penny... only in my dreams! But moreover: I even lost any dreams!

P 5: As far as I know you, you have always been a skilled craftsman, not only with the work down in the pit, also in the house construction business, You have been very active when we rebuilt our church building, and the other

men appreciated the quality of your work. – I understand that your situation is very hard – but why all this pessimism?

Cl 6: After I was laid off from the pit, I found some jobs – here and there. But finally, this accident happened, right in front of my house – and this really changed everything.

P 6: Did you apply for your pension?

Cl 7: Of course I did. They checked my application, and at first the commission sorted me into 'Group 3'. But when they checked on all the specifications, they found out, that my life's working time was to short to be eligible for a pension at all. All that is left to me is to be the 'char'! And my wife is out now for work! We are vegetating, that's what it is! – What will happen once the children will start attending school? – It's better not to start thinking about it at all! – If we wouldn't have our parents to support us, we would be stony-broke.

P 7: Did you try to get some retraining?

Cl 8: I don't know any other kind of work. And to work at a construction site, well everybody would be afraid of that. If some accident would happen there, then they would have to pay.

P 8: It is a pity that you have lost all your courage. All the time before, I have always admired your courage! To be honest, right at the moment I do not know at all how I can help you.

Translated by Klaus Temme

Appendix 1:

The articles of part 1 to part 4, listed with their "topics"

Abbreviation: pcc = pastoral care and counselling

Part 1

discovery of "intercultural factors" in pcc / pcc in the context of political changes / difficulties of intercultural communication / founding of the SIPCC:

K. Temme / H. Weiß, Germany 1996: Reviewing the journey. The "Intercultural Seminars" 1986 to 1995.

Part 2 A

definition of "intercultural pcc" / methodological questions / intercultural communication:

U. Atkins / K. Federschmidt, Germany 1996: Introduction to the first volume of "Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling"

experiences with "intercultural pcc" / methodological questions / the hermeneutics of intercultural pcc / cultural concepts of person – the individual and society / the issue of religion in intercultural pcc:

K. Federschmidt, Germany 1997: Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counselling. Reflections on the background of the Intercultural Seminars in 1995 and 1996

Part 2 B

cultural concept of illness and healing / miracle and healing / popular religiosity / Buddhism:

K. Chuengsatiansup, Thailand 1996: Buddhism, illness, and healing. A comparative review of textual and popular Buddhism

rites of sacrifice in religions / religious sacrifice and human violence / Christianity and sacrifice or violence / sacrifice vs. offering / the theory of Rene Girard:

R. Schwager, Austria 1998: The role of sacrifice in a violent world. Insights into the concepts of sacrifice in the religions and in christology according to René Girard

creating community through pastoral care / church as divided community / theology of liberation and political theology / the human experience of suffering:

J. Farris, Brazil 2000 : Faith and community. Reflections on fragmentation, suffering, and Gospel

popular religiosity in Brazil / influence of Pentecostalism and "new religious movements" / pastoral challenges for the Protestant Churches in Brazil:

L. Silveira Campos, Brazil 2001: New religious movements and traditional Protestantism in Brazil

human dignity and contempt / self-hatred and self-denigration / the task of integrating the abjected within oneself / Reflections on Genesis 3 and 4:

F. Ward, Great Britain 2001: Beneath contempt. Dignity, contempt, and expulsion

theological anthropology / hermeneutics of pcc / from individualistic to a systemic understanding of pcc / methods of cultural analysis / a model for practising intercultural pcc / African spirituality:

D. Louw , South Africa 2001: Dignity and pneuma. Social-cultural analysis in pastoral care and counselling

Part 2 C

cultural limitations of "non-directive" counselling / person and self in Hindu religious setting / the individual within the joint family / relationship between counsellee and counsellor in Indian setting:

N. Arles, India 1998: Counselling in the Indian context. Problems encountered in application of Western (especially non-directive) models of counselling

counselling in the Filipino context / popular images and story-telling as a tool for couselling / counselling to political prisoners:

E. Decenteceo, Philippines 1996: "Burden-Bearing" as a metaphor for counselling. Experiences from the Philippines

concepts of culture in social sciences and in family therapy / a narrative and constructionist approach to intercultural pcc / the attitude of "not knowing" as a prerequisite in intercultural encounter:

J. Müller , South Africa 1997: Intercultural exchange. A discovery of being different

the unconsciousness in groups / revealing the 'unknown' in group behaviour:

J. Foskett, Great Britain 1997: The 'unknown' in intercultural communication

remembrance in the shadow of the Holocaust-experience / the written word as a symbol for life / writing as (a) testifying, (b) prophetic formula and (c) a liturgy of memory / the interconnection of writing, memory, and salvation:

J. Leociak, Poland 1997: Tradition as a dialogue between generations – in the perspective of the Holocaust experiences

pcc in a context of economic oppression / the public dimension of pcc / pastoral theology and human sciences:

R. Sathler-Rosa, Brazil 2000: Pastoral action in a context of economic slavery and cultural apathy

pcc in a context of economic poverty / rituals in pcc / healing and community / questioning "pathogenic structures" / pcc in Brazil:

L. Hoch, Brazil 2001: Healing as a task of pastoral care among the poor

pcc and the issues of the ecumenical movement / relation of pastoral care and pastoral action:

J. Beldermann, Germany 2004: Two pieces of work. A summary from United Evangelical Mission

Part 2 D

violence and sacrifice / violence against women / theories about violence / psycho-social problems of women / movements in India to overcome violence against women:

N. Arles, India 1998: Woman – the scapegoat. Experiences from India

patriarchal structures in family and society / theological aspects of mutuality / mutuality as an alternative way to stop sacrifice / the theory of Rene Girard:

U. Pfäfflin, Germany 1998: A walk in a rosebush. Violence and sacrifice in feminist intercultural perspective of pcc

study and work of women at a Methodist School of Theology / women in the Methodist Church in Brazil:

M. Souza Ribeiro, Brazil 2001: A chair for women's support

Part 2 E

tradition and modernisation in Indonesia / traditional concept of marriage / relationship between parents and children:

D. Susanto, Indonesia 1997: Family life in Indonesia between tradition and change

the impact of modernisation on the society of Papua New Guinea / cultural change and the loss of identity / modernisation/monetarisation and the loss of family values / marriage and divorce in Papua New Guinea:

G. Euling, Papua New Guinea 1997: The impact of westernisation and commerce on the family values in Papua New Guinea

traditional patrilineal and matrilineal family systems in Ghana / concept of marriage and family / polygamy / the effect of urbanisation on social values / pcc programs in Ghana:

Ch. Konadu, Ghana 1997: The effect of social change on the matrilineal system of the Ashantis of Ghana

violence in families / structure of family in Cameroon / problems of polygamy:

R. Zoé-Obianga, Cameroon 1998: Violence in the family. The polygamous family in Cameroon

economic problems of families in Brazil / poverty / family income:

D. Pinto de Castro, Brazil 2001: Understanding the Brazilian family

Part 3 A

changing society in Ghana / youth and marriage in Africa / urbanisation and migration / family planning / pcc programmes in Ghana:

Ch. Konadu, Ghana 1996: Pastoral care and counselling in Africa. The case of Ghana

African spirituality of community life / urbanisation and the fragmentation of life / re-building caring communities as a challenge for pcc:

D. Nwachuku, Nigeria 2000: Creating communities through pcc in the fragmentations of urban African life

Part 3 B

culture and religion in Asia / the concept of family and filial piety / the cultural concept of shame / poverty and injustice / models and challenges of pcc in Asia:

R. Solomon, Singapore 1996: Pastoral counselling in Asian context

contextualisation of pcc in Korea / issue of women's rights / the needs of childern and of old people in Korea:

S.-S. Lee / I.-S. You, Korea 1996: Pastoral care, healing and preaching of the Gospel. Report from a Korean parish

problems of urbanisation in India / tension between poor and rich / family relationships: the joint family / urbanisation and identity-crisis / migration:

N. Arles, India 2000: Living in differences and tensions of the self. Remarks on overt and covert tensions in urban societies in India

Part 3 C

relationship of religion, culture and society in Brazil / poverty, economy, capitalism / migration / rural workers' movements / pastoral challenges in Brazil:

J. Farris, Brazil 2001: Society and pastoral challenges in Brazil. Three short essays

Part 3 D

society in the Czech Republic / the work of church institutions in the Czech Republic / social work and Christian faith:

S. Bulíková, Czech Republic 2001: Restoring human dignity. Some remarks on the work of the SOS Centre of Diakonia in Prague, Czech Republic

Part 3 E

socio-economic situation in Papua New Guinea / problems of youth – education and employment / family:

A. Saiho, Papua New Guinea 2001: Social and economical problems affecting human dignity. Youth in Papua New Guinea

Part 4 A

violence against women / systemic understanding of care and counselling / methodology / the personal and the political in pcc:

U. Pfäfflin / A. Smith, Germany/USA 1996: Death and the maiden. The complexity of trauma and ways of healing – a challenge for pastoral care and counselling

slavery and racism / political concept of "integration" in the USA:

U. Beverly, USA 1997: The tradition of racism in the USA

the theory of Rene Girard / desire and "mimesis" as a source for violence / scapegoating in societies / the meaning of sacrifice:

H.-M. Gutmann, Germany 1998: The contagious effect of violence, the "making sacred" of the victim, and the enlightening power of the Gospel. Aspects of the theory of René Girard

pcc with incestuous and violent men / family violence / ways of "learning violence" / violence of men vs. violence of women / race and violence / power and love in pcc / responsibility vs. empathetic identification? / the theory of Rene Girard / towards a relational and ambigues image of God:

J. Poling, USA 1998: Sacred violence and family violence

violence in Papua New Guinea's society / reasons for violence / theological perspective on violence:

G. Euling, Papua New Guinea 1998: Violence and victims of violence. Experiences from Papua New Guinea

biblical aspects on violence / fundamental vs. contextual understanding of violence / a realistic and responsible use of violence / reduction of violence and reconciliation:

H. Ruddies, Germany 1998: Aspects of the Christian approach to violence in society. A systematic theological approach

Part 4 B

aspects and assesments of worldwide urbanisation / a structuralist (hermeneutical) "reading" of city structures / the task of the church in the city:

Wolfgang Grünberg, Germany 2000: City – living space and form of life

global urbanisation / problems for children and youth in cities / religions in cities / the task of the church in the urban context:

M. Mata, USA 2000: Reading from the urban text. Challenges and possibilities of diversity for pastoral care

theological method for an analysis of urban processes / problems of urbanisation in South Africa / responses of the church to urbanisation / pastoral practise and community-building in urban context:

St. de Beer, South Africa 2000: Nurturing and building community. The challenge of pcc in urban South Africa

Part 4 C

critical assessment of New Labour politics in Britain / "social exclusion" as a new analytical tool of social politics / employment or social welfare? / the concept of communitarism / the role of the church in Great Britain / a liberating theology:

E. Graham, Great Britain 2000: Globalisation, social exclusion and the politics of New Labour in Britain. How can this mean good news for the poor?

theological critique of "Free Market"-mentality / concepts of justice and solidarity:

J. M. Sung, Brazil 2001: Evil in the free market mentality

influence of economy on the social fabric / economic flexibility and personal insecurity / economic risk and corrosion of character / civil society and the "solidarity of the shaken":

Malcolm Brown, Great Britain 2001: Risk and reward. The changing economy and the social fabric

the characteristics of contemporary "globalisation" / chances and dangers in the globalisation / possibilities, motifs and actors to counter disastrous effects of globalisation:

M. Linz, Germany, 2003: Chances and dangers of the globalisation

central ideas of the "Social Market Economy" in post-war Germany / Social Market Economy as "programme for safeguarding freedom" / competition as a necessity for a humane economy / impact of globalisation on economy:

Th. Koester, Germany 2003: Money and humanity – how do they relate? Free competition as the basis for a humane economy in the age of globalisation

people in rural South India facing ecological problems:

S. Victus, India 2003: Ecological problems in rural Indian communities

economy vs. ecology in Brazil / theological aspects of ecology / ecology and the life-situation of poor people:

J. Farris, Brazil 2003 : Ecology, economy and theology in Brazil. Highlighted by a case-study

Part 4 D

mental illness and dignity / mental illness, religiosity, and art / report about an art-project in a psychiartric clinic in London / enhancing human dignity through pcc:

K. Greider, USA 2001: "Much madness is divinest sense". Meaning and ministry in mental illness

traditional culture and fertility-patterns in Nigeria / traditional and modern forms of maternal health care / challenges for pcc in Nigeria:

W. Kalu, Nigeria 2001: Human dignity for youth and women. Reproductive health care practices in Nigeria

health and social inclusion-exclusion / caring for individuals vs. caring for groups / pathologising of social diviancy / the system of "National Health Service" in Great Britain:

St. Bell, Great Britain 2001: Contribution of health to social inclusion

methodology of pcc / "re-authoring" the own story / constructing identity / racism in South Africa:

Julian Müller, South Africa 2001: Human dignity: A South African story

Appendix 2:

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