

**OUR QUEST FOR JUSTICE**

The Second Asian Justice and Peace Consultation  
Hong Kong, February 12-17, 1984

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**I. FOREWORD**

by Bishop Michael Bunluen Mansap

Former Philippine Senator José Diokno said during our recent Second Asian Justice and Peace Consultation: "Justice may be a myth in Asia. It is a myth, however, for which many Asians live — and often die."

The words sum up the reports and speeches heard during the consultation. Justice is so lightly regarded by the powerful in Asia that it is almost illusory or utopian to think it will ever be a reality. In the reports this was clear. The suffering of the poor has increased in every way during the five years since the First Asian Justice and Peace Consultation (Tokyo, 1979). Yet it was also clear that more and more Asians, including the poor, are taking the possibility of a just world seriously, and that many Asians are actually ready to die for it to be a reality.

The Church's Justice and Peace commissions are just beginning their work and admit they have accomplished little inside or outside the Church. Yet it is clear, too, that the great majority of them are certain about what they want to do, are well-staffed, dedicated and will be more effective in the years to come.

"Our Quest for Justice" was the theme of the Justice and Peace Consultation, Hong Kong, February 12-17, 1984. Representatives of

sixteen Justice and Peace commissions of Asia and Oceania, including twelve bishops, with observers from North America, and Cardinal Bernardin Gantin and Bishop Jan Schotte from the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, attended. All in all, there were forty-seven participants. A meeting of this kind, of so many Asian local Churches and countries, becomes a reality because of the long international co-operation of the episcopal conferences, assisted through the past ten years by the services of the FABC Office of Human Development.

The meeting was planned to be practical; that is, we tried to avoid lengthy analyses (economic or theological) and got down to the concrete problems of working for justice. In many ways we succeeded, but you can't keep fourteen bishops and nineteen priests too long away from the general and the abstract. Luckily for these purposes, we had excellent presentations by Senator José Diokno, Father Samuel Rayan and Bishop Julio X. Labayen.

We were pleased to have Cardinal Bernardin Gantin, Bishop Schotte and Father Pung with us from the Pontifical Commission "Justice and Peace" in Rome.

Perhaps the major result of the meeting was the establishment of a Justice and Peace Coordinating Committee for Asia and Oceania, whose members are Archbishop Anthony Soter Fernandez (Southeast Asia), Bishop Vianney Fernando (South Asia), Fr. Francis Fukamizu (East Asia), Mr. Chris Sidoti (Oceania), and Bishop Bunluen Mansap from the FABC Office of Human Development (OHD).

This Committee can give a tremendous push forward to Justice and Peace work in Asia.

A questionnaire was circulated at the end of the meeting. The consultation was rated very highly by the bishops and others who attended. The resource persons were rated "excellent" by a big majority of the forty-seven participants. The meeting's content, time order, process and results were all rated "good" to "excellent." The only activity that had a lower rating was morning prayer, but fewer answered that part of the evaluation sheet. Did they attend, we wonder?

We leave final judgment on the value of the meeting to the reader of this FABC Paper and, of course, to the future.

I would like to end by expressing my thanks to Bishop John Baptist Wu and Mr. Luke Wong of the Hong Kong Justice and Peace Com-

mission, who helped prepare the meeting and hosted a special dinner for the participants. I want to thank also Fr. Desmond de Sousa, Sister Filo Hirota, Mr. Denis Murphy and Ms. Tita del Pilar of OHD, and Ms. Veronica Tam of Hong Kong who prepared and ran the meeting.

## II. OPENING ADDRESS

by Cardinal Bernardin Gantin

For some time I have wanted to come to Asia in my role as president of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace. From the time that Pope Paul VI gave the commission its definitive status in his *motu proprio Justitiam et Pacem*, in December, 1976, the secretariat has been trying to deepen its contacts with the bishops' conferences around the world and with the bodies that the bishops have chosen to carry on this important work.

My coming here with my colleagues, Bishop Schotte and Father Pung, is a natural extension of the work we carry on in Rome. It is part of the ongoing task the commission has of service to the local Church in the fields of development, justice, peace and human rights. And it is done with full respect for the richness and diversity of cultures that together make up the wonderful variety of this vast continent of Asia.

### A Set of Values Shared in Common

Yes, Asia is vast and the Church on the whole is a minority among the many religions of this continent. This might tempt some to reject one's culture or to apologize for one's Christian faith. Neither of these is the proper response for you and for me. I, who have come from another culture — my home is in Benin, W. Africa — have been called by the Church to serve in another culture, Italy and Europe. From that background I come now to you in Asia and I do so with confidence because I know that the faith we share and the life we live as Catholics is truly universal. The Word of God is never foreign to any person or to any culture. The Church of Christ is at home everywhere and can never be dismissed as a product of another time and place. You and I are united in that one faith, one baptism, one Lord, one God and Father of us all. And so, without denying the richness and diversity of our own cultures, we can begin our dialogue on a sound base, a shared set of values that now we seek to use for the good of all our brothers and sisters.

There are many ways of looking at the world we live in. Each one of us is the inheritor of certain cultural values. All of us have been

influenced by cultures and ideologies, by traditions and current opinions. However, I would like to ask you, as far as possible, to put all our theories and ideologies to the side for one moment. Apart from our social and political positions, let us reflect for a few minutes on the Christian basis of our lives in society. We want to ask ourselves if we cannot find in our Christian tradition a coherent vision and guiding criteria to help us deal with the problems of our own societies today and help us, as bishops, priests, religious and laity, to offer our people a way to respond to their deepest calling as human beings and as Christians in the society we live in.

We have just finished celebrating the Christmas liturgical season. Just two weeks ago, on the feast of the Presentation, we reflected once again on Christ who is our light, the light to the nations. The mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God, reveals to us that wonderful truth that God has chosen to become one with us, all of us, and has thus given us the new basis of our unity, the brothers and sisters of our one Lord and Savior. "He took to himself descent from Abraham" (Hebrews 2:15), the liturgy proclaims, and as such, all of human history has been changed. Now the history of humankind is marked by the presence of God among us. Now, you and I are given the life in him, through which the world is being called to the Father. Now, you and I have a challenge from God to be with Christ as he is with us in this world for the good of all people and for the transformation of the world toward the life he offers.

### **A Witness Specifically Christian**

This must always be kept in mind when we are challenged by the great social problems that need our attention. The Lord has cast his lot with us. He is the principle to change the world toward what God wants. He is the source of our proclamation and he is the message we have been given, as the way to commit ourselves to the social problems of our own societies and our own times. In fidelity to the Lord, we are called upon *to make a contribution that is specifically Christian* and that can be a true witness of the life that Christ has brought to this world. For us, the guiding vision is the message of redemption that already has ransomed the world. For us, the guiding light is the light of the newborn Christ Child. It is his light we must use to illumine the darkness of sin and injustice in our world and it is his message that must be the means to heal the divisions of our societies and to begin that transformation *toward the unity and fraternity that every human being has with Christ and that every human being must be able to find with us.*

Therefore, there is one basic foundation that you must make your own in every effort you undertake with your people in the social field. You must see to it that your every action, your every teaching, your every program will be *inspired and informed by the teaching of Christ as passed on* in the Church to you. You must be teachers of the truth. You must see to it that the contributions to the social field you make are imbued with the teaching of the Church and in harmony with the principles of its social doctrine.

### **The Social Teaching of the Church**

That is why I have wanted to speak with you: to urge you to see to it that the people of God *know the social teaching of the Church*. Help them know it in its richness and coherence, in its principles and its values. Help them know it so that the principles of our social teaching can become the basis of the projects and activities we carry on with our fellow citizens for the good of society and our brothers and sisters in our societies.

*The goal of the social doctrine of the Church is eminently pastoral.* What it seeks to do is *to inform people so that they can act*, and act in such a way that their actions reflect the values of the heritage which is ours. That is why I want to stress with you today that the social teaching of the Church, of the pontiffs, and of the II Vatican Council are the specific contribution that we have to give to our people, and it is the basis of the specific contributions the Catholic faithful have to share with all their fellow citizens in society.

Who can commit himself to the betterment of the world of labor without profiting from the teachings of Leo XIII about free association; of Pius XI, about wages and hours; of John Paul II, about the priority of labor over capital?

Who is moved by the plight of the Third World and not guided by Paul VI's great encyclical *Populorum progressio*, and by John Paul II's messages in Africa and to the United Nations?

Who is concerned with justice in all its true dimensions and is not nourished and instructed by the many messages of Pius XII, the profound teaching of Paul VI in *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, and the moving vision of John Paul II in *Redemptor Hominis*, and *Dives in Misericordia*?

Who finally would wish to be a peacemaker and not want to ally himself with the modern tradition of the successors of Peter from Benedict XV to John Paul II in their tireless efforts of teaching and working toward the goal of true peace? The witness of these pontiffs is a sure beacon in the dark night of war and the threats of war. At the United Nations, in intercessions with governments, through the catechetical efforts of the annual World Day of Peace, constant in teaching and prayer, in season and out of season, they have shown us the way to build a world of peace and justice in the spirit of the Lord.

The example of the pontiffs should be the guiding example for you and for me to help us fulfill our role in the social field. The teaching of the Vatican Council, especially of *Lumen Gentium*, gives us the most up-to-date expression of the content of this. Here, we are given the truth about the Church as a sign and sacrament of salvation in the world. Here, we have explained for us how the Church, as the whole people of God, is called to live out that sacramental life in a social way that conforms to the life given us. Only then, when we have been shown the task of the Church as one, does the Council turn to specific states and offices in the Church. I need not exegete *Lumen Gentium*. I would, however, emphasize that the primary call is a call to holiness and that the charisms and offices, including any "prophetic" office, is meant to be a living witness of faith and charity, a manifestation of universal agreement in matters of faith and morals, clinging to the Word of God in faith, penetrating its insights under the teaching authority to which it loyally defers (cf. *LG*, 12).

I point this out because it has a bearing on the role of each one and on the activity of the laity. *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25, spells out our role.

### **Our Social Teaching Reaffirms Our Christian Identity**

In giving you and me the basic elements of our role in the Church, *it re-affirms our identity and gives us criteria to judge whether or not a specific action in the social field is consistent with our identity as bishop, priests, religious and laity*. Once we have accepted an order or state of life that brings with it a specific identity for the life of the Church, then we are not free to contradict that identity and that commitment. If we do, we risk contradicting ourselves, and the Church's mission. I will not go into further detail. The principle I seek to invoke in every case of the involvement of the Church, of Church leaders and the laity is one of non-contradiction between identity and mission, on the one hand, and the actual positions taken in specific cases, on the other.

When they hear this principle, some people today think that I am preventing the full involvement of bishops, priests and religious in the process of social change and development. For there are groups in the Church who see this as too great a limit on their activities. They think bishops, priests and religious have to do everything or we are doing nothing. Am I dividing bishop, priest and religious from the laity? In no way do I intend any of this. The Church has a mission in society. Its mission is primarily spiritual. However, nothing that is human can ever be foreign to the Gospel. Bishops, priests and religious are not taken out of the world. They are however called to be teachers of the faith to their people so that the lay people can take up their own tasks and their own responsibilities in society. Our task as bishops, priests and religious is so to live our lives, so to teach our people, so to intensify our own proper identities in the Church, that we inspire the laity to act in the social field using the principles of the social doctrine that we have given to them by word and example. As the II Vatican Council tells us, the laity are called "by their combined efforts (to) remedy any institutions and conditions of the world which are customarily an inducement to sin, so that all such things may be conformed to the norms of justice and may favor the practice of virtue rather than hinder it. By so doing the laity will imbue culture and human activity with moral values. They will better prepare the field of the world for the seed of the Word of God. At the same time, they will open wider the Church's doors through which the message of peace can enter the world" (LG, 36).

### **A Great Fraternity**

Thus you can see that I am presenting to you not division but a great fraternity of the life in the Church for the good of the world. I am suggesting that if each one of us takes his or her proper role, then the social teaching of the Church can become the leaven to correct injustice and build up a society of harmony and brotherhood. I am asking that we all work together for the good of the whole society, of all our brothers and sisters in this land and in the world. And I am urging you to do this by taking up that wonderful treasure of the values of our Catholic social teaching about the dignity of the human person, about reverence for human life, about the rights and responsibilities each of us has in society, about the common good, about cultural values and universal solidarity in fraternity, this whole rich tradition, and make this the basis of the contribution of the Church to the common good of Asia today.

Formed in the teaching of the Church, each one of us can pass on that teaching to our fellow people. Our people, informed by this great tradition, can then apply it to the social questions of today. This is a great

pastoral effort, because the social teaching aims to foster that attitude and understanding of the laity which gives them the means to grapple with the questions of the day. This is the message I wanted to share with you today.

We have a rich tradition of social teaching that springs from our faith-vision and our understanding of the human person. Join with me in teaching this to our people. We have a specific contribution to make to society. Make it your task to see that the contribution is always a *Church contribution*, bringing the values of our tradition into society. We are a Church that has immense resources of talents and charisms. See to it that the identity of each order and state of life is maintained within the Church, so that the people of God will be enabled to act forcefully and creatively in society for the good of all. Finally, be examples of Christ, the Good Shepherd, so that all will take up their responsibilities and act in the world as Christians, followers of Christ, who is the light to all the nations and the hope for all the world.

### III. THE RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH TO ASIA'S QUEST FOR JUSTICE

by Fr. Samuel Rayan, S.J.

#### The Asian Quest for Wholeness

Asia's quest for justice is only one aspect of a comprehensive quest for full humanity. The search for full and authentic humanity has surely to do with justice in the economic order and in social relationships. But it has also to do with problems of culture and with *asianness*, with questions of freedom and creative imagination, with the shape and quality of society, and, in particular, with issues relating to meeting the depth and silence of things, and the experience of the Divine. Asia's is a quest for wholeness. Asia seeks to recover from the violent breakdown, which it suffered in the colonial era, of its spirit, its creative elan and its confidence. But it also wants to make positive use of its tragic experiences, and to forge ahead, build afresh, and make its own human, cultural and material-spiritual contribution to the shaping of the future of our world.

This quest presents the Churches of Asia, small and limited as they are, with challenges and tasks which are immense and complex, and often enough, baffling and painful. We tend, therefore, to be cautious and reserved in meditations on the response of the Church. Rightly so, perhaps. Nevertheless we must meet the challenges and take up the tasks, even as we agonize over the situation of massive poverty and misery in a world in which nobody indeed need suffer hunger or want. The situation is not something outside us. With its tears and laughters, its struggles and



hopes, it is part of ourselves and our history; part of the life of our earth and of humankind. We are beginning to sense the power of a deep-going spiritual-social-historical solidarity which binds the earth together. We know that God holds this tangled mess, instinct with life, close to God's own heart. We know God is always loving it into clarity and freedom and enabling it to walk its own path and carve out its own destiny in partnership with God. God is here, deeply involved in the history we are making, profoundly interested in it, profoundly affected by it. God is here, urging and challenging us to transform our earth into something of God's Kingdom, where divine dreams are realized and the divine name is experienced as meaningful.

May I then start by sharing with you a letter circulated among friends by three young people who have chosen to live and work with the poor in a rural area in North India. There is nothing unusual about this letter. It carries a simple Christmas greeting from Meeti Lal, a priest-religious, and from Lily Bahan and Amala Bahan, two women-religious.

These three work with a larger movement which is secular in character and is committed to social change in the direction of a fraternal, egalitarian community of women and men. I thought of sharing most of this letter with you because in its simplicity and ordinariness it reflects some of the main concerns which have preoccupied us in this meeting.

The coincidences are, to me at least, striking. The letter mentions precisely the concerns we have been voicing here these days: justice and peace; the faith-vision or the vision of Jesus, and faith-involvement; the people's dignity, solidarity and mutual support; challenges and risks. There are numerous groups of this kind all over India. Each has its own face and voice, its own dynamics, way of life, programs of action and methods of approach. Some operate in large cities like Bombay, others work in villages and rural areas, among the Untouchables (the Harijans—God's people, as they are called; the Dalits — the oppressed, as they call themselves), or the Tribals, or landless agricultural laborers, or poor fisherfolk. Groups are made up of sisters, lay people, priests, in varying combinations; and their number is on the increase. Their emergence is part of a larger awakening, widespread stirrings and movements that mark the masses of the Indian people at this hour of history so ambiguous, so unsure, so full of threat and of promise.

#### **A Letter**

During this season, as we all celebrate the birth of Jesus,

naturally we think of you, who, like us, want to struggle for the realization of his vision. We wish you all success in your faith-involvement. We pray specially that the faith-involvement of yours and ours for the coming New Year 1984 bears fruit . . . Let our involvement and mission also meet the genuine and legitimate aspirations of the vast majority of our poor and exploited people, no matter what religion, caste, sex and class they belong to.

As you know, since one year we have been living out a new venture here in the diocese of Daltonganj. We strive for a greater identification of ourselves with the poor and the outcasts through a non-conventional religious praxis and involvement with people's movements.

At the grass-root level we have been able to contact about 30 villages in our block. We are trying to give the poor a sense of solidarity and dignity by being with them in their struggle for justice. Frequent meetings are held in their villages . . .

During this last one year we also went through experiences of tension, challenges and risks which threatened our very existence here, as a result of our option for the poor. But our faith that the Lord is with us gives us extra strength.

At the macro-level we want to reach the root cause of people's problems in order to build God's Kingdom where his people can enjoy his peace through an experience of equality, justice and fellowship among themselves. This is possible only through the mutual support and concerted action of all in the struggle for his Kingdom. We shall draw strength from Jesus of Nazareth who inaugurated for us a way to reach the goal . . .

The letter we read together represents one type of Church response. But it is not the only kind of response in existence in the Churches of India. I speak from within the experience of the Indian Churches. Some of the things I say may, with proper adjustments, apply to or illustrate realities in other situations on the Asian continent.

### **Five Responses**

It seems to me that, roughly speaking, five different kinds of responses have been forthcoming from the Church. Some of them may sound dated, but I decided to count and list all of them, for it is not rare that what appears to be dated and is rejected at the conscious level remains alive and operative at the level of the subconscious, especially if it has had a fairly long conscious history in the life of the Church.

## A Faith—Society Dualism

1) In the first of the five responses we read that the Church's concern is spiritual and religious; questions of social justice and social power lie outside the scope and competence of the Church; these are the business of the state and of secular society. Economic and political questions will, therefore, be addressed by the Church only when and in the measure in which they touch the individual Christian's interior life and spiritual well-being; or when they affect the rights of the Church as an institution.

Behind this response or non-response lies a faith—society dualism which is wholly alien to a faith committed to Creation, Incarnation, Resurrection and sacramental practice. It is alien to the historical life and ministry of Jesus in which the faith finds its root and sustenance. It is also a stranger to the ethos of Asia, whether this is represented by Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism or Shintoism. Yet this dualistic attitude, which, in fact, is a refusal to respond to historical reality, has had wide currency and profound influence in the religious milieu, including the Christian milieu, for several centuries. It held sway for a long time in the Asian Churches of colonial origin and in colonial theologies and spiritualities. The dichotomy and religious other-worldliness were convenient for feudal and colonial exploitation and oppression. Few today would defend or profess such dualism. And yet we must ask whether it is not there beneath the surface, subtly influencing decisions.

Its remnants, perhaps, survive in sharp distinctions made between the roles to be played by clergy, religious and laity. True, the call and mission of the Church is not in the realm of technicalities of social ordering. The Church's task is to witness to the Reign of God by life and word; to be in each place a manifest and recognizable realization and embodiment of the Kingdom; to be a clear mediation of the mystery of God as Freedom and Love. But this cannot be done except in and through the concrete realities of historical existence; in and through the experience of food, health, freedom, friendship and social acceptance and equality; in and through work, organization and struggle to secure these for all God's children. To say the same thing differently: the mission of the Church has to do with the Godwardness of life; with life's God-dimension and God-relatedness; with the sacramentality of human existence and creativity; with the deeper, humanizing, holistic meaning of creation and history. This covers all human aspirations and activities and includes economic and political realities and cultural-social processes. This responsibility rests with all believers, and with the entire ecclesial community. In the Church all of us, endowed with mutually

accountable charisms, leaderships and functions, have to walk together, and work as one Church, and stand in the front line, even as we celebrate our struggles and hopes together in the sacraments.

### **Misery — The Result of Divine Disposition**

2) A second response is to see social realities and situations of poverty, deprivation, oppression and suffering as the result of divine disposition, as occasions of meritorious endurance for some and virtuous generosity for others. It often amounts to pious fatalism and resignation to a providence which predetermines history. This tendency to see the will of God in every situation and event is the product of a defective understanding of God's creative action and the relationship in which God and creation exist. It is as if God did not share with created realities God's own freedom, autonomy and inventiveness, as much as these could be bestowed and received. It is as if God were the sole agent, a presupposition which would void creation of all sense and purpose. The truth is that our faith reveals God as great, precisely in that God shares and initiates processes and trusts them to evolve on their own and carve out their own path and walk it in freedom and fantasy towards their own completion, while God accompanies them all the way.

At the human level this means reflective consciousness, freedom and responsibility for our own history and the future of our earth. No particular social set-up or concrete historical reality is the result of divine determination. It is in every case the product of human decisions and interactions, the result of a history of sin and grace, of inertia and freedom, of selfishness and love. It is God's expectation that we take our history into our own hands (upheld always by God's own) and mold it and remold it, even as Jesus did in his ministry, and as God did in raising Jesus from the dead, and continues to do in dethroning the powerful and giving the Kingdom to the lowly and the poor.

### **Misery and Emergency Relief**

3) A third response chooses directly to address poverty, misery and suffering by providing relief and undertaking emergency measures. This is the traditional way in which the love which has always glowed in the heart of the Church and its prescientific sense of social responsibility have expressed themselves. Institutions for the care of the sick, the orphan, the leper, the aged, the destitute and the wayfarer have been the creations of this concern. Its most renowned representative today is Mother Theresa who is accepted by all, whose love, poverty and spirituality are understood and appreciated, and whose work is supported generously by governments, as well as by the wealthy the world over.

This response, no doubt, is essential as long as human existence remains frail and vulnerable, and subject to the vicissitudes of time, the caprice of nature and the failure of our hearts to be just and gentle. But should not relief remain strictly an emergency measure, which may not be institutionalized and perpetuated? Is it right to give the impression that the task of the Church is to pick up year after year those whom the system breaks and throws out, and to enable them to die loved for an hour or two, but never to call a halt to the process of destroying women and men by the million? Is it alright for the Church to undertake the cleaning up of the human debris, while paying never enough attention to the nature of the system and the cause of measureless wretchedness in a world of untold resources? Can the Church be true to itself and to the Reign of God in undertaking relief and emergency work, without adverting to the question of justice and the rights of the people, and without consciously and expressly giving to relief services the biblical dimension of prophetic criticism and prophetic protest?

#### **The Technological Response to Misery**

4) A fourth response consists in projects for modernization. Its endeavor is to introduce new technology into industry, agriculture and communication, in an effort to achieve a maximum of efficiency and to overcome what it calls "backwardness," which is identified as the root cause of poverty, misery and suffering. Modernizing action constitutes, I guess, the newest and most powerful response the Churches are trying to give to the challenge of Asia. It is encouraged, supported, guided, even controlled, from the centers of advanced industrialism. And behind it lies the ideology of development.

But the presuppositions of this response are not in all respects sound. It forgets that Asia's history has been violently distorted and Asian lands have been systematically underdeveloped by Western imperialism. It overlooks the ability and resources of non-modern peoples who have laid the foundations of world culture and created the world's languages. Besides, numerous studies have shown that while improvements made through modernization in the economic sphere are real and production has grown, the total human situation has worsened, the number of the landless and the unemployed has increased, the gap between the rich and the poor has widened. Studies in the processes and effects of the Green Revolution, of the White Revolution, of cash crops substituting for food crops, of export-oriented economy and of development through foreign aid may be cited as proof. The power differential, both within India and between countries, and within global capitalism, has grown to the detriment of dependent groups in India and of the

dependent Indian economy. It must be clear that the argument here is not against adoption of technology or the need of modernization. The argument rather is against the naive idea that technological modernization is sufficient to meet the human problem, even the economic problem, on the Asian scene. Technology can be of service to the needy masses and make a contribution to the cause of justice and human dignity only when it functions within a different social framework with a different, more humane, conception of economics and of production relationships.

### **A Socially Acquired and Shared Critical Awareness**

5) That brings us to the last response which the Church is beginning to give through individual Christians and especially through small groups of its members who are moving out of elite institutions and non-protesting relief operations and well-provided city life into the slums, the villages, the far-flung rural districts, the forests where Tribals live, and the coastal areas where poor fisherfolk toil to support a traditional Church and eke out a living in deep attachment to the Christian faith, mingled with ignorance and many a questionable belief and practice. The Christmas message we read at the beginning comes from one such group. The perception of these groups is that beyond individual sins and virtues there stand structural realities which are in themselves unbalanced, distorted, unjust and subhuman; these are responsible in the main for the massive poverty and suffering of hundreds of millions of simple and hardworking people, and for their centennial marginalization and humiliation. They point to a socioeconomic system which can survive only by underdeveloping and dominating more and more people ever more deeply, and which therefore necessitates an arms race, the armament trade, the deployment of armies across the globe, the contriving of conflicts, the setting-up of military regimes, support for dictatorships and development of scientifically refined methods of torture, assassination and destabilization.

It is the conviction of these groups of Christians that this system, with its economic, political and cultural structures, must be removed and replaced by one that will be less and less or not at all oppressive and exploitative; which will grow ever more human, egalitarian and fraternal; and will form the basis of a just and loving society. Governments also speak, not rarely, of radical transformations and a new society, but their rhetoric hides the plans of those who profit by present arrangements to keep the masses hoping and guessing, and grasping at reforms which prove in the end to be merely cosmetic. Hence, this last type of response puts its trust in the popular masses, their sanity and

sense of values, their solidarity and mutual support, their rich humanity and sense of community as yet only slightly eroded by competitive drive for profit and by consumerist craving. The attempt is to make emerge a socially acquired and shared critical awareness of the reality of the situation, of the forces at work in it and their social meaning, of the root causes of deprivation and marginality, and the nature of the system itself, as well as an understanding of the values, actions and processes by which structural changes can be brought about as swiftly as possible in the direction of greater humanity, equality, freedom and justice.

Such are the five types of responses I have been able to discern. Some of them, even all of them, may be found to co-exist in the same local Church, giving rise to tensions and conflicts. For not all of us, nor all the Churches in any region, are at the same level of critical awareness or analytical understanding of social realities, and of the earthly implications of revelation and faith. Different kinds of self-education and action will, therefore, have to develop within the Churches. And it seems to me that the Church will always have to respond to human suffering at the personal level and continue to provide all the relief it possibly can in a broken world. But it must more and more fully and profoundly make its own the transformative response mentioned above. It has to commit itself clearly and openly to work for structural change, lest relief become some sort of collaboration with the lubricant for the dominant system of injustice and oppression. And since a just social order is constitutive of its faith-goal, the Church will be wary of undertaking developmental work unless it actually contributes to a social change marked by the values and orientations acceptable to the faith, and by the human ideals of fairness, equality and freedom.

## Justice

At this point I would like to say a word about justice, which is the perspective from which the responses of the Church are being considered. Justice and faith are mutually constitutive. We cannot have the one without the other. Biblical revelation (to which faith is the response) in its foundational event discloses God as justice intervening in history to end slavery, abolish domination and set the oppressed free. God's justice is not forensic. Rather, it is God's fidelity to every creature God has loved into existence, a fidelity which provides all that is required, and more than is required, for each creature to become fully itself along with the rest of creation. God clothes the flowers and feeds the birds, and makes the sun shine and the rain fall on all people, irrespective of their demerits and merits. This fidelity of God is the justice of the Reign for which we are to strive and hunger and thirst.

Human beings need food, clothing and shelter; they need health, rest and community, love and friendship; they need to be named, spoken to and honored; and they need freedom and creative imagination and the material on which these can be exercised; and human beings need forgiveness and assurance. God is faithful and provides these in abundance in the gift of the earth, in the gift of the human community, in human inventiveness and in the yearnings and interlockings of our hearts and the dreams of our spirit.

To believe is to collaborate with God so that all women and men everywhere may have these blessings in abundance, and may, through them, have deep personal and social experience of God's love-fidelity which they can then share and thus be faithful—just to one another. In the practice of justice, then, the experience of God would abound. Injustice, on the other hand, and unjust structures obscure and hamper the historical realization of God's fidelity-justice and black out the divine face. They distort God's image and end up projecting unbelief and/or idolatry. The challenge of Jesus is as pressing today as ever and clearer than ever. God or Mammon. We cannot serve both, nor pretend to be neutral. That is why, according to Jeremiah, to know God, to have faith-experience of God, is to do justice. The passionate pleading of prophets is not for ritual, asceticism or sacrifice but for the flow of justice like a river in spate. For what is it that God really requires? Not that holocausts be offered but that we act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God. And the summons Jesus issues is that primacy be given to quest for the justice of God's Reign against the injustice, inequality, oppression and misery of the rule of Caesars and Herods and all other powers which prove themselves satanic by the deprivation, domination and wretchedness they administer. Love one another is Jesus' final invitation, as he has loved. And he loved by providing the health, the bread, the rice, the liberty, the honor and the acceptance the neglected masses of the people needed to become fully themselves and know themselves and one another as God's children. Justice is the basic form of love. Where justice is absent, love cannot grow; there love lacks earth and roots.

### **God's Justice is Contextual**

God's justice is concrete and contextual. In Egypt it meant liberation for slaves. In the desert it meant bread for the hungry. In Galilee the justice of God's Reign meant freedom and fellowship for outcasts and sinners. Before accumulated wealth God's justice is the summons to opt out of camelizing greed and join the brotherhood of the non-acquisitive. And before oppressive religion it takes the form of a



startling affirmation of the primacy and centrality of human beings. The Sabbath is for people, not the other way round. The shape of justice and its demands have to be discerned and defined in each concrete historical situation. Centrally produced social doctrines can only give certain general orientations which have to be put in dialectical interaction with concrete contexts before they can be of meaningful service. It is important to remember too that no teaching is free of historical and cultural conditioning, and consequent limitations and blindspots. General and universal doctrines can fail to speak to crying needs and pressing problems. The commitment to justice of the local Church in given contexts is crucial here. In each place the community with its leadership has to discern and determine the meaning of justice and the appropriate action to be taken. This, of course, cannot be done once for all; it will be an ongoing process in the wake of the truth that keeps emerging. The truth of the people and of society, the truth of history and of justice itself, emerges in and through the praxis of justice. Through sustained praxis, always to be critically evaluated, the Church too realizes itself progressively.

### **Praxis**

What the Churches in Asia can do for the social transformation of the continent is obviously little. What it can do will remain symbolic. But its tiny gestures can have a prophetic quality. The small steps it takes, if these represent hearty strivings and the utmost it can do, will carry a spiritual force which could be of great significance. For Jesus is loved and respected all over Asia; he shines over Asia's horizon as a sign of hope, the Bright Morning Star. Encouraged by this hope, may I make a few concrete suggestions which I consider practical.

(i) We need social analysis. Lack of a scientific critical-analytical understanding of society at all levels, local, Asian and global, is one of the major weaknesses of the Church. It dulls the spirit and hampers action. In the absence of a clear and critical grasp of social reality, our goodwill can develop services which may betray the cause of justice, hurt people, forge new chains of enslavement and lead the Church to take the wrong side. It is when the analytically-understood social reality is brought into dialectical relationship with the faith as grasped here and now that clear visions of justice and concrete action programs can come to birth. To secure for the Church at all levels a formation in historical, structural, action-oriented analysis of society would constitute a test of the Church's commitment to justice and a first step in its praxis.

(ii) A second step would be a two-year (for five years?) plan of instruction, catechesis, preaching and formation which will put justice once more at the center of the Christian message. For too long has the message seemed to be unconcerned with justice, or even to be supportive of conquest, enslavement and plunder. Could a whole new presentation of the faith be designed in which faith's justice dimension will stand out clearly? Contextual accenting and underscoring of aspects of the kerygma in order to respond to situations is a necessity. It tallies with biblical practice in Old Testament as well as New Testament times. For the kerygma is not a balanced theory for contemplation but a program of life and a summons to commitment to the Reign of God pressing upon our heart and history now.

(iii) The liturgy, and the Eucharistic celebration in particular, has to be rethought and restructured in relation to justice questions and human rights struggles. Is it consonant with the mind of Jesus and the thrust of his Gospel to hold up any rite as the center and summit of Christian life and discipleship? Liturgy is derivative. It receives content and meaning from the worship of life, from the following of Jesus, from the drinking of his cup and immersion in his baptism. A statement of the Indian Theological Association (October, 1983) has the following:

Participation in people's action for their liberation, with firm belief in God's presence in their midst and trust in his assistance, is also an integral dimension of the liturgy. Worship is therefore celebrated not only in rituals and sacraments, but also in the day-to-day work and struggles to attain fulness and to transform the human community into the household of God. In this perspective baptism becomes the commitment to a God who commits himself to his people and their struggle, and Eucharist becomes a celebration of this struggle and their victory.

Liturgy cannot be taken, ready-made and frozen, from the pages of books. It must come warm and fresh from life which it will sum up, re-express and celebrate. It will have the throb and smell of the people and their earth. And it will, it must, equip them for further commitment, action and courageous endurance. The celebration must reflect the values of the Kingdom which is the heritage of the poor, and not the patterns and upper-class manners of feudal times. It must manifest the equality, freedom and joy of the eschatological feast of the Kingdom, and not follow the class structure and discriminatory ranking of feudal and capitalist societies. The Eucharist must become an education in and a celebration of the new egalitarian social order, the world of justice, love and peace, to which we are committed by our humanity and our faith.

(iv) In nearly all the Asian lands women are victims of multiple oppression and injustice. It is important in this context that the Church eliminate from its midst every semblance of discrimination based on sex difference. All Asians must be able to see that in the Christian Churches there is real equality and justice; that in them the future (the eschatological) world is already being realized. Admission of women to all positions of leadership and decision-making on a par with men will not only enrich the faith-life of the community but shine out as a hopeful and compelling sign before the peoples of this continent. It will challenge too some of our entrenched social attitudes which are little consonant with the spirit of the Gospel.

(v) We are not satisfied with the production of symbolic actions. We want to see social transformation happening, and want to play a part in bringing it about. It is imperative, therefore, for us to link up with people of other faiths and ideologies who are committed to the same goal of justice and equality and a free, fraternal, non-exploitative society. It will be a privilege for us to explore with others the liberational potential of all the religions and their resources to challenge injustice and trigger action for change. Critical collaboration with (non-dogmatic) Marxians may be of particular interest and importance. We cannot forget that we owe our present awakening to questions of justice and injustice and the necessity and possibility of social transformation to Karl Marx, his writings and the movement he initiated. True, his vision has been distorted in many places. It may be our task to redeem it in the grace of our faith and make it a reality of history in the measure it responds to the Gospel dream enshrined in the Lord's Prayer, in the celebration of the Eucharist and in the Symbol of the Trinity.

(vi) We shall not be naive, and shall not forget that social justice and newness have to be bought with a price. In action for justice there is danger and risk. We remember Romero and the thousands of women and men killed in Central America and South Africa for taking a stand for justice and the dignity of people. We remember the martyrs of Asia, who have borne witness to the truth of human beings before Asia's dictators, generals and exceptional regimes. We remember Jesus the martyr of freedom and justice. And we recall his poetic parable of the grain of wheat which must fall to the ground and die if it would rise to new life and burst into a harvest. We pray that we may not refuse to die. We pray that we may stand together and support one another. Does that parable apply only to individual Christians, or also to the Church in each place and each epoch? Instinctively the Church seeks to survive. Survive for what? If not to bear witness to God's justice and love? But to do so is to come to the cross. The Church too must be ready to die in order to rise again, rise not necessarily as Church, but as something greater, something transformed as the Kingdom of God in the wider human history.

## IV. REPORTS OF NATIONAL COMMISSIONS FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE\*

### 1. Commission for Justice and Peace — Australia

Submitted by Mr. Chris Sidoti

#### Issues

There has been a strong consistency of issues taken up by the commission since its establishment in 1968. All have centered around the theme of human rights and human dignity, although not in the narrow sense of civil and political rights. The issues have included:

a) **Aboriginal Land Rights:**

Australia's aboriginal people were dispossessed of their land from the time of the coming of the European settlers, from 1788. The history of Australia for them since that time has been one of eviction, conflict and poverty.

In recent years, aboriginal communities have been organizing to struggle for rights to their remaining lands and for compensation. They have often had the support of the Christian Churches in this struggle.

The commission has supported campaigns for land rights laws and for the rights of individual aboriginal communities.

b) **Human Development:**

The commission's activities here have concentrated on Australia's obligations, as a First World nation, towards its neighbors. Questions taken up include trade relationships and the quality of Australia's Official Development Assistance. The commission has worked with a counterpart Church agency in the Philippines in monitoring an Australian Government aid project there.

c) **Peace and War:**

The commission has published a number of documents on this over the years and in 1984 will commence a series of occasional papers on peace issues.

d) **Unemployment and Poverty:**

Poverty in Australia has been a theme for many years, with the commission playing a major role in educating Australians to the presence of poverty in their midst. Unemployment in recent years has compounded the problem. Associated is the issue of housing, another priority for action in recent years.

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\* Some reports were presented verbally only. We publish here the written submissions.

e) **Human Rights:**

The commission has also monitored human rights situations in the region, having an active role in the Asia-Pacific Hotline since 1979. It is also encouraging study of the relationship between human rights and Australia's foreign policy.

### **Problems**

Being a Church commission in a country which has a Christian ethic and liberal democratic political system, the commission does not encounter problems that restrict its freedom of publication and operation. Its problems relate more to the difficulty in convincing basically middle-class Christians of the injustices experienced by other Australians and by people elsewhere, and of the need for change in Australian society and in world society. This problem is essentially an educational problem—a problem of conversion.

The commission also faces problems in that what it says and does brings it into conflict situations. Church people often have difficulty in accepting that conflict is inevitable and can be productive. So when conflicts arise, questions often arise about the future of the commission—about whether it is valid as part of the official Church structure, about what its orientation is, and so on. These conflicts have on two occasions resulted in threats of legal action for defamation (libel), which have caused the bishops to order the commission to withdraw publications or to apologize.

## **2. Justice and Peace Commission — Bangladesh**

Submitted by Bishop Joachim Rozario and Fr. Richard Timm

### **Activities**

To delineate clearly the main injustices in the country and to ascertain their causes and to create awareness of social issues the National Council for Justice and Peace publishes two bimonthly newsletters, one in English and one in Bengali, including articles from various newspapers and magazines on injustices in Bangladesh. The special issues taken up by NCJP are:

Forced sterilization by the army, Bangladesh tea workers, tribal problems, land problems, exploitation of house servants, exploitation of women workers, problem of dowry, problems of the landless, etc.

## Some of Our Problems

—There was no tradition of concern for human rights in Bangladesh before NCJP was founded. So far there is little popular awareness or response to human rights issues in the rural areas, although newspapers and magazines have created a growing awareness in the cities.

—The Church is generally timid and cautious in having any involvement whatsoever in human rights and social justice issues.

—It is difficult to get exact details of infringements of human rights because of cover-up by the law enforcement agencies.

### 3. Commission for Justice, Development and Peace — India Submitted by Bishop Arul Das James and Fr. Thomas Joseph

The Commission for Justice, Development and Peace seeks to translate effectively into reality the preferential option of the Church for the poor and oppressed, to which she has been called, and gear her educational and health services so as to make them powerful instruments of constant social change in the best sense of the word and under the guidance of the magisterial teaching of the Church.

This is one of the five commissions of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India.

## Issues

Protection of the weaker sections of society:

—Guidelines issued to ensure justice to employees in Church-related institutions, who are not protected by any legislation. Included were security of employment, fair wages and other conditions, social security and welfare programs.

—Code for conciliation and arbitration to resolve disputes between employers and employees in Church-related institutions.

—Legal aid to weaker sections of society for justice.

—Collective action for defense of persons arbitrarily displaced for developmental projects.

—Rehabilitation of repatriates and refugees.

—A national survey was undertaken on the socioeconomic condition of domestic workers. A code of conduct for employers and employees was issued and action initiated for fair treatment of domestic workers.

—Defense of fishermen against mechanized trawlers.

## **Programs of Social Education and Conscientization**

—Programs for motivation of grassroot-level workers for self-confidence and self-reliance. Leaders are trained for social transformation and human development.

—Y.C.S., Y.C.W., AICFF, Teacher's Guild, Nurses Guild are fostered to be action-reflection groups in various parts of the country.

—Educational institutions are progressively assisted to become agents for social change and translate into reality the preferential option for the poor, and to find alternative methods of education and reach-out programs to the masses.

—In the field of health services priority is given to:

Promotion of community health

Promotion of pro-life movement

Promotion of pastoral and spiritual aspect of health care

—Programs are organized for the "training of trainers" and motivation for action for justice.

## **Collaboration with Other Agencies**

—Solidarity with other non-Catholic agencies engaged in the struggle for justice. Joint statements are issued and united action taken. Christians are encouraged to take active part in trade unions and politics.

## **Problems and Constraints**

—Christians are a minority: except for three states, the Christian presence is negligible and often marginalized.

—There is a revival of religious fundamentalism: militant communal elements create suspicion and stand in the way of action for justice.

—There is tension in the society: the feudal elements are making efforts to keep the status quo and as a minority, Christians who stand for justice are easily branded Marxists.

—Conservative elements in the Church are very slow to grasp the spirit of the Second Vatican Council. The social dimension of Christian vision is still very limited.

—In many places the laity still looks to the hierarchy for leadership in the social field and many are very hesitant to become involved personally.

#### **4. Justice and Peace Commission — Indonesia**

Submitted by Fr. Gregory Utomo and Mr. Marcel Beding

In their annual meeting, November 1980, in Jakarta, the Indonesian bishops asked two commissions of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference (MAWI), the Commission for Socioeconomic Development and the Commission for Social Communication, to seek ways to form a body or a committee to deal with the struggle for justice and peace in a direct and intensive way.

During MAWI's 1981 meeting, the two commissions made a report to the bishops on the result of their work. The two commissions were of the opinion that there were quite reasonable grounds to set up a secretariat, or at least a desk, for Justice and Peace in MAWI's office, which could be expected to become an official organ of MAWI. The bishops fully accepted this proposal, and urged these commissions to establish a secretariat of "Justice and Peace" in MAWI's office for a three years' experimental phase. It was expected that after three years' this secretariat could be promoted to be the Commission for Justice and Peace of MAWI.

This Secretariat for Justice and Peace aims to take part in any efforts encouraging and developing awareness and a sense of responsibility among the Indonesian faithful and society in general in matters of justice and peace.

#### **Programs and Activities**

This secretariat operates in two aspects, namely the quantitative aspect and the qualitative one. The former deals with collecting and spreading of data; the latter deals with the development/formation and spreading of opinion in the field of justice and peace, so that the Indonesian faithful and society can be led to reflect and act on the promotion of justice and peace.

The secretariat is facilitator and supporter for:

- Efforts for the formation of cadres
- Activities of action groups which deal with matters of justice and peace
- Legal aid institutes/legal aid study groups
- Leaders/groups in the fields of labor, agriculture and fishing



Also the secretariat endeavors to:

- Document matters related to law, justice and peace (clippings and literature collecting)
- Perform or assist to provide counseling/information/consultation in the fields of law/justice for those in need
- Attend and forward views in forums that discuss the problems of justice and peace
- Publish articles both in the internal and in public media
- Make contact/co-operation:
  - a. Institutions/organizations of other Churches within the ecumenical framework who share the same view, as well as with non-Church institutions/organizations which could support the work, efforts and activities of the secretariat.
  - b. As regards the field of legal aid, the secretariat tries, if at all possible, to set up institutes of legal aid and consultation in needy areas in co-operation with local Catholic universities, particularly universities which have an institution which renders service in legal aid and consultation.
  - c. Co-operation with governmental institutions.
  - d. The Secretariat for Justice and Peace is still in its initial and experimental phase. So far it has not done a lot. Shortage of personnel and finance could come as major problems. However, we do hope that after the experimental phase a permanent commission for Justice and Peace could be set up in MAWI, which can be expected to function more and more intensively and effectively.

#### **5. Justice and Peace Commission — Japan**

Submitted by Bishop Aloysius Soma and Fr. Francis Fukamizu

#### **The Members of the Commission**

On a national level there are fourteen diocesan commissions of Justice and Peace, in every diocese except two, Nagasaki and Oita. Each diocesan commission has its own structure and personnel under the priest co-ordinator who represents the diocese. The fourteen co-ordinators together with the president and executive secretary form the national council. Of these, five coordinators, together with the president and executive secretary and some persons appointed by the president, form the standing committee of the council. The national council under the direction of the standing committee meets every month in Tokyo in order to co-ordinate activities. Membership has no conditions. Anybody can be

a member if one is interested in a social issue. Thus, committed persons forming a group according to an issue can submit its adherence to the council. The standing committee, judging the nature of the issue concerned and personnel, decides on admittance to the council, and it becomes a commission for that particular issue. At present there are six commissions with a total membership of fifty persons, including priests, religious, lay people and some non-Catholics.

On a diocesan level generally the membership is not very strict and is open to anybody interested in a certain issue. There exists good co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics, and non-Christians.

### Issues Taken Up

On the national level, so far, there are six commissions for six issues:

—Korean problem commission. Korea's national problems, such as democracy, unification, labor, politics, etc., and the problems of Korean people living as residents in Japan, their human rights, discrimination, etc.

—Philippine problem commission. Philippine democracy, socio-economic relations with Japanese multinationals, human rights, etc., and problems of Philippine people working in Japan, such as their human rights, prostitution, etc.

—Yasukuki problem commission. The government plans to nationalize this Shinto shrine, with the Emperor as its high priest, to make it the symbol of the spiritual and cultural unity of the Japanese people. The issue is very much connected with Japan's remilitarization and government control of culture, starting with school textbooks.

—Buraku problem commission. One of the biggest national issues of segregation is against the people called Buraku. There exists about three million of these Japanese social outcasts. They experience severe economic discrimination, which is against the Constitution.

—Peace Education commission. Tackles war and peace and nuclear issues from the point of view of an educational movement.

—Nuclear problem commission. Deals with the nuclear problem in general. In particular it works against the government plan to dump the waste of nuclear power stations into the Pacific Ocean.

Some other issues taken up on the national level are issues of ecological destruction and pollution. On the diocesan level there exists much commitment to particular cases, such as Toroku, Minamata, Matsuo and Kawasaki, which are all names of city areas heavily contaminated by local industries.

In addition to those already mentioned, the Nagoya diocese takes up the issue of human rights of homeless daily workers living on the streets. Yokohama and Shimonoseki groups are committed to the issue of industrial workers.

### Some Problems

—Education to justice and peace for Catholics who do not link justice with their faith.

—Co-operation with active Protestant organizations, like the National Council of Churches, has been developed very recently on a practical level. This requires a deep consultation and ecumenical dialogue based on solidarity and practice.

—Solidarity with the non-Christian majority. This has been developing very much on a national and diocesan level. Without it our solitary actions remain meaningless and powerless. But at the same time we must have constructive principles in order to strengthen our solidarity with non-government movements of ordinary citizens, which include some Marxist-oriented people.

—Financial and organizational problems. The annual budget is about 7 million yen, or \$300,000. Thus the existing six commission members are all part-time volunteers. The council has only one full time sister who is paid a relatively very low salary. This financial problem puts limits on the organization as well. Documentary service, information service, research work, educational actions are almost non-existent. The council does not even have a newsletter or regular space in the *National Catholic Weekly*.

### 6. Justice and Peace Commission — Malaysia

Submitted by Archbishop Soter Fernandez,  
Bishop Antony Selvanayagam and Fr. Pierre Gauthier

This report could be extremely brief. It could read simply: "There is no Justice and Peace Commission in Malaysia." However, you might feel a bit frustrated and, even though there is no Justice and Peace Commission in Malaysia, we would like to give you some idea of our concern for justice and peace in our country.

The responsibility for this concern has been carried on so far by our Catholic Welfare Service/Office for Human Development, at least for Peninsular Malaysia. Nobody seems to be especially in charge for Sabah and Sarawak, that is, East Malaysia.

## **The Present Situation**

Our Office, CWS/OHD, has a double identity:

It started in 1952 as a welfare organization (Catholic Welfare Services) and was recognized as such by the Malaysian Government. Because of legal implications it keeps its welfare identity.

Directly, it is involved with refugee assistance and the running of a home for the aged. Indirectly, it is involved through its eighteen affiliates in the charitable, social welfare and medical fields.

Since 1972, however, our office has taken a different orientation. It is now the Office for Human Development, which has as its main concern the building up of an awareness of conditions of poverty and injustice in Malaysia, both within the Church and in Malaysian society. We can say that the office plays the role of a Justice and Peace commission.

## **Activities of Our Office in the Field of Human Development**

Several means are used by our office to raise awareness of conditions of poverty and injustice and to attempt to remedy them.

A Lenten Campaign has been conducted regularly since 1981. Special themes are selected; materials are prepared (in Chinese, Tamil, English and Bahasa); group reflections are organized; briefing sessions and training programs are conducted in connection with the campaign. The campaign serves as the basis of reflection on actions that can be carried out all the year round. We try to find the various categories of people living a life of poverty—plantation workers, fishermen, rice planters, etc. We also attempt a social analysis of the causes of poverty. This year we are deliberating on the theme: "One with the Poor — Solidarity with the Poor."

In the same way "Concern for the Poor" reflection groups have been started at diocesan levels, with varying degree of success.

Our National Office for Human Development (N.O.H.D.) *Bulletin* is a publication that appears whenever we are ready for an issue. It bears on social problems in Malaysia, Asia, and sometimes other parts of the world.

Projects in which financial assistance is given to certain groups of people in their attempts at improving social conditions are also another

means of continuing reflection and action. These projects give support to:

- Church-related organizations
- Non-Church-related groups which very often have a greater audience than the Church in our country.

The office has also organized exposure programs for groups of people, and is also involved in surveys, such as the Free Trade Zone, survey of the Asia Partnership for Human Development, to find out the impact of multinationals in the life of the people.

In 1983 we organized a consultation in Peninsular Malaysia on the topic "Church and Development in Malaysia," which compared our government trends in present-day development with the vision of the Church in human development.

The above activities of the office have placed CWS/OHD in a delicate situation and attracted the attention of the Malaysian Security (Special Branch). In this respect, we must not forget:

- The restrictive legislation that has been gradually set up by our government
- The minority status of the Church in the country
- The small support for justice and peace work within the Malaysian Church

### **Why a Justice and Peace Commission?**

The idea of setting up a Justice and Peace commission in Malaysia has been discussed for five years for two main reasons:

- To release some of the "pressure" that CWS/OHD has to bear because of its human development activities.
- To enable some groups of people to speak more boldly than the present CWS/OHD office can in the defense of human rights and violations of justice.

The Penang Diocese was the first to attempt to set up a Justice and Peace commission at the diocesan level. The process is taking quite some time. The idea was carefully studied by various groups of people, by the presbyterium and by the senate of priests, with, of course, the approval of the bishop. Several problems are encountered which up till now have prevented the official start of the commission. Some of the problems are:

—Few people (clergy-religious-lay) will volunteer to become members of the commission and for two reasons: the general lack of social awareness within the Church, and because of the dangers that membership may create with the government should the commission challenge government policies.

—It has been found difficult to fix the precise role of the Justice and Peace commission, when compared with the role of the OHD diocesan secretariats, since justice and peace and human development are so closely connected.

—Some have suggested that this role be clearly specified before asking volunteer members to join the commission; while others have suggested inviting people to be members and then define the role of the commission.

—The status of the commission has also to be clearly specified. Should it be a diocesan commission, belonging to the regular structures of the diocese and therefore the responsibility of the Church (and bishop) in its statements? If so, it will follow a path of prudence not substantially different from the present CWS/OHD.

—Or should it be more independent from the Church in order to be able to speak more freely or boldly but without the protection of the official Church? This raises two more aspects of the problems: —the Pontifical Commission in Rome, consulted on the subject, recommended that the Justice and Peace commission should clearly be “a Church body speaking a word of the Church in the social field.”

—this type of body would be extremely difficult to get legally recognized in Malaysia.

—It has also been suggested that it could be better simply to join forces with other Justice and Peace-oriented organizations (non-Church organizations) which have a similar dedication in fighting poverty and injustices. CWS/OHD has already established these contacts.

## **7. Justice and Peace Commission — The Pacific Islands (CEPAC)**

Submitted by Fr. Louis Lindner, S.M.

### **Structure of the Commission**

We are only a million or so people in small islands scattered over an area that covers 1/3 of the globe.

The chairman of our CEPAC Justice and Peace Commission is Bishop Mea of the Gilbert Islands. We have members from the Cook Islands, Tonga, Fiji, Carolines and New Caledonia. We could have more members but travel is very expensive.

We are associated closely with the Bishops' Conference of New Zealand.

### **Problems**

—The problems we face are as wide and varied as our area. Some of the Islands are highly developed, some are not. Some are independent nations, others are not. Some have only very few inhabitants, others are overpopulated. Some are tiny, others have the same surface as the People's Republic of China, that is, if we include the sea area.

—The general problem is that most of our people are overaided. Not a single island country is really economically independent, except perhaps for Nauru, a speck of the ocean and the world's wealthiest nation.

—The Pacific is a playground for the superpowers, and for our small countries even New Zealand is a superpower. Foreign companies do whatever they like. Nuclear waste is dumped, nuclear testing still goes on. However, most people in the Pacific are not aware of these issues. Most of our nations have never heard of the other archipelagoes, except perhaps their next door neighbors.

—We speak 1/5 of the world's languages. We have French-speaking people and, on Easter Island, people who speak Spanish.

### **Activities**

All our people want to enter the consumer society, but almost nobody has the means. Therefore, our main task is conscientization, education and awareness raising. Still, real Pacific solidarity and identity is a long way off.

The national governments and foreign powers spend for big projects, which tend to make people more dependent all around. We encourage small projects at the village level, or those projects which improve communication. We question the Western educational system. We fund leader formation seminars. We started last year for the first time a common Lenten Appeal. National interests are, of course, often very different: Tonga wants to build schools, even though there is not much employment; Vanuatu goes for pig fences; the Cook Islands want to repair church roofs; New Caledonians don't know whether they are Pacific or French people; the Marquesas are never heard of — maybe they don't even know they are also in the Pacific.

The CEPAC Committee for Justice and Development has existed since 1972, but it's only now that some people are aware that we are there.

God grant that our people will understand one day that the Kingdom of God cannot be built without justice and peace.

## 8. Justice and Peace — Pakistan

Submitted by Bishop Bonaventure Paul and James D'Mello

You will find here brief descriptions of the objectives and activities of three groups working at different levels for conscientization: the Idara-e-Aman-o-Insaf in Karachi, the Social Awareness Leadership Training team based in Lahore, and the Commission for Justice and Peace of the Religious Superiors.

### I. Idara-E-Aman-O-Insaf

The Idara-e-Aman-o-Insaf (Committee for Peace and Justice) is an ecumenical group whose main activities are:

- the publication of *Jafakash*
- community organizing
- labor and human rights issues

The objectives of the group are:

- To promote Christian responsibility for the social, economic and spiritual dimensions of urbanization and industrialization in Pakistan.
- To awaken an interest in and a concern for the problems and prospects of urban-industrial and rural life among the Churches and Christian organizations, among individuals and groups who work in or are responsible for various aspects of urban-industrial and rural society, and among others who have similar interests.
- To represent ecclesiastical bodies and to co-operate with those organizations which seek to enhance and promote the social, economic and spiritual well-being of persons and groups effected by, and involved in, the urban-industrial and rural life of Pakistan.

The group uses the following means:

- Research, such as studies and surveys of particular issues of urbanization and industrialization, and of various groups who are central to these issues.
- Education, e.g., seminars, conferences, group discussions, production and dissemination of literature, etc.
- Organization of special interest groups which may assume responsibility for a part of the problems of urban-industrial and rural life in which they are involved.



—Representation of weak or powerless groups needing redress before the civic authorities or management, for wrongs committed against them.

—Reconciliation, i.e., bringing together complementary groups of persons to work out solutions to mutual problems and to promote a common understanding between labor and management, urban/rural residents and civic leaders, laity and clergy, etc.

—Initiation of pilot projects aimed at affecting improvement in situations needing change, and for which there are no other means for bringing about the needed change.

—Formulation of new ideas, models, ways of thinking about and responding to the challenge of the fundamental changes which are brought by powerful forces of urbanization and industrialization in Pakistan.

## **II. Social Awareness Leadership Training (SALT)**

### **How Salt Began**

Caritas Pakistan is an organization set up by the Bishops' Conference of Pakistan as an expression of the concern of the Catholics of Pakistan for justice, peace and development.

As a result of serious reflection and rethinking on its activities during the past few years, Caritas Pakistan has decided to concentrate on forms of social education among people that would liberate them from their subhuman existence. For this purpose it is considered necessary to have trained persons in all dioceses, and so Social Awareness and Leadership Training (SALT) was initiated.

### **What Motivates Us**

The majority of our people live in squalor and subhuman conditions. Unjust structures further oppress and dehumanize them. This results in people living a life without human respect and dignity. The exploitation and oppression of people further deny the basic freedom to create the necessary conditions and opportunities for the realization of the common good. For us Christians, every human person is destined to share in the divine nature of God. This faith of ours, therefore, urges us to work for the unity of people based on justice.

### **Aims and Objectives**

Our aim is to train people to work for a just and equitable society. A just and equitable society is both our norm and aspiration. We aim to

create a society in which every human being will be able to live a life worthy of human respect and dignity, having the basic freedom to create the conditions for the common good. Therefore, the content of our training course involves a deep respect for the human person and his innate dignity.

Our objectives are:

—To create awareness of the contemporary needs and aspirations of society. The principal objective in the training courses for justice is to awaken the participants to an objective knowledge of social reality.

—Through the conscientization of the participants in concrete human situations and through sensitizing them to forms of oppression, exploitation and marginalization we hope to activate people to take concrete action.

—To help analyze and assess the needs and aspirations of the people. A scientific approach is needed to diagnose the symptoms of injustice. People's needs can be true or false, felt or unmet. Their aspirations can be legitimate, reasonable or unreasonable, just or unjust. Without a correct assessment, priorities cannot be determined for action.

—To train leaders equipped with knowledge and skills to work with people. Mere knowledge and information of social issues will not effect any change in society unless participants are given the means of communicating practically. Ideas must have hands and feet. It is important to ensure that education will draw out of people their basic longings, desires and aspirations.

—To help organize people, programs and projects. The core of our training program is organization for action. This demands knowledge of organizing skills, democratic organizations, facilitating discussions and methods of decision-making.

—To assist community organizations to evaluate their programs and projects. We provide tools for objective analysis and evaluation to organizations engaged in community development, thus creating a platform for a realistic assessment of projects.

—To help effect social change through education. True education is liberating and humanizing. By starting with people's experience we affirm its richness. Through this reflection change in the concrete human experience can take place.

—To share a Christian vision of the individual and society. The values of the Kingdom of God, justice, peace, truth, love and freedom are to be created in all communities. This is the core of the message of Jesus, which is for all.

## Course Content

Social animation and awareness are based on adult education programs, using various approaches to communicate and to encourage socially conscious leaders at the local level; and to train people to help others utilize their potentialities to the full. The course affirms man and his unity among people and is based on the concept of development as building of people rather than making of projects. The main topics covered are as follows:

- A critical analysis of social reality
- A liberating view of faith
- Communication and group dynamics
- Group discussion techniques
- Social leadership
- Family life education
- Christian community building
- Program and project making
- Evaluation of projects and programs

The program has three phases:

- Reflection and analysis
- Organization for change
- Strategies for action

**Phase I:** The first phase is giving orientation to the group through group dynamics, community building and skills in group formation.

**Phase II:** A deeper reflection on the social reality and the restraining and driving forces of the group in its involvement in the community is done in the second phase.

**Phase III:** Techniques and skills:

- to create awareness among people
- choosing priorities and strategies
- organizational and managerial skills
- working towards social development and self-reliance.

## Methodology

A learning-by-doing method is adopted to develop leadership qualities. Other education methods, such as group discussions, field work, audio-visual aids, effective speaking, written assignments, poster-

making, social dramas, etc., enable the participants to acquire skills necessary for educating and communicating with people.

### **Target Groups**

Social Awareness and Leadership Training courses are offered to the following groups: farmers, workers, students/youth, catechists, women, nurses, teachers, priests and nuns, and other organized or non-organized groups.

### **Duration**

SALT programs are usually scheduled for weekends, Thursday afternoon to Saturday afternoon. However, this is open to change if a public holiday should fall on a weekend. Other arrangements are also accepted.

### **Language**

The language of the course is Urdu or Punjabi and, if necessary, English.

## **III. Justice and Peace Commission of the Major Religious Superiors**

### **Membership**

The Justice and Peace Commission of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious was established in January, 1981 with the initial task of "conscientization of religious in the country to the justice and peace dimension of their formation and their work." The membership has expanded from nine to eleven.

### **Issues Taken Up**

The commission in 1981 saw its task as establishing links with Caritas (SALT), with the Idara in Karachi, and with other groups, national and international; as establishing contact and exchanging information with other groups (religious) within Asia; as aiding in the awareness of religious by providing information, offering a justice and peace syllabus for formation, and developing a mobile animation team for workshops and retreats; as providing data and analysis; and as making known to the Conference of Superiors situations calling for a statement or response.

In two areas, those of animation and action, the commission has done the following:

## **Animation**

- Sought justice and peace contact persons in each religious congregation
- Co-ordinated a justice and peace day for the Conference of Superiors
- Sponsored or organized workshops (for religious and lay persons) on social analysis, liberation theology, militarization, Islamic laws and minorities.

## **Action**

- Offered scholarships for law and journalism
- Involved in the organization of local action groups
- Linked with the Idara in Karachi for the Justice and Peace newsletter
- Published frequent articles with a justice dimension
- Began a contact inventory of “those who have the cause of the poor at heart”
- Commissioned a survey (economic, political, cultural) of Pakistan
- Forwarded action requests from Amnesty International and Hotline (Hong Kong).

Two items on the agenda for the next meeting are:

- A proposal for a local hotline
- An analysis of the Church in Pakistan

## **Some of the Problems Faced**

- All those involved in the Justice and Peace commission are also very busy and fully involved elsewhere
- Difficulty in follow-up with groups who attend workshops and seminars (hence the need for local action groups)
- Martial Law and resultant timidity; fear of jeopardizing community
- The minority status of the Christian community
- The practical gap between the minority and majority community: weak linking between the two
- The general apathy of the mass of people—or rather their incredible ability to cope with unjust situations—becomes a barrier to awareness and action
- Financing

On the whole, attempts have been small and in many ways superficial. There has been, however, a much greater awareness that has grown up in the past few years. Of the several commissions established by the Conference of Religious, the Justice and Peace commission is the only one functioning.

Perhaps it is good to end this short list not with things done or problems faced but with hope, a vision of the future that is the heart of justice.

### **9. Justice and Peace — Philippines**

Submitted by Bishop Antonio Fortich and Fr. Cesario Sanedrin

#### **The Social Context**

The education and action programs of the National Secretariat of Social Action, Justice and Peace (NASSA) of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines were developed in response to the country's socioeconomic and political problems. NASSA has delineated for itself its role in the promotion of social justice through its various programs.

The concern and unifying goal of these programs is the implementation and realization of the Church's social teaching in the life and behavior of the various strata in Philippine society. The programs are constructed outside the academic environment. Instead they are promoted in the sociopastoral milieu of the parish and the diocesan communities. While co-ordinated at the national level, they are implemented eventually in the areas where the issues and events are situated.

The Philippines, since the declaration of Martial Law, has suffered from socioeconomic and political crisis.

The economic situation continues to favor the interests of a small minority at the expense of the marginals who compose the great majority. The lopsidedness in the development of people, as seen in the inequitable distribution of the country's income, best describes the economic situation. The gap between the "haves" and "have-nots" has increasingly widened. Inflation, unemployment, poverty, malnutrition, spiraling prices of prime commodities, lack of housing facilities are some of the glaring effects of the deteriorating economic situation. The brunt of these hardships is borne by the great majority of the Filipino people.

Politically, the country is more unstable than ever. Since Martial Law was declared, up to the present, the country is under the rule of one man. The Marcos dictatorship is becoming more entrenched through the national security ideology. The military has been playing a very important political role and has been a tool of repression by the dictatorship.

Foreign intervention in the political arena has worsened the plight of the Filipino people. The U.S.A. has repeatedly declared its support of the Marcos government in terms of military aid and foreign loans through the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF). Contradictory to their claims, this support is not beneficial to the Filipino people. It is aimed at protecting their investments in the Philippines, as well as preservation of their military bases in the country.

In our country, where 95% are Catholics, the people look to the Church for assistance in protection of their rights, support for their causes and for the promotion of programs which will respond to their needs and aspirations. More and more Church people have expressed their faith through involvement in the struggle of the poor, deprived, oppressed and exploited for total human liberation.

This growing involvement and participation of the Church in the total human development of our people is a major concern of the Marcos regime which considers as dangerous to national security any initiative that runs counter to its political and economic thrusts. Church people and leaders are targets of the Marcos regime in its efforts to restrict their activities to those supportive of the regime, and use and manipulate them as political allies of the establishment.

In the face of these restrictions, Church people and leaders committed to the cause of making the Church the "Church of the Poor" feel that they have to make the issues of the poor, deprived and oppressed and exploited their own concern.

This commitment is reinforced by many biblical themes, the current Church social teachings and by the living challenge of the people's struggles.

### **Activities**

The justice and peace programs of NASSA have been promoted towards the liberation of our people from the stranglehold of the ruling elite and the oppressive structures. Two main program directions were seen as a concrete response of the justice and peace work of NASSA, that is, education and conscientization to justice and action for justice.

A target of the justice and peace programs is to launch and support programs to educate the great majority in their rights—human and God-given rights—and to facilitate their organizations. Education and action for justice have also pinpointed the other sectors of the society, hoping that they will see the plight of the poor people and will support their cry for a decent way of life.

## **Desks**

To achieve effectively the twofold task of education and action for justice, NASSA's justice and peace work has set up the following desks:

- Documentation and Training Desk
- Liaison and Representation Desk
- Theological Renewal Education Desk
- Legal Desk

## **Documentation and Training**

It is essentially a service center which provides the following services to social action groups within the NASSA network and to social action groups, that is, agencies which work along the thrusts of NASSA but outside the NASSA network and to the people's organizations themselves:

- Community organization consultancy
- Resourcing services — labor education
  - peasant training
  - concerned citizens for justice and peace
  - paralegal training
- Documentation

## **Liaison and Representation**

This desk is geared towards the elite sector. Representation is made with bodies like the Bishops-Businessmen Conference, and with economic, government and military establishments.

## **Theological Renewal Education**

This desk is a concrete response to help in the education and conscientization of priests and religious, professionals, Church lay leaders and students.

## **Legal Services**

This desk adopts the well-settled postulate that law is seen as an



instrument of state-building. It is therefore viewed that the legal desk must work towards increasing rights' consciousness of people in the political and social, economic and cultural spheres of society, because once people are kept ignorant of their basic rights, human dignity is impaired and dehumanizing conditions become the rule rather than exception. Legal aid is not a matter of charity but a means to correct imbalances that may often lead to social injustice.

### **Funds**

NASSA has set up a fund for the promotion and defense of justice and human rights. It falls under two categories:

—Justice and Peace Emergency Fund. This is to provide financial support to the promotion and defense of justice, human rights and peace. It is also to provide an appropriate channel for individuals in the country and abroad who intend to contribute specifically to such causes.

—Justice and Peace Detainees' Fund. This is to help organize, develop and mobilize the families of detainees as the principal support group in the struggle of political detainees for their release.

### **10. Justice and Peace Commission — Sri Lanka**

Submitted by Bishop Vianney Fernando and Fr. W. Vincent Dep

### **Members of the Commission**

The National Commission consists of two bishops appointed by the Bishops' Conference, as president and the vice president, and three members nominated by each diocese, together with two representatives from the Major Religious Superiors' Conference. Groups are to be set up in each diocese and in parishes.

The National Commission invites various groups to collaborate with the work of the commission on specific issues. Such groups include specialists, scholars and influential citizens. Based on the findings and suggestions of such groups, the commission tries to activate the Christians and non-Christians on issues of justice and peace, through the structures that are available in the dioceses and parishes.

### **Issues Taken Up**

The National Commission was set up anew after the death of its former president, Bishop Leo Nanayakkara, simultaneously with the outbreak of communal conflicts in July, 1983. Thus the commission's

work so far has been concentrated on this issue of ethnic relationships, which is one of the most serious problems that affect the peace and justice of the country. Immediate action was needed not only to meet the relief and rehabilitation requirements of the victims but also to re-educate and change the attitudes of the people in general. At the level of national political leadership a solution had to be worked out that would bring about lasting peace and unity among the ethnic groups concerned and avoid a recurrence of such violence.

The program worked out by the Justice and Peace Commission involved education, using material prepared by a group of resource persons and carried out through schools and diocesan and parish groups. Distribution of relief was given to affected families, workers who lost employment, and those who migrated to the Northern areas for security.

A special group of scholars and concerned citizens of both communities met regularly to discuss and carry out action in three areas:

—Working out a formula towards a negotiated settlement, and the study of issues involved in such a settlement; for creating a suitable environment of public opinion for a settlement.

—To obtain the support of the Buddhist leadership (Mahasangha) to influence the thinking of the majority community and the national leadership.

—To bring together the Tamil-speaking people, starting with the creation of a forum for those in the South, to work for a united Sri Lanka on the basis of a just settlement. This has now led to the formation of an independent association of Tamil-speaking people, working for a solution to the minority problems within the framework of a unitary state.

These decisions are conveyed to the bishops and other Church personnel. The Justice and Peace Commission also helps in the process of the Church's participation in activities for national unity conducted by other organizations, such as Sarvodaya (Peace Walk) and Citizens' Committee for National Harmony. The Justice and Peace Commission also participated in the action of the workers who lost their employment due to factories being destroyed, and others affected, to move the government to expedite re-establishment of the factories and to create a secure environment, and to pay the workers their salaries until the situation was brought back to normal. The work since the Commission was set up has so far been confined to the above issue.

By setting up regional groups to highlight issues affecting all sections of the poor and oppressed and by setting up special teams to study specific issues, the commission intends to create awareness within and outside the Church to problems of justice and peace affecting such groups in society. It also intends to engage in solidarity action for other organizations and groups engaged in similar activities.

### **Future Plans**

The Justice and Peace Commission intends to work towards goals mentioned in its constitution (prepared by the commission and submitted to the Bishops' Conference for approval, to be finally accepted at the next meeting of the commission) by setting up groups to discuss and highlight issues of justice and peace that arise nationally and in the regions.

Special groups would be invited to deal with specific issues. Findings of such teams would be shared among the groups that would be formed in the dioceses and parishes by the representatives of the diocese in the National Commission.

## **11. Justice and Peace Commission — Thailand**

Submitted by Bishop Bunluen Mansap and Mr. Paul Chamniern

### **Origin**

That the Catholic Church is involved in social affairs derives from a religious teaching that religion exists to save mankind from sins and their adverse effects. Sin is an inhuman act that one performs with an aim to use other people as an instrument to satisfy one's own selfish needs, in such a way that they are not considered one's own brothers. This sin is inherent in human society and visible everywhere in the present time. It is from this sin, or "injustice," that the Church intends to save man by involving itself in worldly affairs.

Thai society is no different from other societies in which there still are exploitation, injustice and violence against people of different opinions. This is manifest in general phenomena today.

The Bishops' Conference of Thailand was well aware of this problem, and passed a resolution asking for the establishment of a Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand. On behalf of the Bishops' Conference of Thailand, Bishop Bunluen Mansap appointed scholars and personalities of various circles, known for their role in promoting

social justice, as members of the Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand on February 17, 1977.

### **Objectives**

- To promote religious persons' consciousness of and their interest in problems of injustice and violations of human rights
- To study and analyze thoroughly the causes of injustice
- To disseminate data and results of these studies by various means among concerned people or groups and to the public, either Thai or international
- To co-operate and co-ordinate its activities, either directly or indirectly, with those of other concerned people and agencies, with a view to finding a peaceful solution to those problems.

### **Activities**

- Analyses, in the form of case studies, of causes of social injustice
- Seminars on the results of such case studies
- Education by means of panel discussions, exhibitions and publications
- Co-operation with other Thai and foreign agencies sharing the same objectives
- Services in certain audio-visual forms to fulfil the afore-mentioned objectives

### **Recent Activities**

#### **1. Case Studies**

The Thai ruling class of different periods has appealed for foreign investments in Thailand, has proposed all promotional privileges to potential investors and has expected only good things. However, the Justice and Peace Commission of Thailand saw certain adverse effects of foreign investment and collaborated with *Research Group 79* in studying the impact of multinationals through a case study on the Dole-Thai Company. The Justice and Peace Commission finally discovered certain facts contrary to the belief of the Thai ruling class.

### **Women's Labor**

The present economic situation results in involving a large number of women in social affairs, notably in urging them to work outside the home to earn a better family income. Female labor has become one of human resources in the labor process. However, various social values still

impede the development of female labor. Female workers are facing various forms of injustice. The Justice and Peace Commission did a case study on this problem and put forth some true solutions.

### **Impact of Government and Non-Governmental Development Projects on the Life of Villagers**

A case study was done on the impact of governmental and non-governmental development projects in the last ten years on the lifestyle and the economic and social situation in Phonsoung Village. An emphasis was put on the study of the consequences of these projects in terms of peace and justice in the village.

### **Problems of Labor Migration to Bangkok**

Successive failures of the State agricultural development policies result in encouraging rural people to migrate to Bangkok and to sell their labor in order to survive. The number of migrating workers increases steadily. A case study centers upon the problems these workers are facing and the services they need while looking for a job, etc. The objective of the study is to collect data with a view to finding ways and means to help these workers.

### **Impact of the Year of Tourism (1980) on People's Income, Their Working Conditions, the Social Situation and Culture**

Although the Thai government, like those of other developing countries, asserts that the development of tourist industries leads to a redistribution of income to rural areas or is beneficial to the Thai economy as a whole, the results of a case study prove that they cause other adverse effects which the government should consider and urgently find measures to prevent or eliminate.

## **2. Seminars**

- On the Impact of Multinationals: The case of Dole-Thai Company.
- On Women's Workers: Problems and Solutions
- On Labor Migration to Bangkok.

## **3. Education**

Exhibitions and panel discussions on such important days or occasions as the World Day of Peace, International Women's Day and Human Rights Day.

## V. THE FINAL PAPER OF THE CONSULTATION

### What is Justice and Peace Work?

The Justice and Peace commissions of Asia and Oceania which we represent have defended the rights of tribal people, farmers, the landless, workers, prisoners—political or otherwise—women, migrants, refugees, unborn babies and the handicapped. They have criticized authoritarian governments, militarism and multinational corporations. They have worked for peace in the world and an end to the arms race, especially of nuclear weapons. They have, in addition, tried to make others, in and out of the Church, aware of these problems.

We believe these are the true concerns and scope of justice and peace work in Asia and Oceania.

### Sources of Inspiration

Justice and peace work is a concrete way of realizing the pledge of the Asian Church to become “the Church of the Poor” (Asian Bishops Meeting, Manila 1970). In other parts of the world this same commitment has been described as “a preferential option for the poor” (Puebla, 1979).

We have been guided in this work by the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church, the body of social insights and principles that the Church has evolved over the years. The social teaching is neither an ideology nor a fixed model of society. It remains for local Churches, therefore, to analyze their own situations and work out creative applications (*Octogesima Adveniens*, no. 4).

### Option for the Poor

As far as the Church is concerned, it makes this option simply because it is the option of Jesus, the Evangelizer; not because the poor are better than the rich; neither because they are holy and the rich are not; much less because they are the majority.

To make an option for the poor means to look at this world through the eyes of the poor, especially the poor who have come to realize their human dignity and the injustice done them and are prepared to do something about it.

We admit our perspective now is different from that of the poor and while it is different, we can never empathize fully with their suffering and their aspirations for justice, freedom, truth, fellowship, love and peace.

Our first task therefore is to put on the mind of the poor.

If we do not do this, we will continue to talk about the poor and make plans that we do not take too seriously. We may have some consolation thinking we have done something. If we do not share the world view of the poor, we will be like the National Security States which believe they really have nothing to learn from the people.

To put on the mind of the poor means we see the whole of God's plan turns upon the liberation of the poor; his dreams for his people are frustrated by their suffering; his Kingdom comes nearer the more the poor are clothed, fed and manage their own lives. It means we put our full trust in God's work among the poor.

Voluntary poverty and a simple lifestyle can be a great help in sharing the world of the poor and an indictment of those who live for power and riches.

### **Our Analysis of Asia's Problems**

The basic problem of justice in Asia is poverty. If development is the new name of peace, poverty is the new name of injustice. In this sense, Asia is the continent of injustice.

Excluding Japan, Asia is the continent of the poor. It has a far less share of the world's wealth and income than its population deserves, worse even than Africa and Latin America. This poverty is not inevitable or irremediable. There is no reason why Asia cannot develop, provided that industrialization is geared to those sectors which generate employment and self-sufficiency. There are no physical impediments to eradicating poverty.

What causes this poverty? Underdevelopment of our economies and inequality, in combination. Underdevelopment is the failure to make the optimal use of resources to meet the people's needs; inequality is the failure to distribute the national product according to needs or to deeds.

Underdevelopment and poverty are the products of Western intrusion into Asia. The West controlled Asia by superior arms, by the policy of divide and rule and by dinning into Asian minds the superiority of what is Western and the inferiority of what is Asian. To control Asians, Western powers co-opted Asian elites who became junior partners of Western imperialism and exploitation. This led to fostering social structures of inequality. Colonialism also structured the economies

of Asia to meet the demands of Europe and North America instead of the needs of Asian peoples. These economic structures persist and are the main causes of Asia's underdevelopment. Together, inequality and underdevelopment produce the poverty that characterizes Asia.

Asia's state of poverty today is maintained by international forces, such as the North's treatment of the South, and the conflict between East and West. The problems of militarism and injustice can be traced to these causes also. World armaments' expenditure last year almost equalled the entire debt of the Third World. The military receives more in budgetary outlays than does education or health. The West seems unwilling to accept anything that hinders it in getting richer — proposals for a New International Economic Order seem finished, for example. And Western investments and loans and the World Bank are used to impose Western-oriented models of development. These policies cause such dislocation and oppression that strong, repressive military and police forces are needed if the policies are to be pursued.

So the poverty, inequality, underdevelopment, militarism and oppression that affect Asia are all interrelated. They are maintained by both national and international forces.

We believe this understanding of our problems serves as an adequate working social analysis. An understanding of our root problems is necessary or our work will lack cohesion and be ineffective. We can begin anywhere, but we must know the forces ranged against us.

We need social analysis. Lack of a scientific critical-analytical understanding of society at all levels, local, Asian and global, is one of the major weaknesses of the Church. It dulls the spirit and hampers action. In the absence of a clear and critical grasp of social reality, our goodwill can develop services which may betray the cause of justice, hurt people, forge new chains of enslavement and lead the Church to take the wrong side. It is when the analytically-understood social reality is brought into dialectical relationship with the faith as grasped here and now that clear visions of justice and concrete action programs can come to birth. To secure for the Church at all levels a formation in historical, structural, action-oriented analysis of society would constitute a test of the Church's commitment to justice and a first step in its praxis.

### **Problems Within the Church**

There are also problems, especially problems of attitude, within the Church, that limit the effectiveness of justice and peace work.



## Harmony and Confrontation

Asians value harmony and so value dialogue and consensus over confrontation and conflict. But there is a limit, even for Asians. When dialogue fails, Asians will resort to confrontation, but not necessarily to violence. The model for non-violent confrontation was an eminent Asian, Mahatma Gandhi. To see confrontation as contrary to Asian values is to mistake the culture of alienation and poverty for Asian culture. Every people in the world seeks to avoid conflict but conflict remains inevitable. Asians too know this. It is a misreading of history to see Asian culture as non-violent, even in the present. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute lists sixteen major wars in this century and of these ten were fought in Asia by Asians in opposition to imperialism and oppression. In any case, can there be anything more violent than the violence of the structures that keep too many Asians in hunger, despair and oppression?

Today a large number of the poor in Asia have awakened to violence done to their human dignity and the violation committed against their human rights. They have taken up the struggle for their liberation from the wanton acts and oppressive systems that condemn them to poverty, misery, despair, fatalism and colonial dependence.

How does the Church look at their struggle for liberation? Are we ready to stand by the poor and support, even join them in their struggle? Should liberation from sin be directed to liberation from all the consequences of sin, structural and systematic, liberation from every oppressive situation?

What is the Church's attitude towards violence? What is it doing to forestall or avoid the incidence of armed violence?

The Church has always recognized and upheld the moral principle of just war and self-defense. Both involve violence. On the other hand, the Church has consistently advocated that violence is not in keeping with the Gospel.

We must understand the sources of violence in society, the dynamics of violence.

It has been said, "It is not the people who breed violence but the tyrants."

## Justice and Faith

Some Catholics see a conflict or an opposition between justice and faith where actually there is none.

Justice and faith are mutually constitutive. We cannot have the one without the other. Biblical revelation (to which faith is the response) in its foundational event discloses God as Justice intervening in history to end slavery, abolish domination and set the oppressed free. God's justice is not forensic. Rather, it is God's fidelity to every creature God has loved into existence: a fidelity which provides all that is required, and more than is required, for each creature to become fully itself along with the rest of creation. God clothes the flowers and feeds the birds, and makes the sun shine and the rain fall on all people, irrespective of their demerits and merits. This fidelity of God is the justice of the Kingdom for which we are to strive and hunger and thirst. Human beings need food, clothing and shelter; they need health, rest and community, love and friendship; they need to be named, spoken to and honored; and they need freedom and creative imagination and the material on which these can be exercised; and human beings need forgiveness and assurance. God is faithful, and provides these in abundance in the gift of the earth, in the gift of the human community, in human inventiveness and in the yearnings and interlockings of our hearts and the dreams of our spirit.

To believe is to collaborate with God so that all women and men everywhere may have these blessings in abundance; and may, through them, have deep personal and social experience of God's love-fidelity which they can then share and thus be faithful-just to one another. In the practice of justice, then, the experience of God would abound. Injustice on the other hand and unjust structures obscure and hamper the historical realization of God's fidelity-justice and blackout the divine face. They distort God's image, and end up projecting unbelief and/or idolatry. The challenge of Jesus is as pressing today as ever; and clearer than ever. God or Mammon. We cannot serve both or pretend to be neutral. That is why, according to Jeremiah, to know God, to have faith-experience of God, is to do justice. The passionate pleading of prophets is not for ritual, asceticism or sacrifice but for the flow of justice like a river in spate. For what is it that God really requires? Not that holocausts be offered but that we "act justly, love tenderly and walk humbly with our God" (Micah 6:8). And the summons Jesus issues is that primacy be given to quest for the justice of God's Reign against the injustice, inequality, oppression and misery of the rule of Caesars and Herods and all other powers which prove themselves satanic by the deprivation, domination and wretchedness they administer. Love one another is

Jesus' final invitation; as he has loved. And he loved by providing the health, the bread, the rice, the liberty, the honor and the acceptance the neglected masses of the people needed to become fully themselves and know themselves and one another as God's children. Justice is the basic form of love. Where justice is absent, love cannot grow; there love lacks earth and roots.

God's justice is concrete and contextual. In Egypt it meant liberation for slaves; in the desert it meant bread for the hungry. In Galilee the justice of God's Reign meant freedom and fellowship for outcasts and sinners. Before accumulated wealth God's justice is the summons to opt out of greed and join the *community* of the non-acquisitive. And before oppressive religion it take the form of a startling affirmation of the primacy and centrality of human beings. The Sabbath is for people, not the other way around. The shape of justice and its demands have to be discerned and defined in each concrete historical situation. Centrally produced social doctrines can only give certain general orientations which have to be put in dialectical interaction with concrete contexts before they can be of meaningful service. It is important to remember too that no teaching is free of historical and cultural conditioning, and consequent limitations and blind spots. General and universal doctrines can fail to speak to crying needs and pressing problems. The commitment to justice of the local Church in given contexts is crucial here. In each place the community with its leadership has to discern and determine the meaning of justice and the appropriate action to be taken. This of course cannot be done once for all; it will be an ongoing process in the wake of the truth that keeps emerging. The truth of the people and of society, the truth of history and of justice itself, emerges in and through the praxis of justice. Through sustained praxis, always to be critically evaluated, the Church too realizes itself progressively.

### **Women and Discrimination**

In nearly all the Asian lands women are victims of multiple oppression and injustice. It is important in this context that the Church eliminate from its midst every semblance of discrimination based on sex difference. All Asians must be able to see that in the Christian Churches there is real equality and justice; that in them the future (the eschatological) world is already being realized. Admission of women to all positions of leadership and decision-making on a par with men will not only enrich the faith-life of the community but shine out as a hopeful and compelling sign before the peoples of this continent. It will challenge, too, some of our entrenched social attitudes which are little consonant with the spirit of the Gospel.

## **Co-operation with Others**

It is imperative that we link up with people of other faiths and ideologies who are committed to the same goal of justice and equality and a free, fraternal, non-exploitative society. It will be a privilege for us to explore with others the liberational potential of all the religions and their resources to challenge injustice and trigger action for change.

We are a tiny minority in Asia and can do almost nothing by ourselves. We should realize this and not romanticize the possibilities of our work, but we should also resolve to co-operate with other religions and traditions since together we can achieve a great deal.

We share with other religions and traditions a thirst for justice and freedom and we can co-operate with them on this basis. Many Church meetings (the meeting on Christian-Muslim Dialog, Varanasi, December 1983, for example) have recommended joint action for development and justice as a first positive step in interreligious dialogue. The 1971 Roman Synod on Justice in the World also strongly urged such co-operation in justice matters.

We should not fear being used or manipulated, provided we have a clear grasp of our vision and methodology; but we should be realistic and give special training to people who are working on the borderline between the Christian and non-Christian worlds. Once these people are prepared we should be willing to give them our full support and the freedom of action they need.

## **Risk and Challenge**

We shall not be naive, and shall not forget that social justice and newness have to be bought with a price. In action for justice there is danger and risk. We remember Archbishop Oscar Romero and the thousands of women and men killed in Central America and South Africa for taking a stand for justice and the dignity of people. We remember the martyrs of Asia, who have borne witness to the truth of human beings before Asia's dictators, generals and exceptional regimes.

We remember Jesus the martyr of freedom and justice. And we recall his poetic parable of the grain of wheat which must fall to the ground and die if it would rise to new life and burst into a harvest. We pray that we may not refuse to die. We pray that we may stand together and support one another. Does that parable apply only to individual Christians or also to the Church in each place and each epoch? Instinctively the Church seeks to survive. Survive for what? If not to bear

witness to God's justice and love? But to do so is to come to the cross. The Church too must be ready to die in order to rise again; rise not necessarily as Church, but as something greater, something transformed: as the Kingdom of God in the wider human history.

## VI. RESOLUTIONS

- A. We agreed to establish the Justice and Peace Coordinating Committee for Asia and Oceania (JPCCAO).

It has four tasks:

1. Co-ordinate justice and peace groups
2. Oversee and advise the Hotline
3. Prepare a further justice and peace consultation\*
4. Explore possibilities of working with the Asian Partnership for Human Development (APHD)

It is composed of:

- One representative from each of the four regions
- One from the FABC Office of Human Development (OHD)
- They have the authority to co-opt two more members.

- B. Concerning the training of justice and peace workers.

It was agreed to set up a co-ordinating training team with one representative from each region and an OHD representative. It is to arrange useful training programs. Some suggestions for these programs were: exchange, exposure programs; give information on available programs; arrange a three-month training program.

## II. Recommendations to National Justice and Peace Commissions.

- A. Provide training for justice and peace workers
- B. Appoint persons, preferably on the Justice and Peace commission, as contacts for Hotline, Labor and Women Workers programs. The contact for the Women Workers program should be a woman, if possible.
- C. Circulate newsletters, etc.

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\* JPCCA should within two years make a judgment on the need for such a meeting.

- D. Co-operate with Center for the Progress of Peoples on Labor Dossier, booklet on the Spirituality of Workers, and exchange of literature on workers.
- E. Attempt to find some time in the formation of seminarians for their exposure to the life situation of workers, so that they will be equipped to function in a working class society.
- F. Recommend that a Sunday close to Labor Day be set aside as "Workers' Sunday," when there will be a statement of bishops and/or Justice and Peace commission on workers and a meaningful liturgical celebration.
- G. Attempt to co-ordinate with different Church groups (catechetical programs, schools, etc.) in an educational effort on workers problems and the Church's teaching on work and workers.
- H. Attempt to build networks among interested labor groups at the national and Asian levels. At the Asian level the Center for the Progress of Peoples will co-ordinate..
- I. Attempts at an ongoing conscientization of the members of the Church in justice matters should be made in ways appropriate to each national group. One way may be to have a team of resource persons available to give talks, advice, etc.

FABC PAPERS is a project of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), designed to bring the thinking of Asian experts to a wider audience and to develop critical analysis of the problems facing the Church in Asia from people on the scene. The opinions expressed are those of the author alone and do not necessarily represent the official policies of the FABC or its member Episcopal Conferences. Manuscripts are always welcome and may be sent to: FABC, G.P.O. Box 2984, Hong Kong.

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  - g. The Role of Women in the Church as a Community of Faith in Asia
  - h. Seminaries and Religious Houses as Centers of Formation of Church as Community of Faith in Asia
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