

**SOCIAL ADVOCACY AS INTEGRAL EVANGELIZATION
THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL ADVOCACY****CONTENTS**

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**EVERYDAY CHRISTIANITY:
TO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR JUSTICE**
by
THE U.S. CATHOLIC CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

One of the great challenges for Christians is as old as our faith, but it takes on special urgency today as we approach the third Christian millennium. How do we connect worship on Sunday to work on Monday? How is the Gospel proclaimed not only in the pulpits of our parishes but also in the everyday lives of Catholic people? How does the church gathered on the Sabbath act as the people of God scattered and active every day of the week? How can we best carry the values of our faith into family life, the marketplace and the public square? How do we love our neighbor, pursue peace and seek justice in everyday choices and commitments?

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In these reflections we highlight one essential dimension of the lay vocation that is sometimes overlooked or neglected: the social mission of Christians in the world.¹ Every believer is called to serve "the least of these," to "hunger and thirst for justice," to be a "peacemaker."² Catholics are called by God to protect human life, to promote human dignity, to defend those who are poor and to seek the common good. This social mission of the church belongs to all of us. It is an essential part of what it is to be a believer.

This social mission is advanced in many ways: by the prophetic teaching of our Holy Father; by the efforts of our bishops' conference; and by many structures of charity and justice within our community of faith. But the most common and in many ways the most important Christian witness is often neither very visible nor highly structured. It is the sacrifice of parents trying to raise children with concern for others; the service and creativity of workers who do their best and reach out to those in need; the struggle of business owners trying to reconcile the bottom line and the needs of employees and customers; and the hard choices of public officials who seek to protect the weak and pursue the common good. The church's social mission is advanced by teachers and scientists, by family farmers and bankers, by salespersons and entertainers.

The Catholic social mission is also carried forward by believers who join unions, neighborhood organizations, business groups, civic associations, the pro-life movement, groups working for social justice; or environmental, civil rights or peace groups. It is advanced by Christians who stand up for the values of the Gospel. This mission is the task of countless Christians living their faith without much fanfare or recognition, who are quietly building a better society by their choices and actions, day by day. They protect human life, defend those who are poor, seek the common good, work for peace and promote human dignity.

Working for justice in everyday life is not easy. There are complex and sometimes difficult challenges encountered by women and men as they try to live their faith in the world. We applaud the efforts of all Catholics to live the Gospel by pursuing justice and peace in their everyday choices and commitments.

The Catholic Layperson: Discipleship and the Pursuit of Justice

Being a believer means that one lives a certain way — walking with the Lord, doing justice, loving kindness, and living peaceably among all people. Christian discipleship means practicing what Jesus preached. Discipleship is found in a relationship with Christ and a commitment to his mission of "bringing glad tidings to the poor./... liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free."³

For Catholics, this takes on special meaning today. According to the Second Vatican Council, "It is the special vocation of the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, in each and every one of the world's occupations and callings, and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life which, as it were, form the context of their existence. There they are called by God to contribute to the sanctification of the world within, like leaven, in the spirit of the Gospel, by fulfilling their own particular duties."⁴

We welcome and affirm the growing participation of lay women and men in the internal life of the church. Service within the church should form and strengthen believers for their mission in the world. With this pastoral statement we are addressing in a special way the demands of discipleship in the pursuit of justice and peace in everyday activity.

Followers of the Lord Jesus live their discipleship as spouses and parents, single adults and youth, employers and employees, consumers and investors, citizens and neighbors. We renew the warning of the Second Vatican Council, that "one of the graves terrors of our time is the dichotomy between the faith which many profess and their day-to-day conduct."⁵ By our baptism and confirmation, every member of our community is called to live his or her faith in the world.

Called to Justice in Everyday Life

Catholicism does not call us to abandon the world, but to help shape it. This does not mean leaving worldly tasks and responsibilities but transforming them. Catholics are everywhere in this society. We are corporate executives and migrant farm workers, politicians and welfare recipients, educators and day-care workers, tradesmen and farmers, office and factory workers, union leaders and small-business owners. Our entire community of faith must help Catholics to be instruments of God's grace and creative power in business and politics, in factories and offices, in homes and schools, and in all the events of daily life. Social justice and the common good are built up or torn down day by day in the countless decisions and choices we make. This vocation to pursue justice is not simply an individual task—it is a call to work with others to humanize and shape the institutions that touch so many people. The lay vocation for justice in the world cannot be carried forward alone, but only as members of a community called to be the "leaven" of the Gospel.

■ Our families are the starting point and the center of a vocation for justice. How we treat our parents, spouses, and children is a reflection of our commitment to Christ's love and justice. We demonstrate our commitment to the Gospel by how we spend our time and money, and whether our family

life includes an ethic of charity, service and action for justice. The lessons we teach our children through what we do as well as what we say determine whether they care for the "least among us" and are committed to work for justice.⁶

■ Workers are called to pursue justice. In the Catholic tradition, work is not a burden, not just how we make a living. Work is a way of supporting our family, realizing our dignity, promoting the common good and participating in God's creation. This means often doing the ordinary well, making the most of our talents and opportunities, treating others fairly and with dignity, and working with integrity and creativity. Believers should be encouraged to choose their work based on how they can best use the gifts God has given them. Decisions made at work can make important contributions to an ethic of justice. Catholics have the often difficult responsibility of choosing between competing values in the workplace. This is a measure of holiness. Associations that enable workers, owners or managers to pursue justice often make the witness of the individual more effective.⁷

■ Owners, managers and investors face important opportunities to seek justice and pursue peace. Ethical responsibility is not just avoiding evil but doing right, especially for the weak and vulnerable. Decisions about the use of capital have moral implications: Are companies creating and preserving quality jobs at living wages? Are they building up community through the goods and services they provide? Do policies and decisions reflect respect for human life and dignity, promote peace and preserve God's creation? While economic returns are important, they should not take precedence over the rights of workers or protection of the environment. Investors should examine ownership, management and economic decisions in the light of the Catholic call to protect life, defend those who are poor and seek the common good. These decisions promote human dignity or undermine it.⁸

■ As consumers, believers can promote social justice or injustice. In an affluent culture that suggests that what we have defines who we are, we can live more simply. When we purchase goods and services, we can choose to support companies that defend human life, treat workers fairly, protect creation and respect other basic moral values at home and abroad. We can also make conscious efforts to consume less.⁹

■ All human beings have unique talents, gifts from God that we are called to develop and share. We should celebrate this diversity. People who use their skills and expertise for the common good, the service of others and the protection of creation are good stewards of the gifts they have been given. When we labor with honesty, serve those in need, work for justice and contribute to charity, we use our talents to show our love—and God's love—for our brothers and sisters.¹⁰

■ As citizens in the world's leading democracy, Catholics in the United States have special responsibilities to protect human life and dignity, and to stand with those who are poor and vulnerable. We are also called to welcome the stranger, to combat discrimination, and to pursue peace. Catholic social teaching calls us to practice civic virtues and offers us principles to shape participation in public life. We cannot be indifferent to or cynical about the obligations of citizenship. Our political choices should not reflect simply our own interests, partisan preferences, or ideological agendas, but should be shaped by the principles of our faith and our commitment to justice, especially to the weak and vulnerable. The voices and votes of lay Catholics are needed to shape a society with greater respect for human life, economic and environmental justice, cultural diversity, and global solidarity. Catholic involvement in public life and legislative advocacy are important ways to exercise responsible citizenship. Participation in politics is a worthy vocation and a public trust. Believers who serve in public office have unique responsibilities and opportunities to stand up for human life and dignity, to pursue justice and peace, and to advance the common good by the policies, priorities and programs they support or oppose.¹¹

Supporting the "Salt of the Earth"

Church statements, structures and initiatives are important for Catholic formation and action. Social ministry programs and structures provide valuable opportunities for believers to learn to act on the justice demands of their faith. Church social ministry efforts should encourage and complement the vital roles of believers in family, economic and public life. However, there is simply no substitute for Catholic men and women carrying their faith into the world. Everyday discipleship for justice and the church's organized social ministry can reinforce one another and help shape a more just society and more peaceful world. We hope these reflections can serve as an opportunity for increased dialogue on the demands of discipleship in our time.

Parishes are essential sources of support and encouragement for Christian discipleship. At their best, parishes help believers prepare and go forth to live the Gospel in everything we do. The Sunday liturgy sends us forth to renew the earth and build up God's kingdom of justice and peace.

We encourage our pastors and preachers to listen to their parishioners on the challenges of their daily lives and help bring the insight of the Gospel and the principles of Catholic teaching to these experiences. We affirm prayer and worship, that help believers apply the Gospel to everyday situations. Across the country, there are examples of Catholic men and women gathering in small groups to examine the moral dimensions of their lives and work. They enlarge their vision beyond the immediate and the individual experience when they are enabled to examine the structures and processes that shape social life.

Catholic schools and religious education programs provide important lessons about living a life of justice and compassion, and promoting participation in civic life. Many parishes participate in legislative networks and community-organizing projects that involve parishioners in working for justice. And in thousands of other parishes, social ministry efforts provide valuable opportunities to help believers make choices about our time, money, and talents that reflect the justice demands of the Gospel. These parishes are convinced that the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection unfolds within human life.

We applaud these efforts and urge our parishes to do even more. Our culture often suggests that religion is a private matter, to be tolerated as long as it is detached from our lives as workers and citizens. Catholic men and women look to our parishes to find the support, tools, and concrete help they need to resist this tendency and instead proclaim Christ's love, justice and peace in everything they do.

The measure of the Church's organized social ministry is not simply the teaching shared, the services offered, or the actions taken, but also the support and challenge provided for men and women as they seek to live the Gospel in the world. Our community of faith needs to share its social teaching more clearly and comprehensively so that its principles can help shape the choices and actions of Catholics. Catholics also need to learn and further explore the links between faith and life, between theology and ethics, between what we believe and how we act every day. Catholics need to support one another as we take up these difficult tasks, helping each other to have the courage of our convictions, to stand up for what we believe and to practice in our own lives what the Scriptures proclaim. As we approach the year 2000, our conference is promoting a "Jubilee Pledge for Charity, Justice and Peace" as one concrete way for believers to commit to renewed prayer, reflection, service and action in preparation for the third Christian millennium (see Appendix).

Conclusion

The word of God calls believers to become "the salt of the earth, the light of the world." The pope and the bishops are called to teach and to lead, but unless the Church's social teaching finds a home in the hearts and lives of Catholic women and men, our community and culture will fall short of what the Gospel requires. Our society urgently needs the everyday witness of Christians who take the social demands of our faith seriously. The pursuit of justice is an essential part of the Catholic call to holiness, which is our true vocation: to live "in Christ" and to let Christ live and work in us in our world today.

Christian faith requires conversion; it changes who we are, what we do, and how we think. The Gospel offers "good news" and guidance not just for our spiritual lives, but for all the commitments and duties that make up our lives. Living our faith in the ordinary tasks of everyday life is an essential part of what it means to be holy today.

As the third Christian millennium approaches, the call to live our faith in everyday choices and actions remains at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. This call takes on renewed urgency as we approach the Great Jubilee, but it is not new. The task of disciples today was probably best and most simply expressed in the words of the prophet Micah: "What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness and walk humbly with your God" (6:8).

NOTES

- ¹ Other major documents address in a more comprehensive way the vocation of the laity (e.g., *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, On the Laity, Called and Gifted, Called and Gifted for the Third Millennium*). Catholic teaching also outlines our broader social mission in a series of documents (e.g., *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, Justice in the World, On the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum, A Century of Social Teaching, Communities of Salt and Light, Called to Global Solidarity*).
- ² Matthew. 25:31-46, Matthew 5:1-10.
- ³ Luke 4:18.
- ⁴ Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)*, no. 31
- ⁵ Vatican II, *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (Gaudium et Spes)*, no. 43.
- ⁶ For more teaching, see *On the Family (Familiaris Consortio)*, Pope John Paul II.
- ⁷ For more teaching, see *On Human Work (Laborem Exercens)*, Pope John Paul II.
- ⁸ For more teaching, see *Tenth Anniversary Edition of Economic Justice for All*, U.S. Catholic Bishops.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁰ For more teaching, see *To Be a Christian Steward*, U.S. Catholic Bishops.
- ¹¹ For more teaching, see *Octogesima Adveniens*, Pope Paul VI; *Political Responsibility*, U.S. Catholic Bishops.

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JUBILEE AND THE LAY CALL TO JUSTICE

A Call to Jubilee Justice

Pope John Paul II has declared the year 2000 to be a jubilee year. The beginning of the next millennium is especially significant for followers of Jesus. The year 2000 is a holy year, a time of favor, a reminder that we live and work in a time of special grace between the incarnation of Jesus and his second coming. Amid all the clamor that will surround the millennium believers need to ask, What does the jubilee mean for us? How should Catholic women and men respond to this call for a jubilee?

The jubilee was an ideal, a reminder that Yahweh, the Creator of all, was the true owner of creation and that those who live in a covenant relationship with Yahweh must also seek right and just relationships with all people. The pious Israelite knew that the land was a gift from God. The land and all it signified — work, material goods, financial security, and the practices of economic and everyday life — were to be understood within the context of one's relationship with God. All gifts of creation, including personal talents and abilities, first of all belong to God. The devout Israelite was a steward of God's goods. Natural resources and human talents were to serve all with a particular concern for those who were poor and weak.

The "year of the Lord's favor" was a time to proclaim "liberty in the land for all" (Lv. 25:10), to "bring glad tidings to the lowly" and "and release to the prisoners" (Is. 61). It was a time to restore freedom and justice among people, to re-establish relationships of equality, remedy the conditions that kept people oppressed (Is. 61), and to cancel debts (Dt. 15). The jubilee was intended to relieve the burdens of the weak and give people an opportunity to start anew. There was a clear social message in the jubilee. The jubilee year was an invitation for people to see their lives from a divine perspective: All that they were and all that they did should be in accord with God's will for building a community of justice, mercy, love and peace.

Like the ancient Israelites in their time, Catholic laypersons today ought to see the coming jubilee as a call to renewed practice of charity, pursuit of justice, welcome to the stranger, and new efforts to permit all to participate in the life of the community. As followers of Christ transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, Catholics must strive to open their hearts to Christ's truth, love, and justice, and to grow in virtue. Each generation of believers must take up this task. This is an essential part of what it means to be holy today.

As the jubilee approaches, there are a variety of ways to take up this task. Among the possibilities is the special "Jubilee Pledge for Charity, Justice and Peace" being promoted by our conference, which offers individuals and families an opportunity to commit themselves to ongoing prayer, reflection, service and action in preparation for the new millennium (see Appendix). Another opportunity is the Jubilee Justice Gathering in Los Angeles, in July 1999, sponsored by a broad range of Catholic organizations, to bring together Catholics from across the nation to explore the demands of charity, justice and peace as we approach the third Christian millennium.

JUBILEE PLEDGE FOR CHARITY, JUSTICE AND PEACE

A Catholic Commitment for the New Millennium

The jubilee of our Lord's birth calls us "to bring glad tidings to the poor..., to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free" (Lk. 4:18).

As disciples of Jesus in the new millennium, I/we pledge to:

Pray regularly for greater justice and peace.

Learn more about Catholic social teaching and its call to protect human life, stand with the poor, and care for creation.

Reach across boundaries of religion, race, ethnicity, gender, and disabling conditions.

Live justly in family life, school, work, the marketplace, and the political arena.

Serve those who are poor and vulnerable, sharing more time and talent.

Give more generously to those in need at home and abroad.

Advocate public policies that protect human life, promote human dignity, preserve God's creation and build peace.

Encourage others to work for greater charity, justice and peace.

Signature

"Love for others, and in the first place love for the poor, in whom the Church sees Christ himself, is made concrete in the promotion of justice" (Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, 1991).

Note: This pledge is being promoted by a variety of U.S.A. Catholic Conference offices and other organizations as a practical response to the Holy Father's designation of 1999 as "the year of charity."

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II. A CALL FOR JUSTICE AND COMPASSION: ASIAN CHRISTIANS CALL FOR ECONOMIC EQUALITY

THE SEOUL FORUM ON THE ASIAN ECONOMIC CRISIS AND THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH SEOUL, KOREA AUGUST 24, 1998

"He saw a great crowd, and he had compassion for them" (Mark 6:34)

INTRODUCTION

1. We, more than 100 participants at the Forum "The Asian Economic Crisis and the Role of the Church — IMF, Human Rights and the Church," met at Sogang (Jesuit) University and the Catholic International Parish of St. Francis, Seoul, Korea, 24-29 August 1998.
2. The Forum was convened by the International Catholic Movement for Intellectual and Cultural Affairs (ICMICA) — Pax Romana and the Woori Theology Institute (WTI) in Seoul, supported by the Korean Catholic Women's Community for a New World (KCWC), Catholic Human Rights Committee in Korea (CHRC), and Korean House for International Solidarity of People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy (PSPD) to reflect on the Asian economic crisis which began with the collapse of the Thai baht in July 1997 and spread rapidly to other countries of East and South East Asia causing widespread bankruptcies, unemployment and impoverishment.
3. We were lay, religious, clergy and bishop members of the Church and representatives of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other organs of civil society coming from countries of the Asia Pacific area (particularly those most affected by the crisis — Thailand, Korea and Indonesia), together with colleagues from Europe and the Americas (the United States and Mexico).
4. We are compelled by our personal Christian commitment:
 - to analyse the nature and causes of the crisis;
 - to judge these from the point of view of our theological reflection on the teachings of Jesus and the social teachings of the Catholic Church, in dialogue with the social message of other Churches and the liberating traditions of other Asian religions, with specific focus on the experiences of the victims of the crisis; and
 - to formulate ways in which we can act against structures of social sin.

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5. At the very beginning of our deliberations, we were encouraged by the words of (Auxiliary) Bishop Peter U-II Kang of the Seoul Archdiocese at the Opening Mass. He spoke of living in the cathedral compound where every day groups demonstrate because they have become suddenly unemployed without any alternatives. He quoted the words of Pope John Paul II in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*. "One must denounce the existence of economic, financial and social mechanisms which, although they are manipulated by people, often function almost automatically, thus accentuating the situation of wealth for some and poverty for the rest" (n. 16).

Understanding the Crisis Through the Eyes of the Victims

6. Early in our Forum we sought to situate our discussions in the reality lived by the victims of this economic crisis. In small groups we visited:
 - groups of workers facing dismissal without compensation or severance pay; — a shelter supported by the Presbyterian Church of Korea for largely unemployed migrant workers, most of whom will be deported, while the rest live in hope of economic recovery;
 - the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) and a center for unemployed women workers, which provides counselling, health care network, and other supports to women workers;
 - the homes of urban poor squatting in makeshift homes, with no registered address, on unused agricultural land at the outskirts of the city;
 - the hopeless, despairing and angry homeless around Seoul Railway Station and in a public park, who are helped by Anglican, Buddhist and other charities.
7. This experience of meeting with the victims of the Asian crisis helped us to understand its human consequences and to see them in the light of practical reality.

Analyzing the Global Economic – Political Structures and Their Impact on Asia

8. We noted that, as the Asian crisis entered its second year, the affected economies have not hit bottom yet. Like Latin America and Africa in the 1980s, East Asia faces a debacle that could last a decade, if not more. Moreover, the threat of currency depreciation has spread from a few countries to many in the region.
9. The current crisis in Asia must be analyzed in the context of the neo-liberal type of economic globalization being carried out today. Key mechanisms of this globalization are trade and finance liberalization, deregulation and privatization. The rules of this global process are negotiated among a coalition of internal and external interests (politicians,

financial institutions, corporate leaders and academics) from economically developed and developing countries, with scarcely any participation of civil society, including NGOs.

10. We recognize that there were contributing domestic factors in the form of over-investment in property and shares, weak banking systems, wrong government policies, patronage, etc. It is important, however, to analyze these domestic factors in the context of the financial deregulation the Asian economies undertook in the preceding years. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the G-7 governments (of leading industrialized countries) had incessantly pushed Asian financial authorities to liberalize their capital accounts and open their financial sector more fully to foreign participation. There was little regulation of capital movements by governments that bought into the IMF's neo-liberal ideology, and that had inadequate experience in handling such massive capital inflows. Thus, foreign capital gravitated not to the productive sectors of the economy (like agriculture and manufacturing) but to the stock market, consumer financing and, in particular, real estate. The same liberalization of capital accounts, which facilitated large inflows but provided no mechanisms to slow down the exit of funds when foreign banks and investors decided to recall them. The same deregulated market made it possible for currency speculators to ride on the exit of foreign and national investors, to gamble on the local currency, and thereby to further accelerate the outflow of capital.
11. The globalization of finance has seriously affected the role of the nation state, whereby sovereignty of control and regulation is transferred to inter-governmental bodies. At the same time, the state is called on to be transparent and politically accountable.
12. The IMF was one of the agencies that had promoted capital account liberalization among the Asian economies in the first place. In its stabilization programs in the crisis-hit countries, the IMF is continuing to push for full financial liberalization, ignoring the mounting evidence that it was uncontrolled capital movements that triggered the crisis. The effects of the crisis have been further deepened by the IMF programs, leading to dramatic contractions in the economies of Korea, Indonesia and Thailand. Measured in terms of lost output, bank and company insolvencies, the costs are enormous. Measured in terms of unemployment, and the millions of people being pushed below the poverty line, the costs are even more frightening. Even those who do not agree with all aspects of our analysis must accept the moral imperatives arising from the devastating effects of this crisis on the lives of people.
13. The emerging civil society in those deeply affected Asian economies is beginning to exercise its role in collaboration with several networks of NGOs of various kinds. They are attempting to understand the crisis, to respond to immediate needs of the victims and to propose alternatives at interlocking levels of the state and the economy. Particularly important

- are their campaigns towards participatory democracy and sustainable development.
14. We also noted the impact of the crisis, and the IMF-driven restructuring, on specifically vulnerable sectors of society — the rural (indigenous and subsistence farmers, fisher-folk, etc.), the informal (homeworkers, temporary-contract workers, street vendors, self-employed, etc.), the environment (further erosion, and pollution of rivers, forest, wetlands, etc.). The crisis further impoverishes the poorest populations of the region, but has also created new poor from the ranks of the middle class.
 15. The crisis has revealed that women in Asia are more critically affected because of their unequal position and ascribed roles in society. Women are the first to be laid-off and have less access to relief measures such as credit and other unemployment benefits. And, as caregivers of families, income earners and food producers, the crisis is bringing about an increased feminization of poverty, and of unemployment and migration, as well as increased abuse and commodification of women. If, before the crisis, poor women were those most affected by gender inequity. With the IMF crisis in Asia middle-class women have also begun to feel its effects in similar ways. (We recognize that women, the rural sector and the informal sector are also important resources for responding to and surviving the crisis, and their contributions should be promoted.)
 16. The ongoing crisis has reversed the achievements in poverty reduction for many people in the region. The aspirations of many more to improve their quality of life has turned into a nightmare of job and food insecurity, homelessness, etc. A future of political strength and cultural assertiveness based on growing economic power has been replaced by shame and uncertainty, and by the fear of a new colonialism. This is not an acceptable future.
 17. At the Seoul Forum we have been addressing the impact of the IMF program in relation to specific country situations, namely, Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand. We had the opportunity as well to compare the experience of Mexico as it has undergone processes of structural adjustment during seventeen years.
 18. The measures included in the bail-out packages for Indonesia, South Korea and Thailand have had devastating effects at all levels, particularly on poor people, and have handed over control to global markets dominated by giant conglomerates.
 19. We heard presentations showing the effects in these three countries and noted that the situations were in general similar, except that in Indonesia the implementation of the IMF-prescribed package became the occasion for political and civil unrest directed towards the authoritarian Suharto regime.
 20. The lesson we have learned from the experience of Mexico is that after such a long period of structural adjustment, while the economy as measured by GDP has improved in the last two years, the average wages of workers have declined in purchasing power and the number of those

below the poverty line has increased by a half, to almost two-thirds of the population.

Crisis among the Workers and the Poor—Thematic Workshops

21. Following these presentations the Forum entered a number of workshops to consider in more depth the effects of the crisis on specific groups and in specific areas. These workshops covered the impact of the economic crisis on farmers and fisher-folk, the environment, the urban poor, and workers (particularly migrant and women workers). On the other hand, the workshops dealt with the response of the Church at parish and diocesan levels, through Justice and Peace commissions, through renewal and restructuring of the Church, and in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.
22. In these discussions we have noted that there have been significant statements from some conferences of bishops responding to the crisis, but that much work remains to be done through Justice and Peace commissions, and at all levels of the Church. It has a prophetic role in expressing solidarity with the people's search for alternatives and responding to the human needs of people in this crisis. In this context we found that there is a clear voice calling for the pastoral priorities of the Church to shift from patriarchal clericalism to the present needs of the laity, and to be open to greater interreligious cooperation. In addition, the Church is called to act for the protection of the rights of workers and to support them in their struggles to organize.

Discerning the Signs of the Time—Kairos

23. Aware of the rich tradition of ethical reflection, especially of the social teaching, of the Catholic Church, we look for the development of this teaching at all levels of the Church, to take account of the new situation of financial globalization. This development should be rooted in the practical experience of local Churches, should take account of a laity perspective, and should integrate the lived experience of Christians.
24. We see that subsequent development of Catholic social teaching should put greater stress on the value of solidarity, which now has a global horizon. It should also develop further the understanding of the right of all people to the ownership of property, a right which must be recognized and fulfilled, if people, individually or in local communities, are to achieve that degree of self-reliance which is commensurate with their dignity. This right has long been recognized in Church teaching, as denying to any individual or corporate body the right to such extensive ownership as to exclude others from the possibility of achieving even a modest level of property ownership. Church teaching should develop this understanding in specific reference to the continued expansion of

- economic control by transnational corporations, to international treaties — such as Multilateral Agreement on Investments (MAI) now being negotiated in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)—and to current practices of patenting the traditional wisdom of indigenous peoples and of biogenetic resources.
25. Globalization is a challenge not only for ethics but also for theology. The current Asian crisis is, for us, a moment of conversion, truth and grace (*kairos*).
- A time to discern in the light of the biblical faith of the Exodus and the Good News of Jesus: What is at stake?
 - A time to be converted: What are in our personal lifestyles and our models of development?
 - A time to denounce: Have we implemented our prophetic role as Christians to denounce idols — money, the market as an absolute, etc.?
 - A time to announce: Have we demonstrated a new world based on solidarity by presenting the alternatives to the present?
 - A time to recognize and welcome the Spirit of God present especially in the poor, in women, and in the cultures and religions of Asia.
26. This *kairos* of the Asian crisis is revealed to us in the light of the Great Jubilee Year 2000, which invites us to make real again the strengths of the teaching and life of Jesus, in order to critique the present and build a new future.
27. To live this *kairos* we need a new communitarian and personal spirituality. The Church strives to live a spirituality of emptying one's self (*kenosis*) and servanthood patterned on its master, the Crucified One, while conscious of its frequent failure by its alliance with powers-that-be and triumphalism. It learns in the Spirit to enter into dialogue with the poor of the world (especially of Asia) and with the cultures of Asian people with deep respect, and humbly takes off its shoes before other religions because it recognizes God's presence and action in them. The participants in the Seoul Forum have no other approach than the approach of this triple dialogue. They listen to the voice of the Spirit from the burning bush of Asia, in its struggles, anxieties, pains, hopes (especially those of the powerless, the excluded), and discern their response of committed action in solidarity with people of other faiths and good will in the service of all in love. It is in this spirit of creative faithfulness to the God of life and justice as revealed in Jesus Christ, and commitment to our people that we reflected on the present crisis in Asia.
28. We should adopt the ethos of "being more" rather than "having more."

An Agenda for Solidarity Action

29. In view of the Asian economic crisis, there is a need for a fundamental restructuring of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs). While

these proposals are not exhaustive, nor do they represent a systematic program of reform, there are immediate concrete actions we can undertake.

- (a) We resolve to support and engage in campaigns against the IMF's initiative to amend its articles to promote full capital account liberalization. This is an irresponsible action on the part of the IMF.
- (b) We resolve to support and engage in campaigns against other existing multilateral, regional and bilateral agreements (such as the World Trade Organization's (WTO's), Financial Services Investment Agreement, MAI, North American Free Trade Organization (NAFTA's) prohibition on capital controls, etc.) to further liberalize international capital flows without adequate regulations and obligations on investors. Controls on capital transactions must be maintained.
- (c) We resolve to support the measure that international lenders and investors must accept their share of the cost. When a crisis occurs and a bail-out happens, in recovering losses from unpayable foreign loans, governments should not guarantee repayment. This socializes the debt and puts an unfair burden on tax payers, particularly the poor, while protecting the interests of irresponsible foreign banks and their debtors.
- (d) We resolve to support the measures to achieve debt write-offs for low-income countries. Health, education and the other basic needs of some of the poorest people in the world are being compromised, so that governments can make payments on debt that can never be repaid. The Jubilee 2000 Campaign (which is an international petition campaign to appeal for a cancellation of the unpayable external debt of the poorest countries) calls not only for debt relief but also for measures to be taken to prevent the recurrence of this kind of debt.
- (e) We resolve to support the measures to abandon Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) conditionalities, for example, the African Alternative Framework to SAP's for Socio-economic Transformation and Recovery, as well as similar initiatives in Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- (f) We resolve to support programs for economic recovery which take as their immediate actions plans to develop and implement social safety nets for those most affected by the crisis. These plans and their implementation should give specific focus to vulnerable sectors of society such as women, children, workers in the informal sector, rural and indigenous populations, the new urban middle class threatened with poverty, etc. These groups must be represented in the development of these programs.
- (g) We resolve to support measures for good governance, with adequate human rights standards, which require transparency and accountability, both in national governments and international institutions.

- (h) We resolve to establish networking links with international NGOs, such as Third World Network (TWN), Consumers International, EURODAD, Jubilee 2000 Coalition, FoodFirst, FIAN, Rural Advancement Foundation International, Bankwatch, 50 Years Is Enough, and other organizations, to share ideas and to collaborate in planning, campaigning and lobbying.
- (i) We resolve to support efforts to control the short-term speculative transfer of capital through such measures as the proposed Tobin Tax, a tax on international financial transfers.

An Agenda for the Renewal of the Church

30. In view of the acute pain and suffering experienced by the victims of the economic practices that caused the Asian economic crisis, it is important for the Church in Asia, in solidarity with the universal Church, to commit itself to respond to the various challenges, starting with our own conversion, based on a critical review of our own behavior, mentality and values.
- (a) We urge that the Churches in Asia examine their structure and pastoral orientation in the context of this economic crisis. We believe that Church structures should provide for lay participation at all levels, including decision-making; that there should be less emphasis on administration and more on pastoral concerns; and that, in particular countries, a change from investment in large buildings and structures to investment in people and their needs.
 - (b) We urge that the Churches in Asia play a role to monitor and to protect and promote human rights of the people affected by the Asian economic crisis, in particular the dismissed workers and homeless people, supporting their rights to organize to protect and further their own human rights and dignity.
 - (c) We urge the Churches in the First World to be in dialogue and solidarity with the Churches in Asia. In this context, we support the appeal made in the Final Message of the Synod for Asia which said: "We call on the particular Churches of the First World to be in solidarity with the poor in Asia and to be their advocates with their own governments and with world economic institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF and the World Trade Organization (WTO), so as to bring about what Pope John Paul II called in this year's World Day of Peace Message: 'Globalization without marginalization. Globalization in solidarity'."
 - (d) We urge that the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in all its activities and especially in preparing for its encounters with the IMF and the World Bank, to discuss the external debt of poor countries, develop its own position in a manner that includes dialogue with NGOs and grassroots groups working with the debt issue, and dialogue with the victims.

- (e) We urge that the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) send a delegation to the IMF and the World Bank to discuss the impact of their policies on the people in Asia, especially on the poor, asking them to review the nature of their interventions, and change the conditionalities imposed. We urge the FABC to invite other religious leaders of Asia to join them in this dialogue with the international financial institutions.
- (f) We urge that the FABC and all Catholic lay groups, organizations and movements, promote the Jubilee 2000 Campaign throughout the Asian Church.
- (g) —i. We urge the national bishops' conferences in Asia to prepare pastoral letters or other responses to the Asian economic crisis and the injustices that have given rise to it, in the light of Catholic social teaching and in dialogue with the victims. Lay people, especially women and relevant NGOs in civil society, should be ensured representation in the process of formulating such documents. This principle of open consultation should be applied to the formulation of Church documents and policy at all levels.
- ii. We urge all Asian bishops' conferences to establish a women's commission, as they have established commissions on labor, justice and peace, etc. Women, especially because of their suffering from the Asian economic crisis, exacerbated by gender discrimination, need an official channel to express their needs and to participate in dialogue for improvement.
- (h) We therefore urge that awareness of socio-economic injustices and concrete strategies to deal with them become and remain an important and prominent part of preparations for, celebrations of and follow-up to the Great Jubilee Year 2000 at the level of the universal Church as well as local Churches.

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**III. FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL —
INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY AS INTEGRAL EVANGELIZATION:
POSSIBILITIES AND LIMITATIONS**

by

THE REV. IGNACIO HARDING, O.F.M.

Sisters and Brothers, Peace and all good!

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you our on-going and relatively new experience as a ministry of the world-wide Franciscan Fam-

* A talk delivered at the annual special assembly of the SEDOS Documentation and Research Centre, Rome, Italy, December 1, 1998. Reprinted with permission.

ily at and through the United Nations Organization, as well as its subsidiary bodies.*

For organizational purposes I intend to present this brief report in six parts:

1. General Introduction.
2. United Nations Overview.
3. Franciscans International.
4. Possibilities: what are we doing and what can be done.
5. Limitations: what we would like to do better.
6. Closing thoughts and recommendations for friends and members of SEDOS.

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

You all know very well that in the past three or four decades a wholesome, new and refreshing approach to development has emerged on the world scene. In the not too distant past the measurement of development was principally and essentially considered economic. Meaning growth in individual and national material economic income — called Income Per Person on a personal level, and Gross National Product on a country level. The more money a person or country had, the more developed it was considered. The fallacy in this method was clearly seen as high income nations also had low literacy rates, poor health services and shockingly low life expectancy.

Thanks to world-wide social, economic, and cultural studies, a significant shift has occurred and the world now is principally concerned with integral human development. Over 17 different aspects of human existence are now considered before a country is given a position on the development ladder.

Today, this coincides greatly, in the same way, with the more integral conception of the Church's definition of evangelization.

Consider these brief quotes from the great encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi*:

Between evangelization and human advancement — development and liberation — there are in fact profound links. These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of

justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and in peace the true, authentic advancement of man? We ourselves have taken care to point this out, by recalling that it is impossible to accept "that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. This would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbor who is suffering and in need" (n. 31).

For the Church, evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new: "Now I am making the whole of creation new" (Rv 21:). But there is no new humanity, if there are not first of all new persons renewed by Baptism (cf. Rom 6:4), and by lives lived according to the Gospel (cf. Eph 4:23-24; Col 3:9-10). The purpose of evangelization is, therefore, precisely this interior change, and if it had to be expressed in one sentence, the best way of stating it would be to say that the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert (cf. Rom 1:16; Cor 1:18; 2:4), solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs (n.18). "Strata of humanity which are transformed: for the Church it is a question not only of preaching the Gospel in ever wider geographic areas or to ever greater numbers of people, but also of affecting, and as it were upsetting, through the power of the Gospel, mankind's criteria of judgment, determining values, points of interest, lines of thought, sources of inspiration and models of life, which are in contrast with the Word of God and the plan of salvation (n.19).

There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity." ... the Church, "striving to proclaim the Gospel to all people" (*Ad Gentes*, n. 1) has had the single aim of fulfilling her duty of being the messenger of the Good News of Jesus Christ—the Good News proclaimed through two fundamental commands: "Put on the new self" (cf. Eph 4:24, 2:15 ; Col 3:10; Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14; 2 Cor 5:17), and "Be reconciled to God" (2 Cor 5:20) (nn. 1-2).

The Church considers it to be undoubtedly important to build up structures which are more human, more just, more respectful of the rights of the person and less oppressive and less enslaving... (n. 36).

Today the international structures that enslave and dehumanize have a new name: globalization. John Paul II in a meeting in the Vatican on human rights just last week reiterated what is becoming one of his new and strong evangelical proposals for an alternative "globalization of solidarity."

So as not to spend too much time "preaching to the choir," let me end this introduction here suggesting that to unite the tenets of true human development and integral evangelization, there is a new need for concrete, creative, and sustained international advocacy in favor of the "globalization of solidarity," and a good place to do such advocacy is the United Nations and its bodies, the world's global forum, and as John XXIII called it: "... the last, best hope for peace."

2. UNITED NATIONS OVERVIEW

Most of us know little or nothing about the United Nations itself, except the slanted information received through most media sponsored by huge international interest groups who want no shackles put on them, especially on their international business interests.

Although we all hope that through constructive criticism and evaluation the UN becomes a better and more effective institution for the world community, we should start by recognizing these positive, relevant and little known facts.

The United Nations is today, more than ever, with its 185 member states and two observer missions, engaged in service to all the world's nations and peoples. However, its ability to function is severely hampered by its well known financial problems. Unless member states pay their debts to the Organization — over \$2.5 billion is owed as of 30 September 1998 — the UN will remain in a precarious financial situation.

The budget for the UN's core functions — the Secretariat operations in New York, Geneva, Nairobi, Vienna, and five Regional Commissions — is \$1.25 billion a year. This is about 4 per cent of New York City's annual budget — and nearly a billion dollars less than the yearly cost of Tokyo's fire department. It is \$3.7 billion less than the annual budget of New York State's university system.

The USA's share of the UN's regular budget for 1998 is \$298 million — the equivalent of \$1.11 per American. Tiny San Marino, by comparison,

pays \$4.26 per citizen to the UN.

The UN has no army. Governments voluntarily supply troops and other personnel to halt conflicts that threaten peace and security. The United States and other member states on the Security Council — not the Secretary General — decide when and where to deploy peacekeeping troops.

The New York world headquarters of the UN requires the services of less than 4,700 people. The Swedish capital of Stockholm, by contrast, has 60,000 municipal employees.

Some 52,280 people work in the UN system, which includes the secretariat and 29 other organizations, such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Three times as many people work for McDonald's, while Disney World and Disneyland employ 50,000.

Eighty per cent of the work of the UN system is devoted to helping developing countries build the capacity to help themselves. This includes promoting and protecting democracy and human rights; saving children from starvation and disease; providing relief assistance to refugees and disaster victims; countering global crime, drugs and disease; and assisting countries devastated by war and the long-term threat of landmines.

The United Nations and its agencies, funds and programs — mainly the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), UN Development Program (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Program (WFP) and the World Health Organization (WHO) — have \$4.8 billion a year to spend on economic and social development, to assist countries in such areas as health care, sanitation, agriculture and food distribution. This is the equivalent of 81 cents per human being. In 1996, the world's governments spent about \$797 billion in military expenditures — the equivalent of \$135 per human being.

The total cost of all UN peacekeeping operations in 1997 was some \$1.3 billion, the equivalent of less than 0.5 per cent of the US military budget, and less than 0.2 per cent of global military spending.

The United States' assessed share of UN peace-keeping expenses — nearly 31 per cent of the yearly total — has dropped by half, from about \$1 billion in 1995 to some \$400 million in 1997. This equals less than one-quarter of 1 per cent of the annual US military budget.

Member states share the risks of maintaining peace and security. Since 1948, over 1,580 UN peace-keepers from some 85 countries have died in the line of duty. Less than 3 per cent were Americans.

Under the supervision of an American, Joseph E. Connor, the Under-Secretary General for Management, the UN Secretariat has a zero-growth budget of \$2.5 billion for 1998-99—\$1.25 billion a year. This is down \$100 million from 1994-95, the result of efficiency gains, and the elimination of nearly 1,000 jobs.

UN Secretariat staff has been cut by 25 percent, to about 8,700, from a high of more than 12,000 in 1984-85. And streamlining continues. Tough new standards have been set for staff performance. UN staff members have about one-third of their salaries deducted in lieu of taxes.

A "quiet revolution" to make the UN leaner and more effective was launched by the Secretary General Kofi Annan in July, 1997, as the second phase of his reform efforts. Initiatives include consolidating several secretariat bodies, streamlining management, and shifting resources from administration to development work.

An Office of Internal Oversight, established in 1994, is pursuing its mandate of promoting more effective and efficient management, and eliminating waste, fraud and mismanagement. It includes a special UN investigative unit and a hotline.

The total operating expenses for the entire UN system—including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and all the UN funds, programs, and specialized agencies put together—come to some \$18.2 billion a year. This is less than the annual revenue of a major corporation like Dow Chemical, which took in more than \$20 billion in 1997.

The top seven contributors to the UN are the USA (25%); Japan (17.98%); Germany (9.63%); France (6.49%); Italy (5.39%); the United Kingdom (5.07%); and Russia (2.87%). Collectively, they account for more than 72% of the regular UN budget.

The United States—whose citizens hold more UN Secretariat jobs than any other member state, as well as the top posts at UNICEF, the United Nations Development Program, the World Bank, the World Food Program, the International Court of Justice, and the Universal Postal Union—owes more in unpaid assessments, both past and current, than any other member state: \$1.6 billion.

Of the \$327.5 million in procurements approved by the UN Secretariat in New York in 1997, American companies got 59 per cent of the business, or \$192 million. For every dollar that the USA contributed in 1996 to the New York-based United Nations Development Program, it got back more than \$3 in contracts to USA companies and other goods and services.

The UN, its agencies and the diplomatic and consular corps contribute \$3.2 billion a year to the economy of the New York City area alone, according to Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani. That has generated 30,600 jobs, yielding \$1.2 billion in annual earnings.

As you can see, the UN is a complicated structure that spans the globe. How does it work? Where can we fit in?

At UN headquarters in New York there are three basic interrelated structures. *The UN Secretariat and UN Specialized Agency Offices (like UNICEF); Permanent Missions of each member state; and the NGO community in consultative status with the UN.*

First, the *United Nations Secretariat*, is responsible for the organization and coordination of all the structures and activities that the member states approve. It is the executive body putting into practice all that is decided by the member states. The *UN Specialized Agency Offices* in New York coordinate activities with member states, NGOs, and the Secretariat itself.

Next, *each country has its own UN staff with one or more ambassador—Permanent Representatives.* It is interesting that since most countries have embassies to the United States in Washington, D.C., the country delegations to the UN, which is on international territory, are called "Permanent Missions" to the United Nations, each headed by an ambassador. They together are the political decision-making body for UN decisions and activities.

Each member country has one representative and one vote in the General Assembly, which ordinarily meets from September to December, and then extraordinarily after the New Year, with no time limit to finish any unfinished agenda items. In the last few years this has become normal procedure since, for instance, in 1998, the agenda contains no less than 158 items.

The General Assembly has six main committees (Disarmament, Sustainable Development, Economic and Social Affairs, De-Colonization and Self Determination, Peacekeeping and Finance) which prepare the agenda items and resolutions brought up. There are also many sub-commissions and regional groups to treat items for any and all of the Committees.

The Security Council is the 15-member body responsible at all times for world security. Five countries are permanent members, with the right to veto any decision: the USA, the Russian Federation, England, France and China. The other ten countries are elected for a two-year membership by

regions. This arrangement is in the process of long-term evaluation, and there are many proposals for its reform being presented for a more representative membership.

Besides the final decisions made by the General Assembly in New York, important preparations are made at the level of the UN Offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi, as well as its 29 Programs and Agencies centered around the world.

One of the most important structures for NGO participation has been the UN World Conferences and now their follow-up Special Sessions of the General Assembly: Rio de Janeiro on Environment 1992, Vienna on Human Rights 1994, Beijing on Women 1995, to name a few.

And, finally, the Non-Governmental Organizations community that is organized through the Conference of NGOs (CONGO). Particular NGOs also work together as groups in NGO Committees by interest area or institutional commitment. There are NGO Committees on Aging; Disarmament; Human Rights; Narcotics and Substance Abuse; Shelter and Community; Southern Africa; Sustainable Development; Trade, Investment and Entrepreneurship; Family; Indigenous Peoples; Youth; Population; Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice; Freedom of Religion and Belief; Religious NGOs; Social Development, and the Reform of the Security Council.

There are also instances of NGO Caucuses, like the Values Caucus, the Faith-Based Caucus for an International Criminal Court; and the Coalition for the establishment of the International Criminal Court.

The participation of NGOs today is based on a 1996/31 resolution governing their participation, that is currently under study once again with the possibility to open the doors to even wider participation.

At this time an NGO in General Consultative Status, like Franciscans International; an NGO with several areas of concern and members in many different countries; or one with Special Consultative Status—meaning with specialized interests and membership limited to even one country, may intervene verbally and/or in writing, and may apply to participate in meetings and conferences of the UN around the world in their specific areas of expertise and concern.

Let's move now more into the concrete to share a little about what we are trying to do.

3. FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL

Franciscans International is a global organization of the Franciscan Family from the grass-roots up to and including the General leadership. It includes sisters, brothers, priests, active as well as cloistered; and a large number of women and men who are Secular Franciscans, as well as some Friends of Franciscans International, not actually Franciscans, but working with our groups. We are ecumenical, since we have both religious and secular Franciscan members from among the Anglicans, Lutherans, as well as a group known as Ecumenical Franciscans. We are joined together by a consensus statement of the vision for our ministry at the UN:

Vision Statement of Franciscans International

*We are Franciscan men and women
who are followers of
Saint Francis of Assisi.*

*We believe that all creation,
from the smallest organism to human beings,
is in interdependent relationship on planet earth.
We are aware that this relationship is threatened
by a refusal to admit this interdependence,
by exploitation and by domination.*

*We commit ourselves to encourage awareness
of this interdependence
so that all creation may live in harmony.*

*We will do this by service to our own members
and to United Nations personnel
as well as other non-governmental organizations
through collaboration, education and action regarding:*

*Care of Creation
Peacemaking
Concern for the Poor*

*We see these concerns as congruent
with the goals expressed by the United Nations
in its Charter
and in its Declaration on Human Rights.*

We are a service of the Conference of the Franciscan Family, based here in Rome representing the whole Franciscan Family worldwide. Special statutes, now governed by an International Executive Committee of eight members from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America, in 1999 will be replaced by a more permanent International Board of Directors.

We maintain our main office at the UN Headquarters in New York with a Sister and Brother, Kathleen Uhler and myself, as co-directors and UN Permanent Representatives; Sister Mary Theresa Plante, a volunteer UN Representative; an administrative secretary; and an intern from Saint Francis College in Brooklyn.

We have a joint office with the Dominicans in Geneva, Switzerland, with a permanent part-time secretary, and a team that attends the important Human Rights Commission and Sub-Commission meetings.

We have Sister Carol Ann Kane, FMM, coordinating the organization of our presence in the most important UN Environmental Program.

We have sent delegations to all of the major World Conferences and on a more limited basis to the follow-up sessions on World Conferences.

As in all experiences of evangelization, we have learned a lot more than perhaps we have been able to contribute.

4. POSSIBILITIES

Let me share a few of our concrete experiences, so that you can perhaps see some more of the possibilities this ministry may open up to all of you as well.

When I first arrived at the UN in June 1995, one of my first experiences was to be approached by Dr Amelia de Barrish, ambassador of Costa Rica. She was insisting that, as a Franciscan, I should help her to promote a General Assembly Resolution for a 10-day worldwide cease fire from all hostilities, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UN in October. I remember so well my reaction I thought that it sounded like such a minimal proposal, that I skeptically asked her what would be the significance of a 10-day cease fire? She looked at me incredulously as she explained that, if a unanimous resolution could be passed by July, it would allow the UN to then ship and stockpile food and medicines on borders of every area of conflict, so that when the cease fire took place, they could be immediately shipped into the war-torn areas and could save the lives of anywhere from 3 to 10 million people. That certainly changed my perspective. We supported her proposal in NGO meetings, with governments and in

our publications and private meetings. She was able to have 80 countries co-sponsor the resolution so that when it was presented, it passed unanimously. The cease-fire went into effect for 10 days in October 1995, as far as we know it was totally adhered to and millions of lives were saved because of it.

In the preparatory meeting in New York for the World Summit on Human Settlements in Istanbul, the city planners were so strongly influencing the Conference that they began to call it the Cities Summit. Our Franciscan International delegates from India and Brazil called this to the attention of the assembly, reminding all that the majority of people in the world still live in rural areas. So we could not have a world summit on Human Settlements without even taking into consideration the rural population and the reason why they are fleeing to the cities. As a result a whole new theme was introduced into the Summit and expressed in many places in the final documents as the "Rural Urban Linkages." This emphasizes the point, too, that we should no longer try to be the voice of our sisters and brothers from Asia, Africa and Latin America, but to open the doors so that they can come and have their own voices heard.

At the Copenhagen World Conference on Social Development the Franciscans International delegation were co-founders of the Values Caucus. It is a forum based on a commitment to values shared by all of humankind. It affirms that such values exist, and we believe that choosing to live by these values will lead to a global future of peaceful cooperation in an interdependent and culturally diverse world. We believe that without this commitment to shared values, humanity will continue to live under the threat of war, subsistent standards of living, and depletion of the natural resources of our endangered planet. Among other objectives the Values Caucus participates in the work of the United Nations by formulating values-related concepts and language for documents and by advocating their inclusion, and by developing and implementing values-related programs and workshops. One of the concrete activities of the Values Caucus is a bi-weekly informal off-the-record coffee session with one of the UN ambassadors for about an hour on pertinent UN issues or country priorities at the UN. Not too long ago we had an extraordinary session with the ambassador of a very large and multicultural country. The ambassador confessed to us that, as he prepared to share his experience and priorities with us, he realized how very little time he spends on real values-considerations, and how much time and energy he spends defending his country's interests. "We must help them make a shift," he said, "from such an emphasis on national interests to some essential shared-values in our UN decision process." In our later evaluation we thought that just causing him to think about his mission at the UN and the need for a values-oriented position made the Caucus worth while.

In the area of disarmament, perhaps one of our greatest successes was the Noble Peace Prize we won as members of the International Campaign to ban landmines. We were among the earliest to join the campaign, and received a significant amount of support and enthusiasm from our grass-roots local members, national groups, and the Franciscan Family as a whole. In this area our Canadian group really helped lead the way by actively participating as our FI delegation in the most significant international meetings, especially in the Ottawa Conference. Thousands and thousands of letters, from our members around the world, North, South, East and West, were transmitted to world leaders. We had prayer services on the feast of St. Francis, Instrument of Peace, in the main entrance of the UN. In a most symbolic and non-violent gesture, small children pleaded for exchanging landmines for flowers, and gave bouquets to UN ambassadors who promised to eliminate the landmines that killed and maimed so many innocent children and women. Today, perhaps because of so many different and significant activities, many nations have already ratified the Landmine Ban Treaty.

For the next two years we hope to work especially hard on the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty — particularly the most important issue — to cancel the debts of the world's most impoverished countries. We have enthusiastically joined the International Jubilee 2000 Campaign to raise the consciousness of the world's financial institutions on the needs and benefits of such a pardon. John Paul II never ceases to mention this point too. A global momentum is building that we hope will cause a positive response as we begin the next millennium. The alleviation of the overburdening and unjust debt of the world's most impoverished countries is the most significant step possible towards the eradication of poverty.

We are also looking forward to participate at all different levels of the United Nations new ten-year "Culture of Peace and Non-Violence" program, now before the General Assembly. We hope that schools, universities, parishes, retreat centers, and all levels of ministry, will be able to contribute to this effort to transform our violent culture into a true culture of peace.

5. LIMITATIONS

Perhaps, the first and foremost limitation is the very size and complexity of the United Nations, system in itself. If you have become just a little dizzy trying to keep straight in your head all these structures I have been explaining, come to the UN for a couple of weeks, and you will get thoroughly confused. This is something we have to deal with at greater length. Before I came to New York, I thought that we at Franciscans International were very wise to choose just three issues to deal with at the UN: Care of

Creation, Peacemaking, and Concern for the Poor. But as I get more and more involved, I see more and more clearly that those three interrelated priorities cover almost every single aspect of UN activity. We are all limited, so our limitations must be carefully weighed and evaluated. Then we must commit ourselves to do what realistically can be accomplished.

We do not wish to be the voice of the poor, but to give the poor their own voice in the UN System. We, and the UN, need to hear the voices of the grassroots person, especially the impoverished of Asia, Africa and Latin America. South--North travel to the UN Centers like New York, Geneva, and Vienna is the most expensive. So those with the least need the most to have their voices heard. Our financial limitations sometimes exclude the very ones we should hear from in these forums.

The work on international advocacy itself is still somewhat culturally limited. Dom Helder Camara, the great Brazilian bishop of the poor, once said, "When I was giving bread to the poor I was called a saint. When I asked why the poor do not have their own bread, I was called a communist." We have not yet been able to establish a serious commitment on the part of the majority of our leadership to invest in a long-range presence at the UN, even in New York. The Methodist Church has a 12-story UN Church Center at the door of the UN; the Episcopal Church has their international UN offices in their own 10-story building a block away. The Bahai Community has extensive offices and a permanent staff of 35 for UN activities just in New York. While these are not the most important aspects, they do show us that our own substantial commitment is not even equal to what we have invested in one parish, school or university.

Another limitation that we must overcome in the future is that of not yet effectively collaborating with UN projects and financing. Many of the activities that our membership are participating in are also UN priorities, and sometimes these would even be eligible for at least partial UN financing or grants.

Although we have begun, we must learn to use better the advantages of Internet communication, much more than we have so far. The possibilities of world consultations and information-sharing are growing each day. List servers could daily connect our experts in different fields and have them input their expertise to meetings, conferences and documents at a distance. Here too, the South still has the most expensive Internet connections and some kind of permanent concrete solidarity must be realized.

6. CONCLUSION

More and more religious communities are beginning to apply for and

receive UN consultative status, Maryknoll, the Augustinians, Good Shepherd Sisters, Congregation of Saint Joseph, Sisters of Notre Dame, among others.

It is a good and important place to minister an international expression of missionary evangelization in its fullest sense.

World-wide religious communities can participate in New York and around the world in UN specialized agencies and world conferences. We can bring our southern sisters and brothers to our New York teams and make a contribution that few other NGOs can make.

There is also a need to hear the voice of youth. Sixty-four per cent of the world population is under 25. The NGOs are not any better. Promote the participation of young religious in your organizations and support them to work on your teams at the different UN Centers.

Care for creation — the environment is an urgent concern of the Church and the world.

If you have or can have a presence at the Center for the UN Environmental Program in Nairobi, Kenya, by all means do not hesitate to do so.

Please forgive me if I failed to mention any or all the things you came to hear about. If you have any questions, I will be happy to answer them to the best of my ability now or at a later time. Thank you for listening. I look forward to speaking with you on an informal basis too.

I have shared what we are in the process of trying to do as Franciscans International at the UN. I hope I have been honest enough and given you a somewhat objective view of the possibilities and limitations. What encourages us at Franciscans International and keeps us going is that beautiful, honest saying of Saint Francis: "Let us begin again today, for up until now little or nothing have we accomplished."

IV. TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY AND THE ROLE OF ADVOCACY – AN IRISH STUDY CASE

by

SR. BRIGID REYNOLDS, S.M. AND FR. SEAN HEALY, S.M.A.

That the world is at a moment of great change is widely recognized. The scale of the change and the appropriate responses required are not so widely appreciated. We believe that this is one of the great moments of change in human history. Such a claim could easily be seen as arrogant. However, it is based on a reading of the present reality which sees four eras of history coming to an end or a resolution simultaneously.

An Historical Perspective

The first of these eras is a 200-years period of human history. This period was shaped by the French Revolution of 1789 and the American Revolution of 1776, but shaped even more importantly by the Industrial Revolution. It is an era that has seen the dominance of the industrial type of development. In this era society set itself a project of production, to produce enough to meet the needs of all people. We suggest that this era is coming to a resolution simply because society is now in a position to produce all that is needed in society. Our world's problem now is that we have surpluses. There are many people in the world dying of starvation at this time. But this is not a production problem. The world now has the capacity to produce enough to ensure that there is nobody in material need.

We also are coming to the end of a 500-year period of human history. This is the era which began with the Renaissance and the Reformation and was dominated by science, an era in which society believed that science could solve all human problems and answer every question the world had to ask. It was an era of great individualism and an era when the political and economic values of the post-Reformation age replaced religious values as the dominant ones in society. That too is coming to a resolution as we come to realize the limits of science, of individualism, and of the dangers that are inherent for society in giving politics and economics the primary value base.

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We are also coming to the end of a 2,000-year period of human history, and this is the period of history that flowed from the cultures of Athens, Jerusalem and Rome. It is an era maybe most clearly identified for us in the concept of European imperialism, an era in which Europe and the people of European origin have been dominant in our world. This too is coming to an end. The center of the world is no longer in the Atlantic or in the North American/European axis. This is also a 2,000-year period of history which has seen the dominance of the White race. The White race is a minority on this planet, and yet it has been dominant for two millennia. This too is coming to an end.

Finally, the fourth era that is coming to an end is a 5,000-year period of human history. We won't argue about this particular figure — maybe it goes back further. But it is the era of male domination, the era of patriarchy, where society has been structured in such a way that it has been dominated by masculine values, masculine priorities and masculine structures. We suggest that this dominance is coming to an end in our time.

Shaping the Future

All of these eras are coming to an end simultaneously. Consequently, we are at a moment of great social change. This is a unique historical moment in which to shape the future. The implications for society are enormous. The future of society for quite some time to come will be shaped in the years immediately ahead. It is important at this moment of great change that those involved in institutions such as government, religion, education, health care, etc., should understand the nature of this transition. They need to have a clear understanding of what is happening at present and of the kind of future they wish to build. Only then will they be in a position to know which forces they should support, which forces they need to resist, and which forces they need to transform.

The future is not predetermined. As Christians, we have an obligation to think very seriously about the future. Everything we do is, in fact, built on some understanding of the present and some vision of the future. We may not be conscious of this fact, yet it is true. As Christians, we should not shirk our responsibility to face up to the implications of what we do. After all, we are meant to be bringing the reign of God to fruition, and that involves moving the world from where it is towards where God wants it to be.

We live in a world which promotes constant economic progress. Wealth, employment and production are growing steadily. The conventional economic wisdom argues that continuing on this path for the foreseeable future will produce a world in which everyone has a stake, and where the good life can be accessed by all. It presumes that everyone, in a world population

twice as large as it is today, can reasonably aspire to and achieve the high-consumption lifestyle enjoyed by the world's affluent minority at present. This is seen as progress.

This conventional economic vision of the future is unattainable. Environmental degradation, encroaching deserts, unemployment, starvation, widening gaps between rich and poor, exclusion from participation in either decision-making or development of society: these are the global realities confronting decision-makers today. Economic globalization and environmental stress are accompanied by social inequality and endemic deprivation. Millions of people in the richer parts of the world recognize these problems and are seriously concerned about the plight of the billions of people on all continents whose lived experience is one of constant exclusion from the resources and the power that shapes this world.

People feel powerless. The media present one vision of the future, and assume it is the only desirable or viable future. Politicians, more concerned about the next election, or simply intent on staying in power, rarely discuss the fundamental causes of, or long-term solutions to, the issues and problems they confront every day. It is crucial that questions be asked concerning the core assumptions that underpin and support the present situation. What model of development is being followed? Is it likely to produce a good life for all the world's citizens? What constitutes progress? What are the underpinning values on which decisions are made in shaping the future? Are we at ease with these values and the structures that flow from them? Is it possible to envision a future where everyone really would have a stake, be respected, have meaningful work and an adequate income? Where all could genuinely participate? These are key questions. The world is at a major crossroads. It has the resources and capacity to choose a wide range of different options. Decisions made now will have major effects on the generations of the future. Consequently, it is essential that the questions raised here be examined by leaders, by policy-makers, and by people generally.

A Gospel Perspective

We start from the belief that the world, as it is now, is not the kind of world envisaged in the Gospels. We do not accept the divisions we see. Like many, we wish to work for a society where "*the hungry are filled with good things*" (Lk 1:53). Taking inspiration from the Beatitudes, we work with Jesus for the coming of the Kingdom, where the poor will be happy because they have sufficiency; where those who hunger and thirst for what is right will see their vision concretized in the structures of society; where the gentle (or "the lowly") will be guaranteed their right to a part of the earth's resources ("*They shall have the earth for their heritage*" Mt 5:5). With St. Paul we are conscious that the "*entire creation is groaning in one great act*

of giving birth" (Rom 8:22). We want to play a positive role in this great act of giving birth to a future society.

How can this Gospel message be made relevant in our mission today? In recent years the Church has developed a large body of social teaching. We find in this teaching the guidelines needed to point the way for us pilgrim people. From Pope Leo XIII, who began the call for major changes in the socio-economic order, to the present day, the Church is calling us to transform society. We recall that Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* called for "bold transformations, innovations that go deep" (n. 32). The Synod of Bishops (1971) in its document *Justice in the World* said that "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel" (n. 6). Pope John Paul II in *Laborem Exercens* calls for a complete analysis to reveal unjust structures so that they may be examined and transformed to build a just earth (n. 2). More recently in *Centesimus Annus* he talked about the virtues needed to be involved in this transformation. "To destroy such structures (of sin which impede the full realization of those who are in any way oppressed by them) and replace them with more authentic forms of living in community is a task which demands courage and patience" (n. 38). Recent social teaching alerts us not only to the structures that oppress people but also to the structures that cause destruction to the environment. "Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone ... There is an order in the universe which must be respected ... The ecological crisis is a moral issue" (Pope John Paul II, January 1, 1990).

Deepening Divisions

When we look at our world today, we see deep division and widespread exclusion. Worldwide more than four billion people do not have the resources required to live life with basic dignity. We acknowledge that the depth of poverty varies. At present, more than one billion people on this planet live in absolute poverty, i.e., with an income of less than \$370 a year. This figure has risen from 500 million in the early 1980s. Today one million children under five die every month in the countries of the "South." The poverty of other better-off countries is none the less real, even though it is not as extreme.

Yet the world as a unit is not poor. 83 per cent of the world's total wealth is controlled by less than 20 per cent of the world's population. This wealthy 20 per cent are in a position to use their wealth and power to strengthen their own position at the expense of the poor nations of the South. There are many other things we could say concerning the economic/political/cultural/social reality of our world today. But in the context of this group it is not necessary to develop this dimension.

An Alternative Vision

Is this the way our society should be organized? Is this the way God wishes our world to be organized? It seems to us that the obvious answer to both questions is in the negative. So two further questions present themselves: What kind of *alternative future* do we have to offer? And what are we doing to articulate and make this alternative concrete? These questions become especially important given the rapid changes in our world today. When the politically and economically powerful in our world address the future, they offer us today only one vision, that of a society with expanding production (*using more technology*), fewer people employed, and with the remainder engaged in a life of leisure. They see power as being in the hands of an even smaller *élite*. The most important people in such a society are seen as those who facilitate the more efficient running of the production process, from which all of life's benefits are presumed to flow. The majority would have no say in the shaping of such a society and would not participate in its operation to any great extent. The very meaning of life would be readily altered, human rights would be eroded, human dignity would not be respected, human development would not be facilitated, and the environment would be exploited.

We believe this vision needs to be seriously challenged. What would an alternative vision entail? What would an alternative future look like? Christian values state clearly that we should not accept the present growing divisions in our society, but should, instead, seek to eliminate them. We need to search for and strive to achieve balance in our values, goals and priorities. This will require a shift of emphasis. We need to move from quantitative to qualitative values and goals, from organizational to personal and interpersonal values and goals. We need to move from values that are economically based towards values that put far more emphasis on the real needs and aspirations of people. We need to move from mechanistic to organic values, from masculine towards feminine priorities. We need as a world to change direction, to find and maintain balance in all our relationships — with ourselves and God, with people we are close to, and people in the wider world, and in our relationship with the environment. A world moving along these balanced lines would be a just world based on the *biblical understanding of justice as a harmony which comes from fidelity to right relationships with God, with our neighbor and with the environment.*

Advocacy: A Ministry of Influence

Substantial social change is required if we are to move towards a just world. The Gospel and Catholic social teaching call all Christians to be involved in transformation. This transformation takes place at both the personal and societal levels. Each generation of religious has responded to

this invitation, which is "ever ancient ever new." What is the appropriate response today?

Traditionally, religious focused on their institutions, e.g., schools, hospitals, etc. They tried to create a just society through the graduates from these institutions. Their work concentrated on preparing good leaders who, they hoped, would in turn transform society. This strategy has produced its successes. However, as we have seen, there is a lot of poverty and social division, even in countries with a long Christian tradition. We find ourselves asking the question why? Part of the explanation, we believe, lies in the lack of awareness among Christian leaders of the structural dimensions of society. We need a strategy that has a greater appreciation of the structural dimensions of justice. As well as good people, we need good structures that promote equity and right relationships

History is teaching us that a new strategy is needed. We believed that Christian leaders need to be involved where the structures of society are being developed. This is an arena where we among many others become a voice:

- developing an accurate social analysis;
- articulating a vision of society;
- providing models of good practice and doing all this in an integrated way which ensures that the lived experience of all, but especially of poor and excluded people, is included at all stages and in all arenas of the process.

Where we formerly controlled and managed the process through religious institutions, now we can only hope to influence the process. Today, the task is that of discovering how to have influence without having control. One way of influencing the development of society is through advocacy. We will look later in this paper at the elements of advocacy and the skills needed. But first we need to ask ourselves if we believe advocacy is a valid ministry for religious.

Where we affirm that advocacy is a ministry in which Church personnel should be involved, we should also commit ourselves to the consequences of this affirmation. What resources are we prepared to make available to this work? Religious have been and still are extraordinarily generous in the resourcing of their institutions. Not only have personnel been provided and trained to a very high standard, but religious leaders have tried to provide facilities and up-to-date equipment for these institutions. To date, the work of advocacy is resourced in a very haphazard and very meager way. This ministry tends to be done by very committed people who are already fully employed in another ministry. Those involved in the ministry of advocacy tend to find it difficult to get the financial resources needed for this work.

Core Meaning

If we are to work for social change, we need to understand how social change can be generated. We can then go on to explore the role of advocacy in a strategy to generate social change.

Every society has a dominant core meaning. By this we mean the principal values, attitudes and assumptions that permeate the society. For the most part people subscribe to these values, attitudes and assumptions without question, or even without adverting to their existence. These provide the meaning that carries society along with a certain sense of purpose. When we use the word "meaning," we are speaking of culture. A society may have a number of cultures within it but at any particular point in history one of these will be dominant. There are many examples of how a dominant core meaning can maintain a very unjust social structure. A case in point would be South Africa, as it was until recently, with its unjust political, economic and social structures of *apartheid*. It would not have been possible to maintain this apartheid system if some "explanation" or "justification" for its existence were not provided. The Afrikaaners could justify apartheid to themselves at least. This enabled the system to be continued. It should be noted that the people who benefit from this dominant core meaning are in a position to ensure that it is transmitted to others.

A society must have meaning if it is to survive. It cannot survive in its present form if its dominant meaning is undermined or not transmitted.

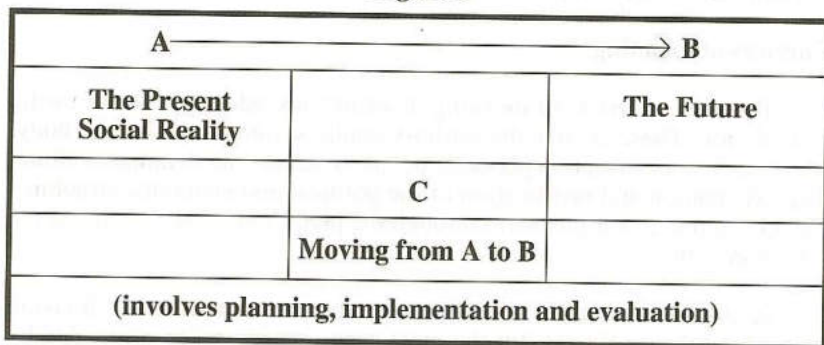
Whether we are addressing rural development or the environment, urbanization or education, or any other element of the world's future, we are involved with social change. Changing meaning is the key to social change. It is changing meaning which provides the energy to do the political organizing required to change economic structures. These changed economic structures will lead to new social structures.

Key Elements of Core Meaning

If the core meaning were changed, then society would change. The old order would not be able to justify or explain its continued existence. It would be replaced by a new order based on the new meaning being transmitted. It is very important that this core meaning be articulated by each individual and by the society as a whole. Our own meaning is the meaning each of us transmits. This meaning is closely linked to two things — our analysis of the present social reality, and our vision of what future society should be about. From these (*whether articulated or not*) flow decisions on what we do. In a society context, both of these elements are central to policy. After

all, policy is aimed at moving from one towards the other. *Figure 1* illustrates this process.

Figure 1



To illustrate what is involved here we simply take *an example* from Europe today. At the moment, the dominant meaning in Europe tells us that we must produce more and export more. This, we are told, will result in more jobs and eventually bring prosperity to all. This is a misreading of the present social reality. There is no failure of production. What is breaking down is the connection between jobs and production. We have seen the emergence of new technologies, robotics, microchips, computers, new technologies in food production, etc. These new technologies in effect mean that we can produce vast surpluses of any goods we wish to focus on. They provide new jobs but not on the scale of the number of jobs replaced.

This dominant meaning in the EU today also misreads the future. There will never again be "jobs for all," in the traditional understanding of that phrase. The dominant meaning of our society, however, still operates as if there will be jobs for all. Our schools prepare people for such a society. Our mass media convince people that this is the way the world must develop. Government statements would have us believe that we can again have a full employment situation. We believe that full employment in the traditional sense is not possible. This is especially true when we realise the world's population is growing by 1/4 million every day — and is likely to do so for the next 50 years! However, everyone has the right to work and to an adequate income. The challenge is to build a society, a world, where everyone has meaningful work and sufficient income to live life with basic dignity.

The children who will graduate from secondary schools in 2015 A.D. are already alive. Yet the question of what sort of continent or world we want in 2015 A.D. is not addressed in a way which would involve the

majority of people. The shapers and carriers of meaning in European society seem to be operating out of an inaccurate analysis of the present social reality and seem to have a very narrow and questionable vision of the future of European society. Such misreading is not confined to Europe.

Carriers of meaning

The major carriers of meaning in society are education, mass media and religion. These are like the cardio-vascular system of the human body. Mass media and education persuade people to accept the dominant culture. The explanation and justification of the political and economic structures are transmitted in various ways through the press, radio, television and the school system.

A close examination will show that the press, radio and television throughout the world are, for the most part, owned and/or controlled by those at the top of the economic and political structures. Consequently, it is not surprising that the values, the meaning, they carry and transmit, are supportive of the status quo.

The school system in most places follows a banking understanding of education, a process which sees the pupils as empty receptacles to be filled with "knowledge" which is processed by the teacher. The values, the meaning, being transmitted socialize the pupils into accepting the existing society as it is. So we can say that the *status quo* is promoted by the mass media and by the school system.

In the whole area of meaning in society, religion plays a very important part. Religion has often been used to legitimate the status quo even though the status quo might be very oppressive. How often has religion preached that the present situation must be accepted because it is God's will and it will only last for a few years, by which time we will pass on to our eternal reward? How often has religion told people that there is no need to do anything about their suffering in this world, as it will soon pass and "there will be pie in the sky when they die"? Not only are people in such situations being told that the status quo has to be accepted but also that God has ordained it so!

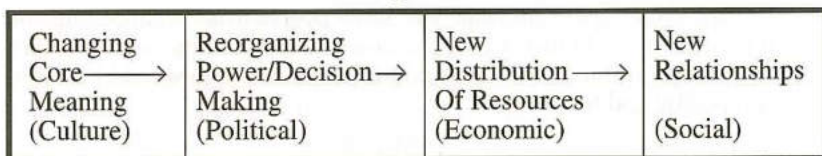
Changing Core Meaning

People's core meaning must change if they are to generate social change. We believe very strongly that as many people as possible should analyze and discuss the present reality, and the future they wish to build. Then, they will be participating in the first step in generating social change: Changing their own core meaning. If people's core meaning does not change, then they

will simply continue striving to maintain the status quo until it becomes unbearable.

Once people's core meaning changes, they begin to make different decisions. These decisions impact on resources. The new core meaning will provide the energy to do the political organizing that is necessary to change the way resources are distributed. When this occurs, we will have new relationships developed between people, new social structures. *Figure 2 illustrates this process.*

Figure 2



Changing meaning is the key to social change. Changing meaning (*culture*) leads to changing decisions (*political*), which leads to changing resource distribution (*economic*), which, in turn, leads to new relationships (*social structures*).

Advocacy: The Process

Advocacy is simply part of a strategy to generate social change. It is, however, an important part of such a strategy. If we believe that the local, the national, and the world situation involves injustices and needs to be changed, then advocacy can be a key element in this work.

The starting point for any group's or organization's advocacy work is some agreement on the analysis of the present situation, and some agreement on a vision of the future towards which the group or organization wishes to work. There is no use trying to communicate with the public if the group does not agree on its analysis and vision. Not all details need to be agreed upon, but there should be substantial agreement on the issues being taken into the advocacy arena.

In preparing a base-line analysis it is crucial that the research being quoted and the claims being made about the present situation are accurate. This is a key issue. Nobody should be able to undermine effectively the research. Otherwise, credibility will be lost and change will not happen.

In outlining a desirable vision of the future it is not necessary to have all the details in place. However, some clear sense of direction is required

which is credible and will engage the imagination and commitment of others and lead them to act.

Key Messages

Before moving into the public arena it is very important to identify and agree on the key messages which the group wishes to transmit. It is important to recognize that not all the information or ideas the group has may be useable in this context. Choices must be made.

In making these choices the group should ensure that its key messages are *effective*. An effective message will show people *what* is happening and *why* it is happening. In this way it promotes understanding, which in turn helps to change attitudes. As far as possible, the message should be short, simple, specific and focused.

There are three situations in which the group or organization will need messages:

- Pro-active messages: These are situations where the group or organization itself is setting the agenda and communicating as it wishes, e.g., regarding the situation of small farmers in poor countries.
- Reactive messages: These are situations in which the group will be asked to react to developments in its area of interest, e.g., regarding the impact of World Trade Organization decisions on small farmers.
- Crises messages: These are messages the group will need to prepare in advance to deal with emergencies and crises which occur, e.g., regarding Central American hurricanes or African famines damaging small farmers.

While all these situations are important, the most important are the pro-active messages. These will be the ones over which the group has most control. They should always be clearly seen to serve the corporate mission of the group, as well as its objectives.

It is very important that the group or organization ensure that its own agenda maintains priority. Endlessly responding to crises is not enough and can consume all one's energy and time. It is gratifying to see the reaction of people, when the group or organization responds to crises. But it must be careful to ensure the crises do not take over.

Responses to crises should as far as possible draw people's attention back to the pro-active messages, e.g., regarding the situation of small farmers in poorer countries.

Target Audiences

The key messages to be transmitted in any particular situation will depend on the audience being addressed. It is very important to identify the different audiences the group or organization wishes to address. Possible audiences in Europe could include:

- The European Commission
- The European Parliament
- The European Council of Ministers
- European National Governments
- Parliamentarians in National Parliaments
- Political Parties
- Trade Unions (*National and International*)
- Business Organizations (*National and International*)
- Farming Organizations (*National and International*)
- The Community and Voluntary Sector Organizations
- "Third World" Organizations and Networks
- Religious and Missionaries
- Congregational and Society Leaders (*Individuals and Conferences*)
- Various Church Organizations (*Local, National and International*)
- Bishops (*Individuals and Conferences*)
- Other Churches
- Inter-Church Organizations (*e.g., W.C.C.*)
- Various Communities of Specialists
- Media (*Reporters, Producers, Editors, etc.*)
- Multilateral Organizations (*e.g., I.M.F., World Bank*).

This is not a comprehensive listing but it gives some idea of the scale of possible audiences. It is important for the group or organization to prioritize its audiences and act accordingly, e.g., some of its efforts should be focused on churches but NOT ALL!

Key messages must be tailored to particular audiences to enable the group reach its priority audiences and to help achieve its overall objectives.

It is important to remember that situations change and, consequently, messages may also need to change. If the group is to be dynamic, it must be rigorous in reassessing its messages on a regular basis to ensure they are relevant and effective as well as Gospel-based.

How to Communicate Key Messages to Target Audiences

There are a wide variety of means through which messages may be transmitted, and some are far more appropriate than others for particular

audiences. Face to face meetings, letters, summary documents, longer research papers, international media, national media, local media (*electronic or written media at all three levels*), newsletters, submissions aimed at specific audience(s), public meetings, assemblies, chapters, action-alert documents, databases, directories. These are some of the means which may be used. The group/organization should identify the most appropriate means for communicating with each target audience.

It is important to realize that:

- Each of the target audiences has a full agenda;
- Each has a limited carrying capacity for items on its agenda;
- Consequently, getting priority on the target audience's agenda means relegating some other item on that agenda;
- Everything already on the agenda is seen as important;
- So any new item must be seen to be more important before it can gain its place.

All communications should have:

- Dynamism;
- Creativity in presentation;

Otherwise they may not even be considered.

Once the key messages, target audiences and means of communication have been identified, a list of *tasks* should be drawn up and detailed plans for implementation should be outlined. Then, it is simply a matter of implementing the plan.

Evaluation, on an ongoing basis, is essential in any advocacy. This evaluation should be built into the plan from the very beginning. Much learning can flow from ongoing evaluation once it is taken seriously, and once its conclusions are built into the ongoing advocacy.

Crises will emerge. Not everything will go according to plan. At times the plan may go "off the rails" or be side-tracked by other events. Such crises should always be seen as opportunities. They can be used as new opportunities to restate the organization's position, or to add an extra dimension to what has already been presented.

CORI: An Irish Case Study

The CORI Justice Commission was established in 1981. It established an office in 1982. Since its establishment the CORI Justice Commission has

had the biblical understanding of justice at the center of its deliberations, and has tried to be strategic in putting it on the wider agenda. In its work it focuses on four key areas:

- Public policy
- Enabling and empowerment
- Spirituality, and
- Partnership projects with other bodies and agencies.

In developing its work in the public policy arena the Commission has focused principally on three key areas. These are:

- The future of work — of special concern given the persistence of unemployment and the right of every person to meaningful work.
- Income distribution systems — of special concern because of the continuing failure of the Welfare State to tackle poverty effectively.
- Participation mechanisms — of special concern because of the democratic deficit being experienced in a democratic country, where the voice of the powerful tends to be listened to much more readily than the voice of people who are poor, unemployed, or experiencing exclusion for a variety of other reasons.

The CORI Justice Commission has developed a comprehensive and integrated advocacy program around these three core issues, while also working on a wide range of other public policy issues. We now outline some elements of this program in a summary form, to give you some idea of the work being done by the CORI Justice Commission.

- **Education, consciousness raising and conscientization.** In the beginning it was necessary to do a comprehensive education, consciousness raising and conscientization program to ensure that people became more familiar with the issues of poverty, unemployment and exclusion. Many workshops, seminars and social analysis training programs were organized and given by the Commission staff. In the beginning these were conducted principally with religious and people with whom religious worked. In later years these were made available to a wide range of other people, organizations and groups, many of whom did not have a Christian orientation to their work. These varied from grass-roots groups to national policy makers. More than 600 of these have been held over the course of the past 16 years involving more than 25,000 participants.

- **Socio-economic review.** For more than a decade the Commission has produced an annual socio-economic review. From modest beginnings this has evolved into a comprehensive book of more than 100 pages. It analyses and critiques the present socio-economic reality of Ireland from

the perspective of the biblical understanding of justice. It proposes specific national objectives in 12 sectors, and outlines detailed policies that could be implemented by government, if it wishes to reach these national objectives. All of this is done within a fiscal stance that shows how these policies could be financed without damaging the economy.

- **National budget.** Each year the CORI Justice Commission makes a pre-budget submission to government along the lines developed in the socio-economic review. Meetings are held with government ministers and officials, as well as with opposition leaders and other organizations to discuss the analysis and the policy proposals. On the day after the Government announces its budget the Commission produces a 25-page detailed analysis and critique of the budget. This document identifies the beneficiaries of government budget decisions, and shows how different decisions could have led to a fairer distribution of the available resources.

- **Social policy conference.** The Commission has hosted an annual social policy conference since 1988. Each year this conference analyzes one topic. An analysis of the topic is provided together with a critique from a justice perspective. Policy alternatives at both the macro- and micro-levels are outlined and critiqued. This conference has always been opened by the President of Ireland or by a government minister. It is attended by about 200 people, including representatives of political parties, government departments, trade unions, employers, farming and community and voluntary organizations, religious leaders and academics, as well as a wide range of activities involved with the topic being discussed.

- **Pilot projects.** The Commission has also been involved in piloting an innovative program that created 1,000 part-time jobs for long-term unemployed people in the social economy. When this approach to tackling unemployment was proposed by the Commission, the Government asked us to pilot the idea. This we did in six pilot areas, with the help of 162 organizations which were prepared to create these positions for unemployed people. After three years of piloting, and another year of transition, this approach has now been accepted and mainstreamed by Government. Once the pilot phase was completed, we handed the program over to Government and now play an advisory role in its ongoing development.

- **Networking.** The Commission has a number of networks which it anchors and/or resources. One of these consists of religious with responsibility for justice issues within their congregations. Another is for activists and groups involved in this work at a local level in different parts of the country. This network has regional and national meetings. A third network consists of national organizations addressing issues of poverty and social exclusion.

- **Submissions to government and other bodies.** The Commission produces a constant stream of submissions and briefings for government departments, parliamentary committees, national bodies of trade unions, employers, etc. These submissions cover a wide range of issues, ranging from foreign policy to local development. They are often accompanied by oral presentations to these bodies, committees, etc.

- **Publications.** The Commission produces other publications, as well as those already outlined. These include a regular newsletter, briefings at election times, studies on topics, such as basic income, etc.

- **Representation on public bodies.** Because of its involvement in public policy issues, the Justice Commission staff are now members of a range of public policy bodies. Some of these are national "think-tank" type bodies. Others deal with specific policy issues, ranging from unemployment to taxation policy, from housing to rural development.

- **Media.** All the activities already listed are accompanied by a range of communications activities. One such area of activity involves briefing editors, journalists, researchers, presenters and producers, and helping them find suitable material for programs and articles that challenge the status quo. Another area is the creation of media events around issues to ensure coverage. We also respond to a steady stream of requests for interviews, comments and debates on issues in the public policy arena. In all cases great care is taken to proceed along the lines already outlined in this paper.

- **European/Global focus.** For more than a decade the Commission has ensured that a European focus is included in its activities. This is especially important where the key strategic issues of work, income and participation are concerned. Many decisions made at EU level have major implications for Ireland in these areas. Consequently, the EU institutions have also been the focus of advocacy activity. The global dimension is also a constant factor in the Commission's work. This is of special importance when proposing policies, as these should be viable in a global context and not simply at the national or continental level.

Impact

In terms of the strategic issues already outlined, has all of this activity had any impact? We believe it has been very successful in highlighting these issues in the public arena, as well as in the policy-making arena.

On the issue of **income**: poverty has a much higher priority on the public agenda now than it had in the past. The public awareness of the relative failure of policies to tackle poverty has pushed government to seek

solutions within the present policy framework and through alternative approaches. CORI Justice Commission has proposed the introduction of a basic income system as a successor to the present social welfare and taxation systems. Government has now commissioned three major studies to analyze the impact of introducing a basic income system in Ireland. A green paper on basic income will be published by government in mid-1999. This will be designed to produce a wide-ranging public debate on these issues. Government has also produced a national anti-poverty strategy, and involved a wide range of groups in developing this. While its targets are not as high as we would wish, it does mark substantial progress from the present situation.

On the issue of **work**: the need for alternative policies to tackle unemployment has been recognized and acted upon by government. The piloting and eventual adoption of our proposals for a more humane approach towards unemployed people involved in government-funded programs has had a very positive impact. Side by side with these developments, we have also sought to highlight the need for recognition of unpaid work and the contribution it makes to national development. From a very difficult beginning slow progress is now being made on this aspect of the work issue.

On the issue of **participation**: in Ireland a national social partnership system has operated since 1987. This brought together three pillars of "social partners," i.e., trade unions, employers and farmers, who sat down with government and negotiated a three-year national program covering pay, taxation, social services, etc. From its inception CORI Justice Commission argued for the inclusion of a fourth pillar representing groups such as the unemployed, poor people and women who were not represented in their own right at these negotiations. After nine years of advocacy work, the establishment of a fourth pillar was agreed by government in 1996. CORI Justice Commission is one of the groups now recognized as a social partner by government. Other include the National Organization of the Unemployed, the National Women's Council, and the National Youth Council. As a direct result of the inclusion of this pillar, the latest agreement (entitled *Partnership 2000 for Inclusion, Employment and Competitiveness*) places social inclusion at its core. It includes a separate chapter on this topic, with a wide range of commitments to be implemented by government before the end of 1999. This is simply one example of improved participation for those who were previously excluded. We can point to a range of other developments at both local and national levels. While a great deal remains to be done on this issue as on the others, substantial progress has been made.

Conclusion

Points to remember in the work of advocacy:

- Recognize the small successes and celebrate them.
- Persist — "*be brave, I have conquered the world*" (Jn. 16:33).
- Continue to update the research.
- Do not allow "the best to be the enemy of the good."
- Continually challenge ourselves about our motivation. Whose kingdom are we building? Be ready to "*account for the hope that is in you*" (1 Pt 3:15).

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