

RELIGION AND POLITICS IN THE ASIAN CONTEXT

- I. FAITH AND POLITICS, CHURCH AND STATE: CHURCH TEACHING AND THE ASIAN CONTEXT, by Romeo J. Intengan
- II. RELIGION AND POLITICS, by George V. Lobo

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CHURCH TEACHING AND THE ASIAN CONTEXT**

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

A. Faith and Politics, Church and State:	
Contemporary Official Catholic Christian Teaching.....	3
(1) Basic notions	3
(2) How Christian faith and politics should be related.....	4
(a) fundamental principles.....	4
(b) principles more specific to the relation between Christian faith and politics.....	8
(3) How Church and state should be related	9
B. Faith and Politics, Church and State:	
Identifying a Contemporary Paradigm for their Relationship.....	11
(1) Justification for the effort to identify a paradigm.....	11
(2) Features of this paradigm	12
(3) Differentiation between pastors and laity in the appropriate form of Christian participation in political life	16

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C. Faith and Politics, Church and State:	
The Asian Context.....	19
(1) Main similarities in the situation in various Asian countries.....	19
(2) Basic typology of settings specifying the problematic	20
(3) Ethico-pastoral guidelines of general or broad applicability in the Asian context	22
(4) Ethico-pastoral guidelines for the different situations in which the Church finds itself in various Asian countries	24
Type A: country with a large Catholic Christian majority (Philippines).....	24
Type B: countries with considerable Catholic Christian minorities	25
Subtype B-1: culturally Confucian capitalist newly industrialized countries (South Korea, Singapore, Hongkong).....	25
Subtype B-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing country (Sri Lanka)	27
Subtype B-3: Islamic majority capitalist developing country (Lebanon, Indonesia).....	27
Subtype B-4: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing country (Vietnam)	29
Type C: countries with small Catholic Christian minorities... 30	
Subtype C-1: culturally Confucian capitalist industrialized countries (Japan, Taiwan).....	30
Subtype C-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing countries (Thailand, Cambodia).....	31
Subtype C-3: Buddhist majority socialist developing country (Myanmar).....	33
Subtype C-4: Hindu majority capitalist developing countries (India, Nepal).....	34
Subtype C-5: Islamic majority capitalist developing countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan)	36
Subtype C-6: Islamic majority socialist developing countries with authoritarian governments (Iraq, Syria)	39
Subtype C-7: Jewish majority capitalist developed country (Israel).....	39
Subtype C-8: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing countries (China, Laos).....	40
(5) Footnotes	42

This paper has three aims. First, to present the contemporary official teaching of the Catholic Christian Church on the relation between faith and politics and that between Church and state. Second, to identify a contemporary paradigm for the relationship between faith and politics and between Church and state. Third, to reflect on the implications of this teaching in the Asian context. Each of these three aims will be pursued in succession in the three main sections of this paper:

**A. Faith and Politics, Church and State:
Contemporary Official Catholic Christian Teaching**

(1) Basic notions

The issue of the relationship between Christian faith and politics, on the one hand, and that of the relationship between Church and state, on the other, though interconnected, are nevertheless distinct.

The relationship between Christian faith and politics has to do with how the meanings and values of Christian faith mold and judge politics. By politics we mean the organized and purposeful activity by which groups within a given society advance their interests, with or without reference to the common good, by promoting particular arrangements of civil, legal and military power in that society. Politics involves the entire society organized as a political community, that is to say, as being governed, in the pursuit of the common good and/or the resolution of social conflicts, according to particular arrangements of civil, legal and military power. In the present condition of the world the primary meaning of “society” here is the national political community, while its analogous meaning is the international society.

The relationship between Church and state has a narrower scope than that between Christian faith and politics. It involves two institutions — Church and state — which exist within a larger society. The Church and the state are themselves central but incomplete embodiments of the religious and the political concerns of human beings — Catholic Christians in the case of the Church, and all the citizens of a given sovereign political community, in the case of the state.

The principles governing the relation between Christian faith and politics are of a doctrinal kind, with relatively general applicability, while those governing the relation between Church and state, though having a doctrinal basis, also have a strongly prudential character, and are suitably presented in relatively particular and concrete terms.

(2) How Christian faith and politics should be related ¹

(a) fundamental principles

In contemporary Catholic Christian teaching regarding the relationship between faith and politics, the most fundamental principles are the following: the dignity and rights of the human person, the social nature of human beings, and respect for the integrity of creation.

The *dignity of the person* is based on the fact that he or she is created in the image and likeness of God and, through Christ, elevated to a supernatural destiny transcending the life of this present world. That human beings, as persons, are intelligent and free, and are the subjects of rights and of duties, is the primary principle in the social teaching of the Church, and hence also the primary principle in the teaching about the relationship between faith and politics.²

Human rights — some political and civil, others social, economic and cultural — derive by an intrinsic logic from the dignity of the human person, are universal, inviolable and inalienable. These rights entail corresponding duties, and should be understood in a context of solidarity and in a manner stressing the requirements of a community nature which solidarity implies.³ The right to religious liberty, touching as it does the intimate sphere of the spirit, is a point of reference and in a certain sense the measure of other fundamental rights.⁴

There is a basic equality among all human beings because they are all endowed with a rational soul, are created in God's image, have the same nature and origin and, being redeemed by Christ, they enjoy the same divine calling and destiny. This equal dignity of human beings as persons entails the obligation for all to strive for fairer and more humane conditions of life for all men and women.⁵

While the above-mentioned rights and duties are primarily rights and duties of the individual person, there are also analogous rights and duties of which the subjects are peoples. An example of this is the right to development.⁶

In contemporary times, two aspects of human dignity and freedom are the objects of persistent aspirations that grow stronger to the extent that human beings become better informed and better educated. These are the aspirations to equality and to participation, which seek to promote a democratic society.⁷

Human beings are *social by nature*, The progress of the individual hu-

man person and the advance of society hinge on each other. Human beings are not sufficient in themselves to attain their full development. They need to serve each other, to dialogue with each other, in order to develop their talents and attain their supernatural destiny.⁸

Human beings are called to share in the unfolding plan of God's creation. There is a God-given *integrity* to creation, meaning to say, that God endowed the universe with its own internal, dynamic balance. Human beings must respect this order. Failure to do so is a rejection of God's plan for creation.⁹

From the dignity, rights and social nature of the human person and respect for the integrity of creation, the other permanent principles for reflection which guide and govern social life in general, and political life in particular, are derived. Among these are the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, participation, the organic concept of social life, the universal purpose of goods, the duty to promote justice, the need to work for change of social structures, the preferential option for the poor, care for the habitability of the natural environment and promotion of a sustainable model of development.

Individuals, families, and the various social groups — whether natural or voluntary — which make up civil society need a wider community, where each one can make a specific contribution to an even broader implementation of the common good. For this reason they set up various forms of political community. The political community exists for the common good, which is the justification and source of its legitimacy. The common good embraces the sum of those conditions of social life which enable individuals, families and organizations to achieve complete and efficacious fulfillment with greater ease.¹⁰ It consists, especially, in safeguarding the rights and duties of the human person.¹¹

Although the common good is higher than private interests, it is inseparable from the good of the human person, so much so that public authorities have the duty to recognize, respect, regulate and protect human rights and facilitate the fulfillment of corresponding duties. In their pursuit of the common good, public authorities are to promote the advantage of all citizens and of the whole human being, considered in his or her temporal and transcendent dimension, while respecting a correct hierarchy of values and making appropriate adjustments to historical circumstances.¹²

Solidarity and subsidiarity are two other important principles governing social life. The *principle of solidarity* affirms that each person, as a member of society, is indissolubly linked to the destiny of society itself,

and, because of the Gospel, to the prospects for the salvation of all other human beings. Solidarity, defined as the firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good, has been identified by Pope John Paul II as a human and Christian virtue.¹³ The ethical demands of this principle require all individual human beings, groups and local communities, associations and organizations, nations and continents, to participate in the management of all the activities of economic, political and cultural life, while overcoming individualism and the disproportionate promotion of sectional interests.¹⁴

The *principle of subsidiarity* affirms that social institutions have an auxiliary and complementary function concerning the tasks and needs of smaller or subordinate social groupings and individuals. This means to say that, on the one hand, the larger or higher social groups, or society as a whole, must leave to the smaller or subordinate social groups or individuals what they can do adequately by their own power, and that, on the other hand, these larger or higher social groups, or society as a whole, must assist the smaller or subordinate social groups and individuals when these are unable by themselves to accomplish a necessary or at least a useful task for their own welfare and for the common good.¹⁵ Subsidiarity is considered as the complement of solidarity. It protects the human person, local communities and intermediary social groups from the danger of losing their legitimate autonomy. This principle is important for the effective recognition of the dignity of the human person, for respect for what is most human in the organization of social life,¹⁶ and for the safeguarding of the rights of peoples in relations between individual societies and universal society.¹⁷

A well-ordered society follows an *organic concept of social life*. This principle requires that the society be founded, on the one hand, on the inner dynamism of its members, which originates in the intelligence and free will of the persons who seek the common good in solidarity. On the other hand, it is founded on the structure and organization of society comprised not only of individual free persons, but also intermediate bodies which are integrated into higher units, beginning with the family, and arriving — through local communities, professional associations, regions and national states — at supernatural bodies and the universal society of all peoples and nations.¹⁸

Participation occupies a predominant place in recent developments of the social teaching of the Church. It refers to the just, proportionate and responsible participation of all members and sectors of society in the development of socio-economic, political and cultural life. Its importance lies in the fact that it ensures the fulfillment of the ethical requirements of social justice.¹⁹

100. The principle of *the universal purpose of goods* affirms that the goods of the earth are for the use of everyone to satisfy their right to a life consonant with the dignity of the person and the needs of the family.²⁰ Consequently, the right to private property, valid and necessary in itself, must be restricted within the limits imposed by its social function.²¹

101. The salvation that Christ proclaims as the core of his Good News is the gift of God which liberates people from everything that oppresses them, but which is above all liberation from sin, by giving oneself over to God.²² The faith which leads to salvation can never be separated from *the promotion of justice* and the transformation of the structures of society, though it can not be reduced to the latter. It must reach the whole person, including the person's openness to the absolute. It begins in this life but is fulfilled in eternity.²³

102. The action of authentic Christian faith in society and in the political field should be characterized by a *preferential option for the poor*. By the poor we mean those persons, social groups or nations who are most victimized by social injustice, manifested in the lack of material goods and of participation in social and political life, or whose dignity is trampled upon and whose human rights are violated.²⁴

103. Care for the *habitability of the natural environment* by human beings is entailed by respect for life.²⁵ Human development is a right of all people and all peoples. However, it is a right not yet enjoyed by the majority of human beings, whose lives are characterized by economic, social and cultural deprivation. On the other hand, a minority of human beings from the wealthy countries consume more than their just share of the economic goods of the world, at a pace which strains the carrying capacity of the natural environment, and which is therefore unsustainable in the long run. The type of development which human beings ought to pursue for the whole of humankind should be of a quality and quantity that can be sustained indefinitely, because it would keep well within the capacity of the natural environment, aided by technology, to renew itself.

(b) principles more specific to the relation between Christian faith and politics

The social teaching of the Church is not an ideology, nor a politico-economic model or system set up alongside and in competition with others. Its social teaching is a formulation of the results of reflection on the realities of social human life in the light of faith. This social teaching has the nature of theological interpretation.²⁶

Through this social teaching the Church encourages her faithful, and especially the laity, to become aware of their responsibility in the political community. They should cultivate patriotism, while keeping in mind the good of the whole human family. The Christian faithful should conscientiously search and opt for solutions to the social problematic, when these can be found in given models or systems which can serve as mediations of Christian practice in the socio-political field.²⁷ None of these models or systems, even if achieved, is to be identified with the kingdom of God,²⁸ though such achievements do reflect and anticipate the glory of the kingdom which the Church awaits at the end of history when the Lord will come again.²⁹ The Christian faithful should recognize the legitimacy of differing points of view regarding the way society should be organized.³⁰ This is especially true when the situations in which Christians find themselves in are quite diverse.³¹

The action of the Church in evangelizing political life is a differentiated one, in the sense that typically the pastors of the Church and the laity have distinct roles. This distinction of roles is related to the distinction between "politics" and "political commitment."³² "Politics" has to do with "ethical" matters — political behavior as the latter affects the religious sphere, and everything that concerns human dignity, fundamental human rights, the common good, and social justice. "Political commitment" has to do with "technical" matters — concrete decisions, programs, campaigns, and the exercise of power — by which the ethical principles of Christian involvement in politics can be carried out.³³ "Politics" is a task of the whole Church, and here the pastors properly exercise their teaching role. "Political commitment" is a task for the laity, acting with a lawful conscience informed by the Gospel.³⁴ Pastors of the Church, in order to better preserve their freedom in the evangelization of political reality, should keep themselves outside of the various parties and groups, involvement in which could create divisions or compromise the effectiveness of the apostolate, and should withhold preferential support from these parties and groups, unless the common good requires it in concrete and special circumstances.³⁵

In the work of Christian liberation, the Church rejects the use of violent means because the latter provokes violence and engenders new forms of oppression,³⁶ except when there is long-standing tyranny which gravely damages fundamental personal rights and the common good.³⁷

The Church and the political community, in their own spheres of competence, are autonomous and independent from each other. Yet both, under different titles, are devoted to the good of the same human beings. Their appropriate cooperation is conducive to the welfare of the whole person of all human beings.³⁸

(3) How Church and state should be related

The moral status of different arrangements according to which Church and state relate to each other depends on one main criterion — whether or not the arrangement respects human rights, particularly the right to religious liberty. The official teaching of the Church on religious liberty is expressed mainly in the Declaration on Religious Freedom (*Dignitatis humanae*) issued by Vatican Council II on December 7 1965,³⁹ and in no. 76 of the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*.⁴⁰ What follows is a summary of that teaching.⁴¹

The right to freedom in religious matters, freedom from psychological and external coercion, and freedom to seek truth, adhere to it and act on it, inheres in each human being by reason of his or her dignity as a person endowed with reason and free will and, therefore, with conscience and personal responsibility. All human beings are impelled by nature and morally obliged to seek the truth and adhere to it. While Catholic Christians believe that in Jesus and his Church God has made known the true religion, this truth, like all others, can impose itself on the human mind only by virtue of its own truthfulness (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 1).⁴²

Human beings cannot fulfill the obligation to seek and adhere to the truth in a way that is in keeping with their own nature, unless they enjoy both psychological freedom and immunity from external coercion (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 2).⁴³

It is by means of conscience that the human being recognizes truth as a norm of human behavior. Just as persons must adhere to the truth they have discovered in order to respond faithfully to their nature, so too human beings are obliged to follow their respective consciences so that they may come to God as their last end. Consequently, no one can be forced to act contrary to conscience nor prevented from acting according to conscience, except when such omission or action is deleterious to public order (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 3).⁴⁴

The human person is essentially social. In the very process by which a human being seeks the truth he or she is social. This social nature of the human person demands freedom for external and social expression and communication of internal religious commitment (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 3).⁴⁵ Moreover, the subjects of the right to religious freedom are not only individual persons as such, but religious communities and families (*Dignitatis humanae*, nos. 4, 5).⁴⁶

Because private and public acts of religion are acts by which people

direct themselves to God, they transcend the temporal order. Therefore, the civil authority, the purpose of which is to promote the common good in the temporal order, ought to recognize and look with favor on the religious life of the citizens. But if it presumes to control or restrict religious activity, it must be said to have exceeded the limits of its power (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 3).⁴⁷ The common good of society consists in the sum total of those conditions of social life which enable human beings to achieve a fuller measure of perfection with greater ease. It consists especially in safeguarding the rights and duties of the human person. While it is a duty of all individuals, groups, religious communities and the Church to protect the rights of all, it is especially an obligation of the civil authority (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 6).⁴⁸

Since the right to freedom in religious matters is exercised in society, its use is subject to regulation by the civil authority. In regulating the exercise of human rights, the civil authority ought to be guided by the requirements of public peace, good order, and true justice, which are required for the protection of public morality. These matters pertain to public order, and are basic to the common good. However, civil authority should respect the principle of the integrity of freedom in society, and, consequently, human freedom should be given the fullest possible recognition and should not be curtailed except when and insofar as it is necessary in the interest of public order (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 7).⁴⁹

The right to religious freedom is known both from reason and from revelation. Though revelation does not explicitly affirm the right to immunity from external coercion in religious matters, it, nevertheless, shows forth the dignity of the human person in religious matters. Moreover, it shows us Christ's respect for the freedom with which human beings are to fulfill their duty of believing the word of God, and it teaches us the spirit which disciples of Christ must acknowledge and follow in all things (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 9-11, especially no. 9).⁵⁰

It is only in a truly free society that the Church can fulfill her divine mission (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 13).⁵¹ Freedom of religion does not absolve members of the Church from the obligation to Christ to grow in the knowledge of truth received from him, to be faithful in announcing it, and to be vigorous in defending it without having recourse to methods which are contrary to the spirit of the Gospel (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 14).⁵²

Religious freedom must be given effective constitutional protection everywhere, and that highest of a human being's rights and duties — to lead a religious life with freedom in society — must be respected (*Dignitatis humanae*, no. 15).⁵³

In performing her evangelizing mission, the Church renounces privileges offered by the state, and is even prepared to give up the exercise of certain legitimately acquired rights, if the latter would compromise the credibility or efficacy of her work. The Church, however, claims the freedom to preach the faith, to teach her social doctrine, and to pass moral judgment in those matters which concern public order.⁵⁴

B. Faith and Politics, Church and State: Identifying a Contemporary Paradigm for Their Relationship

(1) Justification for the effort to identify a paradigm

The effort to define a contemporary paradigm for the relationship between Christian faith and politics and between Church and state (henceforth referred to as "the problematic") implies the making of generalizations which are applicable in some measure to all contemporary sociopolitical situations. These situations are quite diverse, and the diversity of these situations gives rise to caution regarding such generalizations. For example, John Langan, S.J., has this to say:

Church and state are structured differently, and religion and politics are conceived somewhat differently in different societies and different religious traditions. This fact should lead us to be skeptical of generalizations and appreciative of the pragmatic adjustments which different societies have made to resolve conflicts in this area. There is a continuing need to avoid the imposition of the norms and expectations of one culture or one historical period.⁵⁵

The foregoing caution regarding generalizations and the suggestion to be open to pragmatic adjustments in addressing the problematic is well taken. Nevertheless, the main elements and outlines of a paradigm for addressing the problematic exist in the social teaching of the Church.⁵⁶ It is our task now to make the necessary generalizations in as nuanced and flexible, yet principled, a way so as to identify this paradigm.

(2) Features of this paradigm

We begin describing this paradigm by affirming that the meanings and values of Christian faith have implications for the understanding and ethical assessment of political structures and for the discernment of appropriate human conduct in relation to these structures, including the state. In this descriptive and normative endeavor, the key category proceeding from Christian faith is human dignity, which is concretized in human rights and duties. Among these rights is that of freedom of conscience, of which free-

dom of religion is an aspect. Among the corresponding duties is that of respecting freedom of conscience and the freedom of religion that forms part of the latter.

Freedom of religion includes freedom of both religious belief and religious practice. Freedom of religious practice includes the freedom to publicly propagate the teachings of one's religion, including such of its teachings as directly address society in general and politics in particular, as long as the manner of propagation does not infringe on the human rights of other citizens.

In the phrase "religious belief and religious practice" the adjective "religious" denotes that the belief and practice receive their warrant from a source considered to be supernatural or transcendent. Nonreligious persons or social groups have rights and duties analogous to those in relation to the right to freedom of religion, and these analogous rights and duties are comprehended under the heading of freedom of conscience.

Operationally, the contemporary Catholic Christian paradigm for addressing the problematic can be called "constitutional separation between religion and the state." This means that the state will refrain from any action which may obstruct the work of the various religions,⁵⁷ while the various religions individually and collectively will not be given special privileges which might give any or all of them an unfair advantage over other comparable groups within society.⁵⁸ The various religions will be assured reasonable access to the educational system and to the mass communications media, so that they may be able to present their belief systems, ways of life and projects, including those which have a direct bearing on society and on politics, to the public. Since one basic purpose of the political community is the promotion of the common good, the advocates of the various religions, just like other individuals and social groups in the body politic, will be encouraged to cooperate with the state and with each other in the promotion of the common good.⁵⁹

The state, as the apex, concentrated expression and special organ of the political community, has the right and the duty to regulate the freedom of religious practice, in the interests of public order which is a basic element in the common good. By public order we mean the arrangements and practices that are proximately and directly important for the survival of the political community. When a certain religious practice damages or threatens the common good but not in such a way as to significantly impair public order, the state ought not to prohibit or constrain the religious practice. But when it does significantly impair public order the state has the right to prohibit or constrain the said practice.⁶⁰

For example, should a militant religious sect undertake armed struggle against a duly constituted government respectful of human dignity and observant of human rights, that government has a right to use the power of the state to repel the armed action in a proportionate way and to use proportionate force to put an end to preparations for such armed action. Similarly, should the accession of religious leaders to certain public offices cause such social unrest as to threaten the survival of the political community, the state would have the right to prohibit access of religious leaders to such public offices.

However, if the religious practice at stake, though arguably somewhat harmful to the common good, inflicts only little harm on public order, the state ought not to hamper such a practice. It may even grant exceptions from general law in order to accommodate the freedom of religion of sincere advocates of such a practice. For example, Seventh Day Adventists have strong religious objections to any public nonreligious activities on the Sabbath (which for them is Saturday). However, government offices, for good reasons, sometimes oblige their functionaries to do work on Saturday. Jurisprudence or case law should probably accommodate Seventh Day Adventists so that they are not penalized for not reporting for work on Saturdays, provided they do equivalent work on other days.

An even more serious matter is that of conscientious objection, whether for religious or philosophical reasons. The state should probably exempt conscientious objectors from the obligation to render military service, as long as they render equivalent service to the common good of the political community. Again, the rationale for such a measure is that the practice at stake, though arguably harming the common good slightly or perhaps moderately, inflicts only little, if any, harm on public order, particularly if conscientious objectors are a small minority of able-bodied citizens eligible for military service.

The paradigm of constitutional separation between religion and the state would strongly tend to exclude any establishment of religion, including even benign forms of establishment, such as would be the case of a government with an established religion but which financially supports the schools of other religious bodies. Such an exclusion of religious establishment may appear to some as excessively rigorous and secularistic, but others believe that it is not so. The latter believe that such an exclusion of religious establishment is in keeping with the very high priority given to respect for the conscience of individual persons which characterizes present Catholic Christian moral teaching. Persons who do not believe in the tenets of the established religion could not be expected to want to pay taxes to support that religion.

Relatively benign types of religious establishment, such as that described above, may at best be tolerated in the interests of public order but may not be held up as ideal in principle. This is particularly true in our times when the rapid advances in transportation and communication have disseminated all kinds of ideas everywhere, thus increasingly breaking down cultural and religious homogeneity and providing a tremendous impetus to cultural and religious pluralism.

Constitutional separation between religion and the state makes for more distinction and separation between religious rites and civil ceremonies than obtains at present in many countries. This would put into serious question practices like that which used to take place during the commemorations of the "People Power" revolution of 1986 in the Philippines, in which the Catholic Christian Mass formed the center of the civic celebration, and in which the President of the Republic of the Philippines delivered a civic address from a Catholic Christian shrine.⁶¹ Such a practice caused much discontent among non-Catholic Filipinos who are just as much committed to democracy as most Catholic Christians are, but whose participation in such a festival of democracy was conditioned upon their attendance at or physical proximity to a religious rite in which they do not believe.

The observation has been made that the best way for Catholic Christians to effectively obtain respect for their religious rights is for them to practice exquisite respect for the rights of others, both outside and within the Church. The ethical rule of impartiality holds here. One can hardly be credible in demanding respect for one's own rights, if at the same time one is not disposed to respect the rights of others.

We can safely assume that most, if not all, religions are in principle oriented toward the common good and teach respect for the rights of conscience of advocates of other belief systems. Such an assumption would render reasonable a situation such that within the political community the various religions cooperate in the advancement of the common good, and even engage in more or less friendly competition in the advancement of the common good.

The common good referred to here is both domestic (obtaining in or projected for a given political community), and universal (projected for the whole of humankind). Catholic Christians, precisely because of their catholicity, should be particularly well-disposed to the advancement of the common good of humankind, both through action within the international community that is the Catholic Christian Church, and through action directed to all persons and nations in need. Due to limited resources and other human limitations, the moral obligation of an ecumenical humanism

is often in painful, but potentially creative, tension with the moral obligation to practice priority of solicitude for those who are of the household of the Catholic Christian faith.

At this point, there arises the question regarding what ethically and practically viable basis citizens holding different worldviews, whether religious or nonreligious, could have for cooperating in the advancement of the common good. The basis an increasing number of ethicists are proposing for such cooperation is that of *civil ethics*.

Civil ethics involves a consensus regarding ethical values and ethical norms among individuals and social groups (whether religious or nonreligious) in a given political community. The individuals and groups who can contribute to the building of a civil ethics are those which respect human dignity. This consensus, to become civil ethics, must guide and enter into the formal and legal governance and the symbolism of civic life.

The adoption of civil ethics as the basis for cooperation in advancing the common good does not mean religious indifference, nor any dilution of personal commitment to one's religious or nonreligious belief-and-value system. This is because civil ethics governs only public or civic life, while one's personal beliefs and values govern one's entire life and the life of the segment of the political community which holds those personal beliefs and values. Moreover, one lives civil ethics from the motives of one's personal beliefs and values, desisting from imposing upon the whole body politic those of one's beliefs and values which are not part of the social ethical consensus, because of respect for the human dignity of those who uphold beliefs and values different from one's own. In a sense, therefore, civil ethics is an abstraction, albeit a necessary and useful one, and what really are operative in civil life governed by civil ethics are the beliefs and values of individual human persons.

On the international level, examples of documents which express civil ethics include the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization (UNO) in 1948, and two other covenants adopted by the UNO in 1966: the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. These two covenants integrate the rights laid out in the *Declaration*, but introduce important nuances and some innovations.

(3) Differentiation between pastors and laity in the appropriate form of Christian participation in political life

In the opening section of this paper, in the presentation of the official

Catholic Christian teaching on the relation between faith and politics and between Church and state, it was mentioned that the action of the Church in evangelizing political life is a differentiated one, in the sense that typically the pastors of the Church and the laity have distinct roles. (By "pastors" we mean primarily the bishops, but also priests and deacons, and by extension, nonclerical male and female religious.) This distinction of roles is related to the distinction between "politics" and "political commitment," or, as Bishop Francisco F. Claver, S.J., puts it, the distinction between "political field" and "political arena." Bishop Claver makes this distinction in a recent article entitled "Faith and Politics: The Church in the Political Arena."⁶² This article makes a lucid presentation of the character, rationale and nuances of this distinction. This presentation is summarized in the next few paragraphs.

Bishop Claver begins by distinguishing between the role of the hierarchy (in which he includes the clergy and the religious)⁶³ and the laity. The hierarchy as such, that is, as a body (better called "pastors," and called such henceforth in this paper) generally have no special competence in politics,⁶⁴ while the laity do — at least some of them, and in greater proportion than among pastors. The Synod of Bishops of 1987 teaches that the role of pastors is to enunciate general moral principles governing political action, while that of the laity is to act in direct political action according to these principles.⁶⁵ In other words, pastors typically have competence only in what can be called the political field (where politics and morality meet), the laity in the political arena (where more concrete and technical politics, usually of the partisan kind, is played).⁶⁶

This distinction is a very useful basic rule. Moreover, pastors, besides having a teaching function, should also be the foci of unity in Christian communities of all levels, and for them to take an active part in partisan politics would tend to weaken their teaching authority and destroy the unity they represent and protect.⁶⁷

Nevertheless, the rule is not an absolute one. To begin with, the distinction between political field and political arena is not always clear-cut in real life and they sometimes become inextricably linked. This could happen, for example, when the bare enunciation of moral principles becomes, because of circumstances, in effect an act of partisan politics.⁶⁸ Moreover, the political field, as far as it is part of the realm of morality, is not the sole concern of the pastors, but like the Gospel itself, it is also a concern of the whole Church as a community. For these and other reasons, the principle of distinction which the rule lays down must be seen as secondary to a prior, more basic principle which governs both political field and political arena and binds all Christians, whether pastors or laity, at all times. This principle is simply that politics, whether as field or as arena, like all human

activities, must be exercised always in the light of the faith of the Gospel. As a corollary, the requirements of the Gospel with regard to human dignity, justice, charity, the common good, cannot be sacrificed to the exigencies of one's politics. The latter must be rejected when it threatens to violate or deny the nonnegotiable demands of Christian faith. Concretely, this means that both pastors and laity must be involved in the political arena when field and arena are one.⁶⁹

The participation of pastors in the arena of politics which the foregoing position allows, though limited to situations in which political field and political arena merge existentially, could cause some to hesitate to accept this position. This hesitation would seem to be bolstered by canon law, if we take at face value its explicit prohibition against clerics engaging in activity in the political arena.⁷⁰ The reason for the ban on clergy being active in the political arena is not something intrinsic to the clerical state. Clerics do not lose their political rights simply because of their ordination. The reason for the ban is something quite fundamental and common to all Christians: the prohibition against manipulation and deception, against taking undue advantage of an office, in this case a "holy office," for certain ends in the political arena.⁷¹ The spirit of such a ban would extend its application to others, besides clerics, who form part of our category of pastors, as for example, nonclerical religious men and women.

Yet, the prohibition against clerics (and other pastors) being active in the political arena is not as apodictic as it may seem. It makes for exceptions, the demands of the common good being the main ones. The latter is a broad category which accommodates situations in which political field and political arena do merge.⁷²

Fears have been expressed that allowing, in the name of the common good or the defense of the rights of the Church, for exceptions to the prohibition of pastors from activity in the political arena would open the Church to more politicking, with clerics appealing to such arguments to disguise their penchant for politics. While such fears have some basis, there is a check to such possible abuses by pastors. It has been observed that where, as a result of sound formation in the Church's social teaching, the role of the Church in the political field is seen as an integral part of its evangelizing mission, and as a result, continuous communal discernment goes on regarding the implications of the Gospel for the political situation, the faithful develop a more refined critical sense in matters political, knowing almost instinctively when a particular issue is one of field or arena or is one which belongs to both of these. The role of the Church in relation to politics thus becomes, if not less problematical, at least clearer as far as pastors and laity are concerned.⁷³

Given such sound formation in the Church's social teaching, pastors can effectively mobilize the faithful to appropriate action in the political field, in the political arena, or in both, when the faithful perceive that two conditions obtain. First, that the effort to mobilize them is not a mere political power play, but is truly rooted in the moral sphere. Second, when the issue at stake is neither trivial nor irrelevant, but on the contrary touches intimately their life and well-being. When the effort to mobilize the faithful is seen to be a mere political power play, with no significant moral issues at stake, the response of the faithful is ambiguous at best, negative and even disastrous at times. Such ambiguous, negative or even disastrous results can occur when the effort to politically mobilize the faithful is seen by the latter to be for the protection of Church privileges, or to be for the protection even of legitimate Church interests but in a manner which is disproportionate and not in keeping with the common good.⁷⁴

Out of concern for civil ethics and the public order which the latter protects, the action of the Church as community in the political field or in the political arena should ordinarily pass through the action of lay Catholic Christian members of nonconfessional voluntary organizations whose ultimate reason for being is the promotion of the common good. The action of the Church as community in the political field should be indirect, in the sense that it should ordinarily be mediated through the institutions of civil society, and not through formal intervention of the Church as such in the social debate. This caution against formal intervention of the Church in the social debate holds for the Church even as community, but holds much more strongly for interventions by pastors in general and by the hierarchy in particular.

In relation to the latter rule, with regard to issues which have clearly political aspects, messages of pastors should ordinarily be addressed formally to the Catholic Christian faithful, showing the concrete connection of these issues with Christian faith and with the common good. Exceptions can arise in which it would be justified for the pastors of the Church to address interventions in the social debate directly to the state or to the political community at large. Such exceptions include mostly situations in which the state or some potent social force directly menaces the basic rights of the Church, and especially if the fundamental human rights of Catholic Christian citizens, or the common good, or public order itself were at stake. Even when the latter kind of situation obtains, appeals by the pastors of the Church to the state or to the political community at large should be argued not primarily in terms of the legitimate interests of the Church, but in terms of the common good, public order and human rights.

The foregoing second section of this paper has sketched a contempor-

ary paradigm for the relationship between Christian faith and politics and between Church and state (what we have called "the problematic"). In the third and final section of this paper we shall reflect on how this paradigm applies to the problematic in the Asian context.

C. Faith and Politics, Church and State: The Asian Context

The respective politico-economic and sociological situations in which Catholic Christians find themselves in the various countries which make up Asia have some similarities and many differences among them. A helpful approach to discussing our problematic and the Catholic Christian paradigm for addressing that problematic in the Asian context would entail four steps. First, state the similarities that we can detect among these situations. Second, lay down a basic typology of the various situations configured by the above-mentioned differences, and which further specify the problematic. Third, posit certain paradigm-based ethico-pastoral guidelines which hold for all or many of these situations. Fourth, further specify the typology, and propose paradigm-based ethico-pastoral guidelines for the various types and subtypes of situations.

It would have been desirable to make a country-to-country survey as a framework for contextualizing the problematic and the relevant paradigm-based ethico-pastoral guidelines. However, this would have made this paper even more lengthy than it already is, and would have made it repetitious, since many concrete ethico-pastoral guidelines hold for several countries. Consequently, we have directed the formulation of ethico-pastoral guidelines to types and subtypes of situations rather than to countries as such.

(1) Main similarities in the situation in various Asian countries

One similarity among the respective situations of the Church in various Asian countries is that in the majority of Asian countries the Catholic Christian faith is perceived by most citizens as being foreign, and the Catholic Christian faithful are suspected of being disloyal to the indigenous cultural heritage of the country and even to its basic politico-economic interests.

A second similarity is the spread of a new humanism of responsibility among wide sectors of the Asian peoples, especially but not exclusively among the intelligentsia. This humanism of responsibility defines the human being by his or her solidarity, socialization and co-responsibility in responding to the concrete needs of his or her fellow human beings.

A third similarity is the disadvantaged situation of women. This obtains in all Asian countries without exception, though the manner and degree of this disadvantage greatly vary.

A fourth similarity is the urgent character of the problem of the degradation of the natural environment in most Asian countries. This mainly takes the forms of deforestation, atmospheric pollution and pollution of water sources.

Another main similarity in the situations we are studying is the steady, albeit gradual and uneven, spread of a technological culture with all its ambiguities. Among these ambiguities is the retreat of tradition and the spread of a modernizing rationality. The latter, however, is to a large extent a rationality which is more and more merely instrumental and devoid of ethical interest or control.

Still another main similarity is the at least temporary decline in popular acceptance of egalitarian and redistributionist worldviews and societal models (not just Marxist-Leninist state socialism, but also social democracy) and the advance of economic neoliberalism and rightist politics.

Having described this similarity, we note immediately that the reactions to this new universal technological culture are quite varied, depending upon such factors as the sophistication and strength of the indigenous culture and the maturity or immaturity of civil society. This gives us a hint to start laying down our typology of situations.

For lack of space and detailed technical knowledge this typology is a very rough and summary one.⁷⁵ Just the same, it might turn out to be useful initial material for further study on how the teaching of the Catholic Christian Church on the problematic we have discussed should be applied in the Asian context.

(2) Basic typology of settings, specifying the problematic

In delineating our typology the criteria we will employ are the following, in descending order of priority: first, the demographic and sociological strength of the Catholic Christian community; second, the religious or philosophical system professed by the politically dominant community or group;⁷⁶ third, the prevailing type of economic system; fourth, the level of economic development; and fifth, other criteria. The political system, especially the type of state — democratic, authoritarian, totalitarian — could plausibly be one of the main criteria used, but in the total complex of variables involved, using the political system as a main criterion would have made the typology extremely complicated and would, therefore,

have unduly reduced its utility. Variations in the political system will, however, be addressed in the proposal of ethico-pastoral guidelines.

For convenience, this typology is presented in outline form, with some main examples placed after each type or subtype.⁷⁷ Countries are referred to by their popular or day-to-day nontechnical names, Such a manner of reference is not politically or ideologically motivated, and is simply for the sake of brevity.

Type A: country with a large Catholic Christian majority (Philippines)

Type B: countries with considerable Catholic Christian minorities

Subtype B-1: culturally Confucian capitalist newly industrialized countries (South Korea, Singapore, Hongkong)

Subtype B-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing country (Sri Lanka)

Subtype B-3: Islamic majority capitalist developing country (Lebanon, Indonesia)

Subtype B-4: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing country (Vietnam)

Type C: countries with small Catholic Christian minorities

Subtype C-1: culturally Confucian capitalist industrialized countries (Japan, Taiwan)

Subtype C-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing countries (Thailand, Cambodia)

Subtype C-3: Buddhist majority indigenous socialist developing country (Myanmar)

Subtype C-4: Hindu majority capitalist developing countries (India, Nepal)

Subtype C-5: Islamic majority capitalist developing countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan)

Subtype C-6: Islamic majority socialist developing countries with authoritarian governments (Iraq, Syria)

Subtype C-7: Jewish majority capitalist developed country (Israel)

Subtype C-8: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing countries (China, Laos)

(3) Ethico-pastoral guidelines of general or broad applicability in the Asian context

The following are some ethico-pastoral guidelines related to our problematic, which have general or broad applicability in the Asian context.

- (a) Civil ethics, with its respect for the freedom of expression and of association of advocates of competing worldviews and value systems, should be regarded as a permanent ethical achievement of humankind, manifesting respect for the conscience of the human person. The Church should, therefore, consistently promote the cause of civil ethics.
- (b) The demographic or sociological strength or weakness of a local Church does not in principle affect the obligation to publicly propagate and to strive to implement the teaching of the Church on political matters, though it does affect responsibility for the scale of the effort of propagation and implementation.
- (c) The respect for human rights which is a central element in our paradigm for the relationship between Christian faith and politics and between Church and state should be understood in a manner purified of both individualistic and collectivist distortions. This purified understanding of human rights should be attentive to the priority of rights stemming from a balanced integration of liberty and equality.⁷⁸
- (d) The Church's effort in favor of human rights should extend to all the "generations" of human rights: the first generation (the classical civil and political rights), the second generation (social and economic rights, such as those to health care, employment, housing and education), and the third generation (rights to the basic needs for survival — water, food, shelter, biodiversity and other environmental rights).⁷⁹
- (e) Respect for human rights in the political field entails that the Church promote democracy. By democracy is understood a political system in which the state governs the country with the free and continuing consent of the governed, and in which the rights of minorities are effectively protected by law. This existential duty to promote democracy stems from the postulate that at present democracy is the political system which best safeguards and promotes human rights.
- (f) The conviction that patriotism — understood as a reasonable and well-ordered love for and devotion to one's country or ethnocultural group — is an aspect of the primary Christian virtue of charity, should be affirmed by the each local Church. This is especially true in Asia where Catholic Christian faith is often seen as foreign, and embracing that faith is considered as dis-

loyalty to one's indigenous cultural heritage, and even to one's country. Love and devotion to one's country entails effort in promoting the moral perfection of one's people. Hence patriotism strives to inculcate virtues among one's people, including those virtues — such as truthfulness, justice and solidarity — which are opposed to chauvinism and are of direct importance to peace and cooperation among nations. By promoting an authentic patriotism the Church can contribute significantly to international peace and progress.

- (g) Efforts must be made to inculturate Catholic Christian faith in each Asian country. Such inculturation could help make the Church's teaching in political matters more effective among the people of each country, since the teaching would not be perceived as foreign and would be more easily understood and assimilated.
- (h) The spread of the new humanism of responsibility makes even more urgent the theory and practice of effective solidarity with those in need and the preferential option for the poor. This is especially relevant in Asia, where the needy and the poor are very numerous and in dire want.
- (i) The virtue of charity includes a certain order of priority in the way it is concretely expressed (*ordo charitatis*). An aspect of this order of priority is solidarity with those of the household of Catholic Christian faith. All other things — especially urgency of need in terms of salvation, life or basic welfare — being equal, our limited resources should be directed to fellow Catholic Christians in need. This is particularly relevant in Asia, where very many Catholic Christians are needy or are suffering under political or social disabilities not often found elsewhere precisely because of their faith.
- (j) The Church in each Asian country should address the issue of women's rights both within the Church as well as in society at large, in the manner appropriate to the variations that this issue has in each country.
- (k) The integrity of creation is not respected and the habitability of the environment is under severe threat in many Asian countries. Wherever necessary, the local Church should make this problem an important concern of its moral teaching in the political field.
- (l) The universal spirit and character of the Catholic Christian

Church demands that the various national Churches in Asia systematically cooperate with each other and with local Churches in other parts of the world, as well as with other groups, in working for the solution of political problems which cut across national boundaries. Such problems include the protection and rehabilitation of the natural environment, peace and disarmament, territorial disputes, collective security, the treatment of overseas workers, and the management of the refugee problem.

(4) Ethico-pastoral guidelines for the different situations in which the Church finds itself in various Asian countries

Type A: country with a large Catholic Christian majority (Philippines)

The Philippines is reputed to be the only Asian country with a large Catholic Christian majority.⁸⁰ The Philippines was colonized by Spain and then by the United States of America before its people had attained national identity, political unity and a highly-developed culture, and remained a colony for more than three and a half centuries. Partly as a result of this, Filipinos have a relatively weak national identity, an under-developed sense of the common good, an unfamiliarity with an authentic politics based on rational choices among several concrete ideas of the common good, and a culture highly vulnerable to influence by other cultures. Its civil institutions are still unfinished and not fully functional. Consequently, the pursuit of the common good is difficult. Symptomatic of this difficulty is the fact that the natural environment is suffering rapid destruction and degradation at the hands of the selfish, the ignorant or the desperate, with neither government nor the private sector being able until now to intervene effectively to solve this problem.

This situation demands that the Church stress patriotism as a Christian virtue, and emphasize that one central purpose of the political community should be the promotion of the common good. The Church should cooperate in efforts to put an end to the traditional politics based on personalities and patronage, and to promote authentic politics, which is based on the rational appreciation of ideologies, programs of government, and qualifications for public office. Another obvious duty of the Church would be to help develop and strengthen Philippine culture, while purifying it according to Gospel norms. The Church is also forced by circumstances to take up a suppletory function in society, by setting up structures to make up for what is lacking in civil institutions. For example, the Church has to help set up livelihood and health projects, to supplement the civil communications network, to help guard the sanctity of the ballot with organizations of poll watchers, and to help in education and vigilant action in defense of the integrity of creation and the habitability of the environ-

ment.

In its work to promote the common good, the Church in the Philippines must yield to none in respect for the consciences of non-Catholics. This is crucial because Catholic Christians form the great majority of Filipinos, and in the absence of such respect, they could end up taking advantage of their numerical strength to coerce or manipulate non-Catholics. The latter would be detrimental to the common good and to the credibility of the Church itself, not only in the Philippines, but also in Asia and in the rest of the world.

The Philippines is politically a formal democracy, but of the liberal kind, within the context of a highly class-divided society. Consequently, the economically upper and middle classes are able to misuse a kind of individualistic interpretation of human rights for their own ends. This is a special danger in our time, when in most parts the world neoliberalism is on the ascendant in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Hence, a prioritization of human rights, in terms of which rights are more closely concerned with eternal salvation, life and basic welfare, should be stressed in the social ministry of the Church. This is in line with the Church's professed preferential option for the poor.

Type B: countries with considerable Catholic Christian minorities

Subtype B-1: culturally Confucian capitalist newly industrialized countries (South Korea, Singapore, Hongkong)

South Korea, Singapore and Hongkong share a Confucian cultural background, as well as rapid economic growth within a capitalist framework of industrialization. This Confucian cultural background, while it favors a sense of the common good, also tends to authoritarianism in politics and culture. Such a situation requires the Church to strive to affirm the sense of the common good, while defending human rights, particularly political, civil and cultural rights.

South Korea, with its Confucian cultural background, is grappling with the problems associated with its rapid ongoing process of capitalist industrialization. It is prone to the problems attendant on incorporation in the world neoliberal capitalist system — problems such as the structural marginalization of the poorest of the poor and the degradation of the natural environment. Moreover, the material progress expected from industrialization has been quite uneven in South Korea. The cities have grown and prospered, while the people in the countryside are relatively neglected.

In such a setting, the South Korean Church might actively foster a model of economic development which, while harnessing the productivity and creativity of the market economy, nevertheless deliberately makes provisions for poverty alleviation and the equitable distribution of the rewards and burdens of economic development. Besides, the Church could advocate an integral idea of progress, which includes rural development.

South Korean Catholic Christians, though a minority, number in the millions and have social influence greater than their numbers would suggest. Yet, many Koreans still consider Christianity a foreign religion. For this reason the Korean Church has to make special efforts to inculcate the faith and to show forth their patriotism.

Political debate and competition in South Korea easily tend to become embittered and violent. This is particularly true in relation to such emotionally-laden topics as the reunification of Korea. The South Korean Church could help dissipate this tendency to bitterness and violence by stressing an impartiality in political discernment, respect for truth and a solidarity for the common good in the conduct of political debate and competition.

South Korean democracy is young and fragile, and often in the past it was beset, as elsewhere, by a tendency to decay into authoritarianism and corruption. The social ministry of the Church could then contribute a reinforcement of their commitment to personal human rights, as well as support efforts toward honest and efficient government.

Considering that many South Koreans belong to an even bigger Protestant Christian minority, these efforts of Catholics in relation to the faith-and-politics problematic could be more effective if carried out in an ecumenical manner.

The political system in Singapore is formally democratic, but the ruling party has shown at times what appears to be harsh intolerance towards dissent, even for nonviolent forms of the latter. This intolerance towards dissent is usually explained as being for the sake of political stability which is necessary for the common good. Such a situation would require the Church to steadfastly promote respect for human rights, especially in the political and cultural fields. In so promoting human rights the Church will render itself more credible, if at the same time it clearly manifests what are its deep commitment to the common good and respect for the rights of the state.

Hongkong will cease to be a British colony in 1997, and will return to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China. Some have questioned

whether the political preparations so far undertaken for that transition are ethically unquestionable, in several senses — lack of genuine consultation of the people of Hongkong, and a seeming insufficient concern for guarantees of respect for human rights after the transition. The Church in Hongkong could do well to support moves for genuine consultation in this regard and for guarantees for respect for human rights after the transition.

Subtype B-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing country (Sri Lanka)

In Sri Lanka there are considerable Catholic Christian communities among the mainly Buddhist Singhalese and the mainly Hindu Tamils. The Catholic Christian Church has deep roots in Sri Lanka among both the Singhalese and the various Tamil communities. This has probably placed the Church in a relatively favorable position to help mediate between the main forces in the present war. Its efforts will surely contribute to a just and lasting solution to the conflict, or at least to the humanization of the conflict.

It seems that among the contending forces in this conflict there is some tendency to identify religion with nationality, which further exacerbates the emotional intensity of the conflict and makes reconciliation even more difficult to achieve. Thus, the Singhalese are being led to identify with Buddhism, and the Tamils with Hinduism. The Church could probably critique systematically this unwarranted identification and propagate a civil ethics as the basis for the political community.

Subtype B-3: Islamic majority capitalist developing country (Lebanon, Indonesia)

In Lebanon and in Indonesia Catholic Christians, though a minority in a population in which Muslims form a majority, do form numerous and vigorous communities and exercise a social influence beyond their numbers. The Islamic milieu of these countries tend to the confessionalization of politics, with large and vocal segments of Muslim citizens exerting unrelenting pressure for the establishment of an Islamic state, which non-Muslims would have to support with tax money and in which non-Muslims would suffer onerous civil disabilities, and at most only be tolerated. In both situations the Catholic Christian Church might uphold the freedom of conscience as concretized in a civil ethics. It should strongly advocate effective guarantees for respect for the human rights of minorities. The latter could be done in an impartial manner, benefiting all minorities and not only Catholic Christians.

In Lebanon, Christians, formerly a majority of the population, were

initially favored by the confessional patterns of civil government. The latter provided for a precarious peace for some decades but was found not to be a stable foundation for the realization of the fundamental value of equitable relations among citizens of various religious persuasions in a multiconfessional political community. This stable foundation can be provided only by a civil ethics, but the Lebanese political community is probably not intellectually and morally ready to accept the notion of a purely civil ethics easily. Moreover, the historical memory of atrocities sustained by the now minority Christian communities makes mutual trust among communities so essential for the deconfessionalization of politics, most difficult to achieve. The Church could rise above such a situation and courageously but realistically guide its members to accept and propagate a civil ethics as the foundation for a new Lebanon.

There are varying views among Lebanese about relations with Syria: some want the incorporation of Lebanon into a Greater Syria, others oppose it. Given such positions, the unity of all Lebanese within a framework of civil ethics would seem unrealistic. On the contrary, a civil ethics is needed to ensure respect for the right to political fulfillment of all communities within Lebanon, and to bring about a just and nonviolent solution to the problem of the future structure of the Lebanese political community. In any such context, the Church should beware of any emotionalism and obsession within narrow communal interests and advocate solidarity of commitment to the common good.

In Indonesia, although the Muslims form a majority of the population, Christians enjoy the full range of civil rights available to citizens of other religious persuasions. Although the Republic of Indonesia is constitutionally committed to religion,⁸¹ this commitment is a pluralistic one.⁸² This may displease some radical Muslims, who want Indonesia to be an Islamic republic, with Islam as the established religion. In such a situation the Catholic Christian Church, in an effort with Protestant Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists and those who hold traditional beliefs, respectfully but firmly advocates a civil ethics as the normative foundation of national life. This would entail a interpretation of *Pancasila* so that the principle of belief in God would not result in any disrespect for and disadvantage to nonreligious persons or persons whose convictions cannot be classified with any of the state-recognized religions.

The Indonesian system has been appropriately described as "guided democracy." There are good historical reasons to posit that the common good in that country is open to a broadening of democratic space and an invigoration of democratic institutions. The Church might encourage efforts towards these goals, while being careful not to exacerbate the strong centrifugal forces active in Indonesian society. The Church could

help see that the lofty tenets of *Pancasila* are not able to be perverted to advance the interests of the powerful at the expense of the weak and the needy. The latter point is, perhaps, especially important in Indonesia, where Catholic Christians are perceived to have influence beyond what could be expected from their number. It should be clear by Christian conduct to everyone that such influence is being used for the betterment of the social context for all in an evangelical manner.

There is the touchy matter of Timor Timur (East Timor) and Irian Jaya (West Papua). The Indonesian Church could bear difficult but helpful witness to evangelical values by advocating a patriotism as Catholic Christian social teaching defines it — a reasonable and well-ordered love for one's country. This entails concern for the moral perfection of one's people. Such moral perfection also entails respect for other peoples' human rights. In this context, authentic love for Indonesia demands effective respect for the full development of the human rights of the indigenous peoples of East Timor and West Papua.

Subtype B-4: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing country (Viet Nam)

Viet Nam is a state socialist developing country governed by a Marxist-Leninist party. The latter, aside from forcibly exercising a claim to a right to a permanent virtual monopoly of political power, is in principle still militantly atheistic. As a result, political and ideological dissent, or even the mere suspicion of dissent, is met with repression. The various religions operate under many unwarranted restraints. Catholic Christians are still subject to lingering suspicions of lack of patriotism, because many of them opposed the Marxist-Leninist-led struggle for the seizure of state power (regarded by Marxist-Leninists and their allies as a struggle for national liberation), and are accused of having been aligned with foreign forces in that opposition.

At present, Viet Nam is suffering grave economic difficulties and considerable social malaise. Especially in the southern part of the country many Vietnamese have not accepted Marxism-Leninism. This has to some extent caused a spiritual and intellectual vacuum. In place of the ideals of Marxism-Leninism, however, some Vietnamese have now given themselves to an unbridled pursuit of private wealth, to such an extent that accusations of corruption among public officials are frequent. Vietnamese Christians can effectively promote the common good and can also bear credible witness to the humanizing and salvific power of the Gospel in political life, by being good examples of honesty, competence, and earnest application to work, especially in the conduct of public office.

The Vietnamese Church would do well to reinforce the formation of its members in patriotism, especially as the latter is expressed in a spirit of generous service, of integrity, and of painstaking industry in promoting the interests of the country. At the same time, it should continue to work for the full enjoyment of human rights by all in Vietnamese society. The latter entails formal recognition and effective respect for political, civil and cultural rights, including the freedom of religious belief and practice. Respect for these rights would make citizens, especially religious believers, more enthusiastic in cooperating with the state in solving the problems of Vietnamese society and entering into its pursuit of an integral prosperity.

Type C: countries with small Catholic Christian minorities

Subtype C-1: culturally Confucian capitalist industrialized countries (Japan, Taiwan)

There are small Catholic Christian minorities in the culturally Confucian industrialized countries of Japan and Taiwan. Though small, the Catholic Christian communities in these countries have more influence than one should expect, because of the relatively strong presence of the Church in education and in cultural activity. Efforts at social ministry in Japan and in Taiwan would surely be more effective if Christians from the different Churches cooperated in ecumenical endeavors in this field.

In both countries it is said that Christianity is still looked upon by many citizens as foreign to the culture of the people. Consequently, the efforts at inculturation carried out by the Japanese Church and the Church in Taiwan will continue and will be reinforced. This task is made simpler in Japan because of the relative cultural homogeneity of the people. In Taiwan this task of inculturation has to be multifaceted for it. It involves inculturation among the highland tribal aborigines and inculturation among the people of Han stock.

There are good reasons to claim that the economic development of both Japan and Taiwan has not been accompanied by a corresponding spiritual progress. The social ministry of Christian Churches in these countries are then stressing an integral human development — including the spiritual aspect thereof — as the standard for the authentic progress of peoples. Furthermore, the so-called progress attained at the cost of the degradation of the natural environment is seen not as true progress. And it is recognized not morally acceptable for affluent countries to transfer the environmental costs of aggregate economic growth to poor countries.

Affluent countries like Japan and Taiwan have excess capital which they have to invest, and which bring them as well dominant positions in

trading relations with poorer countries. The Japanese Church and the Church in Taiwan could strive to form the conscience and influence the policies of the people and leaders of Japan and Taiwan. This formation of conscience and this influence on policies could help form attitudes so that the investment and trade policies of Japan and Taiwan benefit not only these wealthy countries themselves but also the ordinary people of the poor countries in which they invest and with which they trade.

The affluence of Japan and Taiwan has brought about a market for overseas workers to fill up menial or relatively low-paying jobs which Japanese and Chinese no longer want. The social ministry of the Church is showing effective concern for the condition of overseas workers in Japan and in Taiwan, many of whom have been abused and exploited.

Japan's economic might has led to a resurgence of Japanese national pride and for some political ambition. This resurgence has even reached the point of ultranationalism and militarism among a small but growing segment of the Japanese people. This ultranationalism and militarism is often linked by some to an attachment to a revived state Shinto cult. All the Japanese Churches are vigilant in monitoring and combating this resurgence of ultranationalism and militarism. They could promote a real patriotism, and combat chauvinism. They have protested against any identification of patriotism with the state Shinto cult, and especially with chauvinism and militarism. The Catholic Church has been active in promoting disarmament and peace. It also supports efforts toward reform of the political system in the direction of honesty, efficiency and transparency.

In Taiwan the Church should assist the process of a full human development, standing up for respect for human rights of all, even of political dissenters, as well as of the native Taiwanese of Han stock and of high-land tribal origin.

Subtype C-2: Buddhist majority capitalist developing countries (Thailand, Cambodia)

Thailand is one of the strongholds of Theravada Buddhism, to which some 94% of the population belongs. The culture of Thailand is steeped in Theravada Buddhism. Hence, there is always a need to emphasize the inculturation of Catholic Christian faith among the Thais, so that the latter would not find it difficult to identify with Catholic Christianity. The Church might show with tranquility that it considers as unwarranted the identification of nationality with a given religion, and continue to prove by its Catholic teaching and practice that religion transcends nationality.

The Church in Thailand, originating to a large extent from ethnic

Chinese and from primal or tribal peoples, continues by its social activities to help integrate these communities into the larger political community of Thailand, secure respect for their rights and encourage them to perform their social duties for the common good.

The rapid economic growth achieved by Thailand during the past two decades has not been free of serious dysfunctions for human development. The development associated with this growth has been uneven, benefiting mainly the wealthier strata of Thai society and the urban areas, and bypassing the rural poor of most regions. Moreover, this rapid economic growth has been achieved at great cost to the natural environment.

In such circumstances the Church in Thailand has a clear call to work for an equitable sharing by all citizens and sectors of society in the burdens and benefits of development, as well as in the protection and rehabilitation of the natural environment.

The Church should also help in the defense, consolidation and maturation of Thailand's democratic institutions, which can be threatened internally by corruption and social unrest, and externally by military interventionism.

Some may object to Cambodia being treated in this paper as a Buddhist majority capitalist developing country. Their objections would be based on the fact that, given the present balance of political and military forces in Cambodian society and the very fragile condition of the economy, the future of Cambodia, in terms of such relevant criteria as politico-economic model and religious belief and practice, is still loaded with ambiguities.

However, the dominant elements in the internationally-recognized government controlling most of Cambodia's population and territory have shown preference for Theravada Buddhism and for a capitalist economic structure, or at least for the adoption of many features of a market economy. There is no doubt, of course, that Cambodia is a "developing country."

Considering the massive economic, political and social destruction that Cambodia has sustained in the recent past, the Cambodian Church has the great task of manifesting an effective solidarity with all Cambodians of good will in their efforts toward national reconstruction on all fronts.

As in Thailand, the Cambodian Church has also to work against an unwarranted identification of nationality with a given religion, and to wit-

ness by its teaching and practice that Catholic Christian faith and life do transcend the boundaries of nationality. To do this effectively, the Cambodian Church, so much identified with the French and with Vietnamese and Chinese immigrants, is exerting extra efforts at rooting itself in the life and culture of the Khmer people.

A problem peculiar to Cambodia, at least in its extent and gravity, is the death or grave injury suffered by people in their thousands (the great majority of these being noncombatants), from the huge numbers of land mines (particularly anti-personnel mines) sown by the opposing sides in the civil war that has been intermittently raging in Cambodia for more than a decade now. This points out a task shared by to the Church in Cambodia — that of joining a worldwide campaign to ban the production of land mines.

Subtype C-3: Buddhist majority indigenous socialist developing country (Myanmar)

Theravada Buddhism is also predominant in Myanmar, especially among the Burmese (the majority people) and the Shan. Some 85% of the population of Myanmar are Theravada Buddhists. There is a vigorous, though small, Catholic Christian community in Myanmar, drawn from both the Burmese and from the other non-Burmese ethnic groups, such as the Karen. The Catholic Christian community in Myanmar is outnumbered by a bigger number of Protestant Christians who are also of both Burmese and non-Burmese origin.

The Burmese tend to identify Burmese nationality with Theravada Buddhism. The Burmese Church is especially called to inculturate itself strongly in Burmese culture, if only to be able to make the Burmese and kindred peoples more receptive to the Gospel message. The Church in Myanmar should strive, as in Thailand, to break down the unwarranted identification of nationality with a given religion. The Church could do this in cooperation with Protestant Christians.

The strong presence of the Church among some of the non-Burmese peoples increases its obligation to exert special effort for the promotion of the human rights of these peoples. The Church could integrate its support of the human rights of the non-Burmese groups with an effective concern for the common good of the larger political community of Myanmar. Such a mediating role, based on moral values and not merely on pragmatic considerations of power, does help to bring about a just and lasting solution to the chronic state of war between the central, Burmese-dominated, government of Myanmar and the movements of some of the non-Burmese groups.

The present government of Myanmar is authoritarian and does not tolerate even legitimate nonviolent dissent. The Church in Myanmar cooperates with Protestant Christians and other citizens of good will to uphold the political and civil rights of all the the people, and so necessarily, of human rights' advocates and the legitimate political opposition. The Church should actively participate with all citizens to restore their democracy. At the same time, it should make the people aware that a formally democratic political system does not by itself guarantee the attainment of the common good. It should help educate the people in the economic and political skills and the civic virtues which enable a democratic system to attain success in promoting the common good.

The economy of Myanmar still remains state socialist of an indigenous kind, and has been dysfunctional in terms of providing even for the people's basic needs. The Church can only inform the people of Myanmar about the general principles of economic ethics found in its social teaching. The principle of subsidiarity is one of those principles. Drawing conclusions from such a principle could probably stimulate Christians, as a community, to press for a less rigid and centralized economy and for a more decentralized and responsive one that is more efficient in providing for the basic needs of the people.

Subtype C-4: Hindu majority capitalist developing countries (India, Nepal)

India, in spite of the socialist ideals of its early leaders, is a capitalist developing country. So is Nepal. Both of these countries have Hindu majorities, and the culture of most of their people is steeped in Hinduism. This brings about a tendency in the Hindu majority to identify being Indian with Hinduism and to consider Christianity as foreign. The Church in these countries does strive to inculturate itself deeply in the native cultures, showing that Christianity is congenial with all the authentically humanizing values of any given culture. In this way Indian Christians more effectively resist the efforts of some extremist Hindus to restrict the work of evangelization.

India is faced with many problems, among them communal ethnocultural and religious intolerance and the abject poverty of a large proportion of its people. The Church serves India well and at the same time witnesses to the Gospel by working against communal intolerance and violence, while promoting sobriety, truth-telling and solidarity in political debate and public life. The Church can actively promote a civil ethics, so that India's many religious and ethnocultural groups may have a viable framework for cooperation in the pursuit of the common good. The Church

seeks to increase the scope of its services to the people of India in the field of education and health, extending these still more to the economically and socially disadvantaged sectors of the population.

Huge numbers among the people of India are gravely disadvantaged by the caste system. Tribal groups, which hold primal religious or Christian beliefs and are therefore not assimilated into the Hindu majority, are also victims of marginalization. The Church in India is faced with the challenge of defending the rights of those oppressed by the caste system and of marginalized tribal peoples.

India has politico-military tensions with its neighboring countries, particularly Pakistan. Emphases on the Church's teaching of patriotism can help ensure that the pursuit of India's legitimate national interests is integrated with the effort for a just and lasting solution to the tensions among the nations of South Asia.

In Nepal democracy has been established only recently and is still fragile. The Church in Nepal can help in the consolidation of this new democracy.

Non-Hindus in Nepal have only quite recently gained legal recognition of their human rights to freedom of religious belief and practice. Christian communities in Nepal should cooperate with all Nepalese of good will in strengthening this legal recognition of religious liberty.

Like in India, the Church in Nepal seeks to inculturate itself more deeply, so that it can effectively break down the traditional identification of Nepalese nationality with Hinduism. The Church must foster an authentic patriotism, which would effectively be seen then to defend the interests of Nepal in the difficult context of the latter's proximity to powerful neighbors, while making sure that the tensions with weaker countries, such as Bhutan, are resolved in an equitable manner.

The vast majority of the people of Nepal suffer from worsening poverty. Degradation of the natural environment is also an increasingly serious problem in many parts of Nepal, as a result of as well as causing more poverty. The Church in Nepal has the task of helping to alleviate poverty and defending and restoring the integrity of the natural environment.

Subtype C-5: Islamic majority capitalist developing countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan)

Though the situation of small Catholic Christian minorities in Islamic

majority capitalist developing countries (Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan)

Though the situation of small Catholic Christian minorities in Islamic majority capitalist countries differs considerably from country to country, this situation has a common feature present in various degrees. This is the tendency of Muslims strongly to prefer theocratic types of state, in which one or other of Islam forms the basis of national life and government, state resources are used to support Islam, and the office of Islamic religious leadership and of political leadership are vested in the same persons. In this theocratic setting non-Muslims are usually at best tolerated, and have no access to the holding of certain types and levels of public office considered to be important for the cultural and ideological formation of the people. The freedom of religious practice of non-Muslims, especially the public proclamation and propagation of their religious convictions, is curtailed, sometimes drastically, sometimes subtly. Conversion from Islam is discouraged by various state-enforced measures. State-supported pressures are often made to bear upon non-Muslims to embrace Islam. This can be true even in countries which profess to be democracies.

Saudi Arabia shows an extreme form of this theocratic tendency. There even private expressions of non-Islamic religiosity, even by expatriate contract workers, are forbidden or harassed.

Kuwait and Iran are less stringent in this regard, as are Pakistan and Bangladesh. Practice of non-Muslim religious convictions, and especially of Christianity, is allowed, and this even publicly, as long as no conversions from Islam are attempted.

In Iran any such efforts at conversion are treated with special ferocity, if directed at people of Farsi or Arab stock. The latter is especially true if the conversion is attempted by believers of the Baha'i religion, which Iranian Shiite Muslims especially detest because they consider it a heresy from within the bosom of Islam itself.

Malaysia is a special case. Since the country's leaders claim to govern a democracy, and since Muslims are at most a very slight majority of the population, and because Christianity has a strong demographic presence in the East Malaysian states of Sarawak and Sabah, the Islamizing policy of the government is pursued less directly, though also by some quite vigorously.

In all these cases the Church needs to work hard to secure a respect for freedom of religious belief and practice, invoking in this regard the international covenants to which Islamic countries are also signatories. Such

a respect is especially due to expatriate workers, particularly, if they only wish to practice their religion in their place of work or temporary residence and do not proselytize among Muslims.

In many of these Islamic majority capitalist countries the type of state is authoritarian, with the ruling party or dynasty having absolute or near absolute power, often with freedom of expression and association restricted to a degree incompatible with respect for human dignity. In such countries, the Church can put whatever influence it has at the service of human dignity, which is concretized in respect for human rights, including those of the political field. This entails promoting universally accepted democratic values and institutions.

Such democratic ideals can be promoted even in an Islamic context, because, according to scholarly experts, Islam is open to a democratic and nontheocratic interpretation. Some *ulama*, or Islamic scholars, hold that the real *Khalifa*, or earthly representative of Allah, is the Muslim community or *umma*, and that the religious and political power held by leaders is only delegated by the *umma*, and can be withdrawn by the *umma*. Some *ulama*, albeit few, would even extend fully equal political and civil rights to non-Muslims in countries where Muslims comprise a majority of the population.

Such a task of promoting a democratic interpretation by Muslims of Islam is no doubt an arduous one, but can be supported perseveringly. It also entails a policy of promoting civil ethics as the basis for the constitution of the political community.

Some Islamic majority capitalist countries — such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait — are very affluent, mainly because of large deposits of petroleum. Such countries hire many expatriate workers. The Church can consider supporting efforts by their governments that the affluence of their countries be used responsibly for their long-term self-sufficiency and welfare, and to help relieve substantially the poverty of peoples of other countries. The Church should also work for the just and humane treatment of expatriate workers.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and some other oil-rich Arab countries have emerged victors in the recent war against Iraq. Let us grant, just for the sake of discussion, that the cause of the victors was relatively just and that the rulers of Iraq committed atrocious violations of international law and especially of the moral law. Nevertheless, the Church could help stimulate more reflection on the part of the victors as to how their own shortcomings contributed to the political situation and gave a reason for Saddam Hussein's position. The Church should also work so that the people of Iraq,

Jordan and Palestine, already suffering so much, are not made to bear continued suffering by a vindictive treatment on the part of the allies.

In some Islamic majority capitalist countries, such as Pakistan and Bangladesh, the whole country or broad segments of the population are in chronic economic distress. There many people live in destitution. There the Church, drawing on its international connections, can work to help provide help for the basic needs of the people, such as food, clothing, education and health care.

In Malaysia, Pakistan and Bangladesh the full enjoyment of human rights is threatened by political strife and by communal intolerance, sometimes leading to violence. In Malaysia such a danger to democracy has been symbolized by the recurrent employment of the Internal Security Act for what appears on the world scene to be purposes of harassing opponents. In such countries the Church has worked for the reinvigoration of democratic institutions through the repeal of unjust legislation, the promotion of impartiality and veracity in political discourse, and a deeper sense of the common good which transcends communal lines.

In these countries, particularly in Malaysia, there is often an unwarranted identification between nationality and religion. By commonly-accepted and legally-sanctioned definition, a Malay is necessarily a Muslim. The Church should work to put an end to such an unwarranted identification of nationality with religion. Such an identification can be contrary to a respect for the dignity of the human conscience, and the universally-accepted principle that religious convictions, based on deliberate choice, transcend nationality.

Malaysia has strong Christian enclaves among the primal peoples of the states of Sarawak and Sabah in East Malaysia. These enclaves are under considerable political pressure for Islamization. In most cases Islamization also is intended to mean adopting Malay culture. In such a situation the Church in Malaysia does defend the right of Christians and other non-Muslims to freedom of religious belief and practice on equal terms as Muslims. The Church should seek a more comprehensive solution to this problem by working patiently to establish a basis of the Malaysian political community in civil ethics. The Church also defends the cultural identity of the primal peoples among whom it is rooted.

Subtype C-6: Islamic majority socialist developing contries with authoritarian governments (Iraq, Syria)

Iraq and Syria are each governed by a faction of the Arab *Ba'ath*⁸³ Socialist Party. This type of political party is supposed to have secular

roots, which are mainly pan-Arabism and socialism. Because of the socio-historical context of Iraq and Syria — the lack of cultural grounding in democratic values and practices — the form of pan-Arabism and socialism *Ba'ath* rule has established is an authoritarian one. However, the sheer sociological weight of the Muslim majority in these countries has much eroded the secular basis of *Ba'ath* rule, which has had to concede much to Islamic interests.

Nevertheless, Christians in Iraq and Syria have much more freedom of religious belief and practice than they have in many of the Islamic majority conservative capitalist countries. This might be partly the cause of the original secular roots of the governing party in Iraq and in Syria, and partly because Christians have long historical roots in these countries, even antedating Islam. The religious freedom of Christians in these countries is not complete, however, since mainstream Islamic political doctrine takes for granted an Islamic religious establishment. The Church could perhaps underline the officially secular (but not secularistic) character of pan-Arab socialism and, as a minorily, advocate civil ethics as a foundation of the Iraqi and the Syrian political communities.

In one sense, even more fundamental an issue to Catholic Christian political ethics is the authoritarian nature of the regimes in power in Iraq and in Syria. The Church in these countries does do its best, under difficult circumstances, to promote respect for human rights and to enlarge a participatory space.

Iraq recently suffered defeat in the disastrous Gulf War of 1991, and is still suffering an economic embargo at the hands of the victors. Catholic Christian citizens of Iraq are second to none in practicing patriotic solidarity and generosity in the effort for national reconstruction.

Subtype C-7: Jewish majority capitalist developed country (Israel)

Israel is a functioning democracy. Nevertheless, the workings of Israeli democracy have been very much disturbed by the chronic tension between Jews and Arabs, particularly in the Arab territories occupied by Israel, a tension exploding recurrently into armed hostilities. Even the recent agreement between the Israeli government and the Palestinian Liberation Organization for Palestinian home rule in some areas now under Israeli occupation is facing grave problems because of a systematic escalation of violence by both Jewish and Arab extremists.

Almost all the Christians in Israel and the Israeli-occupied territories are Palestinian Arabs. Thus, it is natural for the Church to advocate respect for the human rights of the Arab population, including their right to

a homeland. At the same time, it respects the right of the Jews to a homeland with secure frontiers. The Church is called to support the moderates on both sides in their efforts to achieve a just and lasting peace between Arab and Jew.

Although the state of Israel was founded according to secular principles, religious fundamentalists among the Jews have succeeded in obtaining enough sociological and electoral support so that they can politically impose more and more their particular religious views on the whole body politic. Unfortunately, the presence of Christians among the Israel population is insignificant, and the racial identification of Christians with the Arab cause makes them unable to influence significantly Jewish opinion except perhaps to influence the Jews take the opposite position to what Christians advocate. The most effective way in which Christians can defend civil ethics is low-key dialogue with and support for moderate and peace-loving Jews and Arabs who are fully respectful of human rights.

Jerusalem, a city holy to Judaism, Christianity and Islam, is found in Israel and in Israeli-occupied Arab territory. In it are many places considered sacred by one or the other of these great monotheistic faiths. The Church should work for an unrestricted access to these holy places to the religious believers who consider them sacred.

Subtype C-8: Marxist-Leninist state socialist developing countries (China, Laos)

China and Laos are countries in which small Catholic Christian minorities live under Marxist-Leninist state socialist regimes. In these countries the growth of Christianity in modern times has to a great extent been associated with the influence of Western colonial powers. Christianity, therefore, still suffers from some identification with Western imperialism, though less so than was the case several decades ago.

In these countries the Marxist-Leninist dispensation places upon the Church the burden of promoting full enjoyment of political and civil rights and of freedom of religious belief and practice. This is a difficult and often heroic task, especially when the respective regimes in power are in one of their recurrent repressive phases.

The association of Christianity with the colonial past adds a task which requires the Church in these countries to be especially conscientious in its inculturation and in advocating patriotism.

In an effort to attain high levels of aggregate economic growth, the Marxist-Leninist regimes of these two countries, but especially that of Chi-

na, have introduced features of the market economy in some sectors of the economy and in some regions of the country, while retaining the basically state socialist structure of the economy as a whole. The private acquisition of wealth is no longer frowned upon; in fact it is encouraged. Particularly in China, high levels of aggregate economic growth have been attained in some parts of the country, mainly urban ones, while most of the countryside continues to miss out on the economic betterment. Overt corruption in government and in private business has also grown to alarming proportions, in part arising from considerable disillusionment with Marxism-Leninism, and a corresponding vacuum in the spiritual strength of the nation.

In such a situation, with its new economic, political and moral problems, the Church in China and in Laos, even in its extreme minority status, can promote the common good of their respective countries to a significant degree and can also bear powerful witness to the humanizing and salvific power of the Gospel in socio-political life. They can do these by being good examples and effective advocates of honesty, competence and generosity in work, especially in the discharge of public office, and by working for a kind of development characterized by more equitable distribution of costs, benefits and opportunities among the people.

FOOTNOTES I: FAITH AND POLITICS, CHURCH AND STATE: CHURCH TEACHING AND THE ASIAN CONTEXT

1. This summary of the teaching of the Church regarding the relation between faith and politics draws much from the booklet issued by the Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests* (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1988), pp. 35-45. Paragraph numbers of the documents mentioned in the rest of this paper are those found in *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, except those of *Quadragesimo anno*, which is based on the way paragraphs are numbered in *Seven Great Encyclicals* (Glen Rock, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1963); those of *De iustitia in mundo*, which follow the way paragraphs are numbered in Michael Walsh and Brian Davies, eds., *Proclaiming Justice and Peace. Documents from John XXIII to John Paul II* (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1985); and those of two other documents which have their own system of numbering. The first of these documents is *Codex Iuris Canonici*. The second is the "Final Document" of the Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops (also known as *CELAM III*), held at Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico, from 27 January to 13 February 1979. The version of the latter used in this paper comes from an official English edition of the Conclusions of the said Third General Conference of Latin American Bishops, published originally by the Secretariat, Committee for the Church in Latin America, National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the U.S.A., Washington, D.C., in 1979, and with a Philippine edition published by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines in 1979. This "Final Document" shall henceforth be referred to as *Final Document, CELAM III*.
2. *Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 17, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1037-1038; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor hominis* (4 March 1979), nos. 8-17, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 71 (1979), pp. 270-300.
3. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (11 April 1963), especially nos. 8-35, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 55, (1963), pp. 253-304, especially pp. 259-266.
4. John Paul II, "Message for the XXI World Day of Prayer for Peace (8 December 1987)," no. 1, *Insegnamenti de Giovanni Paolo II*, X, 3, p. 1334.
5. *Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 29, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1048-1049; John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Mulieris dignitatem* (15 August 1988), nos. 7, 10, 24-25, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 1664-1667, 1674-1677, 1710-1715.
6. 1971 Synod of Bishops, Statement *De iustitia in mundo* (30 November 1971), nos. 13-16, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), pp. 926-927.
7. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (14 May 1971), nos. 22-24, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), pp. 417-419.
8. *Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 25, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1045-1046.
9. John Paul II, *La paix avec Dieu Créateur — La paix avec toute la création* (8 December 1989) (Message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1990), nos. 3, 7-8, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 82 (1990), pp. 148-149, 150-152.
10. *Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), nos. 23, 74, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1044, 1095-1097.
11. *Vatican Council II, Declaration Dignitatis humanae* (7 December 1965), no. 6, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 933-934.
12. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (11 April 1963), nos. 53-61, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 55 (1963), p. 272-274.

13. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), nos. 38-40, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 564-569; *idem*, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), nos. 10, 15, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 804-806, 811-813.
14. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), nos. 30-32, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1049-1051; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation" (22 March 1986), no. 73, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 79 (1987), p. 586; John Paul II, "Discourse *Je désire* to the 68th Session of the International Labor Organization" (15 June 1982), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 74 (1982), pp. 992 ff.
15. This definition is adapted from Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, vol. II: *Special Moral Theology* (Manila: Divine Word Publications, 1987), pp.224-225. Cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (15 May 1931), nos. 78-80, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 23 (1931), pp. 203 ff; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (15 May 1961), no. 53, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 53 (1961), p. 414; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 15, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 811-813.
16. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (15 May 1931), nos. 780, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 23 (1931), pp. 203 ff; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (15 May 1961), no. 53, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 53 (1961), p. 414; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Instruction *Libertatis conscientia* on Christian freedom and liberation" (22 March 1986), no. 73, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 79 (1987), p. 586.
17. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (11 April 1963), no. 140-141, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 55 (1963), pp. 294-295; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (26 March 1967), no. 33, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 273-274.
18. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo anno* (15 May 1931), nos. 78-80, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 23 (1931), pp. 203 ff; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et magistra* (15 May 1961), no. 37, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 53 (1961), pp. 409, 413; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (26 March 1967), no. 33, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 273-274; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (14 May 1971), nos. 46-47, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), pp. 433-437; Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), nos. 30-31, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1049-1050; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 13, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 809-810.
19. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in terris* (11 April 1963), no. 79, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 55 (1963), p. 278; Vatican Council II, *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), nos. 9, 68, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1031-1033, 1089-1090; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), no. 44, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 576-577.
20. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 69, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1090-1092; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), no. 42, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 573-574; *idem*, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 19, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83, (1991), pp. 816-818.
21. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem exercens* (14 September 1981), no. 14, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 73 (1981), p. 613.
22. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), no. 9, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 68 (1976), pp. 10-11.
23. 1971 Synod of Bishops, Statement *De iustitia in mundo* (30 November 1971), no. 6, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), p. 924; Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), nos. 27-36, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 68 (1976), pp. 23-29.

24. *Final Document, CELAM III*, nos. 1141 to 1145; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), nos. 42, 42, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 572-575; *idem*, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 11, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 806-807. Corollary to the foregoing is the affirmation that all people and all peoples have a fundamental right to integral human development. The model of development chosen must be one that lessens rather than widens the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged in the economic, social, sexual, political and cultural spheres (cf. Donal Dorr, *The Social Justice Agenda, Justice, Ecology, Power and the Church* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 100.
25. John Paul II, *La paix avec Dieu Créateur — La paix avec toute la création* (8 December 1989) (Message for the World Day of Peace on 1 January 1990), no. 7, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 82 (1990), pp. 150-151. This statement, while primarily true for human beings, also applies analogously to other life forms.
26. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 76, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1099-1100; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), no. 41, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), p.571.
27. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*, (7 December 1965) no. 75, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1097-1099; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (14 May 1971), no. 24, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), pp. 418-419.
28. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 25, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 822-824.
29. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (30 December 1987), no. 48, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 80 (1988), pp. 583-584.
30. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 75, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), p. 1098; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (14 May 1971), no. 50, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63, (1971), pp. 439-440.
31. Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima adveniens* (14 May 1971), nos. 3, 4, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971), pp. 402-404.
32. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 76, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), p. 1099; *Final Document, CELAM III*, nos. 521 and 523.
33. Bishop Francisco F. Claver, S.J., D.D. (Bishop Emeritus of Malaybalay in Bukidnon, Philippines) calls the respective frameworks of these kinds of political involvement as "politics as field" and "politics as arena." See his article "Faith and Politics: The Church in the Political Arena," *Pulso* Monograph No.5, December 1990, pp. 11-20, especially p. 13. *Pulso* is published by the Institute on Church and Social Issues, which is located in Ateneo de Manila University campus in Loyola Heights, Quezon City, Philippines.
34. *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Can. 227; Congregation for Catholic Education, *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests* (Rome: Vatican Polyglot Press, 1988), pp. 59-60.
35. *Final Document, CELAM III*, nos. 526-527; *Codex Iuris Canonici*, Can. 287.
36. Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi* (8 December 1975), no. 37, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 68 (1976), p. 29.
37. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum progressio* (26 March 1967), no. 31, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 1099.
38. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 76, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), p. 1099.

39. Vatican Council II, Declaration *Dignitatis humanae* (7 December 1965), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 929-944.
40. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 76, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1099-1100.
41. This summary is adapted from the article "Liberty, Religious (Tolerance)," by John Linnan, CSV, in Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987), pp. 576-584.
42. Vatican Council II, Declaration *Dignitatis humanae* (7 December 1965), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 929-944, at 929-930.
43. *Ibid.*, at pp. 930-931.
44. *Ibid.*, at pp. 931-932.
45. *Ibid.*, at p. 932.
46. *Ibid.*, at pp. 932-933.
47. *Ibid.*, at p. 932.
48. *Ibid.*, at pp. 933-934.
49. *Ibid.*, at pp. 934-935.
50. *Ibid.*, at pp. 935-938, especially at pp. 935-936.
51. *Ibid.*, at p. 939.
52. *Ibid.*, at p. 940.
53. *Ibid.*, at pp. 940-941; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 29, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 828-830.
54. Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 76, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966), pp. 1099-1100; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus annus* (1 May 1991), no. 5, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 83 (1991), pp. 798-800.
55. "Church and State," by John Langan, S.J., in Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane, eds., *The New Dictionary of Theology* (Wilmington, Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1987), pp. 206-209, at pp. 206-207.
56. Denying that the elements and outlines of such a paradigm are available from the teaching of the Church would be untenable for a Christian, since it would amount to saying that the Gospel is fundamentally incomplete, since it does not address such important aspects of human life as politics and the state. Fortunately, such a denial is not necessary, nor would it be factual if made.
57. This right to freedom from restraint by state action holds only when a given concrete form of religious practice has no significant adverse effect on public order. See the article of Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J., entitled "Safeguarding Freedom: Church-State Relations in Public Policy Formulation," *Pulso* Monograph No. 6, February 1991, pp. 11-23, especially pp. 16-22.
58. Cf. Richard P. McBrien, "Church," in *An American Catholic Catechism*, ed. George J. Dyer (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), pp. 16-30, at pp. 29-30.
59. All this is in contrast to what may be called a "total moral separation" of religion and the state, in which the practice of religion, if at all permitted, is confined to private life and is not allowed to directly affect public institutions and discussions regarding public policy.
60. Again, see the lucid presentation of the rationale for these morally legitimate restrictions on religious practice in Bernas, "Safeguarding Freedom," pp. 11-23, especially pp. 16-22.

61. This used to happen from 1987 to 1992, during the administration of President Corazon C. Aquino, who is a devout Catholic Christian. The venue for the combined civil and religious observance of the 1986 "People Power" revolution, starting in 1988, was the shrine of Our Lady of Peace, then newly completed. This was built along the historic portion of Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (EDSA) where active nonviolence of largely Catholic Christian religious inspiration caused the downfall of the Marcos dictatorship.
62. Claver, "Faith and Politics," *Pulso* Monograph No.5, December 1990, pp. 11-20. The distinction referred to is on p. 13.
63. The author of this paper prefers to use the term "pastors" as a broad term encompassing bishops, clergy and religious, as being more accurate and less prone to misinterpretation than "hierarchy." In the text of this paper the shift of usage from "hierarchy" to "pastors" will be pointed out.
64. This does not mean to deny that some members of the hierarchy may have special competence in political action or in the "political arena."
65. "Message to the People of God from the Synod of 1987," no. 22, mentioned in Claver, "Faith and Politics," p. 13.
66. Claver, "Faith and Politics," p. 13. The greater competence of the laity over the pastors in direct political action ("the political arena") is not due to some difference of ontological character between members of the hierarchy and the laity. It is largely due to the laity's generally more profound theoretical and experiential knowledge of political action ("the political arena"). Conversely, the members of the pastoral body generally have more competence than the laity in "politics" or "the political field," not because of some difference of ontological character between pastors and laity, but largely because the pastors generally have had more opportunity to formally study and reflect upon the general moral principles governing political action.
67. Claver, "Faith and Politics," p. 13.
68. A typical example of this was the Post-election Statement, dated 13 February 1986, issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. In effect, this statement rejected the claim to legitimacy of the Marcos dictatorship, on the ground that the latter, through blatant terrorism and massive fraud, had systematically attempted to subvert the will of the people in the snap presidential elections of February 1986. For the latter document, see *Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines. Letters and Statements: 1984-1990* (Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute, Loyola School of Theology and Ateneo de Manila University, 1990), pp. 61-64.
69. Claver, "Faith and Politics," p. 13.
70. The pertinent parts of the *Code of Canon Law* which Bishop Claver mentions are Canons 285, # 3 and 287, # 2. The first states specifically that "Clerics are forbidden to assume public office whenever it means sharing in the exercise of civil power"; and the second, that "They are not to play an active role in political parties or in directing trade unions unless, in the judgment of the competent ecclesiastical authority, this is required for the defence of the rights of the Church or to promote the common good." The translation of the *Codex Iuris Canonici* used here is that entitled *The Code of Canon Law in English Translation*, prepared by the Canon Law Society of Great Britain and Ireland in association with The Canon Law Society of Australia and New Zealand and The Canadian Canon Law Society (London: Collins Liturgical Publications, 1983 and Sydney: Collins Liturgical Australia, 1983), p. 49.
71. Cf. Claver, "Faith and Politics," p. 14.
72. *Ibid.*
73. *Ibid.*, at pp. 14-15.

74. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 20.
75. For example, the typology does not cover the whole area conventionally considered to be part of Asia. Specifically the typology does not include the Asian parts of Russia, as well as the Republic of Kazakhstan, in both of which there are considerable numbers of Catholic Christians, in the order of hundreds of thousands in the former, and tens of thousands in the latter. This is because, as far as the author knows, the ecclesiastical territories found in these two areas do not belong to the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. Moreover, the sociopolitical situation in these areas is still so unstable as to make difficult the identification of clear social ethical imperatives for the Church there. The typology also does not specifically mention all the countries of Asia, but only gives some main examples of each type of situation.
76. The adherence to these religious or philosophical systems may at times be only nominal, but nevertheless these systems are the ones invoked to legitimize the control of power by the dominant community or group.
77. In relation to the criterion of prevailing type of economic system, this paper has sometimes taken a position regarding the character of the economies of certain countries distinct from that claimed by the ruling groups therein. For instance, this paper has considered as capitalist the economic systems of some countries whose rulers call them socialist, the reason being that capitalism is here understood as the economic system in which the bulk of the means of production and exchange is owned by the private sector.
78. An accurate concept of human rights should therefore affirm, for example, that though all human beings are the subjects of human rights, particular attention should be paid to the rights of the oppressed, namely, those whose rights are being violated, and that the right of the majority to satisfy their basic needs is prior to the majority's desire for or the minority's aspirations to nonbasic needs. An accurate concept of human rights should also affirm that freedom of conscience and of action in accordance with conscience is a fundamental human right, and should not be suppressed for collective goals unless public order or the fundamental human rights of other persons is at stake.
79. Komonchak *et al.*, *New Dictionary of Theology*, s.v. "Rights, Human," by Falconer.
80. Such a reputation, however, should be nuanced by taking into consideration the struggle of the predominantly Catholic Christian people of East Timor for the recognition of their independence as a nation. The debate, both domestic Philippine and international, in relation to the holding of the Asia-Pacific Conference on East Timor (APCET) in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, from 31 May to 4 June 1994, made many aware for the first time that the great majority of the people of East Timor are Catholic Christians. Many believe that East Timor has a right to have its independence recognized, and they consider the Indonesian occupation of East Timor since 1975 to be immoral, as well as illegal by the standards of international law.
81. The Indonesian state ideology, called *Pancasila*, has five tenets: belief in God, humanitarianism, national unity, democracy based on consensus and representation, and social justice.
82. The Indonesian state recognizes five religions — Islam, Catholic Christianity, Protestant Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism — and *kepercauaan* or traditional beliefs (especially in the latter's Javanese form) as legally acceptable expressions of the belief in God that *Pancasila* upholds.
83. *Ba'ath* is an Arabic word meaning "resurgence."

II. RELIGION AND POLITICS

by

GEORGE V. LOBO

1. God is Not Dead

In the nineteen-fifties, there was widespread speculation in the West about the "death of God". This was but a form of "modern theology" that tried to come to terms with the secularizing trend in modern life. In some circles it was taken for granted that religion had become a spent force because of factors such as Marxism, rationalism and the advance of science and technology. Even a person like Dietrich Bonhoeffer thought that the world was entering a time of "no religion at all" and so Christianity must shed the outer garb of religion. He proposed that the future task of theology was to develop a "religionless interpretation of the Gospel."

Such a trend was also spreading to the East where the elite had begun to adopt Western postures. They felt that traditional religion was to be transcended by a spirit of scientific enquiry.

However, now the scene has rapidly changed. We are now witnessing a strong revival of religion in different forms everywhere. Harvey Cox mentions some particularly powerful symbols of the sea change that has taken place. For instance, in January 24, 1979, the newly-elected Pope John Paul II landed at the officially secularized city of Mexico to a triumphant welcome that simply swept away the anticlerical restrictions that prevailed there for a century. The leaders of the world's largest "secular city" became jittery at the phenomenon. Just about then, Ayatollah Khomeini reversed at one stroke the seemingly secularized set up in modern Iran.

The first was a case of upsurge of faith that was always there in the hearts of the *campesinos* and the destitute inhabitants of the city *barrios*. The second was sign of the religious fundamentalism that is now sweeping through a great part of the world. However, both reveal that religion is a most potent force in human life and society.

"Modern theology" had discounted the popular religion of the masses. Marxists had derided it as "opium of the people." Certain rulers like

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the Shah of Iran, mostly out of self-interest, had attempted to build a new political and social order free from what they considered as shackles of religion. However, events in Iran and Eastern Europe have shown that religious faith cannot be stamped out by a materialistic ideology or by brute force. The rise of religious fundamentalism among Muslims, Hindus and Christians is a reaction against rationalistic ideologies.

Even the phenomenon of modernity has had a limited effect on religious faith as such, even though it might have challenged many of its traditional expressions. The impact of science and technology may in the long run have a positive effect on religion by helping to free it from superstitious elements. Tensions of modern life can raise questions like that of the meaning of suffering, life and death which religion alone cannot answer.

Although organized religion has no longer a dominant role in many societies, the influence of religious faith seems to have become deeper and more subtle. If the elite and workers in countries like France seem to largely manage without religion, the phenomenon of Lourdes, Fatima and many other pilgrim centers shows that religion is quite alive. The creed of rationalism and agnosticism may have attracted some people. However, most of those who have abandoned the traditional Christian faith are having recourse to esoteric cults and Eastern religions.

Religiosity has always been a marked trait of Eastern peoples. In many Asian societies organized religion seems to be even getting stronger. Hinduism, which was traditionally a diffused entity, is now acquiring a militant identity. So even while it is urgent to bring about socio-economic liberation, the deep religiosity of Asian peoples must be taken into account.

2. Religion and Politics: Models of Relationship

Religion and politics are two of the most important dimensions of human life. Religion is the expression of man's longing for ultimate meaning in life and his striving towards his transcendent destiny. It is concerned with the ultimate values of the human person and society and the realization of the deepest human aspirations. Politics is the way of organizing man's secular life in order to achieve the common good, and thereby the conditions needed for realizing human values in society. Hence, the importance of the right order between these two vital spheres.

There are different *models* for the relationship between religion and politics: 1) the two are essentially unrelated and parallel, and hence *totally separable*; 2) *religion dominates* and absorbs politics, creating a theocratic society or established Church; 3) *politics uses religion*, for instance, to

further unworthy ends, thus creating communalism in the pejorative sense; 4) there is a *harmonious convergence* between the two so that the autonomy of the political sphere is maintained, even while religious freedom is assured. The mutual interpenetration and collaboration should bring about the true welfare of mankind.

These models are helpful in understanding the situation in a particular country and in bringing about a much needed reform. But they cannot be applied rigidly to different countries. The greatly complex variety of situations must be attended to.

3. Complete Separation of Religion and Politics

The belief that the two can be kept completely separate is an illusion. As expressions of the two most vital dimensions of human life, the vertical and the horizontal, they are bound to be closely interlinked, even if at times the link is less apparent.

The French revolutionaries had tried to consign religion to the “sacristy,” Modern secularists, while they do grant freedom of religion, want to relegate it to the private sphere. However, the attempt to privatize religion has never met with success. In Eastern countries, it has not even been seriously attempted.

Still, it has happened that many Christians — and believers of other religions — have failed to see that their faith itself calls for social responsibility and commitment to justice. Many pious people show grave indifference to social concerns. Some with a conservative and fundamentalist outlook even actively work against social change. However, their indifference to political and social affairs is often only apparent. Behind the veil of studied detachment is the option to maintain the status quo which itself is a subtle way of playing politics.

After Vatican II, with its clear call to social involvement, such escapism is clearly unjustified. True religion must have a positive impact on society, including its political organization. Therefore, the question is not whether religion is related to politics, but what the type of relationship should be.

4. Religion Dominating Politics — Theocracy

When a particular religion acquires a dominating position we have a *theocracy*. This is not the rightful subjection of all human life to the sovereignty of God. But it is the domination of a particular ideology over the whole of human society. When a religion acquires a privileged con-

stitutional status as in Pakistan or Malaysia, it becomes established.

The system of established Christianity in what was known as “Christianism” seemed to have provided an advantage to religion. In fact, however, religion got involved in the politics of the realm. While the Church tried to use the power of the state, the state, in fact, made the Church the instrument of its own interests. The prophetic dimension of religion challenging the misuse of power was stifled.

This happened all the more when there was an external threat from another religio-political power. For instance, when Islam was sweeping through Eastern Europe and Northern Africa, Christian rulers harnessed the influence of religion to face the threat and even went on the counterattack, giving the military venture a sacred garb, like that of the Crusades. In such a situation, religion was in no position to question the autocracy and rapacity of the princes or raise its voice against the cruel oppression of the poor by the privileged classes attached to the throne.

Thus, the establishment of religion drained away the ferment of renewal carried by the Gospel. The leaders of the Church tended to pattern their life and office after those of secular monarchs. No wonder, then, that the bishops became princes and the clergy a sort of sacred bureaucracy. Thus religion, instead of proving to be an inspiration to society, became an instrument of statecraft. The earthly kingdom, instead of being a means of achieving the common good of human society, became a means of oppression sanctioned by religion.

Thank God, such an overt form of establishment is fading away in most parts of the world. However, there is some form of theocracy in nearly all Muslim majority countries. There is an effort to organize the whole of social and political life according to the literal understanding of the *Shari'a* or Islamic law. What is considered sacred, mandatory and immutable is, not only the Qur'an and Hadith (the reported sayings of the Prophet), but the entire corpus of law developed in the first centuries under the impact of particular situations. The laudable effort to have an integrated polity is in fact directed to perpetuate outdated and inhuman practices such as the mutilation of criminals and discrimination against women.

Such trends are not entirely absent from Christian communities. In Asia, because of their mostly minority status, they do not normally come out in the open. There is need for renouncing a desire of establishing one's religion. Within a theocracy or system of established religion, the minorities suffer the violation of their human rights. In spite of verbal recognition of religious freedom, minorities are discriminated against in the mat-

ter of jobs and even in the public practice of their faith. Religious leaders belonging to the majority tend to unduly interfere in secular affairs, including politics. Under the guise of protecting religious interests, they often adopt obscurantist positions which benefit neither the religious nor the civil sphere. When religious leaders acquire special privileges, they are diverted from their proper religious mission.

5. Politics Manipulating Religion — Communalism

This is the obverse of religion dominating politics. In countries like India it is called “communalism,” in the sense that it is the abuse of the religious sentiment for narrow political purposes. It has several aspects:⁴

a) First of all, it has an *economic basis*. When resources and opportunities are limited, people tend to gain some personal advantages by closely identifying themselves with a particular group, for instance, a religious community. When one such group has already an advantageous position, others tend to react which provokes a counterreaction on the part of the first group.

b) *Political parties* exploit the situation of imbalances and tensions for narrow partisan interests. They stir up the religious passions of the people which often leads to violent clashes. It is generally the poor who suffer most from the violent confrontations. In this way religion gets politicized.

c) *Psychological stereotypes* conduce to perpetuate prejudices. People of a particular community are identified with certain character or behavior traits which are often fictitious, grossly exaggerated, or are true only of a limited number in the group.

d) More deeply, communalism thrives on a *narrow religious outlook*. A feeling of superiority or exclusive validation for one's religion leads the members of one community to look down on others, or, on the contrary, they suffer from persecution mania. It may also result in fanaticism, or inclination to put up a fight at the least provocation.

e) *Religious fundamentalism* inverts the hierarchy of truths and values. The core inspiration of a particular religion is replaced by blind adherence to secondary factors. Roger Garaudy, for instance, tries to show that the core inspiration of Islam is universalist and humanitarian. Allah alone has absolute knowledge and he alone is the sole possessor of earthly goods. Hence, no one may claim absolute knowledge or absolute possession. Even the saying that Allah alone commands is not a sign of “theocracy,” but is an invitation to submit to his divine will. The legal code, *Shari'a*, (etymologically “the path to the true source”), is meant to

help the devotees to live their private and public life twenty-four hours a day in the sight of Allah.

However, a true application of the *Shari'a* has nothing to do with uncritical literalism or resistance to change. There is need for putting an end to legalism that deprives the law of its dimension of interiority and love.⁵

A Sudanese Muslim writer suggests a key to the interpretation of secondary codes. The *Shari'a* is to be understood as a particular interpretation of the original Islam in a given historical context. The historical *Shari'a* is, therefore, not at fault when seen in its proper context. However, the fault is in contemporary believers who insist on implementing archaic concepts in radically transformed circumstances. So it is not that the Qur'an should be interpreted according to the *Shari'a*, but the other way round.⁶

f) *Overidentification of religion and culture.* The complex of laws, practices and artistic expressions is called "culture." In primitive societies, religious faith, rituals and lifestyle were closely interlinked. The latter two were fixated according to some patterns and strictly regulated according to the community's laws or customs.

As such, there is no harm if a people of a particular religion adopts a distinctive culture. However, today, most religions are spread throughout the world and have members from the most diverse cultural backgrounds. When a religious group makes converts from another group and gets the converts to change their lifestyle, tension naturally arises. The others would regard the converts as alien and renegades. They would even be considered unreliable in the context of international conflict.

Thus, one of the main reasons why Hindus in India regard Muslims with suspicion is the bitter experience of partition of the motherland in 1947 on religious lines. Pakistan was created on the ground that Muslims are a distinct "nation" even though over 90% were of the same original stock. It is feared that if more become Muslims in residual India, there might be the demand for further partition. When Christians in an area adopt a too-Western lifestyle, a section of the Hindus begin to feel that they too might carve out other nation states from the country.

Religious and cultural pluralism is a human right. But the implications of religious groups adopting a too-distinct way of life even in the secular sphere must be carefully examined. The majority community may be wrong in insisting that everyone adopt the so-called national culture, especially when this may have been imposed by an elite on other groups.

On the other hand, a minority cultivating a too-distinctive culture, especially if this is from an alien source, should be avoided. At least, an alien culture, including ritual forms, should not be imposed on the converts by the particular religious leadership. Here we are deep into the question of *inculturation*, which has both political and religious implications.

It should be evident that at least the Christian religion is not bound to any particular culture.⁷ Today, any religion that claims to be truly universal has to adapt itself to different cultures. The Church, particularly, has the prophetic role of giving an example of such inculturation.

6. Cultural and Religious Pluralism

Culture has three instrumental dimensions: a) *cognitive*, or a definite world view; b) *conative*, or a design of action; c) *normative*, or a guide for life by providing values.

This last normative or evaluative dimension can be either *hegemonic*, or one which admits *pluralism*. The first attempts to liquidate other religions, marginalizes them or assimilates them. Thus, it has been said that the apparent "tolerance" of Hinduism only tends to marginalize other faiths.

Religious pluralism, on the other hand, admits the coexistence of different religions within the same society or nation State.

This would be *isolationist*, if different religious groups do not question the legitimacy of, or interfere with, the life and activities of others, but merely exist as socio-cultural isolates. This would be in fact a form of *retreatist communalism* that is sterile and static. Small minorities may give in to this mode of existence.

Genuine religious pluralism would mean a multicultural and multireligious polity. As T. K. Oommen puts it:

In contrast, religious pluralism would mean a societal situation in which different religious collectivities would, not only respect one another in terms of their respective beliefs and worship patterns, but would be eager to enter into creative and critical dialogue so that they could empathetically understand one another and collectively shape a human and just society.

In such an effort there should not be excessive cultural purity which may result in racism or casteism. There should also not be an exclusive concern for the material welfare of the community, in which case religion

would degenerate into a cult of affluence, or for mere “spiritual” salvation which would be an *escapist retreatism*.

7. Secularism and Communalism

It is very important to distinguish carefully between the ideology of *secularism* and the process of *secularization*. While the former denies the transcendent dimension of human existence, the latter could be understood in different ways. One of these is quite legitimate, namely, as a rational and humanistic movement that does not necessarily deny the transcendent and religious sphere. In fact, the biblical vision has a dimension of such secularization or “demythologization,” inasmuch as it reveals the distinction of creative earthly reality from the divine. A concept of secularity that stresses the value of created things is to be welcomed, provided the sovereignty of God is recognized and there is no dichotomy between the secular and the sacred.

Secularism in the West crystallized as an ideology in the context of the conflict between the Church and the state. Either it was understood as a division of labor between the two, or more often as a denial of the transcendent and the religious. The three connotations of this kind of secularism are: 1) separating man and society from the divine; 2) instituting pure rationality through the process of displacing religiosity; 3) relegating religion to the private realm of human life.

However, such a project is not valid, because: 1) the sacred and the secular are intrinsically intertwined in everyday human existence; any effort to establish a separate “space” for the sacred apart from the secular is bound to fail; 2) there is no evidence of scientific thought being able to displace religion. Certain aspects wrongly attributed to religion, like magic and superstition, may disappear, but thereby religion will only acquire a more authentic meaning; 3) to privatize religion is to seek to liquidate it.

In some Eastern countries, like India, secularism is often understood as a means of resolving conflicts between different religions. In this case, it is proposed less as a way of ensuring freedom of religion as of ensuring the cohesion of the state, of the “freedom of the state” in a multireligious situation.⁹ This is legitimate if it does not lead to religious indifferentism.

Communalism expresses the desire of people who share a common faith to have also common economic and political interests which are different from and often antagonistic to those of other religious groups.¹⁰ According to T.K. Oommen,

Communalism has come to be perceived as the tendency on the part

of a religious group to affirm that it is a political entity. That is, communalism obtains when a religious community believes that unless it has an exclusive "political roof," it cannot have a secure existence.¹¹

Thus, communalism is the opposite of secularism when this latter is understood as the building up of a plural polity. It has different forms: 1) *assimilative*, when a dominant majority or even an elite minority seeks to absorb or assimilate the rest to its worldview and culture; 2) *welfarist*, when a particular religious community seeks solely to advance its position either by internal mutual help or by constantly agitating to get favors from the state; 3) *retreatist*, when the community is small in number and weak in influence, and so may experience a sense of powerlessness and withdraw into itself. As this is a passive stance, it may ultimately lead to assimilation; 4) *separatist*, or maintaining undue cultural specificity; 5) *secessionist*, seeking a separate political entity or a totally independent or sovereign state.

None of these positions is conducive to national harmony and security. The Church should avoid all of them. Even a welfarist policy should be adopted only on behalf of all the people, and not merely of Christians, although it would be natural to have special concern for those of one's own community.

The best way of avoiding the pitfalls of communalism is to strive towards genuine pluralism. Secularism is helpful when it is understood as a true neutrality of the state and not as a rationalist ideology.

8. Rightful Autonomy of the Secular Sphere

The transition from tradition to modernity, which most Asian societies are now passing through, implies the progressive autonomy of the secular sphere from the control of organized religion. Jesus has resolved the question in germ in proclaiming: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22 : 17).

Already the doctrine of creation frees earthly activity from the demonic and magical. True religion accepts creation with its proper character as a gracious gift of God. Hence, scientific progress, human sciences and sociopolitical activity are not an obstacle to religion, but a most precious aid.

One of the Church laws that puzzles many is the prohibition of clergy from taking part in party politics or assuming public office.¹² This is not meant to exclude Church leaders from all political activity, but to warn them not to neglect their proper mission of bringing the transcendent

dimension to human activity, and not to abuse their spiritual authority to interfere in the political process.

The pastors of Church do have the prophetic role of denouncing unjust structures and announcing by word and deed a new society that is marked by justice and love. However, normally, it is for the laity to engage themselves directly in political activity. As Vatican II declares: "Laymen should also know that it is generally the function of their well-formed Christian conscience to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city."¹³

As this role belongs properly to the laity, they do not need any permission from Church authorities to exercise it. It is a "proper" and not "delegated" function. From the clergy they can expect enlightenment and not concrete directions. Further, the laity engage in this activity basically as citizens. From their faith they do derive an inspiration for their dedication. But their religion does not provide any blueprint for temporal activity. If this were made clear, there would be less room for suspicion when Christians seek to take a prominent part in political activity.

The question can arise whether Christians should organize themselves in "Christian" trade unions or political parties. Normally, it would be most imprudent and misleading to form such denominational groups. At least in Asia, it would be unwise to form Christian political parties. Christian democratic parties arose in Europe under special circumstances, when it was a question of radical opposition between the Christian faith and what was perceived as militant godless Communism. In the Asian situation, it would be counterproductive to form such political parties. The apparent advantage gained thereby would be counterbalanced by the suspicion and opposition that it would arouse in other groups. Sectarianism breeds sectarianism which in the end would profit no one.

Still, what about defending *minority rights*? The rights of all citizens and groups must be safeguarded in any just society. It is highly desirable that minority rights are protected through constitutional means. Any violation of the rights of a minority is to be condemned. Hence, Christians must be careful not to indulge in selective indignation when the rights of Christians are violated. The defense of minority rights is better carried out at the level of *human rights*. Then, the conscience of a wider circle could be aroused and the defense would become more effective. Respect for the human order implies a common struggle for justice by all people of good will without any sectarian bias.

Here again, the "small flocks" of Asian Churches have the crucial role of witnessing to human values. Defense of basic human rights may

provoke the opposition of vested interests. But Christians could not in this way be blamed for seeking their own narrow interests and thereby threatening the national polity. Christians should give the lead to other religious groups in shedding their particularisms or the tendency to suppress human rights within their own community in the name of protecting their religion.

9. Religious Freedom

While the autonomy of the secular sphere is to be respected and preserved from interference by misguided religious elements, religion itself needs to be defended from encroachment by secular or political forces.

One of the most important acts of Vatican II is the *Declaration on Religious Freedom* which in effect means "immunity from coercion in secular society." The Council spells this out thus:

This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that in matters religious no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs. Nor is anyone to be restrained from acting in accordance with his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association, within due limits.¹⁴

This right to religious freedom is based on the unique dignity of the human person. It has special importance, since it concerns the deepest dimension of human life. If the life of the citizens is to be enhanced, civil society must acknowledge and protect this basic right. "Hence, it should be recognized in constitutional law whereby society is governed. Thus, it becomes a civil right."¹⁵

As religious truth is sought by *free inquiry* and *mutual dialogue*, religious freedom implies the free search for truth with every available means, as well as the freedom to communicate the same to others. There is, therefore, the inherent right to *propagate* one's religious faith, and, correlatively, the right to change one's religious affiliation, which is often called *conversion*. Hence, the government may not impose on its people the adherence to or repudiation of any religion, or hinder anyone from joining or leaving a religious body.¹⁶

The Council qualifies the right to religious freedom by saying that "its exercise is subject to certain regulatory norms."¹⁷ Hence, the moral principle of personal and social responsibility is to be respected. Manifest violations of the moral order, like child sacrifice and sacred prostitution, are to be curbed by civil society. As the Council declares:

Society has the right to defend itself against possible abuses committed under the pretext of religious freedom. It is the special duty of government to provide protection against violation of human rights in this way. However, government is not to act in an arbitrary manner or in an unfair spirit of partisanship. Its action is to be regulated by juridical norms which are in conformity with the objective moral order.¹⁸

Today, there are different opinions as to what is "in accordance" with the moral order. Any conflicts that may arise are to be resolved in a spirit of openness and sincere dialogue.

The Council is hesitant in condemning the legal recognition of a particular religion, as the time did not seem to be ripe for it. But it emphasizes the point that, in case there is such recognition, the rights of others are not to be violated, and there should be no discrimination among citizens on the ground of religion.¹⁹

As human persons have to practise religion in a social way, each religious community has the right to own properties and to conduct institutions in a corporate manner. These include all activities directed to realize the goals of religion, like education and health services. Such institutions are to have civil recognition as moral persons in the form of trusts, or in other ways.

In practice, this may produce serious conflicts. The religious community may demand state-aid for schools, even while claiming full autonomy in their administration. It is interesting to note that such aid is denied in several Western countries, while it is granted to a large extent in several Asian countries. The state may tend to acquire a monopoly of education under the pretext of bringing about national integration or of curbing certain abuses. Hence, there is need for mutual accommodation, even while religious freedom is preserved.

While the Church, therefore, can legitimately claim the right to run autonomous educational and health services, one may ask whether this should be overemphasized. Religious personnel, not to mention dedicated lay persons, could also work in secular institutions, and thereby improve their atmosphere. We need not wait for the government to bring about nationalization of schools, as happened some years back in Sri Lanka.

In any case, the Church should not seek to build up a too massive institutional structure. This would not only provoke an adverse reaction from others, but would affect the very life and mission of the Church. In-

stead of being a prophetic community, she would be thoroughly institutionalized, with all its attendant drawbacks. The Church, as a human society, has an institutional aspect; but this should be wholly subservient to its charismatic mission and should be directed to the service of human society. She should live and function according to the example of the Master "who came to serve and not be served" (Mt 20 : 28).

10. Religion and Political Responsibility

We have seen that religion should not dominate politics, nor politics dominate religion. At the same time, the two cannot be kept apart, but must achieve a *harmony* for the sake of the human person and society.

As the believer is also a citizen, he or she has the grave moral responsibility of building up the earthly city. Genuine religious faith in God, who is the common Father of all, should urge the believer to contribute to the achievement of a social order in which all of God's children will live in justice, peace, love and prosperity.

Vatican II has expressed this strongly:

They are mistaken who, knowing that we have here no lasting city, but seek one which is to come, think that they may therefore shirk their earthly responsibilities. For they are forgetting that by the faith itself they are more than ever obliged to measure up to these duties.... The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties toward his neighbor and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation.²⁰

The believer must fulfill his earthly responsibilities inspired by his faith. Hence, there should be no contradiction between faith and authentic political involvement; but one must reinforce the other.

The believers essentially belong to a faith community, and religion publicly professed acquires a communitarian dimension (which is more or less strong in different religions). Hence, the religious community itself has a political responsibility. As far as the Church is concerned, she is, in the words of Vatican II, "a kind of sacrament or sign of intimate union with God, and of the unity of all mankind. She is also *instrument for the achievement of such unity*."²¹ The Church is to be a leaven or ferment of fraternity and concord in the world, even when is a minority group.

A problem arises when the religious community is organized with powerful institutional structures and develops strong secular interests. It may then tend to appear like a massive power structure. Instead, the

Church must imitate Christ who gave an example of passing from “love of power” to “power of love.” If religious communities conform to the power structures of the world, they would lose their specific role which is to inspire and guide earthly structures. Conflicts between various religious groups arise when they ignore their *core faith experience* and jockey for positions within human society.

Hence, much of the suspicion of the state regarding religious groups is based on a rivalry for power within the same society. However, it can also happen that a religious community encounters opposition when it exercises its prophetic function of denouncing injustice and the violation of human rights. If, for instance, conversion of backward classes leads to their human promotion and a challenge to the centuries-old system of oppression and exploitation, the vested interests may use state power to curb religious activity under various pretexts.

Hence, while the Church should renounce power politics and the causing of cultural alienation among the converts, she cannot renounce her right and duty to evangelize which also implies humanization, development and liberation of the poor and downtrodden. If she meets opposition in carrying out this mission, she should not be surprised, but accept the trial, after the example of Jesus who was condemned for “proclaiming the good news to the poor and liberation to the captives” (Lk 4 : 18).

In certain situations, not only individual members, but the religious community as such, may have to make political options, as in the Philippines, during the struggle against the dictatorship of Marcos. Once such an urgent task is achieved, the Church should beware of engaging in partisan political activity.

As we have seen earlier, the prohibition of clerics from engaging in party politics is not meant to exclude their involvement in social change. It is directed to preventing misuse of a sacred power for mere political purposes, which also goes against the rightful autonomy of the earthly sphere and may lead to the contamination of religion itself.

A recent editorial in *Vidyajyoti* has expressed well the proper role of religion in the political sphere, and the ever-present danger of communalism:

If we affirm that religion has to influence political options in a constructive way, we refer to the religious core experience, free from the temptations of power, where the universal and deepest values have not been adulterated by communalism. This would mean, presum-

ably, that the religious influence on the believer for concrete political options must not normally reach him or her from organized religion or its leadership, for at this level religion can hardly avoid being, or appearing to be, communalist. The influence must come from the inner resources of the contact with Transcendence. The role of religious leaders will be to deepen the faith perception of the believers. They should not try to control or determine their political options.²²

Thus, Vatican II declares that “secular duties belong *properly*, although *not exclusively*, to the laity.” It is the role of the laity with well-formed Christian conscience “to see that the divine law is inscribed in the life of the earthly city.”²³

They must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, let them act directly and definitively in the temporal sphere. As citizens they must cooperate with other citizens, using their own particular skills and acting on their own responsibility. Everywhere and in all things they must seek the justice characteristic of God’s kingdom.²⁴

11. Conclusions

1) Religion can play the role of transformation by inspiration and service, or of division by contributing to communal conflicts. Christians must sedulously seek the former goal.

2) In the Asian context, it makes little sense to talk about the “relationship between religions and the state.”

3) The concept of the “secular state” in some countries has served a good purpose. But as it is open to misunderstanding, it would perhaps be better to accept the idea of “religious pluralism,” since religion is a fact of life and there is also “theocracy” or the “establishment” of a particular religion.

4) The Church, as “the sacrament of the unity of mankind,” must give the lead in achieving a proper harmony between religion and politics.

5) The Church has to maintain and develop her self-identity as a unique community of salvation. But this should not imply rivalry with the state or other religious communities.

6) The Church must renounce any tendency to interfere in the rightful autonomy of the secular and political spheres. Trying to get any special

place or favor from the state would only be counterproductive in the long run.

7) At the same time, the Church must vigorously fulfil her prophetic role and strive for justice and liberation. She must be ready to face the inevitable conflicts that this will provoke.

8) There need not be a conflict between justice/liberation and inculturation, since cultural alienation itself is an important form of structural injustice.

9) Systematic class struggle or violent revolution is not a Christian option. However, the right of the poor to struggle for liberation from oppression should be recognized. Violence could be accepted only as a last resort in a defensive struggle, according to the just war theory. However, the Christian should have a decided preference for a non-violent path, even under grave provocation.

10) The Church must project the image of a truly religious community, and not merely of a philanthropic organization, or of a mighty institutional structure. The more the Church sheds worldiness, the more she will be able to help the world.

11) Conducting educational, health and other social services can be helpful, if the goal is clearly service, especially of the poor. However, even religious could serve in government or other institutions in order to bring the Christian vision and the spirit of service to them. This would diminish the image of the Church as a colossal institution.

12) The Church exists in widely-varied situations in different Asian countries. Her mission must take into account the complexities of the particular local situation, even while it is guided by some general orientations.

13) There is no question of pretending to adopt an apolitical distance from political issues that confront the nation or the world. This would in reality be an option for the status quo.

14) The Church in Asia must, as far as possible, shed a Western image. There is need for adopting a national outlook without the excesses of nationalism. There is also the need of developing a pan-Asian perspective, as well as an Asian-level collaboration for the transformation of the continent.

15) The Church cannot canonize any political system, however good it may appear. She has to adopt a critical stance, so that a basically just

system might be developed.

16) Apart from an ecumenical spirit, there is need for a dialogue with other faiths to bring about mutual enrichment and to seek a common approach to urgent social problems.

17) In any concrete involvement of the Church, besides personal prudence and reflection, there is need for communal discernment in order to arrive at a truly mature judgment. An ongoing process of discernment would be of help in developing a more refined and critical sense regarding political affairs.

18) The proper and rightful role of the laity in secular affairs should be recognized. They should be encouraged and trained to engage themselves in political activity.

FOOTNOTES II: RELIGION AND POLITICS

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5. "Human Rights and Islam: Foundations, Traditions, Violations," *Concilium*, 1990/2, pp. 46-60.
6. A.A., An-Na'im, "Qur'an, Shari'a and Human Rights: Foundations, Deficiencies and Prospects," *Concilium*, 1990/2, pp. 61-69.
7. Cf. Vatican II, *Gaudium et spes*, no. 58.
8. *State and Society in India*, New York, Sage Publications, 1990, p. 120.
9. Cf. G.J. Larson, "Some Notes on Religion and Politics in Contemporary India," *Vidyajyoti*, 53 (1989) 84-85.
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11. *Op. cit.*, p. 113.
12. See *Code of Canon Law, 1993*, Can. 285 and 287.
13. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43.
14. *Dignitatis humanae*, no. 2.
15. *Ibid.*, no. 1.
16. *Ibid.*, no. 6.
17. *Ibid.*, no. 7.

18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, no. 6.
20. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43.
21. Vatican II, *Lumen gentium*, no. 1; cf. no. 9.
22. 53 (1989) 286.
23. *Gaudium et spes*, no. 43.
24. Decree *Apostolicam actuositatem* on the Apostolate of the Laity, no. 7.

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