BISHOPS’ INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL ACTION V (BISA V)

“SEARCH, CHALLENGE AND COLLEGIAL RESPONSE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT”

BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES
MAY 21 – JUNE 1, 1979
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VI. TALKS – BY THE RESOURCE PERSONS

BAGUIO CITY, PHILIPPINES
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WELCOME ADDRESS

Jaime L. Cardinal Sin
May 26, 2979

On behalf of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, I welcome you to BISA V. The last-minute change of venue from India to the Philippines has most likely brought about unexpected problems. But I sense the impulse of the Holy Spirit in this sudden convergence of Bishops from all over the world to the Philippines. Might it not be that God in His all-seeing wisdom, is entrusting you with the role of precursors who prepare the way for a new Pentecost in Asia? Might it not be that the suitable matrix for your reflections and plans for renewed evangelization in Asia today is in an island sanctuary that faithfully nurtured the life of the Church for over 400 years?

And so, my brother Bishops, after having gone through the highways and byways of Asia to see and touch the fact of its massive poverty and its massive ignorance of Christ – I welcome you, weary travelers, to rest awhile, break bread with us, share your thoughts and experiences, your hopes and dreams with us.

The past BISA papers constitute a rich background for your present meeting. These documents summarize the reflections of those who went before you – their awareness of the suffering and hope that co-exist in Asia today, their analysis of the root causes of poverty, their concern for violations of human rights, their call for pastoral action in the fields of education, communication, social action and human development.

In addition to these BISA documents, I wish to include for your reflections some of the themes found in Redemptor Hominis, the first encyclical of Pope John Paul II. These themes are: (1) Man as the primary and fundamental way for the Church; (2) Unity in the fellowship of service and awareness of the apostolate; (3) Redemption as a New Creation.

I propose these three themes for your consideration not only because of their conceptual relevance to the Church in Asia but because they formulate the evangelical dynamism needed to build up Asia’s capacity to receive the fullness of Christ’s Incarnation and Redemption.

I

Man in Asia continues to be diminished in many ways. He is dehumanized by new technology; he is exploited by economic processes; his freedom is curtailed by non-participatory political systems.

Faced with the systematic and programmed dehumanization of man, the temptation for the Church might be to go around man’s misery, to walk past by it or to select only those aspects that can be comfortably handled and solved.

But Pope John Paul II doest not speak of a selective and comfortable apostolate. He offers no detours from the path that leads to man in his totality – ‘man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being – in the sphere of his own family, in the sphere of his own nation or people… and in the sphere of the whole of mankind – this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission: he is the primary and fundamental way for the Church.

Therefore, the challenge to BISA V is clearly stated: “Since this man is the way for the Church, the way for her daily life and experience, for her mission and toil, the Church of today must be aware in an always new manner of man’s ‘situation.’ That means that she must be aware of his possibilities, which keep returning to
their proper bearings and thus revealing themselves. She must likewise be aware of the threats to man and of all that seems to oppose the endeavor 'to make human life ever more human' and make every element of this life correspond to man’s true dignity – in a word, she must be aware of all that is opposed to that process.”

II

The lack of unity in the Church continues to be a stumbling block towards the fulfillment of the Redemption in Asia. Dichotomies arise between evangelization and humanization, between kerygma and diaconia, between the institutional Church and the Church of the people. Revolutionary movements principally relying on violence find adherents within the Church, in contradiction to the gospel of peace and love. Ideological polarizations and mutual condemnations scandalize the faithful.

It becomes a temptation to solve disunity by imposing uniformity and authoritarianism. Persons who are not in the inner circle of believers are marginalized: the dependency of individuals towards a leader is intensified in order to bring about a superficial unity.

The solution to disunity was pointed out by the Pope in his First Message to the Church and the World when he called on people to ‘meditate with renewed and envigorating zeal on the nature and function of the Church, her way of being and acting . . . not merely in order that the vital communion in Christ of all who believe and hope in Him should be accomplished, but also in order to contribute to bringing about a fuller and closer unity of the whole human family.”

Therefore, the challenge to BISA V is to join a serious and vigorous evangelizing activity with a well-founded ecclesiology. The deepest identity of the Church is based on love, love even for its enemies. Her ways are the ways of peace; her being is animated by the Spirit of Hope. Is it not time, then, to replace instruments of analysis that view situations as basically conflictual with new methodologies that promote unity among all social classes under the Fatherhood of God? Is it not time also to evaluate programs to see whether they are not based on too much activism and too little theologizing?

III

The Redemption of Asia is far from accomplished. In this region that is home for the major non-Christian religions, Christianity has not convinced Buddhists, Hindus and Moslems that their quest for the full dimension of their humanity can be found in Christ – who came that they may have life and have it more abundantly. Whenever the quality of Church life is characterized by dependency, passiveness and rigidity, she falls to give witness to the fullness of redemption.

That is why Pope John Paul II equates redemption with a new creation. Creation is a total act. For the Church this means it is an act based on a comprehensive and unified position. It is an act of freedom based on truth. It is an act of love.

Again, therefore, the challenge to BISA V is to bring about a new momentum of redemptive activity which is that never-ending restlessness to bring Asia to Christ. “In this creative restlessness beats and pulsates what is most deeply human – the search for truth, the insatiable need for the good, hunger for freedom, nostalgia for the beautiful….”

Is it not time, then to bring about more coordination among the different instrumentalities of the FABC in order that problems may be solved jointly and comprehensively? So that issues affecting social action are enlightened by pastoral and theological insights? Is it not time also for the laity to be given the responsible
positions in those areas requiring their expertise? So that the Collegiality of Bishops for Human Development might have the laity as partners in the same spirit of collaboration and shared responsibility?

My brother Bishops. You come to the Philippines at a propitious time. UNCTAD V, another global meeting on the problems of development, is taking place right now in Manila. Its issues have divided mankind into the First World versus the Third World. Frustrations and disappointments have characterized the feelings of the poor regarding the results of this conference. As you begin your meeting, the People of God have their eyes on you. I have full confidence and trust that you will not disappoint them, that you will come forth from the Upper Room of your BISA V meeting to give hope to Man, to give witness to the Unity of the Church, to bring the fruits of Redemption to an Asia “groaning in travail” and “waiting with eager longing for the revelation of the Children of God.” (Rom. 8:19)
SITUATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Bp. Edward Daly
Derry, Northern Ireland
May 28, 1979

HISTORY

Christianity came to Ireland in the 5th century. Afterwards Ireland was invaded by Norsemen, Danes and England. In the 16th and 17th centuries the land was taken away from the Irish people and given to Englishmen, for example the soldiers of Oliver Cromwell. The Protestants tried to impose their religion on the Catholic Irish. Mass was not allowed, priests and bishops were martyred, including Oliver Plunkett who was canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1973, churches and monasteries were destroyed (today the oldest Church Catholics worship in dates from about 1800). A Protestant dominated feudal system was established.

In 1829 Catholic emancipation was granted allowing them to vote and run for seats in the London Parliament. From 1843-1846, a potato famine swept over the country. At that time, the potato was to Ireland what rice is to Asia. Millions emigrated or died. Those that left brought little with them but the faith and spread it around the world.

In 1916 the Irish people revolted. The lead group in the uprising was inspired by old Gaelic and Christian values. Was the revolt a mistake? I don’t know. The fighting continued till 1922 when a settlement was reached, granting independence to the South of Ireland, but maintaining Northern Ireland as a British colony. The settlement was one of political convenience. It created an artificial state in the North where there was a Protestant majority whose ancestors have been “planted” there from England. Voting districts were gerrymandered, so that Catholics had only two M.P.’s to the Protestants’ ten, although they numbered 500,000 to the latter’s 700,000. there was cruel discrimination against Catholics (or Nationalists) by the Protestants (or Unionists).

In the 1920’s and 1930’s the memories of violence of World War I tended to mute Catholic protest. The same after World War II.

In the 1960’s a second university was to be set up, but instead of putting it in Derry, the second largest city, it was put in a smaller city with a Protestant majority.

I was then a curate in the Bogside area of Derry. Unemployment reached 50%. Housing conditions were dreadful for a European country. Injustice was rife. The people were passive, accepting second class citizenship. I was sorry for them but I didn’t know what I could do.

*Mater et Magistra* and then the other social encyclicals galvanized the priests. We realized we had to do something. Credit unions were set up to combat usury. From a London merchant bank and with other priests and lay people we managed to borrow L900,000 to build 300 houses. The local authorities didn’t like this since it broke their monopoly of allocating houses to those they favored.

In 1966-67 young Catholic people from the North began to graduate from the best schools in Ireland and England. They were able to get such education because of the 1947 British Education Act that guaranteed it for qualified studies of any sect, and our Catholic schools were able to produce such candidates. Bernadette Devlin and John Hume were two of these.
During the 1960’s we had watched events in the U.S., Martin Luther King’s civil rights movement, and saw possibilities of promoting justice through non-violence. At the same time came the revolt of the students in Paris. Out of these influences came the Northern Ireland Irish Civil Rights Movement. Some priests were asked to take leadership positions in it but we refused, feeling it should be a people’s movement. Nor did we want it to be associated with the Catholic Church. We wanted certain things: one man-one vote, fair employment practices, equality of housing allocation based on need. In October 1968, I joined a march with other priests and about 500 people. The police hosed us with water cannons, but we had learned from the U.S. and had T.V. cameras there. The Civil Rights Movement (CRM) was born. On five succeeding Saturdays we marched and had sit-downs and then in November 1968, 40,000 – 50,000 people marched in Derry. We received international publicity. James Callaghan the British Home Secretary who was later to become Prime Minister came to Derry and Belfast and abolished the Derry City Council and appointed a commission that worked well. We got some of our demands. From October 1968 to mid 1969 there were many gains.

On August 12, 1969 there was a huge march of Protestants through Derry including Catholic areas. Clashes between the residents, the marchers and the Royal Ulster Constabulary lasted three days and nights. In Belfast Protestant mobs invaded Catholic areas. Streets of houses were burned and many people were killed in Belfast. Britain sent in her army on 15th August 1969 to protect the Catholic population.

There was relative quiet for sometime. Our community organization work in the parishes was doing well. In early 1970 the Irish Republican Army (IRA) which had been dormant since the mid-twenties entered the struggle. It was not the old IRA which had become Marxist with the years but a younger non-Marxist segment, called Provisionals or Provos, resembling Fascists more than Marxists. Armed struggle began. The Provos wanted an independent and united Ireland. The CRM activity virtually ceased. It’s important to remember that most of the advance regarding justice and rights made by Catholics in Northern Ireland were made through non-violent means.

The labor government in England fell in May/June 1970 and the new Prime Minister, Mr. Heath, sent a representative to Ireland who was disastrous, completely insensitive to the needs of the situation. He began by having a curfew in a Catholic area of Belfast. The IRA gained support among the young people. The army began to search houses and maltreat people. Many young Catholics began to support the IRA and to join the IRA. In August 1971 Interment was introduced whereby people could be sent to prison without trial. 2,500 were sent to prison; many of them completely innocent of any crime or political activity. Almost all of there were from the Catholic population. More support for the IRA and moderate voices were being gradually drowned out. The Protestants formed groups similar to the IRA which were just as vicious: they killed hundreds of innocent Catholics. Two priests were killed in Belfast. Several churches in my diocese were blown up and destroyed.

On Sunday, January 30, 1972, a huge protest march was organized in Derry. For some reason – I don’t know why, there was a little stone throwing but nothing serious – all of a sudden British paratroopers opened fired on the crowd shooting 29 people. 13 of those people died instantly. The others survived. I saw five die with own eyes and I gave the last rites to 16.

A special tribunal set up by the British government found the soldiers guilty not of murder but of “shooting bordering on the reckless.”

Some progress was made in the rest of 1973 and 1974. with the agreement of the Irish Republic (South Ireland) and all political parties in Ireland, a new scheme for sharing power was set up for sharing power at all levels (SONNINGDALE). However the Heath government fell at this time and the new government headed by Harold Wilson was not as willing to support the new agreement when the crisis came. The
Protestants mounted a huge strike and closed down all power stations and industrial generators even those needed for vital facilities, sewerage pumping, etc. The new arrangement collapsed. There was further violence. Now there were 14,000 English soldiers in Ireland. Interment was ended. New laws were introduced so that a judge without a jury could sentence people to jail. Torture was used in many well-documented cases to gain confessions, and 90% of the accused were found guilty on the basis of their confessions alone. There has been international exposure of this. On the other hand no soldier or police officer has been convicted of torture or murder. Today there are 4,000 – 5,000 prisoners in jail, from all sectors of society. Before 1969, the average prison population was 400/500.

IRA AND THE CATHOLIC POPULATION

Catholics resent the IRA and they also resent and distrust the British Army. They may agree with some goals of the IRA but not with its means. They are afraid of the IRA. There is some passive support, but there is much more active support in the U.S. than in Northern Ireland. The IRA has plenty of arms but is short of personnel. It has links with the P.L.O. and similar groups. The British army will never admit its wrong and some of its officers are more used to operating as they like in authoritarian Middle East regimes than in a society where the rule of law is supposed to prevail. Everyone is on computer tapes. They even know – and this is no exaggeration – the color of wall paper in your house. There is constant harassment, phone tapping, murder. The IRA plans into the British Army’s hand since violence is all the latter can cope with. They couldn’t handle non-violence. An army is equipped to counter another army. It is a blunt instrument when it attempts to act as a police service.

THE CHURCH

We’ve made mistakes, Bishops differ on what to do, so I speak only of Derry. In the absence of a government or police force they can trust, the people turn to the Church. I saw the same in Samar, Philippines. Priests and people are very close, for they have suffered together. There are tremendous community organization efforts at the parish level, again because there is no government. We investigate arrests, follow-up prisoners, document injustice. We do some work ecumenically but not with the fundamentalists like Paisely: how can you cooperate with a man who calls the Catholic Church “the whore of Babylon.” Pope Paul VI was well aware of our situation.

Recently we’ve been able to convince some Americans like Senator Kennedy and Speaker O’Neill to see our point of view.

We stress adult education: pre-marriage courses, a new catechetical program, marriage encounter, cursillos and charismatic prayer groups.

Our diocese which has suffered so much is the number one contributor to Trocaire, the national Irish office for development in the Third World. One of our parishes were almost 50% of the people are unemployed, 100 in prison and over 50 dead in the last few years, St. Mary’s Parish, during lent gave one pound per person to Trocaire for every one of its men, women and children. Suffering creates brotherhood. This was the highest per capita contribution in Ireland.

The ten years have been instructive for all of us. We are identified more and more with the people. On Sunday 90-95% of the people go to Mass. We have the largest number of seminarians we’ve had since the 1940’s. It’s a privilege to serve as their bishop.

I think if the Church had condoned violence, 200,000 would be dead by now, not 2,000.
The British must leave. However it must be a carefully phased withdrawal. The economy must be restructure over this period.

Perhaps England is unwilling to make this decision, for Scotland would seek the same and Britain cannot lost Scotland which receives the oil from the North Sea rings. Besides the British Government might be seen to be surrendering to terrorism. The IRA should cease all terrorism. We have pleaded with them to this again and again.

There are good people on all sides. We have more in common than not. Violence is folly. “Violence only generates violence.” Pope John Paul II said in Puebla and I heartily agree.

I saw many things in Samar that reminded me of home in the late 1960’s. I hope they might learn from our experience. No just cause, however, noble and honourable, can be served by violence.
SPIRITUAL VALUES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE FOR THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED IN THE QUEST FOR FULL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Bp. Francisco Claver, SJ
May 24, 1979

Introduction

The present subject of discussion should have been given to a professional theologian for in-depth consideration. I am no theologian, but the fact notwithstanding, I think there is something worth saying about the subject from an anthropological point of view – likewise from a pastoral one – two points of view that do give one license to shoot his mouth off about anything and everything. I trust anyway the “shooting-off” will not be a futile exercise.

I would like to limit myself to the key ideas contained in the very title – but (in typically oriental fashion?) in inverse order:

1) The Quest for Full Human Development
2) The Economically Disadvantage
3) Social Justice, and
4) Spiritual Values.

I. THE QUEST

The human world order that the Mischers talks about in their Toward a Human World Order is, to me – and, if I read them right, to them – synonymous with full human development. It is, to use the anthropologist’s Johnny-one-note term, a “holistic” concept which in turn calls for a holistic vision, and, if the vision is to be reality, a holistic approach and a holistic ethic. Let me say something briefly about each of these ideas for I believe they have to contribute to the task at hand.

The Concept. Full human development is, in the sense of Populorum Progressio, development for the whole man (body and soul, intellect and will, everything that makes for man’s humanity) and for all men (rich and poor, powerful and powerless, all races, all cultures). It is a thoroughly holistic concept, promising forth a genuinely valid anthropological insight about the nature of human life, namely, that all aspects of that same life – political, social economic, spiritual, etc. – are intimately and intricately intermeshed and hence will not tolerate any form of reductionism that ignores precisely the intermeshing we note here. I would like that most current ideologies, whether of the right or left or center, are all equally blighted by their reductionist character and all their deficiencies may stem from this one fault. But this probably is itself a reductionist statement of the worst sort! The point is, in any case, that the whole cannot be reduced to the parts and vice versa: full human development cannot be reduced, say, to economic development; nor is economic development the totality of human development.

The Vision. Full human development as a vision to be worked into reality seem from the outset to be a quixotic quest, a utopian dream no different from other currently fashionable utopian dreams, hence doomed to unviability from its very conception. But yet, it is not utopian in the classic sense of the term. On the contrary, it is eminently viable, for the sole reason, I believe, that we are dealing with the human and the human has to be understood in terms of more or less, of degrees and levels, of something that is essentially perfectible.
Any group of people with a common culture will be able to describe in fair detail what they define as the human, indeed as the ideally human, and their description will delineate how they conceive their vision of what full – or more correctly, fuller – human development is. It will be a vision that starts from what it is, from experience, from life, and this very grounding of their vision in reality, their reality, is what takes the vision we speak of out of the realm of utopian imaginings into one of immediate realizability – or, better, of perfectibility. It is a vision hence that is geared towards the possible, the humanly possible. The sheer possibility of man to be more human – this seems to be setting our sights too low. But if the human in indeed perfectible, the possible is all we need.

The Approach. If the goal, the vision of full human development, is holistic in nature, so must the approach be to its realization. In broadest outline this will mean taking into account in the development process every aspect of human life in such a way that one part does not advance to the detriment of other parts or of the whole, whether the whole be one individual or an entire community or people. This balanced, integral progress, will in all probability, rarely, if ever, happen in this imperfect world, but at least care will be taken to minimize imbalance.

If, as we adverted to earlier, the concept of holism is incompatible with reductionism of any kind, this does not mean that for reasons of strategy or economy of resources we cannot start with one or another aspect of human life which, after careful analysis, we can isolate and identify as the key problem or the main root of all other problems in the development process. But whatever that aspect is, it must always be taken in the context of the whole and its implications for or inter-linkage with the other parts of the whole must not be disregarded. All this sounds like just so much jejune generalizing. But we trust what will be set forth further on below will help specify more these broad generalizations.

The Ethic. There is a whole set of values and principles – an ethic, in other words – underlying any approach to human development. Since we are concerned primarily with the human, the core values of such an ethic, I would think, will perforce have to center around human dignity, its protection and assertion, its enhancement and growth. Likewise, the main principle from which to work in the actualization of that value will have to be unstinting participation of the individual (for his personal good), of all members of the community (for the common good), in the process of development. This process is at core a series of human decisions taken by people for people, and it is to be fully human and genuine development, the decisions will have to be by the people for themselves. The responsibility for decisions is theirs and theirs alone, and this responsibility is rooted in their very humanness, their shared dignity.

People Possibility. The new world that the quest for full human development connotes is thus of people, by people, for people, and whatever restructuring of society it entails will have to be one worked out by people for themselves. The ideal restructuring, hence the actuality of full human development, will probably never take place this side of heaven. But the very real possibility of such restructuring and development taking place is often sufficient reason of itself for people to start acting to bring them about. Paradoxically, the very acting, when done in deliberate and concerted fashion by a whole people, is itself a restructuring and development of no little moment. In a holistic perspective, every change in people relationships, however minimal and innocent it may seem, is bound to have an effect on the whole structure of society. The ever pressing question then is whether that effect helps or not to the actualization of the possibility of people becoming more people.

II. THE ECONOMICALLY DISADVANTAGED

The denial of that possibility is, it seems to me, the heart of the problem of people everywhere who are economically and every other way disadvantaged. And conversely, development for them will consist in
making that possibility real and effective. I believe this is basically what is aimed at by social reformers of all shades and colors who make much of methods and strategies of social change targeted especially at modifying social structures. From a holistic point of view, it will help to the argument if we speak of 1) the disadvantage itself, 2) the rationale for starting action with the disadvantaged, and 3) their place in any development scheme.

**The Disadvantage.** The ethic of holistic human development touched on briefly above is strongly premised on the acceptance of and respect for the dignity of man and all men, and of their full participation in decisions made for the individual as well as for the common wealth. “Everyman is the agent of his good, everyman is the great of his neighbor’s good.” Couched in these terms, the ethic’s base in human dignity and participation on decision-making connotes responsibility to act for one’s personal good and for the common good too, and that responsibility, innate, inalienable, when taken seriously in the order of praxis, in turn translates itself into power. The lack of this power – whether one reduces it to economics of politics or any other key aspect of human living – this is the disadvantage we are concerned with. It is a disadvantage that strikes at people’s very humanity for the obvious reason that it deprives them precisely of the possibility to be human, or at least to live in a human way.

**The Rationale of Action with the Disadvantaged.** The logic of the approach to development from the bottom up needs no justification in the supposition that all we have said above about the basicness and inalienability of human dignity is valid. For when the people are without dignity – and the disadvantaged by our definition are exactly that – no amount of restoring or respecting of their dignity by those responsible for its denial will every give it back to them unless they, the disadvantaged, themselves are aware of their own dignity, treasure it, and most importantly, assert it actively. If we take human development as a form of conversation among all peoples, it is the strongest at all levels – individual, community, national, international – who do all the talking (and the deciding), and the weakest, again at all levels, are left out entirely of the whole conversation. For human dignity to mean anything then, they, the disadvantaged, have to be brought in as equal participants in the conversation. And they must speak by themselves, for themselves.

**The Place of the Disadvantaged in the New World Order.** I am perhaps being too simplistic (reductionist?), but it seems to me that the new world order cannot begin to be unless and until the kind of conversation described above takes place. Heads of state can meet and deliberate and maneuver till doom’s day; UNCTAD VI, VII, VIII, and on and on can convene in an infinite series of conferences; ideologies, intellectuals, technocrats, all kinds of elites, can plan and dream and spin out theories and blueprints of development all to no avail, I am afraid, as long as the rank and file, the disadvantaged at all levels of human society, do not have a place in the general conversation. I do not doubt that even without them some kind of development will occur – but not the full and human development we speak of here. I am not saying that the kind of conversations elites excel at are useless and should not continue. They should. But their conversations must take into serious account the conversation that must concurrently go on among the world’s dispossessed and powerless. When what they say matters, we already have the beginnings of a new world order. The start of the new world order is with them – precisely because so far they have had no say, have been considered and treated as incapable of having a say, in short, despite all the faddish talk about human dignity and human rights, have been refused dignity and rights by all sorts of “oppressors.”

**People Helplessness.** When we speak of a new world order, the very globality of the problem is most daunting, and despair and apathy are the easy temptation, especially for people whose lives have for long been controlled by forces above and outside of them. So they have to start where they are, try to do what they can where they are. And this means acting together with others of their kind. It is to them that the new order matters most, for whom the advantages of change are greatest, and whose action is the most crucial despite their seeming helplessness – rather, precisely because of it. It is to them the vision we enlarged on
earlier speaks with a meaning that only they can understand fully simply because they are the most in need of hope, because only they can work it into reality for themselves. If dignity and rights are to be more than mere words and slogans, they have to be ever validated by the very people who lack them. When people do not of themselves act to validate them – that is when they are most helpless.

III. SOCIAL JUSTICE

The recognizing of the dignity of people and the rights that flow from that same dignity is incumbent not only on the individual citizen but on the state, the polity and the community. I trust I am not being too loose in my use of terms, but that recognition by a body bigger than the individual is, it seems to me, what social justice is all about. And we cannot talk of full human development without also talking of this kind of justice. For a main reason for the lack of development of people is, by and large, the lack too of the justice that satisfies the demands of human dignity and rights. I will assume that this is a generally accepted truism and hence we will not spend time “proving” it or analyzing the situation of people the world over, the disadvantaged especially, to scrutinize how the lack of social justice and the lack of real human development go hand in hand. This kind of analysis is going on all over and is a common-place wherever people are beginning to stir and act on their own behalf on precisely the problem the twin lack presents.

It would be more to our purpose, I think, to try to flesh out what we said earlier about the holistic vision of full human development, the approach and ethics implied by it. For the vision, approach, and ethics are, as we said, based firmly on human dignity and participation in decision-making, and these in turn cannot be understood except in the acceptance of an order in which justice is effectively an integral part. Hence I would like to limit myself here to a cursory but necessary look at strategies and methods, goals and objectives, in the striving for a more just order and let these suffice for what we have to say about social justice.

Methods and Strategies. The new world order, we can not stress too much, is people: the possibility of their becoming more human; their developing of more just life structures for themselves, among themselves, their growth as people, interdependent, mutually supportive, concerned with individual as well as common goods. If this definition is at all of some validity, the next question to face is: How to bring this order about? – the perennial question of reformers and ideologues. All sorts of answers are being put forward – ideological for the most part – which tend, for that very reason, to degenerate into academic at best, factional at worst, bickerings in which ideologies, not people, hold center-stage, and coercion and manipulation, control and one-upmanship, become the over-riding tactical concerns. But heavily larded over with ideological grease or not, coercive and manipulative or free and respectful of human worth, somehow despite the differing answers, some common methodological and strategic denominators are coming to the fore: conscientization and organization.

a) Conscientization. The neologism has become an ordinary term in the vocabulary of social workers and activists within the past ten years or so and is, remarkably enough, used in pretty much a uniform sense everywhere (although motives for using it can be very mixed indeed): the coming to awareness of people of themselves and their life condition, generating a will and a readiness to do something about it on their own. The methodology that it inspires – action – reflection – is a self-discovery, self-help, preeminently participatory way of analyzing problems and working out solutions to them. Understood right, it embodies perfectly the ethic of holism alluded to earlier. For the fact is it is – or at least can be – deeply rooted in the primary value of the dignity of people and the principle of people participation in arriving at decisions for the common good. The inspiring, empowering force of conscientization can be truly tremendous when evolved into real people-power. Thus the necessity of organization.

b) Organization. The mobilization of people to act in concert for the common good is possible the fullest expression of genuine people-power. This cannot be done except through self-organization by a whole
group. The organization can be very rudimentary or sophisticated, transitory or permanent, issue-oriented or faith/ideology-inspired, but whatever its nature as a functioning entity, its strength will depend on how truly participatory it is in its inner make-up and in its execution of common decisions; also on its constant centering on people and their good. The new human world order we are concerned with here, when brought down to its minimal effective working unit, is people at the grass-roots level, mobilized and organized for power: power, that is, not for power’s sake but for people.

**Goals and Objectives.** What we have been speaking about all the while in the discussion of conscientization and organization above is the creation of basic communities of discernment and responsible action. In terms of the vision of full human development, the basic community – people interacting with one another face-to-face – is at the same time the ambience in which development is to take place and the vehicle through which it is to come about. But here we talk of it as an end in itself? We do. And this underlines one curious fact when we view things and act within a holistic framework, to wit, that objectives and goals, strategies and methods, environments and structures, become transfused into a oneness that cannot be disregarded except at the risk of worsening, not bettering, the human condition. The kind of community we aim for is people reasoning and acting together with people, for people, in a mutuality of concerns and interest building themselves up into people. If the formula is too simple, too trite, it is because, it seems to me, we are down to rock-bottom basics: *people*.

**People Power.** The term “people power,” I do not doubt, conjures up in the minds of many some extremely distressing images. It is kin to *subversive* ideas like “the dictatorship of the proletariat, the tyranny of the masses, lay power (in a clerically-dominated Church),” etc. But set within a holistic world vision of people and events, it assumes a meaning that is far from menacing – except to dictators and tyrants themselves. For at base it is no more, no less, than the collective dignity of a people in act. It is a moral force, however one defines it, which when taken seriously has the capability of commanding recognition even from the most entrenched and arbitrary dictators’ and when actively asserted, the power of compelling whole peoples and states to act justly – of causing revolutions too. If the disadvantage of the economically deprives lies in their helplessness, the justice that will restore the balance, destroy their very helplessness, is one that will have to be a direct response to the imperatives of a people’s shared dignity. When we talk of social justice, therefore, we cannot do so without taking into consideration the active exercise of that dignity – the power, innate and God-given, of people simply because they are people. Recognizing that dignity is the first act of justice demanded of all.

**IV. SPIRITUAL VALUES**

A new world order – any utopian dream, any vision of what is to be, any movement for change or reform – will not simply occur, schools of economic and other determinisms notwithstanding. People are the architects of the world they live in and they do not fashion it without some idea of what they want, how they are to achieve what they want, and just as importantly, why they want it and attempt to achieve it in the manner they have chosen. So far we have been talking mainly of the *what* and the *how*, but all the while too we have been attending to the *why* in a way that may seem, to the philosopher who likes things neatly packaged into various genres of causes and effects, to be most imprecise and confusing. It is probably that – and worse. But when one deals with human and social facts – and deals with them holistically – the most realistic approach is to accept the fact of the profound intermeshedness of things and their consequent mutual causalities and move on from there. This, put another way, is the curious fact we noted above of the seeming confusion of means and ends, objectives and goals, strategies and methods, etc. The fact needs stressing because when we talk of the *why* of things – in our present deliberation, values, spiritual and otherwise – we do so conscious of the fact that the *what* (social structures, world orders, etc.) and the *how* (methods, strategies for change, etc.) are never far from considerations of the *why*. It should be worthwhile
then delaying a little on the place of culture, ideology, and faith in this section of the paper. These are the underpinnings, if not the very substance, of the why of human development and the shaping of new orders.

**Culture.** The culture of a people, no matter how “primitive” or “developed” they are thought to be, define for them, often more implicitly than explicitly, their world view and ethos, their norms and goals, their values and ideals, in brief, their special way of being human as a distinct group. True enough, the actual culture of a people will never coincide perfectly with their ideal conception of it, but what is important is that do people do have in their cultural ideals an idea of what they want to be as a people, how they are to be that people, and why: an idea, that is, of what it is to be human according to their own conception of the human. It is this fact that makes it possible to speak of a new global order, of full human development, to all people of the world and expect from them a response that will lead to their realization.

The fact is, the human, however it is defined from culture to culture, from people to people, will necessarily encompass the basic needs of people, and these needs, by their very commonality, provide in their entirety the bases and the framework of the full human development we are concerned with here. How a particular people will respond to those needs – whether to emphasize one over others, whether to satisfy them one way and not another way (the idiosyncrasies of each cultural tradition) – will depend on a great extent on their ethos (the complex of values they cherish) as a people. If we are interested in what it is exactly that makes a people “tick,” we would do well to look into their ethos. For it will say much about the what, the how, and most especially the why of development in their terms.

**Ideology.** Social scientists often speak of the ethos of a people as their ideology – a systematic body of concepts about human life, a manner of thinking characteristic of them as a cultural group. In this sense everyone, by the sheer fact that he is a bearer of a culture, has an ideology. But ideologies as definite theories and programs aimed at bringing about specific political orders – they can be diverse and as many as there are excogitators, even within the same cultural tradition. Some will be more attuned to that tradition, others less so, and still others directly contrary to it. But howsoever conformed or contrary ideologies are to cultural traditions, the strange fact is that great pains will be taken by their proponents to give them a semblance of conformity – a simple fact which tells us plenty about the crucial role cultures play even for deep-dyed ideologues.

The point in bringing up the question of ideology is simply to post the question: Does one have to subscribe to an ideology in order to bring about a new order of things? Or is a cultural ethos sufficient? The question would be academic except for the fact that actual formulas for social structures, both local and international, are heavily ideological in nature. The question is moot. Possibly the real question to ask is: Regardless of ideological considerations, is development taking place in any particular program or scheme? As one South American theologian is reported to have commented in all the hullabaloo about liberation theology at Puebla: “What matters is not whether one holds a liberationists theology or not but whether liberation is actually being achieved.”

**Faith.** For the committed Christian, the values we speak of here will not be only cultural and human values (or ideological for the ideologically inclined), but over and beyond, faith-inspired. I must confess I am a little uneasy when I hear priests and religious talk about a “faith dimension” to human development or political involvement or whatever activist program they are engaged in, perhaps it is only al manner of speaking, but somehow, to my mind at least, the phrase smack too much of a dichotomizing way of thinking about the human event and the faith event, a rather non-biblical way of neatly cutting up life and life events into easily reduced bits and pieces, dimensions and moments. For the fact is values of the spirit – for the Christian the faith that says: “Christ is the Lord, hence I act thus and so” – are not merely dimensions to be superadded to or imposed on already existing (or dreamt about) human structures, but are
– or should be – the very ground and substance, or at least intrinsic parts, of those same human structures, be it political, economic, social, etc. within which he has to work out his and others’ salvation.

The faith is there from the very start. It does not of itself dictate a specific world order, a specific program or ideology for attaining it, but it does enable him to discern and decide, to move and act, towards one which is authentically both human and Christian. We give up too much, I am afraid, when we start with very specific ideological presuppositions and only in afterthought slap on a “faith-dimension” to legitimate or “baptize” them.

**People Spirit.** If values are in truth the well-spring of motivations for any steps taken towards the realizing of people’s vision and dreams, they are of critical importance in any blueprint of people-development. For these values – I do not speak of any or all values but of those that are truly and deeply human (dignity, truth, justice, loyalty, etc.) – comprise that intangible something that makes a people a people, endowing them with a special spirit, a distinct sense of peoplehood, and that is ultimately founded on human dignity itself. Yet a scrutiny of most developmental schemes reveals a depressingly uniform pattern which we can only describe as “development of people without people.” GNP, balance of payments, national security, industrialization, modernization, etc. – these are the prime objectives, the prime values and governments are all too ready to sacrifice whole generations of people to reach their ends. Coercion, manipulation, deception – these become the major methods of development. The sum of all this is a deadening of all that makes for the spirit of a people. A development program that kills that spirit or forces it to metamorphose into a baser form of itself is not human development at all.

* put forth by governments in Third World especially

**CONCLUSION**

There is much more to be said about the subject at hand, but I leave that to our very capable discussants. Let me briefly conclude then with these last few remarks.

First, we have been treating in a rather abstract way about a very concrete task: full human development, the creation of a human world order – that which there should be nothing more concrete. I don’t think any apologies are in order. The treatment is quite deliberate. It would be the easiest thing in the world to illustrate with very concrete examples the main points we have been trying to make above. But what we have articulating in more or less abstract fashion here is hard reality outside the walls of this hall and nothing more need be said.

Secondly, our focus has constantly been on the human, and the human is people. Hence our stress on human dignity and all that goes with that dignity – participation, responsibility, justice, rights, values; not merely on material life and all that goes with it too – the meeting of basic needs, the production of goods to meet those needs, etc. Not that these are not important. They are. But if we seem to be stressing the intangibles of life excessively here, it is not simply to counteract their utter neglect in other approaches to development and the corresponding undue emphasis placed on tangibles: as we have repeated an nauseam, in an holistic perspective, both the material and non-material aspects of the human intermesh in a way that does not allow for their easy reduction to lifeless bits and pieces. But it is also to point up the fact that the intermeshing notwithstanding, the things of the spirit are what gives the human its unique character, and full human development is not possible without them – an elemental fact that is not always elemental to technocratic planners.

And lastly, our stress on the human and on people seems to carry with it an overly idealistic and thus extremely naive view of man and his works, an unwarrantedly optimistic acceptance of his native nobility
and goodness. Not really. And this is the reason we make much of the mere possibility of people becoming more human. Implied in this stress is a rather negative judgment: we – people in general – still do not know how to be human, really human. Because if we did, this conference would be quite superfluous – or since we like to create problems even where there are none, it would be addressed to quite different problems.
I. **THE ASIAN BACKGROUND**

I shall add only a few general ideas to what you have already surfaced in your reports from the visits to different Asian countries and the workshops.

The overall historical background of our Asian countries is one of long centuries of feudalism and absolutism. We have had a culture and institution of local self-government and village self-reliance. However, absolute rule by kings and emperors has been the normal social structure in the countries. In fact, political democracy is of recent historical origin in all parts of the world. Hence we find that elements of feudalism persist beyond the colonial era. Our problems did not originate or terminate with colonial rule. After some short years of democratic experiments, may Asian countries are going back to authoritarian rule in this post-colonial era. Most Asian countries of the North and the West have never known anything else except absolute rule, however benign some rulers may have been.

A. **THE SOCIALIST HALF OF ASIA**

China, Vietnam, Laos, Kampuchea, Mongolia, North Korea and the Asian part of the Soviet Union have Marxist regimes. Afghanistan is now more or less in this bloc under the umbrella of the U.S.S.R. These socialist countries are now divided among themselves and present some of the important points of international conflict in Asia.

**Vietnam** is remarkable for its dogged resistance to the Western powers for 30 years. But now the whole Indo-China area is in turmoil with grave internal and external problems.

**China** is the outstanding example of an Asian country that has pulled itself up by its own efforts. It has gone through nearly 30 years of self-reliant policy. It has carried through a radical revolution under Mao Tse Tung with approaches more related to the Asian reality. The organization of the Communes, the health and educational policies, its attitude towards technology and urbanization provide an alternative approach towards development. The Chinese revolution was based on the priority of the needs of the masses, rather than the building up of an elite as in the free enterprise countries of Asia.

China has shown the world that it can look after its fifth of the human race without foreign aid. It has full employment and the people have enough to eat. The simplicity of food, clothing, housing and transportation has helped evolve this type of social system. It has above all a different value system or regarding human beings as more important than profit.

Today China is opening itself to the rest of the world in trade and economic life. Its foreign policy stems more concerned with its own self interests than the promotion of ideological unity among the Marxist bloc. Its recent invasion of Vietnam “to teach it a lesson” has led to many being disenchanted with its foreign policy. How China will evolve in the future, we cannot foresee. But its achievements since 1949 are so outstanding that they merit the attention of all concerned with development: Liberation from having to subsidize other countries was the beginning of China’s own economic self-reliance and cultural revival.
B. WEST ASIA

While the socialist countries of North Asia have shown the Marxist revolutionary way to change their societies, the OPEC countries of West Asia have demonstrated the power of organized economic pressure. The oil exporting countries of the Middle East are now quite rich due to their dramatic increase of oil prices after 1973. Several billions of dollars flow to them now in return for oil. Their overall wealth has increased phenomenally during the past five years. This is a growth unprecedented in history. It shows how important raw materials are in world trade and what can be done by a change in the terms of trade. Now hundreds of thousands of workers are migrating temporarily to these countries due to their development plans and shortage of skilled labour.

These countries are neither democratic nor genuinely socialistic. Power is controlled by the ruling families or cliques. The recent events in Iran show how unjust rich regimes can be. The Shah used the fabulous income from oil in a way that did not benefit the poor millions of Iran. The uprising against him was led by Ayatollah Khoemini and the Islamic Mullahs. In this we can see the radical dimension of Islam. The Iranian upsurge was basically an expression of the people’s moral indignation at the Shah’s waste and absolutism. Asian religions can thus be important motivators of social change. Iran is however far from reaching political or economic stability. West Asia is likely to be a trouble spot in the coming years due to oil, the big power interests in the region and the presence of Israel within this Arab region.

C. FREE ENTERPRISE ASIA

A third group of countries are those open to the free enterprise market economy in South Asia and the Far East. These have had neither internal Marxist revolutions nor the economic power to carry through OPEC type price changes in trade. They are open to the capitalist economies of the West and Japan.

Among the Free Enterprise countries of Asia we can distinguish those which are clearly capitalistic and those which are still trying to make an option between capitalistic and socialist democratic policies.

The ASEAN countries. Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the Philippines are definitely geared towards a capitalistic socio-economic policy are also Taiwan, South Korea and the last colonial outport of Asia, Hong Kong.

In these countries the values and structures of free enterprise capitalism have been entrenched by the present rulers. They are open to foreign investment with generous incentives for profit repatriation. They have become an economic appendage of the Trilateral alliance of the North American Western Europe and Japan. Their economies are geared towards export promotion, encouragement of tourism and free trade zones. There is little effort at a just redistribution of wealth within the countries. The governments are militarily linked among themselves and with the Trilateral alliance. Australia and New Zealand also belong to this group.

Due to the discontent of the people, there are strong repressive measures against any effort to bring about changes in the main socio-economic orientation. The mass media are effectively controlled by the States or the power of capital. The workers movements are held in check. Students are not permitted to engage in political activities. The ideology of “national security” is invoked to prevent any dislocation of the production effort or political regime. The elite dominate rather ostentatiously; the big multi-nationals have a very favourable ground for investment and profits. Tourism, prostitution, advertising and the pleasure provisions tend to dehumanize women very much. This is a sharp contrast to the traditional values of these countries. Hard work and discipline are emphasized. Political prisoners are non-existent in some of them, and virtually in-effective in some others.
Taiwan is virtually isolated in diplomatic relation, though it trades with most countries of the free enterprise world.

The Indian Sub-Continent. India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have had a fairly long experience of the processes of democracy. In India and Sri Lanka governments have been changed by peaceful means. These countries have also had some respect for the socialistic trends. India and Sri Lanka have been forerunners of the search for a non-aligned foreign policy, not opting to side fully with one or other of the big power blocs. These have had some concern for social services and reducing inequality. But in recent years the democratic system has been under severe strain in all these countries. India and Sri Lanka have so far maintained many of the aspects of political democracy. Sri Lanka is going on a more clearly capitalistic line since the change of government in July 1977.

The influence of the Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic religions is also predominant in this region of Asia. Islam is more closely associated with public policy in Pakistan and Bangladesh, India has set out to be a secular State, while in Sri Lanka Buddhism has the place of honour while all religions are guaranteed their rights.

In these countries too the capitalistic approaches have tended to get rather consolidated during the past few years, in spite of the policy statements in favour of socialism and a limited measure of social reform. India is emerging to be an industrial giant with some multi-national firms of her own. The masses of the Sub-Continent however remain extremely poor and subject to the vagaries of nature and of national and international economic relations.

Burma is an exception to all categorization. Burma has tried to evolve a pattern of self reliance based on a Burmese Buddhist Socialist Programme under General Ne Win. Here too, democratic rights are rather restricted. Foreign enterprise has been long prohibited. The country is only gradually opening to the rest of the world. There is great poverty among the masses and the economy is far from being prosperous.

Nepal is a kingdom which is only gradually opening itself to the modern world and to the democratic processes.

Japan and Israel are economically more advanced countries. Japan is a global economic giant. Its multinational companies exercise economic powers in the whole region and in other parts of the world. Japan has shown another Asian way to rapid development. It delinked itself from the rest of the world and developed its technological skills and capacity by learning from the West. Today Japan is a prominent member of the club of very rich nations. Yet it is quite dependent on the import of raw materials from other countries, and on their markets for the sale of its products.

Israel developed rapidly both due to the dogged determination of its people and the exceptional support of the Western countries, especially the United States. With a messianic sense of destiny the Jewish people have made the desert bloom, armed to the teeth they are more than holding their own in a most trying situation.

II. LOCAL EXPLOITATION IN ASIA

Here I would like to stress more the economic relationships.

The Asian Village
The village is the most important social reality in Asia. About 70 – 80 percent of the people of Asia live in the villages. In the villages power belongs to the landowners, traders, transport agents, money lenders, government officials, police, teachers, and religious leaders. These form the establishment of the village. They control economic, political, social and cultural power. They are often interrelated. These are partly from the traditional leadership and partly from the newly emergent elite. Each village has its own social structures.

The majority of the people are poor agricultural workers, without land ownership and small craftsmen. They are at the bottom 75 – 85 percent of our villages. Population increase, fragmentation, rise of prices of fertilizers and neglect by the governments worsen their lot. It is the poor workers in the village who contribute to make the landlords and other elite rich in the village. They have done so for generations upon generations, living at the bare margin of subsistence. The relative incomes in the village are such that the poor cannot save. Many are perpetually in debt.

The rich farmers, traders, moneylenders get more than a proportionate share of the rural output. This is the extent of the exploitation in the village. The village elite is in closer contact with the ruling powers in the cities or districts. They support each other in keeping the other villages poor. Development action at this level requires a structural transformation so that the wealth generated by the villagers remains for their benefit. Unfortunately this is denied to them by the village elite, the urban elite and the rich companies that control the trade in the products of the villages such as rice, sugar, fruits, coconut, rubber, jute, etc. The problems of the international trade in commodities thus affect the villages very adversely. At the village level the power of the local elite expresses itself both legally and extra legally such as through huggery.

In this connection it is useful to see why the change in China after the revolution were so concerned about the restructuration of the villages into more collectivist communes.

**The Plantations** are increasingly important in Asia. Not being urban they are within the village set up. But they are organized into more efficient production units, specially to provide commodities for export: e.g. rubber, tea, sugar, coconut and bananas. Big multinational and landlords living in urban areas dominate the large plantations. The workers, sometimes migrant labour, have been long exploited in the plantations, while the big companies gather in huge profits. The processing of these raw materials is done mainly in the rich countries through the multinationals.

**In the Cities** the larger industries are concentrated in the cities, which draw migrant workers from the villages. While industry is developing in the Asian regions, the wages of the workers are kept low. Trade unions are more and more repressed. Some of the worst conditions of human living in the world are found in and around the big cities of Asia. A little distance from the beautiful city centres and main roads are the appalling slums and shanties where 40 percent of the urban population live. The cities are the hub of the global exploitative system. They organize the control of the countryside in function of the requirements of the rich MNC’s.
At the National Level. When we add together the villages, plantations and cities, we get an idea of the social system in our free enterprise countries of Asia. The nations too generally represent a pyramidal structure with an even greater gap between the rich and the poor than in the villages.

The same type of elite exists as in the village but with more wealth and power, viz:

- landowners and industrialists
- big traders and commercial agencies
- banks and financial houses
- transportation agents, by land, air and sea
- the bureaucracy and political leaders
- police and military
- intellectual and mass media elite
- the nation’s religious leaders

These are generally linked together in their common interests even if they are ostensibly belonging to different political groupings.

At the national levels the Asian elite dominate every major sector of life. The rural and urban elite are generally linked together by intermarriage, business or political ties.

Most of the national planning in the free enterprise countries is done by the elite, with the priorities of the elite. Thus city centres are adorned with people not in urban slums. Private cars increase, whereas public transport deteriorates specially in the hinterland. The education system favours the elite and perpetuates their privileges. They influence deeply the value system in our countries.

We can take the Philippines coconut industry as an example of this local and global economic exploitation.
NUMBER OF COCONUT FARMERS BY TYPE – 1976

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF FARMERS</th>
<th>NUMBER OF FARMERS</th>
<th>TOTAL POPULATION</th>
<th>PERCENT OF TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Owner-Farmer</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>350,000</td>
<td>3.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td>3,500,000</td>
<td>32.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm workers</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>7,000,000</td>
<td>64.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>1,550,000</td>
<td>10,850,000</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Assuming seven persons per household.


The author estimates that there are at present some 1.55 million coconut farmers, representing a population of close to 11 million or 25 percent of the country’s population. Only about 50,000 or more than 3 percent are owner-farmers. The farm workers are the most numerous, numbering one million or about 65 percent. The tenants are about 500,000 or 32 percent. The tenants and farm workers together comprise 96 percent of the total number of coconut workers.

DISTRIBUTION OF COCONUT INDUSTRY INCOME – 1971

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Percent Share in Industry Income</th>
<th>Percent of Industry Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXPORTERS AND OIL MILLERS</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRADERS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town Dealers</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barrio Buyers</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FARM SECTOR</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landowners</td>
<td>44.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overseers</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>24.6</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on 1971 F.O.B. export price of copra (Philippine Port) of PhP65.00 per 100 kilos.


The Asian elite, though about 10-15 per cent of our countries represent a substantial population, a pool of technical competence and a market for goods. 10 percent of the Indian population is about 60 million i.e., more than the population of any Western European country. They are adequate to create a significant demand for many luxury items. The country can give the impression of much development even though about 400 million are poor and 200 million are absolute and even relatively off than 10 or 15 years ago. Hence we must not be deceived by the illusion of affluence seen in many Asian capitals. These are the First World areas in our Third World countries.

The exploitation of the workers and farm labourers continues at the national level. It we take any commodity we see how a few exporters or distributors obtain the lions share of the value of any output. Thus in the coconut industry in the Philippines there are about 1.5 million farm workers and 50,000 owner farmers. But 31 millers, 8 dessicators and 9 exporters control the processing and export markets. (cf. data
from Virgilio David). These exporters are big multinationals or companies linked to them. While the labourers live at the margin of subsistence, the company owners are millionaires.

At the national level too, there is a close linkage between economic, power and political rulers. Most rulers are extremely wealthy people. If a politician is poor when he rises up the ladder of power, he soon acquires wealth. Many keep their ill gotten riches in foreign banks, as the Shah of Iran and the late Haile Selassie of Ethiopia did. The legal system helps the rich, while the poor are often harassed by the agencies of law and order.

The social values favour the elite. Status goes with wealth and power. The mass media are generally controlled by a few families and companies. Consumerism is encouraged by the media and advertising. We can see here how much Coca Cola and Pepsi are advertised in the whole of the Philippines.

In many of our countries the rulers are military men, or closely linked to them. Increasingly the military are gaining the upper hand in the exercise of power. Along with them are the intellectual elite and the technocrats. Thus capitalism is being established in an efficient and strong manner in these Asian countries. Martial Law and emergency rule are becoming the ordinary form of rule in many countries. Political prisoners are detained by the thousands, often for years, without trial. Political executions and disappearance of persons are also not uncommon in our region.

Thus post colonial Asia has been largely plunged under new dictatorships of one form or other, of one ideology or other. Absolutism is being reestablished, mainly for the benefit of the privileged elite. The masses are marginalized and hardly given any right of participating in decision making. An export-oriented elitist pattern of development is being foisted on them. Political stability is maintained by arbitrary rule in the name of national security.

The religious too largely acquiesce in this situation. But in certain countries the religious represent a force of moral contestation. Small groups everywhere inspired by the culture and religions of the people, question the values of this pattern of development.

While the repression grows, there is also armed contestation of governments in many areas as in the Philippines, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia, Iran. Etc. Some of these are Marxist-oriented. Some seek redress of grievances of national minorities as the Kurds in Iraq and Iran, the Karens in Burma and the Moros in Mindanao.

III. AT THE WORLD LEVEL

Conditions in the rest of the so-called Third World are somewhat similar to what we have just described. The power structure that we found in the villager and at the national level continues into the international scene. The rate of profit and exploitation grows as we go up the echelon from village to the global level. The big multinational companies control large sectors of the world economy. The coconut industry is controlled by a few big companies such as Unilever and Procter and Gamble. Unilever has interests in other related fields like palm olive, soaps. Detergents, etc. It is estimated that about 2/3 of humanity but the products of Unilever.

The producers of the raw materials get only a small portion of the value of their products in the international market. Out of about $230 billion worth of commodities traded in the world only about $30 billion goes to the Third world producers. The balance is raked in by those who control the processing and marketing, including shipping and insurance. This is a further stage of the exploitation of the Asian and Third World poor in the world.
At the international level too we find the power elite of:

Big multinational corporations controlling
- raw materials and landownership, e.g., rubber in Malaysia, Banana Republic
- processing and manufacturing; technology
- banking and finance: IMF, World Bank, private capital
- trade between countries
- shipping and air transport, insurance
- the highway complex of motor cars, tyres, roads
- the armaments trade
- the mass media including the world’s few new agencies

A great ideal of world trade is between the MNC’s and often between subsidiaries of the same MNC’s. The universities and intellectual elite are also often at the service of big companies who control their purse strings. Thus research and development largely help the already rich.

At the world level, there is a linkage of the local elites, the MNC’s and the rich countries. Even the rich socialist countries are interested in gaining advantages from the unequal terms of trade that exist today. Their nation’s trading agencies deal with the poor countries more of less in the same way as the MNC’s of the capitalist world. At UNCTAD V we seen how the western countries, Japan and the rich socialist countries are together in refusing to accede to the demands of the poor countries.

The poor countries (group of 7) are asking for a fundamental report of the world economic structures in precisely these areas: viz.,

- Trade relations: the terms of trade between their exports and imports.
- In international division of labour so that the Third World can process their raw materials and increase their manufactures, and access to the world’s markets.
- The monetary system be reformed to prevent destabilization of the rates of exchange, inflation and loss of incomes.
- That finance be available to them on easier terms. That a debt commission be set up on an international basis to help them.
- Shipping be more in their hands.
- There be greater collective self-reliance among Third World countries in trade, in technology, and industrial growth
- Trade between them and socialist countries be developed.

These indicate how there is a many-tiered system of exploitation under girding the economic relations within the free enterprise countries from the village to the city, to the nation and the world level. At each stage it is the poor who subsidize the rich. The poor grow relatively poorer. The rich grow richer. The gap between them grows, even if some of the poor are becoming slightly richer. The debt of the poor countries kept mounting due to their increasing trade deficits, repatriation of profits from investments, payment for transfer of technology and the debt servicing itself.

![Diagram](image)

A fundamental reason for this growth imbalance is the unfair trade relations at the world level (as within nations). The workers in poor countries are paid less for their work than those in rich countries. They can produce less due to their capital and technology being poorer. So there is a vicious circle of the poor becoming poorer. The Third world supplies cheap labour, and cheap raw materials to the rich countries. They are also markets for the industries of the rich powers, the brain drain from the poor to the rich nations is another form of subsidy to the rich.

There is thus a continuing poverty of the masses of the poor countries even though the elites of these countries grow richer. These elites are being incorporated into the exploitative world system. They in turn help maintain the poor countries in a dependent position in relation to the rich free enterprise (and socialist) countries. The conflict of interests is no longer between the East and West of Europe, as between the rich of the North and the poor of the South in the world. The local elites of the poor countries are not effective bargainers with the rich countries as they themselves co-opted into the overall system.

At the world level the governments of countries are linked together mainly according to their economic interests. Many Asian governments are beholden to the western powers and thus subject to their pressures. The poor of the Third World are therefore at the receiving end of a worldwide system of exploitation. They have to give an “extorted aid” to the rich of their countries and the rich countries. But they are made to feel receivers of aid – thanks to the cultural domination by the powerful and the whole semantics of development literature.

IV. THE WORLD SYSTEM
There is a social structure or system at different levels: the village, national and global. A system is a linkage of interrelated parts making a whole.

We can speak of a world system within which Asia exists. We are all within one global physical system of oceans, atmosphere, weather and lands. The world’s physical system provides humanity with a limited quantity of land, sea, air and other natural resources. Human beings have built a system of relationships in the use and disposal of nature’s resources.

The world system is the actual way of allocating these resources among the peoples of the world. To it belongs the organization of nations, states, as well as the world’s heritage of technology and culture. We must try to understand the genesis and operation of this world system. If we do not undertake such a systemic analysis we may fail to diagnose the deeper causes of our problems. We can easily be doing some problems. We can easily be doing some good deeds but adding to the evil in the system – as when we run elitist schools which increase inequality by adding to the privilege of the affluent. We can easily be good persons doing good things but (unconsciously) adding to the sum of human misery by being accomplices in an overall evil system.

In the world system the motive forces are largely profit and power, personal or national. Hence it does not necessarily operate for the good of all.

**Origins of the World System.** There is a tendency to view the present world structure as if they started after the 2nd World War in 1945. this is true to a limited extent. But the overall lineaments of the present nation states came into being in the period 1500 to the mid-twentieth century thanks to their lecturological and military superiority at the time the European peoples captured all the available land spaces on the earth. Western Europe occupies North and South America, Australia and New Zealand and parts of Southern Africa. They made colonies of most of the other countries. Russia under the Czars advanced eastwards to the Pacific.

During 450 years from 1500 – 1945 these powers extracted enormous wealth from the colonies: including gold and raw materials. They de-industrialized the more developed countries like India. They destroyed whole peoples and civilizations. By skill, hard work and pillage they built up their capital as well as their economic might. They subordinated the economy and culture of the rest of the world to their needs. Thus we have the underdevelopment of the poor countries and their being made dependent on the rich industrialized countries.

After the political decolonization of Asia, Africa and Latin America their economic dependence on the West continued. The main land base of the present nation states was determined by that wave of European expansion. Hence today about 50 per cent of the world’s population are contained in the countries of Asia between Pakistan and Taiwan. But they have a limited land space compared to the enormous areas of North and South America or Australia and New Zealand. These are still open to the peoples of Europe. The Asian base of raw materials for development is limited by this factor as can be seen tragically in the case of Bangladesh. Hence also the keenness of western powers to control the populations of Third World countries. In a certain sense we can say that the vast land areas of Brazil, USSR, US, Canada and Australia are underdeveloped, as human beings have not yet been settled in them. This another way of understanding the problems of human development. Unfortunately while the rich countries control so much land, they try to get control of the raw materials of poor countries. This multinational companies which are the successors of their former colonizing companies like the British and Dutch East India companies, control large shares of the resources of Asia, Africa and Latin America.
In any assessment of the world situation we have to remember this origin of the present world system. It was based on superior power and force and has no necessary moral sanction behind it. A fundamental restructuring of the world in the long term will have to face the issue of population and land. But as yet the poor countries cannot even raise it. I feel the clash between China and the USSR is very much a nationalistic conflict around a common land frontier. The USSR seems unable to develop the enormous resources of Siberia. It is frightened of Chinese expansion. China on the other hand has historical claims to some of these areas. Even the conflict in the Indo-China areas is partly one of population pressure in the region. The world’s migration laws do not provide for a national adjustment of land to population. At present the brain drain, the migrant labour and the movement of refugees are the only ways in which some slight adjustment is taking place.

This whole world system is now in grave crisis. While the poor countries have always suffered form it, now the rich countries are also very much affected by the imbalances in the system. Inflation, economic recession and large scale unemployment have plagued the Western capitalist countries during the second half of the 1970’s. nor is there a solution in sight. It would seem that the world free enterprise system is unable to correct the imbalances. For the rich countries can produce goods, but the poor countries do not have the means to buy them. Hence there is excess capacity in the rich countries. The MNC’s tend to move their production bases to poor countries causing unemployment in their rich countries. The debts of the poor countries are increasing. The exploitation of the Third World poor is having a boomerang effect on the rich countries themselves. The western world tries to keep control over its resources, capital, technology and markets. This is in itself a bloc on the increase in demand among the poor countries. The free market economies are struggling to resolve this crisis seeking solutions in protectionism, monetary reform, aid, transfer of technology, etc., meanwhile the gap between rich and poor keep growing.

V. CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

We are at an important turning point in human history characterized by:

1. A confluence of major revolutionary trends in science and technology as well as in human consciousness. Communications have unified humanity. A sexual revolution is rapidly transforming interpersonal relations.
2. An awakening of the oppressed peoples of the world to a sense of their historical destiny as equal members of the human race.
3. And consequently a thrust at transforming the relationships and structures within nations and in the world at large in spite of the opposition of those in power.

Let us go back briefly in human history to understand how the Church has related to such circumstances. The early Church converted the Roman Empire after two to three centuries of unremitting effort. By the 4th century A.D. the Roman Empire was under attack from a more powerful force that had military superiority over the Romans. The races coming from the East through the North of Europe conquered and settled down in the lands of the Roman Empire. To the Romans they seemed to be “barbarians.” There was a disastrous decline in civilization. Over the centuries the Church participated in the task of educating these people – as it were of civilizing the Barbarians. Thereafter a new type of feudal society developed in Europe.

During the middle ages European Christianity attuned itself to feudalism. The flourishing theology in the later middle ages included a Christian thinking that was concerned with social justice within the framework of feudalism. Feudal society was not egalitarian, but it had significant aspects of a communitarian approach to society. The care of all the people was the concern of the feudal community. In theology there were the concepts of just wages, and fair prices. Usury was considered unjust. Economic life was subordinated to ethical considerations. Property had primarily social function for the common good. The rulers were also
considered to be under the judgment of justice. As St. Augustine said, after Cicero, “what are kingdoms without justice but … mere robberies.” St. Thomas Aquinas had a treatise on just government: De Regimina Principum.”

In a sense medieval society had a sort of socialistic approach within a feudal structure. But with the advent of the modern era we see a major change in world history and Christian thought. The emerging nation states, the growth of mercantilism and later industrial capitalism and the reformation saw to the relegation of religion and ethics to a secondary place in social life. Machiavellian political thought and the principle of profit maximization in economic life came to dominate Western European society. The Church too was influenced by these trends.

*Colonialism* had a further impact on the Church’s action and thinking. Europeans went to all the continents conquering lands and peoples. The Churches rationalized this, linking it with the spread of the gospel of Christ and the salvation of souls. Thus there was a sad betrayal of the main tenets of the teaching of Jesus by the Christians. Large scale pillage of peoples was not seen as sinful. The Christian theology of justice became mere individualistic and moralistic with an accent of sexual matters. Theology adjusted itself implicitly to colonialism, capitalism and the market economy. The inter-Christian conflicts occupied much of the energy of Church personnel.

This sort of thinking and practice continued right down to the first half of the twentieth century. Christian life was profoundly vitiated by the centuries of collusion with colonialism and capitalism. The Christians were not open to see the evil in this systematic plunder of other peoples. Even within Europe the working class was de-Christianized due to the Church’s alliance with capitalism. As Pope Pius XI remarked the loss of the working class to the Church was the great scandal of the 19th century. Christians were proud and disrespectful in their attitude towards other religions and nonwestern cultures.

The Church did not easily understand the forces of change in the world. It took nearly a century to come to terms with some of the value of the French Revolution. It did not understand the significance of the Russian Revolution of 1917. It was only in the 1940’s and 1950’s that European thinkers became more aware of some of the finer dimensions of the Gospel, such as communitarian sharing and authority as service.

The Second Vatican Council 1962 – 1965 helped immensely to bring the Church up to date in many aspects. It brought in an element of openness and dialogue to the Church. It made for greater freedom and communion within the Church. The Vatican I doctrine of Papal supremacy was tempered with the concept of collegiality of the episcopate. It recognized much that was good in the movements of secular society.

The Second Vatican Council was very much a *European Council*. It was prepared by the European theologians and dealt with problems that concerned mainly Europeans. This is to the credit of the Europeans that they had prepared the subject matter of discussion through years of research and even contestation in the Church. It is only in the last year or two that the North American and Latin American episcopacies became more active in the Council.

The Asian and African bishops were hardly aware of their identity as representing the peoples of the exploited Third World. It was only at the Council itself that many of them became aware of the new trends in theology in Europe and later North and South America. Hence the problems which directly concerned Asia, Africa and Latin America hardly came up for decision at the Council. The issue of relations with other religions was dealt with briefly almost as an appendix to other discussions. The problems of Capitalism, Colonialism, Underdevelopment were not adequately discussed; much less was there a concern with understanding Socialism and the Chinese revolution or the need of restructuring the world economy and society.
Vatican II was also very much a Council of the Bishops for the Bishops. In the decrees of the Council the decision making powers pass very substantially from the Holy See to the conferences of Bishops and individual bishops. There is not much of a thrust in the direction of effective sharing of decision making with the rank and file of the Christian people. This growth in collegiality in relation to the rest of the Christian community may have to avail future developments.

After 1965 there has been a further progress in Christian thinking in the Encyclicals of Pope Paul VI “Populorum Progressio,” “Octagesima Adveniens,” the Bishops Synod of 1971 and in the thinking of the present Pope John Paul II. The experience of Christian social interest has developed in many ways and in all the continents of the world. Christian groups are now becoming increasingly concerned with justice and the transformation of social structures and values.

However we can hardly say that this development is adequate. In large measure the progress of the Church bodies comes after the other secular agencies have moved ahead. It is other bodies and force that have become the principal thrust of the humanization of our society. Questions of human rights, food, control of technology, sharing of wealth, decolonization, care of the environment, dignity and rights of women workers and of children, limitation of armaments, peaceful co-existence, freedom of the press, the new international economic order, control of multinational corporations, the sea bed, etc., have all been evolved by humanity without much of a theological and practical impact from the church. These are areas to which a great deal of attention needs to be given by the Church.

*Opportunity for the Church.* If we are not to be satisfied with merely following events, but wish to be in the vanguard of the movement towards a new humanity, the Church must take stock of the present situation in the village, the countries and in the world as a whole. We must be able to visualize the fundamental transformation in mentalities, life styles and structures that are required in order to have justice in the world. We must hear the cry of the poor and the oppressed specially in Asia, Africa and Latin America. We must think boldly of the type of global, national and local societies that are called for in this situation.

Even the New International Economic Order that the United Nations has envisioned in principle is inadequate to satisfy humanity’s needs. The Churches have to carry the reflection and action further towards civilized our technological age. We must articulate how there can be effective sharing of wealth and incomes and participation by peoples in the process of human development within country’s and in the world.

In this task we can find guidelines in the scriptures, specially in the teaching of Jesus. His prayers was “My Kingdom come on Earth as in Heaven. . . give us today our daily break.” Today food will not be available to the world’s hungry millions unless there is political action for sharing. Much of the world’s food is controlled by the world’s rich companies and disposed of for profit or power and not according to need. The Lord’s prayer and command therefore demands effective national and international action by believers. The vision of the Kingdom of God to be realized on Earth can be the starting point and motivation of the Church’s endeavours for humanizing our brutal world.

The world system of exploitation that has been built up over five centuries has to be radically transformed in a rapid and peaceful manner if there is to a meaningful human existence in the coming decades. There are some minimal structures for international negotiation today. The principal obstacles to be restructuring of the world on just lives are the so called “Christian” countries of the West. They are the world Establishment along with Japan and the rich socialist countries. Their government say is that their peoples do not support changes demanded by the poor of the world. The Church can have a major influence in creating the “political will” for such changes in both the rich and the poor countries.
Therefore in addition to the vision of a just society we must develop strategies for helping to bring about such difficult but urgently needed changes. We must give attention to developing ways and means of opposing and overcoming the SIN of injustice in the present exploitative national and world systems. This may well be one of the main challenges for the Church in the 1980’s.

VI. A MISSION FOR BISHOPS

Among the document of this conference is FABC Papers No. 6, containing my talk to bishops at BISA III in December 1975 on “Strategies of Action for Justice.” I would like to share with you a few thoughts on the mission of the bishops at the international level in the coming years.

This Conference is exceptional in that there are bishops from Asia, Oceania, the Pacific, Europe and North America. We can therefore reflect more globally about the collegial response and responsibilities of bishops. This may be a special phase of BISA V meeting here in the Philippines at the same time as the international community is grappling with issues of development at UNCTAD V in Manila.

In the Christian endeavour for the humanization of our societies, the bishops have a pivotal role. They are the leaders of the Church communities. They are also accepted as spiritual leaders in most countries of the world. They have thus a very special moral power. In a world in which the poor and oppressed are voiceless and powerless, the bishops can be their genuine shepherds and brothers. The good shepherd gives his life for his sheep.

You have a special moral power also because you are over 200 bishops spread throughout the world. About 300,000 priests, over a million religious and innumerable groups of lay people follow your lead. You belong even humanly speaking to one of the world’s best organized communities. Your followers are present both in the centres of power and in the remotest villages of the world. You have access to means of communication that are rare in today’s world. The governments, respect you, even when they are authoritarian they do not easily touch a bishop, much less a united hierarchy. What a tremendous grace it is for the poor if the bishops of the world place themselves firmly on the side of justice and sharing.

It would seem that Episcopal collegiality today needs to be thought of in terms of greater communication across national frontiers and continents. Then the bishops will be able to make a better contribution to the guidance of the whole Church through the Church’s universal congregations and Synods. Since most of the word’s problems are now both local and global, such sharing of experiences is essential. This would require a consultation with both grassroot groups and technically competent persons. The bishops being in contact with village groups and having linked nationally and internationally can be the great help to overcoming an evil that is also linked from village to world.

In the face of the vast human transformations needed or taking place today Christian theology has to evolve both in terms of the experience of the masses of the people, and the exigencies of dialogue and interaction with people of diverse religions, cultures and ideologies. All these can be understood as an enriching dimension of Episcopal collegiality. The linkage of the bishops can truly be a transcontinental alliance for human development and liberation. At a time when authoritarian regimes ride rough shod over human rights, this alliance can truly be a sign of hope to those who are victims of such oppression.

The Christian vocation is inextricably linked to the cross. The bishops of the early Church were mostly martyrs. Today the roads to Calvary are numerous and diverse. A bishop or a hierarchy that opts for justice and integral human development will inevitably face the cross of opposition and criticism. But in an unjust
world can we be followers of Christ without provoking the ire of the beneficiaries of the evil system? Is not suffering the authentication of fidelity to the master?

If we genuinely stand for the gospel values of love and sharing, our mission of preaching the gospel would be fulfilled thereby. If the bishops of the world determinedly struggle for the radical transformation of mentalities, relationships and structures at both local and global levels using all the means at their disposal and in collaboration of all others working for similar causes, the future of humanity in the 1980’s is mostly likely to be better and the Kingdom of God more freely realized here on Earth.

After thousands of years of oppression the peoples of Asia are at last awakening to a sense of their rights and destiny. They wish to remake the world in such a way that the men, women and children of Asia also can live on this Earth as free persons with opportunities for full human development. We hope that the bishops of Asia and the world will understand these elemental movements of history and play their part in helping evolve a more human world in the coming two decades.
OUR SEARCH: SEEK FIRST HIS KINGDOM AND ITS JUSTICE

Fr. Samuel Rayan, SJ

1. INTRODUCTION

a. Pre-supposed in this reflection is a general awareness of the Asian reality gained from the exposure program and from analysis of this experience

b. Theological reflection brings faith and life together, face to face with each other so that they may listen to each other, question each other, and challenge, illumine, interpret, re-interpret and serve each other. They can do this because both come from God, both are his word to us, and his gracious gifts.

Faith is our shared commitment to God in Christ in the historical movement of people; it is our commitment to people whom God loves and summons to strive for every fully humanity; it is commitment to God’s earth with all its needs and possibilities and the finer shape and quality it is capable of.

Life is the historical moments in which we live with its economic, political, socio-cultural and religious systems, and with its contradictions, fears and hopes as it struggles and moves into the future. It is our shared and interlocked human existence.

2. OUR SEARCH

The Kingdom of God is what we, with all Christians and believers, seek. The Kingdom is what Jesus represented. He embodied it in himself, expressed it in his person, proclaimed it and lived it. He made it the core of his mission and challenged us to seek it above all else (Mt. 6:33). He taught us to pray for it and to make it our best wishes for our earth: “This is how you are to pray”, said Jesus; “Our Father in Heaven, … your Kingdom come, your will be done, on earth…” (Mt. 6:9-10)

The Kingdom is a gift coming from God. It approaches us and remains in us and among us, growing like a mustard tree, and transforming reality as yeast transforms dough. We can come across it as one comes across a hidden treasure, or find it at the end of a search as a pearl merchant finds the finest of pearls. (Mt. 13). In OT times and lands a king was one entrusted with the task of securing justice for all, especially for the weak, and of protecting the country against aggression and the poor from oppression by the powerful.

Yahweh was king because he had intervened on behalf of the Hebrews, liberating them from Egypt, giving them a land of their own and securing their freedom. The NT has retained these elements, but within a larger and finer perspective. In the NT the Kingdom is God’s unconditional love for and acceptance of the world and humankind. Unconditional: independent of and prior to observance of any law. Love: making possible a new style of human existence on earth. The Kingdom, then, is an activity of God, something he does, on behalf of humankind, his Rule, his Reign over the world.

The Reign of God comes to our earth, becomes a reality of history, and a present experience of people. “Your Kingdom come one earth”. It becomes a process enmeshed in the process of the history we are building through the decisions we make and the relationships we forge with nature and with one another.

And that means that the Kingdom, without ever ceasing to be God’s gift, becomes our historical task. Or, it becomes our task precisely because it is God’s gift to his daughters and his sons, free people, enabled to return God’s love and to share among ourselves the unconditional love bestowed on us. All God’s gifts – his gift to us of ourselves and to one another, his gift of life and of the earth – are also tasks we are to fulfill, realities to take charge of, work upon, and lead towards their final freedom and completion.

Believing in the Kingdom, therefore, and proclaiming it implies in particular the practice, the doing and
living, of it as well. In the Lord’s prayer the word about the coming of the Kingdom is immediately paralleled by and transposed into the word about the doing of God’s will on earth. The response to the Kingdom is not crying Lord, Lord, but doing the will of the Father. (Mt. 7:21).

And doing God’s Will will change us. The practice of the Kingdom begins with conversion, with change of life at the personal level as well as at the social, in the structures of the heart no less than in the structure of economics and politics. See Mk. 1:14-15, the proclamation of the Kingdom and the call for change, followed by a series of radical alterations in view points, relationships and value-sets in a compact passage that ends in 3/6 with an anticipated narrative of the death of Jesus, the price he paid for introducing the newness of the Kingdom into the course of history. The Kingdom is the movement of a new creation, the becoming of a new people and the shaping up of the new earth (2Cor. 5:17; Rv. 21:1-5).

Search for the Kingdom therefore includes search for a new society, for new relationships in economic production, in political decision-making, and patterns of priorities and values. It implies action for transformation of the social order.

3. JESUS AND THE KINGDOM

Jesus not only proclaimed the Kingdom but practiced it. He manifested it in himself, and became its Sign, the place where we could encounter it, experience it, enter into it. We would like to see how he lived the Kingdom and serve its causes. The first thing we notice is that he took care to acquire first-hand knowledge of his people and the conditions in which they lived. He toured the whole of Galilee (Mtt. 4:23); he continued his tour of all the towns and villages (Mtt. 9:35); he refused to stay lone in any one place but insisted on moving on to neighboring villages to proclaim the good news there, thus covering the whole of Galilee (Mk. 1:38-39); so he journeyed through towns and villages (Lk. 8:1). In the Fourth Gospel chapter after chapter shows Jesus as being constantly on the move from Judea to Galilee and Galilee to Judea, and passing through Samaria.

Jesus took note of the situation in his country. He grasped the shape of his society. He saw that the crowds, the common masses of the people, were harassed, oppressed and helpless, lying prostrate from exhaustion, like sheep without a shepherd, like sheep neglected by hirelings and left for the wolf to snatch and scatter, like sheep whose shepherds had turned thieves and marauders who steal and slaughter and destroy. The crowds appeared to Jesus like good but neglected harvest to gather which he would have laborers sent out. (Mtt. 9:36-38, Jn. 10:8-13). Jesus knew that the laboring masses were weighed down with many a burden which he longed and planned to lighten so that they could have relief and rest – rest, the symbol of liberation and dignity (Mtt 11:28-30; 23:4 cf. Dt. 5:12-15).

Jesus therefore took the side of the poor, the deprived and the oppressed, he stood by the marginated of society, the publicans, sinners and prostitutes, and habitually moved with them and with the suffering masses. He came to see, that he had been empowered buy the Spirit and sent to bring good news to these, the news of freedom to captives and liberation to the downtrodden (Lk. 4:18-19; Mtt. 11:1-4). His parables were directed to the masses to raise questions, to create awareness, to summon to decision and responsible, participative action. The miracles and exorcisms he performed were acts of liberation from every force that enslaved and diminished people. They were signs of the dismantling of the dominion of Satan and the abolition of all demonic powers. Expressions, all these, of the Kingdom coming into our life and our history.

But if the Kingdom comes it cannot leave the old structures and lifestyles intact. The Gospel of the Kingdom is a New Wine bursting old wineskins and calling for and creating new ones (Mk. 2:18-22). Hence it is we see Jesus setting aside, undermining or demolishing many an established tradition and
institution, be it religious, social or political. A system of religion built on the distinction between the pure and the impure, Jesus rejects (Mk. 7:1-23; Mt. 15:1-20). No human person may be shunned (Mk. 2:13-17; Lk. 7:36-50). The Sabbath law itself, however ancient and central it might be held to be, is for people, is secondary to human needs and conveniences. Jesus tore down in public and liberated the people from the authority of the Pharisees and their teaching (Mt. 15:1-11; 16:6-12; 23:1-36; Mk. 7:5-16). His rejection of the Temple, the central symbol of the Jewish nation as a socio-religious and political reality, is a crowning example of the explosive quality of the good news of the Kingdom (Jn. 2:13-22; 4:19-24; Mk. 11:15-19). The independent political attitude of Jesus is hinted at in his defiance of Herod, that for (Lk. 13:31-35; 23:4-12) and his assertion of his people’s freedom under God’s and the things that are Caesar’s (Mt. 22:15-22; Lk. 23:1-2. See Hosea 2:10-11; Joel 2:18-22; 4:1-5 and other OT passages for the things that are God’s and not Caesar’s.

What Jesus did by way of exorcising, healing, feeding, rejecting the establishments, and building up the masses in a sense of dignity and hope was only meant as the beginnings of a movement his disciples were to carry forward. His actions were symbolic. They were pointers, value index, orientations. While serving as guidelines, they also lay on us the task of practicing the Kingdom with ever deepening and widening effectiveness our concrete situation within the march of history.

4. THE KINGDOM AND THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

It is with and within the experience of Kingdom that we come to “know” God. This is true whether we take the Kingdom as that unconditional love that creates us, or whether we take it as the love that redeems us, be it through Moses, be it in Jesus. Hence as our practice of the Kingdom grows and matures, our knowledge of God becomes deeper and purer; we become more of believing people, and our faith can grow endlessly. But the converse too seems to be true. The less is the Kingdom and its justice sought and lived the smaller and obscurer grows the knowledge of God. The greater the injustice and unlove that we practice, maintain or let be, the faster the development of unbelief and atheism.

Jesus’ own growth and development took place with and within his practice of the Kingdom. It was through his commitment that he came to now God deeper and to experience him intimately. It was through obedience that he became perfect, and it was in the school of suffering that he learned to obey. His mission to bring to the people the experience of God’s liberating and transforming love placed him in a situation of historical conflict with vested interests. And the conflict culminated on Calvary; but it also issued in his resurrection and lordship over the world. (Hb. 5:7-9). The resurrection is the high point where the struggle bursts into flower, and the fully human is disclosed, and the Spirit of justice and liberation and hope is released into history (Jn. 7:37-39; 19:34; 20:20-23; Lk. 4:18).

A significant factor in Jesus’ practice of the Kingdom is his option for the poor, the deprived and the oppressed. The option is clear and needs no demonstration here. It is of a piece with God’s ‘bias’ evidenced in OT history. The early Christians’ keen awareness of this fact found expression in a song them composed and placed on the lips of Jesus’ Mother. In the Magnificat, the God who appeared and acted in Jesus is celebrated as one who subverts thrones and lifts up the lowly, and as one who rejects the rich and feeds the hungry (Lk 1:51-53; 6:20-24). Jesus opts for the oppressed and marginated masses not because they are saints, not because their ideology is pure, but because they are the bearers of social change, the bearers of the future, and the basis of hope for the world. A biblical viewpoint confirmed by the history of civilization: change for the better has moved along the axis of struggle from below by the oppressed masses who have also paid a heavy price for every human advance. (see IC 1:18-31). Jesus’ option has to do with the need he saw of change: the shape and quality of society as it existed in his day was unacceptable to him. It was colonial, imperialist, exploitative, oppressive and the burdens the working masses had to bear were too heavy. Such a society did not express the reality and grace of the Kingdom of
the Father; it did not serve human persons whom God loves, it was not capable of renewing and transforming our earth into the new city where the people with their God will have dealt with all the forces of anti-life.

At the heart of Jesus’ option lies a ruling principle of his life, namely, the primary and centrality of the Human in the practice of the Kingdom. The principle is affirmed in the parable of the judgement which we chose for the day’s prayer and theme: Mt. 26:31-46. Basic to our meditation is the question put to the Son of Man, “When did we see you hungry, thirsty?” as we the answer given. The answer is a surprising revelation. The revelation is that Jesus, and God too, identify themselves with the poor and the oppressed; and it is impossible to relate to Jesus, the Father or the Kingdom except through a historical option to be with and for the marginated masses. The oppressed are where God and his Christ are with the liberating grace of the Kingdom. And the Kingdom keeps coming into history along the axis of their liberation.

5. CONCLUSIONS

a. The consequence of all this is that the search for the Kingdom of God and for God is inseparable from the search for the authentically Human, for people who live in freedom and dignity and exercise their creativity in joy. Where, on the contrary, people are oppressed and marginated, the image of God on our earth is obscured or destroyed and atheism built. See Micah 4:1-7, a description of injustice and oppression followed immediately by a picture of godlessness, the absence of God’s face and voice, a divine blackout. The same perspective, is in Mt. 5:23-24 and John 4:20, about the impossibility of loving God or finding a God to worship if our historical social relationships with people is not rightly oriented.

b. But the Human is in the image of God not merely at the individual level but above all at the level of the community. It is Humankind that God made in his own image and likeness. It is humankind honoring and realizing its societal dimensions that alone can reflect on earth the image of God as Triune and the Kingdom of the Triune God. All individualist conceptions of society and all classist and exploitative traditions of inequality and dependence in economic and political life become unacceptable to us Christians.

c. It is necessary therefore to develop the vision of a new society from within our experience of the Kingdom and our faith in God as Trinitarian Society; in God as Creator who shared with others his Existence, Power, Freedom and Creativity; in God our Father whose Kingdom must come to the earth in abundance of bread for all and abundance of forgiveness. A pattern of society is disclosed and experience within the Eucharist when it is rightly celebrated. It is this vision we are to pick up and make into a force for social transformation.

d. Faith can reach social realities and transform them only through a fairly clear and deep understanding of the structures and systems of society, and through the development of proper strategies of approach and action. We have to master and use without prejudice the best tools of social analysis now available.

e. Finally there must be on our part a new and serious commitment to the practice of the Kingdom, to the living out of the social dimensions of the Gospel we have accepted. Neither faith nor unfaith is abstract and static. They grow strong or faith in dialectical interaction with practice. Without practice faith will become harmful ideology; and with practice, injustice can give birth to atheism. All transcendent hope must have roots in the soil of realized historical hopes or of struggle for their realization.