Landas

JOURNAL OF LOYOLA SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
Vol. 18, No. 2 (2004)

THE CHURCH TODAY

Crisis in the Church:
Causes and Response of Formation
LUIS ANTONIO G. TAGLE, D.D.

A Burden of Means:
An Overlooked Aspect of the PVS Debate
JAMES T. BRETZKE, S.J.

Can China Become a Christian Country?
Christianity and Civil Society in China
THIERRY MEYNARD, S.J.

Jesus, Evolution and the Environment:
A Critique of the CBCP's Statement
on the Environment
GABRIEL L. LAMUG-NAÑAWA, S.J.

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES

Formation of the Basic Ecclesial
Community as an Authentic Community
MA. FE MENDOZA, R.G.S.

Basic Ecclesial Communities
in the Philippines:
Some Missiological Challenges
MANUEL G. GABRIEL

Rekindling the BEC Flame:
Questions and Reflections
JAMES H. KROEGER, M.M.

Landas 18:2 (2004) v-vi

EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Church is not exempt from crisis. What has enabled the Church to grow and move forward is the way she faces and responds wisely to the mixture of difficulties and opportunities that arise now and then in the life of the community of believers. At present, the Church is grappling with the crisis of sexual misconduct involving the clergy. Tagle tackles this painful and confusing reality and, with great intelligence and compassion, shares his views on the need to understand the crisis in relation to cultural practices and boundaries, the call to be more sensitive to those affected by acts of misconduct—victims, perpetrators, families of both, the greater community—and the urgency of forming seminarians in accountability.

In the field of moral theology, Bretzke clarifies the broader meaning of the notion of "burden," which is key to a proper moral valuation and application of the principle of ordinary and extraordinary means in medical care. He differentiates between a physicalist and a personalist interpretation of the principle, and explains how a difference in interpretation leads to divergent responses, one erroneous and the other appropriate.

Meynard shares his experience and reflections on evangelization in China. He indicates possible directions that may be taken by efforts to integrate Christianity and civil society in China. Lamug-Nañawa evaluates the official document of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines that addresses the issue of the environment. He examines the ideas presented in the document from a theological perspective that consciously relates Jesus, evolutionary theory, and care for the environment.

In the Philippine context, Mendoza, Gabriel and Kroeger evaluate the Basic Ecclesial Communities movement, and discuss, respectively, sustainable formation guided by the Lonerganian notion of "self-appropriation," some missiological challenges, and the BEC's potential for mission.

May the articles in this volume provide a deeper understanding of questions and concerns that confront the community of believers and demand effective responses.

Miguel B. Lambino, S.J.
Editor

Landas 18:2 (2004) 193-210

CRISIS IN THE CHURCH
Causes and Response of Formation

Luis Antonio G. Tagle, D.D.

The word crisis in the title of this article points to the allegations of sexual misconduct on the part of the clergy. While this is happening in different parts of the world, this article will focus on specific cases and situations here in the Philippines. But we have to alert you to the fact that the allegations and actual cases of sexual misconduct of the clergy here in the Philippines have also opened other areas of crisis. For instance, people are now looking into finances (the way money and property of the churches are being handled), the exercise of authority in the workplace, etc. We cannot, therefore, isolate the crisis of sexual misconduct from the other crises related to the clergy. Our topic focuses on something quite specific—the context of formation.

The word "crisis" comes from the Greek verb *creno*, which means to make distinctions, to exercise judgment upon a particular case, or even to be brought to trial. Crisis, therefore, means distinctions, discriminations, judgments, decisions. When we hear the word crisis,

---

*Lecture delivered during Theological Hour at Loyola School of Theology, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, on August 27, 2003.

we normally think of it as a problem. Actually, it is more than just that; it also demands a decision, a judgment, a discriminating look or view. It calls for finer distinctions leading to a judgment and a decision; and that is more difficult. So when we say that the sexual misconduct of the clergy has generated a crisis, it means that it has generated a lot of urgency regarding some decisions that the Church has made. (Some of them are painful decisions.) Let us bear this in mind as we think about the crisis. Meanwhile, let me share with you some pastoral guidelines that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has disseminated in addressing this issue. (I am not a member of the Commission of the Clergy, but I was invited to be part of the drafting committee to help in the writing.) This article will have three main parts. The first part will focus on understanding the six aspects of the crisis; the second part, responses to the six aspects of the crisis; and the third part, formation amid the sexual misconduct crisis.

I. Understanding the Crisis

The first part: We should admit that there is a crisis. If we all admit that there is a crisis, we will go a very long way in forming ourselves and the Church in facing the crisis. I say this because there are still many people in the Philippines who are too shocked and are going through a stage of denial. In fact, during one of the first sessions in preparation for the guidelines, some bishops came to me and said, "We do not need to address the issue because that is a Western issue. That is not an issue here in the Philippines. Our Catholics are very subservient and respectful to the Church. They will not raise any issue."

But such is not true. We only have to open our eyes and admit that something problematic is going on. The recognition that there is a real crisis is formative. Such recognition should be integrated into the personal and communal approach to formation. In our formation houses, we cannot just pretend that no such crisis exists. We cannot just continue with our regular formation programs (which were for-

mulated five years ago and evaluated last year) and ignore the presence of the crisis. Those of you who are in charge of formation, please review your formation programs and see if you have already integrated the presence of the crisis in the Church now.

In speaking about the causes of the crisis, I will be modest. I am not an expert in identifying the causes of the crisis. I think what I can offer you are some helps in understanding the crisis. Let us try to understand the crisis in its complexity. Let us avoid at the outset simplistic approaches because, in reality, the crisis is complex.

Two years ago, I was invited to preach at the annual retreat of the clergy of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles in California. When I got there, the crisis had erupted to unimaginable proportions. The retreat schedule was arranged in such a way that priests, according to their felt need, could attend workshops facilitated by lawyers, social workers, psychiatrists, and youth ministers. For example, if one feared indictment, he could go to the workshop conducted by the lawyers. If one felt that the youth in his parish were causing problems, he could go to the youth minister. It felt weird and strange to be in that setting. It was a graphic manifestation of the complexity of the matter.

When we talk of sexual misconduct, we just cannot lump together all actions that are related to genitality and sexuality. Sexual misconduct comes in different shapes and forms. (I think that this is one major problem with our media people here in the Philippines; they do not make the necessary distinctions.) Pedophilia, the abuse of a child, is quite different from fathering a child, or having a 25-year-old partner. Statutory rape is quite different from indecent touching. A homosexual encounter between a parish priest and an 18--year-old altar boy is quite different from sexual encounters among priests. Sexual misconduct is an umbrella concept and there is a rich variety under that umbrella. This makes it difficult for us to make generalizations. In the end, we just have to deal with concrete cases and persons. What I will give in terms of understanding the crisis will be rather general, but as a word of caution, let us give room for individual cases because each one of them is unique. I have here six aspects of the sexual misconduct crisis.

1. Personal-Relational Aspect

If the crisis is about sexual misconduct, sexuality is at the heart of the crisis. But sexuality is not synonymous with genitality. Broadly, it is about personal identity and relationships; genitality is just one part of sexuality. So when we talk about sexuality, we talk about the person's identity and the quality of his/her relationships with other people based on that identity. It is not just about sexual behavior.

Now, this whole crisis has generated a lot of discussion on the fundamental question of what it means to be human and how the human being expresses his/her being human in relationships. Once, I was in the library browsing through the periodicals, and I saw an article written by Gerard Sloyan in *Theology Today* entitled, "Pedophilia among the Catholic Clergy: Some Questions and Answers." One of the questions in the article was, "What do Catholic priests do when they fall in love?" This is one aspect of human reality—a loving relationship. Married people or those open to marriage definitely know what they will do; priests, however, do not have the same freedom and certainty. So when we are brought into the heart of this sexual misconduct crisis, we should be prepared to enter into deeper questions such as the mystery of the human being and of human relationships, for the mysterious realm called relationship is at the heart of our being persons

Sometimes, however, human beings who have entered into enriching relationships wake up and realize that they are no longer in such relationships. They realize that they are in an abusive situation, a situation of disrespect, a situation of manipulation and victimization. Part of the journal of a priest who was in jail for child abuse said, "It does not start with sex. There are days when I just want to have a friend. There are days when I just want to have someone to talk to... [S]ex is farthest from my mind." Then he goes on to say, "I see this familiar face, a young boy who serves at my mass, who wants to join me for pizza... I find joy in talking with him and it looks like he's enjoying the interaction. There seems to be a relationship.... [T]he next thing I know, I have just molested a boy."

The crisis on sexual misconduct has also spawned a lot of questions about sexual orientation and sexual behavior. Different theories are being offered to us. Some offer the theory that sexual orientation leads to a particular action or sexual behavior, and they hold that since sexual orientation is an essential part of personhood, one cannot but act it out. I was in one seminar where the facilitator said, "Come on. No amount of formation can change a seminarian who just wants to have sex with a woman. No amount of formation can change that." We asked him, "What do we do with formation." He answered, "No more." But what do we do now with the ethical-/moral principle that sexual action, not the sexual orientation, is sinful? This is also the question in some circles.

2. Cultural Aspect

In every culture, there are accepted behaviors. In fact, cultures determine, to a wide extent, what behaviors are acceptable or not. Sexual behaviors are culturally conditioned. Hence, if there is a crisis in the area of sexuality, we have look at the culture. The culture must also be put to the test in many ways. The culture is being asked to explain why its members, the people who have been nurtured by the culture, end up as abusers or engage in sexual misconduct.

For example, in the Philippines, some sexual behaviors are acceptable. In the barrios, we see parents fondle the genitals of their sons to check their masculinity. They even do this in front of a priest and as a sign of affection for the child. This is culturally accepted if the child is three or four years old; but it becomes otherwise when it is done to a 15-year-old child, whether by a parent or by a friend. But we ask, why are some aspects of affection acceptable and some others not?

A study on the sexual behavior of males in the Philippines conducted by the University of the Philippines Psychology Department reveals that sexual intimacy is regarded in a sexist way by wives. One response consistently given by wives—who described sexual intimacy or intercourse as an act of being used—was: *ginamit ako* (I was used); or an obligation: *nagpagamit ako* (I allowed myself to be used).

After being asked, "*Kung ayaw mo, bakit ka nagpagamit?*" (Why did you allow yourself to be used, even if you didn't want to do it?), their common reply would be, "*Kasi hindi ako kakausapin kinabukasan; mainit ang ulo*" (Because he will not talk to me the next day; he will be moody). Seemingly, the culturally-accepted perception that the woman can be used is not an expression of union and love. The bishops have been reflecting on this, and we ask the question, "What elements of the Philippine culture open up to possible sexually-abusive behaviors or sexual misconduct?"

Some experts indicate that we are a hugging culture. Seminarians put their arms on another's shoulder when they go home to San Jose Seminary, a gesture seldom found in other cultures. *Mahilig tayo sa kalabit, pasundot* (It is normal for us to poke gently). Even the word *kalabit* does not exist in other languages because only Filpinos do this. But when a three-year-old child is hugged, s/he is not yet capable of distinguishing signals coming from the touch. A certain sophistication or maturity is needed to be able to distinguish whether this is a friendly touch, a caring touch, or the beginning of an abusive or seductive touch. However, the child will get mixed signals especially if the one touching him/her is someone called "Father." This is another element of Philippine culture; priests are considered part of families. When you say that you are a priest, people open their doors, their inner sanctum, and they even entrust their children to you, and say, "*Father, bahala ka na sa aking anak*"(Father, please take care of my child). That is why sexual abuse by clerics is much more painful.

In addition, males are vested with so much authority in our culture. One study reveals that the most powerful people in the Philippines are priests because they are males whose source of authority comes from a culture that enthrones religion. Hence, we are the potential abusers of that power.

When we were seminarians, we were advised, in our pastoral counseling training, to maintain a table between the counselee and ourselves, regardless of gender. However, in some current modules, some supervisors teach our seminarians that a normal human being

needs forty hugs a day. Now, assuming this is true, I will remove the table if I have a client who is in distress and needs forty hugs. The module has shifted and one asks: in a shifting mode, when do we cross the boundaries of culturally-accepted behavior?

I have been told by an auxiliary bishop of New York that many mothers in the United States have forbidden their husbands from changing the diapers of their infant daughters. It is not culturally accepted for fathers to touch their infant daughters. Such has become a sexualized behavior. As a response, bishops have proposed that in the ministerial/pastoral relationship, sexualized behavior should be avoided. Because of the crisis, new cultural modes are being born. Cultural expressions of affection that were formerly acceptable are now being questioned.

I was once asked to facilitate a recollection—for former seminarians, priests and their wives—where one woman complained in front of the assembly that her husband was very cold, distant, and aloof. "He does not praise me, he does not affirm me, he does not show signs of affection." The husband admitted this and explained that this was due to their training in the 1950s when touching and signs of intimacy were prohibited and custody of the eyes was practiced. Formation really worked with this person, even unto marriage. Another fiancée of a younger former seminarian said that her partner hugs every woman, which is an effect of the present formation.

3. Ecclesiastical Aspect

When the case of a bishop was reported by the media, a psychology professor asked me on the phone, "What's the problem? He's an adult and the woman is also an adult. What's the big problem?" For this psychologist, the personal-relational-cultural aspect is not a problem, and there shouldn't be a fuss about these two adults who happened to fall in love. While I appreciate the concern of this professor, I must say that he was oblivious to the ecclesiastical aspect of the case. The person involved is a cleric who is bound to his vow of celibacy, even if the behavior can be excused in the cultural and personalistic view. When we move to the ecclesiastical level, there

are added considerations involved: the ecclesiastical discipline among members of the religious community and the religious vow. The question now is, "Have we ordained people who were not ready to embrace a lifestyle that is in harmony with the vows of chastity and celibacy?"

This question is being posed to dioceses and religious orders with regard to the ongoing formation of their members. Some have questioned whether celibacy as a call is humanly possible, or whether celibacy is part of the problem. I think you are familiar with the arguments for and against. I arrived in the United States last week and visited the pastors of four parishes who said that they were in favor of removing the vow of celibacy. I was told that in two parishes a random survey was done and the results indicated that an overwhelming number of Catholics prefer to remove the vow of celibacy. But that is in the United States. Here in the Philippines, the picture might be quite different. Even here in this school of theology, we just cannot discuss sexual misconduct without having a solid theological response to the issue being raised against celibacy. After all, in the tradition and experience of the Church, the practice of celibacy has been a source of great blessing.

Many people would like to approach it logically. They say, "Great, if it is not part of the essence of the priesthood, would it not be more timely to review the discipline, especially now that we are facing the scandal?" Some are eager to learn from the Christian communities that do not practice celibacy like the Eastern Orthodox Churches. Although they recognize the Eucharist, some of their priests are married, some are not. (And I think that all of the bishops are celibate; at least that is what we know.) But we should not rush into following their formation. I was once at an inter-faith dialogue where one Lutheran Pastor said, "You Catholics should not rush into removing the discipline of celibacy. In our Church, the pastors can get married, but they also have a lot of problems in the sexual area. There is [for example] the problem of adultery."

Studies conducted in the United States show that the majority of child abusers are married men. It is, therefore, a mistake to think that sexual misconduct disappears just because these men are in a legal and, in some cases, sacramental union (and, therefore, can enjoy intimacy). Marriage is not a guarantee that sexual misbehaviors will be prevented. I will not be in full harmony with some changes being made in some circles. When I reflect on the capacity of a seminarian for ordination/ordained life, I always look for two charisms: one is the charism for pastoral leadership, and the other is the charism for celibacy. These must be present in anyone we recommend for ordination. Sad to say, we find some people who have the potential to be leaders but do not have the gift of celibacy; so I just have to tell them, "*Baka hindi*" (Maybe not). But there are some people who have the gift of celibacy but do not have leadership potential. I talked with one priest who was ready to leave the priesthood. He said, "I would like to be dispensed from the obligations of the clerical state but I would remain celibate." He was called to celibacy, but he was not called to priestly ministry.

4. Legal Aspect

There is a legal definition of rape. A sexual act may be considered rape even without penetration. There are laws regarding sexual harassment in the workplace, i.e., relationships with secretaries, cooks, or sisters working in your parish. Because of this crisis, I was called to hear some of the cases. The scope covered by the law is amazing. Clerics, because they are citizens of the land, are definitely not exempted from the law. There are some areas on which the courts are clear, such as the exclusive domain of the diocese, religious order, or the Church; but when criminal acts are involved, a religious will definitely be judged as a citizen.

The jurisprudence in the Philippines is not well developed, but we have been warned that some high-ranking people in the government and Philippine society have sent some Filipino lawyers to the United States. The latter have been tasked to study the jurisprudence of the United States and to pin down offenders. There is a Filipino

priest, imprisoned in the United States, whose mother diocese here in the Philippines was contacted and asked to shoulder the legal fees amounting to $150,000.00 as first installment. The legal aspect is financially enormous, but there is a concern beyond finances—the anguish of the victims.

I hope that part of our formation, even among superiors who are here, would be an awareness of the legal aspects of sexual misconduct here in the Philippines. In the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, applicants to the seminary are fingerprinted. They are not accepted unless they submit an FBI clearance. One bishop advised me to require a waiver from a candidate for ordination stating that the bishop and the seminary will not be liable in case of future sexual misconduct.

5. Media Aspect

The media are a part of life. John Paul II regards them as the means of social communication, the new "aerophagus" for the evangelization of the world. But I guess that when it comes to crises related to sexual misconduct by the clergy, our instinct is to be repulsed by the media. They become a hostile presence. I think we should calm down a bit for the simple reason that they are a fact of life. We appreciate the media for exposing corruption in the government and other sectors, and I think that we cannot be selective in our demand for fair and balanced reporting, especially when the object of reports are Church-related scandals. "*Kapag iniri-report ay pari o obispo dapat* fair and charitable. *Pero kapag* government official, *puwedeng babuyin 'yan"* (If media reports are about priest scandals, we demand fairness and charity; but we condemn government officials when they become targets of controversy). Some people do not like that; they will all the more accuse us of suppressing truth and say, "What can we expect from you? You are defending your own kind." Now we should clamor for fair and fruitful reporting and look at the common good. The media are there to tell the truth, not to destroy.

6. Pastoral-Spiritual Aspect

And finally, there is the pastoral-spiritual aspect: a personal integrity before God and the Church. One bishop asked me during a CBCP meeting, "After long years of formation in the seminary and in spite of the ongoing formation programs available, why do some priests and bishops still engage in sexual misconduct? What has happened?" There are many aspects to this question, but there are three things we should consider: 1) the call to personal integrity; 2) a deep communion with the Lord; and 3) a deep commitment to the Church.

The bishops distinguish between three fora in handling sexual misconduct cases: 1) legal, 2) canonical (ecclesial laws), and 3) internal (forum of the person's conscience). When one is cleared in the legal forum and the canonical forum, that person can be cleared right away. I was told of a case of one priest who was relieved to have lost his child, whom he considered a mere obligation. I hope that our ecclesiastical discipline will do something about this.

II. Responses to Cases or Allegations

1. Caring for Victims

Many cases in the United States and Europe were blown out of proportion because many of the victims felt that they were not cared for, attended or listened to. We have to be sensitive to these: compassion, protection, justice, and restitution for the victims and their families. I think that our tendency to protect the Church and our fellow priests could be a problem. In integrating the discussion about and evaluation of sexual abuse cases into seminary and religious formation, we must endeavor to put ourselves in the victim's shoes. This must be a conscious effort and, therefore, done deliberately. If you have not had such experience, I encourage you to talk to a victim and, assuredly, your perception will change. When you ask, for instance, a poor and abused nine-year-old altar boy, "Why didn't you run away?" you will be rendered speechless by his answer, "Father,

kapag tinutukan na kayo ng baril sa ulo n'yo habang hinahalay kayo, hindi kayo makakatakbo" (Father, if a gun were pointed at your head while you were being abused, you cannot run away). You cannot but feel compassion for the woman who has fallen victim to a priest who promises to leave priesthood to raise a family with her, but leaves her after a miscarriage and says, "Huh, so I have no obligation, I really love my priesthood." And the girl weeps before you saying, "He has a life that he can return to. But what about me? What about my life?" Listening to these stories should be part of formation. If we are changed by the stories of the victims, we can hope that their experiences serve as a deterrent for further victimization. I hope that the study of the dynamics of victimization and the lack of accountability can be included in seminaries and schools of theology.

Hopefully, we could also study what victims go through, how their worlds are shattered. It really angers me every time I see some priests and bishops who deal with this reality as though no life has been shattered. I tell you, when the world of a victim is shattered, the lives of the victim's family members, friends, etc., are also shattered. Sometimes the victims that we have to care for may potentially become offenders. Many offenders were victims at some point in their lives. Once, when I was a seminarian, the priest in our apostolate area took a fellow seminarian and me to his room saying, "Please do not go" (as it was time for us to go back to the seminary after talking with the lay people). We asked, "Why?" He said, "See some of the people outside, especially that woman? They are out to get me. Her friends have been doing their very best to put us in a compromising situation." This also happens. We have a culture of victimization and, in many cases, mutual victimization. This aggression, this anger, this domination—we hope that we become sensitive to them in formation.

2. Caring for a Community

The crisis has created wounds not only among the victims but also among parishes, apostolate areas, and schools. Last week, in the United States, one of the auxiliary bishops of Los Angeles arranged

for me to stay in a parish where he had stayed for a few months. I did not know that the place was getting over a sexual misconduct crisis. I felt it; the gloom, the hurt, the pain was thick in the air. Someone told me that one Sunday the commentator greeted everyone in the usual manner, "Good morning, everyone. Let us greet one another. Let us welcome those who are not part of our parish. Will our visitors please stand? Our presider for this liturgy is Father So-and-so. By the way, I have been sleeping with Father. I am his mistress. I have discovered that he sleeps with two other women." This was before the mass. The priest was already there with all the ministers and the choir. What did the priest do? He just stopped there, he could not continue anymore. Trust had been violated. The whole community, the whole diocese, was hurting.

Even when a new bishop replaces a bishop accused of sexual misconduct, the wounds are still there; I get a lot of phone calls from the people of the diocese. But what do we do? We keep quiet. I am not sure if such response will continue to work. The people are hurting. Some priests call me and they just cry. They understand the administrative approach: the bishop has been replaced. But theirs is a lost community who could not believe that their pastor—someone ordained to care for the community—abused them. Their response should bring the right signals in the community.

One bishop asked me, "How do we discern this? How do we interpret the behavior of many parishes in the Philippines?" Many parishioners know that their pastor has a mistress and children, but they tolerate it. In trying to protect everyone, some bear the shock and pain. Some prefer having an erring priest to not having regular celebrations of the Eucharist. What does this mean to our people? Is it an act of forgiveness on our part? Are we a forgiving people? Or is it a sign that we are ready for a married clergy? Or that our morals are becoming loose?

Clearly, handling wounded communities should also be part of our sensitivity in formation.

3. Caring for the Offender

Care for the priest-offender is also needed. No accused offender I know enjoys the situation. They are lost, confused, and ashamed; they feel that they have betrayed God and the community; they feel they have no more reason to exist. As we defend victims and work for justice, we cannot abandon the accused and the offenders. They need a lot of human support, the assurance that they can be restored after they face their dark inner selves. This does not mean, however, that we are tolerating what they have done; rather, we are assuring them that there is hope for them, that the journey back to facing themselves is worth taking, and that we are willing to accompany them through the painful process of assessment, counseling, and sometimes, dismissal from the clerical state. Let us give extensive guidance to the accused or the offenders; let us help them start a new life and recover.

4. Caring for the Offender's Family

In our culture, families of the accused also suffer the most. The priest may be sent by the diocese or congregation somewhere else abroad (United States, Rome, India, etc.), but the family remains here. *"Totoo ba 'to? Ito ba ang ginagawa ng anak mo?"* (Is this true? Did your son really do that?) We cannot underestimate the impact of the scandal on the families. I know of parents of accused priests who fathered children; some of them have stopped going to church, not because they do not believe in the Eucharist or in the community, but because of shame. They feel betrayed by their priest-sons. We need to reach out to them. In the diocese of Imus, I reach out to parents and families of ex-priests in order to assure them that they are still loved and that they can re-integrate themselves into the community. In school and seminary formation, programs such as Care for the Families and Victims and the Offenders can be included in Family Ministry. They have their pastoral needs and dynamics. To seminarians and priests, before you engage in a sexual misconduct, just think of your families. Our study says that many of the offenders are "me-first" persons with no regard for other people. How would other

people and your fathers and mothers feel? If caring for families of the offenders becomes part of our consciousness, it will hopefully help us understand what our own parents and families go through when we will fall.

5. Caring for the Non-offender

This is an aspect that is often forgotten: how to take care of priests who have been doing their best, but have to bear the weight of the scandals committed by their fellow priests. The offense of one priest becomes the shame of all. It has brought a lot of fear to priests, fear for their own past. "What will my former girlfriend in high school say? What if a playmate shows up and talks about it? What if people just come up?" In the middle of the retreat with the clergy of Los Angeles, a cardinal was accused of molesting a girl who was a student at the Catholic High school where he, while a priest, was the director. He didn't know what to do.

Last month, I had the chance to talk to one of the professors in a Catholic university. He said, "You know I am 66 years old. I've been a priest for more than 30 years. Since my ordination, I have never imagined that some people would spit on me just because they see me wearing the clerical collar." How do we care for the majority of these people who have not done scandalous misdeeds but are ashamed, afraid, and unsure of what to say to people who demand an answer?

Last week, after celebrating mass in our parish, one of the parents of the altar servers (boys and girls) asked me to join a photo session with the children. All of a sudden, I had to be very careful with my hands; I just did not know how to behave. I felt a strong mutual suspicion. In the retreat for the clergy of Los Angeles, I discovered that they who lived in the same rectory admitted having suspicion toward their fellows' possible involvement in secret sexual misbehavior. Pastors think this way toward their parochial vicars and I cannot blame them. I know a case of a young, newly-ordained priest who related how one morning he came down to the kitchen to make

some coffee and found a note on the table. The note came from a fellow pastor who had written that he was arrested the previous night for molesting a child. We looked at each other and he asked, "Will I be the next?"

In the same retreat for the clergy of Los Angeles, the former rector of the seminary ended a wonderful homily by saying: "Please pray for me. I am thinking of leaving the priesthood. I'm confused right now. I don't think I want to be associated with priests." At the time, our seminarian, who was preparing himself for ordination to the diaconate, was also confused. He came to my room and said, "When I finished my theological studies, my mother was so afraid that I still had to undergo a year of parish work prior to ordination. She said that she would talk to the bishop to exempt me from the required year because it was dangerous. *'Baka maligaw ka pa'* (You might be waylaid). The sooner the better." He went through the year of parish work, yet his mother kept on calling him, expressing her anxiety over priests being ridiculed. This is a sad example of families retreating; not taking pride in having sons who will become priests. How do we care for them? I hope that part of formation is to intensify mutual support, brotherhood among priests, fraternal correction, assurance of a companion, common prayer, and support of lay people. Many of our priests are hurting not because they have done something wrong, but simply because they are priests.

6. Caring for Your Superiors and Bishops

We are torn. We help and defend our priests. On the one hand, we are like fathers to them, but on the other hand, we are also defenders and helpers of all the victims and people of God. A point comes when we have to be judges also. *Krisis talaga.* (It's really a crisis.) I know that, at times, the best way to help an erring cleric is to help him face his mistakes, and we lose many friends when we do that. Some priests and lay friends say that I am very harsh, but I also do not want to give signals that abuse and misconduct are all right. Many bishops are hurting; many superiors are confused. It is not easy. We are losing sleep.

Archbishop Rosales is the head of the Commission on the Clergy that prepared the guidelines on how to deal with sexual misconduct. He told me, "This is one of the most difficult papers I have ever helped write. I catch myself spending 15 minutes to write one sentence on the computer. It's not easy, especially if I start thinking of concrete cases and people I know. These are applied to them."

Learn how to support the local superiors, too. It is not easy to be in their position.

III. Formation in Accountability

Formation is a continuum. It does not only take place inside the seminary but also outside of it, even after ordination. We cannot put all the burden on the seminary. One question is, "Is the seminary to be blamed for all the sexual misconduct?" (Perhaps not only because seminarians are not screened well, but also because the very structure and atmosphere of seminaries create potential abusers and offenders? Is it a healthy atmosphere?) I am appealing to the bishops to look at formation as a continuum where we can integrate family life, formation in the parish, among the youth, and those who wish to enter the seminary and religious life. What kind of formation, whether in the seminary or religious order, can be given to them during and after the seminary years, amid the sexual misconduct crisis?

1. Human maturity, especially when it comes to responsible relationships.
2. Ministerial and pastoral accountability, which comes with clarity of purpose and identity. "What is a priest?" When I am clear with my identity as a priest, hopefully my relationships and my way of handling communities will follow.
3. Motivational purification—from a view of myself with the grandeur and sense of authority that comes with the position of the priesthood. Maybe it is time to check that. After all, the scandal has already proven that we are not grand. It is time for us to accept with humility our own humanity and

start to be the seeds of the Church with the human face—humble and focused on service. These motivations should be tested among seminarians and constantly checked in our priestly life.

4. And, of course, our spirituality—a spirituality that will enable us to discern God's calling every moment of life, in everything and in everyone whom we encounter. A calling to serve God and not to manipulate, abuse, and offend. A spirituality of total dependence on God rather than on "my authority," "my grandeur" and "my grand position."

Finally, let me close by emphasizing the fact that the priest is the *Cura Párroco*, the caretaker of the parish. He is also the *Cura Animarum*, the caretaker of souls. Paradoxically, however, I read a book that lampooned priests as "Slayer of the Soul," and another book entitled *The Story of the Soul of a Church: Healing Congregations Wounded by Clergy Sexual Misconduct.* Sadly, we have to acknowledge that from being one who cares for the soul, the priest has become a slayer of the soul; and through sexual misconduct, the Church is losing its soul. It is a painful reality: the slayers of souls are the very ones who ought to care for souls. We are in a crisis. We have to make a decision: Will we be slayers of souls or *Cura Animarum*, caretakers of souls?

Landas 18:2 (2004) 211-230

A BURDEN OF MEANS
An Overlooked Aspect of the PVS Debate

James T. Bretzke, S.J.

I met recently with Nancy and Gary, a wife and son who were struggling with making some possible changes in the ongoing care for Bob, a 68-year-old man diagnosed over eight years ago with an inoperable malignant brain tumor located in the center of his brain and which has since spread tentacles throughout the brain. At the time of his initial diagnosis, Bob had named his eldest and youngest sons—Gary, an attorney, and Chris, a doctor—as co-executors of his advanced health care directive. Bob and Nancy were high-school sweethearts and have been married for forty-five years. Gary told me at the outset that he and his youngest brother (Chris, the out-of-state physician) have virtually decided that it would be best to end Bob's anti-seizure medication but their mother was still not sure. While this medication gave Bob some relief and a higher quality of life some years ago, Bob's current situation is that he is bed-ridden, unaware of his surroundings, and suffering from painful bedsores and

---

*Lecture delivered during Theological Hour at Loyola School of Theology, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, on July 7, 2004. An earlier version of this paper was also presented to the Society of Christian Ethics, Pacific Section, at the San Francisco campus of the University of the Pacific on February 13, 2004.

incessant itching. Gary is worried about his mom who is the primary caregiver for Bob and who feels she must stay at home virtually non-stop (though there is a paid caregiver during the daytime). If the anti-seizure medication is terminated, Bob may begin to experience progressive seizures, one of which may ultimately combine with his other debilities that could lead to his death. If he remains on this medication though and nothing else changes, Bob's doctor has said that Bob will likely curl up in bed and withdraw into a fetal state while requiring a feeding tube to maintain life. Ultimately, in this scenario, Bob will probably contract pneumonia at some point and die.

Gary, the eldest son, is somewhat impatient with this whole discussion process, but has agreed to come with his mother because she has indicated that she wants to respect the Church's teaching in this area. Both Gary and his mother agree that the other members of the family will support whatever decision they make, and Chris, the youngest brother (the out-of-state physician), particularly believes that the anti-seizure medication should be terminated. Nancy turns to me and says that she knows that the Church would not require "extreme measures" but she just does not know what to do in this case. At this point, both Gary and his mother Nancy make a spontaneous reference to Terri Schiavo and say that they know that Bob would not want to end up like that. It was clear to me that the Schiavo case was playing a very significant role in the anguished deliberations of Bob's family.

Terri Schiavo's fifteen minutes of fame does seem to be going into double overtime. In the United States, the basic facts of the case are relatively well-known.[1] Theresa Marie Schindler was born in Pennsylvania on December 3, 1963, to Mary and Robert Schindler.

---

[1]An Internet search (e.g., through Google) will turn up scores of hits. For the best site on the side of Terry Schiavo's parents, Robert and Mary Schindler, see http://terrisfight.org/. This site is updated frequently with the latest legal developments in the case, and contains numerous documents and links that support the position of the Schindler family.

She married Michael Schiavo and on February 25, 1990, at the age of twenty-seven, collapsed in their home and went into cardiac arrest due to a severe potassium imbalance. Since her release from the hospital in August 1990, Terri lived in nursing homes with total and constant care, including being artificially fed and hydrated. She left no formal advanced health care directive and that just about concludes the "facts" that all parties will agree on. In 1998, Terri's husband petitioned the circuit courts of Pinellas County, Florida, to remove her feeding tube and the ups and downs of the legal battles have escalated over the years. Decisions were made, appealed, sustained, and/or reversed until Michael Schiavo finally won his case to have Terri's feeding tube removed. In its June 2003 decision affirming the lower trial court's decision to allow Michael Schiavo to have Terri's feeding tube removed, the Florida Second District Court, in reviewing Terri's medical condition, concluded that

> Over the span of this last decade, Theresa's brain has deteriorated because of the lack of oxygen it suffered at the time of the heart attack. By mid 1996, the CAT scans of her brain showed a severely abnormal structure. At this point, much of her cerebral cortex is simply gone and has been replaced by cerebral spinal fluid. Medicine cannot cure this condition. Unless an act of God, a true miracle, were to recreate her brain, Theresa will always remain in an unconscious, reflexive state, totally dependent upon others to feed her and care for her most private needs.[2]

In August 2003, the Florida Supreme Court refused to review the Second District Court's ruling, and Terri's parents then turned unsuccessfully to the federal courts. Finally, on October 15, 2003, Terri's feeding tube was removed, but five days later Florida Governor Jeb Bush and the Republican-controlled state legislature rushed

---

[2]Excerpts of the Court's decision, as well as a very helpful timeline of the legal developments in the Terri Schiavo case, are found on *Abstract Appeal* (http://abstractappeal.com/schiavo/infopage.html), a website devoted to Florida law and the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals. On January 30, 2004, the editorial position of the webmaster is stated as being in sympathy with both the Schindlers and Michael Schiavo.

to enact what is called "Terri's law" to overturn the court decision that gave Michael Schiavo the authority to have her feeding tube removed. The feeding tube was then reinserted and another round of legal challenges is underway as this article is being written.[3]

While many parts of this whole case read like an overly melodramatic daytime soap opera, there is one aspect of the case that has, frankly, not gotten the press coverage it deserves, and oddly enough, at the same time, is the locus of the side-debate among (mostly) Roman Catholic moral theologians and Church officials. This aspect of the case is what is usually called in Roman Catholic bioethical circles the distinction between "ordinary and extraordinary means" (henceforth, o/e). More specifically, I will argue that many problematic interpretations of this o/e tradition rely on an overly physicalist reading of the case, and pay insufficient attention to the broader meaning of the notion of "burden," which is key to a proper analysis and application of the o/e principle. To open up this discussion further, I will highlight what may be a potentially helpful insight from the Catholic bishops of the Philippines, which might move us in one direction, as well as to acknowledge the recent input from John Paul II in the form of an address given to a conference in March 2004, which might seem to move in a quite different direction. Thus, these seemingly competing magisterial documents raise some important issues as to just what Church Tradition is in this regard, and how it is meant to be used in coming to an informed decision in a concrete case.

[3]The actions of the Florida legislature and Governor Jeb Bush have been ruled unconstitutional by a judge, but this decision has been appealed to a higher court and, at this writing, no final decision has been rendered.

The Tradition of Ordinary and Extraordinary Means

To return to the encounter with Nancy and her son Gary, I turned to Nancy and asked her what she understood the Church's teaching to be in this regard. She responded that she knew the Church didn't require "extreme measures," but felt that in her husband's case his whole care, including the anti-seizure medication that was being re-evaluated, would not count as an "extreme measure," and therefore perhaps would be considered by the Church as morally mandatory. I suspect that Nancy's response would be the understanding that many people in the pew would have. And that understanding is incorrect.

Though the tradition of the o/e principle is lengthy, it might be helpful to turn to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for a concise definition:

> 2278 Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted. The decisions should be made by the patient if he is competent and able or, if not, by those legally entitled to act for the patient, whose reasonable will and legitimate interests must always be respected.
>
> 2279 Even if death is thought imminent, the ordinary care owed to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at the risk of shortening their days, can be morally in conformity with human dignity if death is not willed as either an end or a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a special form of disinterested charity. As such it should be encouraged.[4]

---

[4] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. nos. 2278-79. Henceforth, CCC followed by the paragraph number(s). Unless otherwise indicated, I will be using the official English translation at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/__P7Z.HTM.

Before moving to a closer analysis of this principle, it will be important to acknowledge the context in which the principle is found—both within the *Catechism* itself, as well as in the minds of many people. Here I am referring to the nagging suspicion that *any* termination of treatment, unless it is clearly "extreme," would be tantamount to passive euthanasia, as expressed in the paragraph that immediately precedes the *Catechism*'s section on ordinary and extraordinary means:

> 2277 Whatever its motives and means, direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons. It is morally unacceptable. Thus an act or omission which, of itself or by intention, causes death in order to eliminate suffering constitutes a murder gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator. The error of judgment into which one can fall in good faith does not change the nature of this murderous act, which must always be forbidden and excluded.

Both with Nancy and her husband's treatment, as well as with many arguing on behalf of maintaining the feeding tube for Terri Schiavo, the working assumption seems to be that termination of any treatment protocol that can help sustain biological life is, *ipso facto,* passive euthanasia and therefore morally wrong. Again, this common assumption is incorrect.

I suspect that one reason for the common misperception of what the o/e principle actually entails lies with the traditional vocabulary employed. The terms "ordinary" and "extraordinary" are commonplace in our everyday speech, but the usual meanings of these words do not accurately connote their precise significance in health care ethics. Too often, people like Nancy, Gary, and many arguing for the maintenance of the feeding tube for Terri Schiavo presume that "ordinary means" refers to any procedure that is relatively well-established in contemporary medical practice, safe, and effective in its intended usage. While a century ago blood transfusions might not have met these triple criteria of established practice, safety, and effectiveness, today they clearly would and so, many people would

conclude that a blood transfusion would virtually always constitute "ordinary means" and, therefore, would be morally obligatory if a patient's medical condition so indicated.

Because of the great facility for misunderstanding the o/e terminology, many ethicists—and even the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—have suggested using instead the terms "proportionate and disproportionate means." While this suggestion has merit, current usage tends to stick with the traditional vocabulary and thus the problem of fundamental misunderstanding is exacerbated.[5] This vocabulary grew out of the moral theology being done in Rome and perhaps a cross-cultural linguistic gloss may help in better grasping the terms' import. *Ordinario* and *straordinario* would be the equivalent terms in Italian, but they do *not* always convey the same range of meanings as their English counterparts. *Ordinario* involves the nuance of "full" and "permanent"; in contrast, *straordinario* is seen as temporary, supplemental, supernumerary, or somehow lacking the fullness and completeness of *ordinario*.[6] Thus, ordinary means refer to the full range of medical treatments expected for a complete moral treatment, while extraordinary means would refer to supplemental treatments that are not required. Neither term in this context

---

[5]The terminology of ordinary and extraordinary means dates back at least to the sixteenth century, and has been consistently used in modern times since the papacy of Pius XII (1939-1958) and through the present, as seen in John Paul II's 1995 encyclical *Evangelium vitae*. For a helpful overview of the principle, see Kevin Wildes, "Ordinary and Extraordinary Means and the Quality of Life," *Theological Studies* 57 (1996): 500-512. The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith noted the potential misunderstanding of the traditional terminology and suggested replacing it with proportionate and disproportionate means in its Declaration on Euthanasia *Jura et bona*, 5 May 1980, *AAS* 72:1 (1980): 542-52. English translation found in *Vatican Council II: More Post Conciliar Documents*, ed. Austin Flannery (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982): 510-17, and at http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19800505_euthanasia_en.html.

[6]An academic application may be helpful here. The Italian for "full professor" is *professore ordinario*. A *professore ordinario* has full active and passive voice,

means "routine" or "extreme" in the sense of the objective nature of the medical treatment protocols.

Carrying this distinction back to health care ethics, "ordinary means" can then be defined as all those treatment protocols, medicines, surgeries, etc., that are morally obligatory, and therefore *ipso facto* must always be done. "Extraordinary means," in contrast, can best be described as *not* being morally obligatory. What makes a means ordinary or extraordinary is primarily its relation to the particular individual patient. Thus, surgery to repair a perforated stomach in an otherwise healthy twenty-year old would usually be judged as ordinary means, while the exact same surgical intervention in a ninety-year old who has suffered a massive heart attack or stroke—and who very likely would not even survive the surgery—would clearly be extraordinary. The surgery itself, the so-called objective nature of the treatment, is virtually the same in both cases, but the individual patients' differences—the subjective nature of the equation—yield two quite different judgments: in the case of the twenty-year-old, we would judge the surgery to be morally required, whereas in the case of the ninety-year-old, it would not be obligatory.

The Criterion of Burden

What is the difference in these two cases? A number of things to be sure, but one key aspect that differs is the relative burden of the proposed medical intervention on each patient. Burden is necessarily subjective, i.e., centered on the person and his or her particular constitution, context, and matrix of relationships. There is no easy way to assess or quantify "burden" objectively, and perhaps for this reason the burden criterion in the o/e means principle has either been given insufficient attention or (and more problematically) read

---

and represents the highest academic rank in the university. A *professore straordinario* is equivalent to an associate professor, but with diminished active and passive voice; in other words, the *professore straordinario* does not have the same rights or responsibilities as the *ordinario*.

in a very narrow physicalist fashion. As evidence of this claim, let us turn to some representative opinions offered by some Church officials and theologians.

Terri Schiavo's diocesan bishop Robert N. Lynch of St. Petersburg, released a statement on August 12, 2003, in which he summarized the o/e principle in this fashion:

> We are obliged to preserve our own lives, and help others preserve theirs, by use of means that have a reasonable hope of sustaining life without imposing unreasonable burdens on those we seek to help, that is, on the patient and his or her family and community. In general, we are only required to use ordinary means that do not involve an excessive burden, for others or for ourselves. What may be too difficult for some may not be for others.[7]

His statement of the general principle is in full accord with the tradition and the formulation found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* quoted above, as well as the most recent version of the United States Bishops' "Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Care Services."[8]

However, as Thomas Aquinas noted in his treatise on the natural law, the more we descend from general ethical principles to concrete moral applications, both changeability and fallibility will be an unavoidable aspect of our conclusions.[9] Bishop Lynch concludes, how-

---

[7]Robert N. Lynch, "Statement of Bishop Robert N. Lynch Concerning the Terri Schiavo Case" (12 Aug 2003), http://www.dioceseofstpete.org/news_releases/statement_of_bishop_robert_n.htm.

[8]For the text, see *Origins* 31 (19 Jul 2001): 153, 155-68. These guidelines are a revision of the 1994 directives, published in *Origins* 24 (15 Dec 1994): 449-61, and note specifically that the issue of artificial hydration and nutrition in a persistent vegetative state (PVS) case is a matter of open theological debate (and thus would be an instance of the legitimate application of the principle of probabilism in terminating such treatment).

[9]See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae I-II*, Q. 94, art. 4. This crucial point is discussed in some detail in James T. Bretzke, *A Morally Complex World:*

ever, that "there should be a presumption in favor of providing medically assisted nutrition and hydration to all patients as long as it is of sufficient benefit to outweigh the burdens involved to the patient." He then goes on to explain his conclusion in reference to Terri's case in this way:

> If Terri's feeding tube is removed, it will undoubtedly be followed by her death. If it were to be removed because the nutrition which she receives from it is of no use to her, or because it is unreasonably burdensome for her and her family or her care givers, it could be seen as permissible. But if it were to be removed simply because she is not dying quickly enough and some believe she would be better off because of her low quality of life, this would be wrong.[10]

Lynch's own conclusion as to the application of the o/e principle is reiterated in almost the exact same wording by the collective statements of the Florida bishops issued two weeks later (which, in fact, refers to Lynch's original statement). What has happened though in the move from the statement of the general o/e principle to its application in the Schiavo case is that a judgment of passive euthanasia seems to be implied: "But if her feeding tube were to be removed to intentionally cause her death, or because her life is perceived to be useless, or because it is believed that the quality of her life is such that she would be better off, this would be wrong."[11]

Returning to the definition of passive euthanasia in the *Catechism* quoted fully above (CCC 2277: "direct euthanasia consists in putting an end to the lives of handicapped, sick, or dying persons"), the

---

Engaging Contemporary Moral Theology (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2004), see especially 59-69.

[10]Lynch, "Statement of Bishop Robert N. Lynch Concerning the Terri Schiavo Case."

[11]Catholic Bishops of Florida, "Florida Bishops Urge Safer Course for Terri Schiavo: Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Florida" (27 Aug 2003), http://www.flacathconf.org/Publications/BishopsStatements/Bpst2000/TerriSchiavo.htm.

key elements in cases like that of Terri Schiavo would be the intentional withholding of some treatment that would be considered *in that particular given case* to be ordinary means with the aim of *directly* causing the death of the patient. Remember that ordinary means cannot be given in the abstract, and that what could be labeled "ordinary" in one patient's treatment would be "extraordinary" in another's. If extraordinary means are withheld from a patient, this would not, by itself, constitute passive euthanasia. Full assessment of benefit and burden is one crucial means of accurately determining whether a given treatment for a given patient constitutes ordinary or extraordinary means. This assessment always has to be made in reference to the particular patient; there is no appendix in the back of medical ethics textbooks that indicates whether treatments are considered ordinary or extraordinary.

The other important aspect of the definition highlighted here concerns the key word "direct" as this refers to the combination of the intention behind the act and the effect of the act itself. Only when taken together can the moral meaning of the action be adequately evaluated. In classic Roman Catholic moral theology, these two terms are labeled the *finis operis* (end of the act) and the *finis operantis* (end of the agent).[12] The *finis operis* looks more to the foreseen consequences of the action performed, while the *finis operantis* focuses on the motivating intention of the agent who performs the action. Thus, the modifier "direct(ly)" refers primarily to the *finis operantis* and not to the *finis operis*. For example, the removal of a fetus implanted in the fallopian tube in an ectopic pregnancy would not constitute a "direct" abortion from a moral standpoint, though it is clear that the *finis operis* of this intervention would clearly result in the death of the fetus, and which in the quite different circumstances of a normal pregnancy would otherwise be termed an abortion.

---

[12]For a fuller translation and discussion of these and similar Latin terms frequently found in theological writings, see James T. Bretzke, *Consecrated Phrases: A Latin Dictionary of Theological Terms*, 2nd ed. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998, 2003).

What is important to bear in mind in this, and most moral cases, is that while the definitions of terms such as *finis operis* and *finis operantis* may seem clear and concise in the abstract, the realities behind them are usually much more opaque and complex. How can one judge an action that seems to have more than one *finis operis*? Principles such as the double effect can help here, but how do we overcome the difficulty of weighing the human heart involved in the *finis operantis*? What if attention to the *finis operis* seems to suggest one moral evaluation while concentration on the *finis operantis* provides a different judgment?

While there is no easy shortcut here and a rush to judgment usually will result in a serious misjudgment of the moral reality of the situation, the manualist tradition of moral theology, following Thomas Aquinas, used the axiom *finis operis semper reducitur in finem operantis* to provide some guidance in sorting out potentially contrasting ends of an action. I will freely translate this phrase as "the moral meaning of the act (*finis operis*) always ultimately comes down to (*semper reducitur*) the intention of the agent (*finis operantis*)." I hasten to admit that this tradition might be employed uncritically to suggest that *any* good intention *whatsoever* could justify any evil action. This axiom is not the casuistical equivalent of Augustine's *ama et fac quod vis* (love and do what you will), but requires that we look long and hard at what truly is going on in a complex case so as to determine as fully and accurately as we can what our intentions truly are. In cases like that of Terri Schiavo and Nancy's husband Bob, this fuller evaluation has to look more carefully at considerations of burden and benefit to help us realize what the various treatment options do—and do not—"directly" intend.

The media (especially the letters to the editor sections of Catholic newspapers and periodicals) are rife with charges that the projected removal of Terri Schiavo's feeding tube is tantamount to murder. While these clippings may build a case for better adult religious education, it is the smaller collection of opinions published by some theologians and Church officials, who one could hope really should know their tradition better, that is especially disturbing. One repre-

sentative of this latter group is Patrick Boyle, who states emphatically that, "The church teaches that the health condition of a sick person never enters into the decision whether to start or to withdraw life support."[13] Boyle tries to nuance what otherwise would be simply a ludicrous error of fact by separating the question of burden from the patient's medical condition:

> The central question is whether the medical treatment causes grave burdens. If it does, then the treatment is considered extraordinary means and therefore the choice of the sick person. If, on the other hand, the medical treatment does not cause grave burdens and is beneficial, the sick person has no choice but to accept the medical treatment because it is ordinary means.[14]

Thus, in Boyle's view, extraordinary means do in fact coincide with what my client Nancy had called "extreme measures" in reference to her husband Bob. Lest anyone misread that this is in fact his interpretation of the relevant principles in the Schiavo case, Boyle supplies his own application:

> Schiavo is fed by means of a gastrostomy tube. The questions to be asked are, "Does this medical procedure create grave burdens for her?" and "Is it useless?" The answers are no. Schiavo's burdens were caused by the brain damage resulting from her heart attack. They are not the result of the feeding tube. Barring complications, it is a burdenless medical treatment as it is certainly beneficial, since it has been keeping Schiavo alive for some thirteen years.[15]

---

[13]Patrick J. Boyle, "Wrong on Schiavo," *Commonweal* 130 (5 Dec 2003): 4. Boyle is professor of moral theology at the Archdiocese of Chicago's Mundelein Seminary. For a somewhat similar scholarly dispute over the reading of the tradition in the Schiavo case, see John J. Paris and James Keenan, "Ethical Analysis and the Facts," *America* 189 (22-29 Dec 2003): 15. These two ethicists carefully critique John Kavanaugh's Ethics Notebook column, "Food for Terri Schiavo," which originally appeared in *America* 189 (24 Nov 2003): 8. Kavanaugh also has a brief rejoinder on the same page as the Paris/Keenan article.

[14]Boyle, 4.

What has Boyle done here? At least three things it seems to me. First, he has separated the patient's own health condition from a consideration of burden and benefit; and then second, he looks *only* at the burdens and benefits of the treatment itself, *abstracted* from the patient's total context, in determining whether this treatment is ordinary or extraordinary. In other words, he is making a judgment about what constitutes burden and benefit only by looking at the patient as a biological organism, and without attention to his or her larger context. Third, Boyle, whose area of professional training is understandably not in the health care professions, seems to misread seriously the medical situation itself. I suspect most health care professionals would disagree strongly with Boyle's assertion that the feeding tube is a "burdenless medical treatment"; virtually every medical treatment, even the two aspirin we are enjoined to take before calling the doctor in the morning, involve some sort of burden. Thus, it seems that Boyle has redefined the burden criterion to refer only to a burden that is not physically grave in reference to the narrow scope of the procedure's intended effect. A similar concern has been raised some about the practical import of John Paul II's address in March 2004 to the congress held in Rome on "Life-sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State," but I suggest that the Pope's remarks should be read in a different light, and that certainly even the Vatican's own public statements to the media make it clear that this is *not* a case of *Roma locuta, causa finita.*[16] In statements released by various theologians connected with the Vatican in the days following this address, they made it clear that the papal address should *not* be considered an infallible teaching, and that the Pope was trying to enunciate some

---

[15]Ibid. A follow-up letter from Boyle appears in *Commonweal* 31 (16 Jan 2004): 6.

[16]See the address of John Paul II to the participants in the International Congress on "Life-sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas" (20 Mar 2004). *Origins* 33:43 (8 Apr 2004): 737-40, http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/speeches/2004/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20040320_congress-fiamc_en.html.

general principles in this debate. A close reading of *Lumen gentium* 25 on how to interpret magisterial teaching would be helpful here.[17]

At this point, the *Commonweal* editors reply not by engaging the burden criterion directly, but rather with a fuller consideration of the benefit side of the coin: "Has artificially keeping Terri Schiavo alive for thirteen years been a self-evident benefit to her. Such a reductive, physicalist understanding of benefit, pace Father Boyle, is not one the Catholic tradition embraces."[18] While I believe the editors have framed the benefit question correctly, I think this particular debate, and those like it, have suffered by not fleshing out the burden criterion more fully.[19]

---

[17]LG #25 gives three key interpretive criteria for assessing the relative authority of magisterial teaching: 1) the character of the teaching itself; 2) the manner in which the teaching has been promulgated; and 3) the frequency of repetition of the teaching. In the instance of the recent papal address, it is clear that the second and third criteria would significantly lessen the authoritative weight of this teaching. We also must keep in mind that even though it is less recent than the March 2004 address, as an encyclical, *Evangelium vitae* carries greater magisterial authority than an address to a meeting. Thus, the recent papal address should be read in light of the encyclical and not vice versa. For some guidelines to interpreting magisterial documents, see "Rules for Magisterial Exegesis" found at http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/bretzkesj/MagisterialExegesis.pdf (pdf) and/or http://www.usfca.edu/fac-staff/bretzkesj/MagisterialExegesis.htm (html).

[18]"The Editors Reply," *Commonweal* 130 (5 Dec 2003): 4.

[19]Since John Paul II's address on artificial hydration and nutrition, several helpful articles have appeared. See especially Ronald Hamel and Michael Panicola, "We Preserve Life? The Narrowing of Catholic Teaching," *America* (19-26 Apr 2004): 6-13; and Gerald Coleman "Moral Questions of Nutrition and Hydration," *Catholic San Francisco* (12 Dec 2003), http://catholic-sf.org/121203.html, or "Take and Eat: Morality and Medically Assisted Feeding," *America* (3 Apr 2004). Still quite helpful is Richard McCormick, "'Moral Considerations' Ill Considered," *America* 166 (14 Mar 1992): 210-14, which is also found in McCormick's *Corrective Vision: Explorations in Moral Theology* (Kansas City: Sheed & Ward, 1994).

Shouldering the Burden of Means

In the statements quoted above from Bishop Lynch of St. Petersburg and his brother bishops in Florida, it seems clear that they believe the use of the feeding tube in the Terri Schiavo case constitutes ordinary means and, therefore, is morally obligatory. Their statements raise a nettlesome ecclesial issue regarding the competency of the Magisterium to pronounce on concrete ethical issues. Traditionally, the Magisterium has followed the important distinction between the formulation of general principles and concrete applications of those principles. Usually the Magisterium has restricted itself to speaking about the former, and allowing those nearest the concrete case and/or those with particular expertise involved in the issue to discern how the general principles would be best applied to a specific case. This approach also respects the principle of subsidiarity, which was articulated well by Pius XI in his 1931 social encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (cf. #79), reaffirmed by John XXIII and John Paul II in their respective encyclicals *Mater et Magistra* (1961, cf. #55) and *Centesimus annus* (1991, cf. #48), and restated as well in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (cf. #1894).

Now some might object that the principle of subsidiarity has only been used in connection with social issues and that the Schiavo case is a medical case involving a clear-cut decision that the Magisterium can pronounce upon. Two problems arise here though: one concerns the aforementioned competency of the Magisterium to pronounce on a concrete ethical application, and the second turns on whether the burden involved in the Schiavo case is shouldered just by herself and her immediate family and care givers, or whether this burden in fact is a larger burden that the wider community has to share. Let us briefly consider these two problems in turn.

The issue of the competency of the Magisterium to give definitive judgments on concrete moral applications has been hotly debated ever since Paul VI published his 1968 encyclical *Humanae vitae,* which condemned artificial contraception. It would be impossible even to summarize that debate here, but the eminent late Catholic

moral theologian Richard McCormick wisely observed with regard to the debate over artificial hydration and nutrition of Permament Vegetative State (PVS) patients that, "the bishops do not, indeed cannot, claim the same authority for applications as they do for their statement of general principles."[20] Additionally, what would happen though if a different individual or group within the Magisterium were to offer a counter-position? This is precisely what has already happened in the PVS debate with antithetical statements released by the Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania and the Catholic Bishops of Texas.[21]

This whole affair highlights the danger of prematurely closing off discussion and debate through imposition of some sort of magisterial gag order. As I mentioned above, I do not believe that John Paul II's March 2004 address aimed at doing anything of the sort. Rather, I believe the pope's intention, which we see adumbrated in his usage of the twin metaphors of "culture of life" and "culture of death" in his 1995 encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, was to underscore once again the general principle that all human life is indeed sacred and deserving of respect and care. I think *Evangelium vitae* gives the proper hermeneutical framework for interpreting this later address, and it should be recalled that, in this encyclical, the pope states quite clearly that the Roman Catholic tradition is *not* governed by the principle of vitalism, which the pope unequivocally denounces.[22]

---

[20] Ibid., 211.

[21] McCormick critiques the Catholic Bishops of Pennsylvania statement ("Nutrition and Hydration: Moral Considerations," *Linacre Quarterly* 59 [1992]: 8-30), which argued that termination of nutrition and hydration of patients in PVS is "euthanasia by omission," and therefore cannot be morally tolerated. *Origins* 21 (30 Jan 1992): 541; 543-53. The counter-opinion was released by the Texas bishops, "On Withdrawing Artificial Hydration and Nutrition," *Origins* 20 (7 Jun 1990): 53-55. Similar statements issued by the bishops of Washington and Oregon follow the line of argumentation of the Texas bishops.

[22] This theme occurs in several places in *Evangelium vitae*, but see especially nos. 2, 65 and 67. For support for my reading of the pope's address see Norman Ford, "The Debate Goes On," *The Tablet* (1 May 2004): 8-9. While

While I think most would agree that we should attend to what the Magisterium is saying in this area, I would note here that some very good insights into overlooked aspects of the issue can be found by consulting more broadly. For example, consider the following statement found in the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' official *Catechism for Filipino Catholics,* which gives an insight into the moral considerations of extraordinary means easily overlooked in the medical culture of the United States:

> However, when there is no real hope for the patient's genuine benefit, there is no moral obligation to prolong life artificially by the use of various drugs and machines. In fact, using *extraordinary means* to keep comatose or terminally ill patients artificially alive seems clearly to lack objective moral validity, especially in a society where the majority of the population do not enjoy even adequate elementary health care.[23]

It seems clear what position the Philippine bishops would take on the artificial hydration/nutrition debate in general and the Schiavo case in particular, and here I would emphasize what seems to be for them the key morally-relevant feature, namely the "justice" issue of distribution of limited medical resources in a society marked by what the bishops term the "glaring contradictions" between the rich and

---

agreeing "in principle" with John Paul II's position enunciated in the latter's 20 Mar 2004 address to the participants in the International Congress on "Life-sustaining Treatments and Vegetative State: Scientific Advances and Ethical Dilemmas," Ford argues that a concrete medical assessment of a PVS patient's condition might warrant the withholding of artificial hydration and nutrition on the grounds that it is not—in this or that specific case—an instance of "ordinary means." Ford's brief piece is quite good for outlining some of the pertinent medical issues that need to be taken into consideration in assessing what constitutes burden and ordinary means in the PVS scenario. See also the articles published in *Origins* along with John Paul II's address, "Care for Patients in a 'Permanent' Vegetative State," *Origins* 33:43 (8 Apr 2004): 737, 739-52.

[23]Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines [CBCP], *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (Manila: ECCCE Word and Life Publications, 1997), no. 1039.

the poor as is the case in the contemporary Philippine context.[24] The bishops remind us about justice in our consideration of the usage or non-usage of extraordinary means.[25]

Pace Boyle, and with respectful disagreement with the line taken by the Florida bishops, I think the Philippine bishops see more clearly that there is no such thing as "burdenless" means when it comes to cases like that of Terri Schiavo. Faced with a harsher economic reality than is the case in the United States, I believe the Philippine bishops can discern the hidden social costs involved in health care and are not afraid to raise the question of who ultimately will shoulder this burden. Their cross-cultural ethical insight may help us to see more clearly that health care resources devoted to keeping a PVS patient alive for over a decade do in fact represent burdens on many levels, including the global. Finally then, the correct moral question should be whether this burden is proportionate to the case at hand, and *not* whether this is simply a burden that the patient and/or the family and care givers can physically endure. Proportionality speaks to what is reasonable, while endurance speaks rather simply to what is physically possible. The two terms are certainly not identical, nor even close synonyms, morally speaking.

If the term "extraordinary means" were to be equated with what my counseling client Nancy called "extreme measures," then that would mean that virtually every other treatment protocol would logically have to be classified as "ordinary means." This in fact seems to

---

[24]CBCP, no. 732.

[25]In an earlier version of this paper given at the Society of Christian Ethics Pacific Section annual convention on 13 Feb 2004, one person expressed unease with the position of the Philippine bishops, calling it essentially a form of social utilitarianism. I believe that this reading of the text is unwarranted, but do acknowledge that care must be taken so that this sort of formulation is not used in a utilitarian manner. Once again, I suspect it is precisely this sort of general concern that led to John Paul II's emphasis on maintaining artificial hydration and nutrition care in patients who could not feed themselves.

be what is happening in many circles and this *de facto* reclassification is a significant and troubling departure from the tradition.

Nancy told me that she could physically continue to care for her husband Bob even though it was exacting a fearsome toll on her physically, emotionally, and economically. She said it was a burden that *could* still be physically borne. I suggested that the o/e principle asked not whether the burden *could* be physically endured, but whether it *should* be shouldered, i.e., whether this burden was now still reasonable. Nancy was clearly startled by this new question. She and her family have not yet come to a decision, but I believe the proper focus of the o/e tradition will give them a helpful resource for further reflection. We can only hope that these same questions can continue to be asked in Florida, Manila, and elsewhere.

Finally, we must recall the central message of Christianity with regard to our life here on Earth. This is not our ultimate home, and thus, as Christian leaders from St. Paul to John Paul II remind us, our life here and now is only a penultimate reality.[26] This means that it is certainly an important aspect of Catholic moral theology to continue to insist not only on the sanctity of life, but also a dignified death.[27] Hopefully, this ongoing discussion on end-of-life health care decisions will strengthen and not weaken these central truths of our faith.

[26]Cf. John Paul II, *Evangelium vitae* 2.

[27]For a good treatment of the notion of a dignified death in the context of health care decisions, see two good articles by Thomas R. Kopfensteiner, "Protecting a Dignified Death: A Contemporary Challenge for Moral Reasoning," *New Theology Review* 6 (Nov 1993): 6-27; and "Death with Dignity: A Roman Catholic Perspective," *Linacre Quarterly* 63 (Nov 1996): 64-75.

Landas 18:2 (2004) 231-243

CAN CHINA BECOME A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY?

Christianity and Civil Society in China

Thierry Meynard, S.J.

The dream has come true. After the limited success of evangelization in the past centuries, Christianity has now reached the golden age in mainland China. Never before have conversions been so numerous. Some claim that there are 80 million Christians in today's People's Republic of China.[1] Although many experts consider this figure to be overestimated, the more realistic sum of 50 million (15 million Catholics and 35 million Protestants) still represents an impressive increase from the 4 million Christians estimated in 1949 (3 million Catholics and 1 million Protestants).[2] What is even more impressive is that this figure has increased within the last twenty-five years, after the end of the Cultural Revolution and the beginning of reforms in 1978.

---

*Lecture delivered for the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies and the Ateneo de Manila Chinese Studies Program at the Ateneo de Manila University, Loyola Heights, Quezon City, on February 16, 2004.

[1]*Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington: Regnery Publishing, 2003), 7.

[2]Jonathan Chao and Rosanna Chong, *A History of Christianity in Socialist China* (Taipei: CMI, 1997), vi-xxix.

In some regions, evangelization has been so widespread—such as in Henan, Zhejiang or Fujian provinces—that some predict these provinces will accommodate a majority of Christians in the next twenty years. Although it would probably be premature to talk of Christianity as becoming the religion of the majority in China, Christians may account for twenty percent of the population (if conversions continue at the same rate) in less than two decades from now, dramatically reshaping the spiritual, cultural and political landscape. Beyond the astonishing figures, this essay reflects on the commitment of Christianity toward civil society as a condition for true evangelization.

Religious Fever Today

Since 1978, with the deconstruction of Marxism, the reform of China has opened an ideological vacuum. Since the political repression in 1989 and the subsequent blockage of political reform, the optimism of the 1980s has turned into a general distrust in politics. The cynical attitude of those in political power, the demise of public morality, and the collapse of traditional values have made the society soulless—a situation that Fr. Guo Shujun, S.J., describes as a "spiritual hunger" in today's China.[3]

Today, most of the people turn their interest into more pragmatic and individualistic pursuits, notably personal economic success. However, such repercussion from economic and social changes fosters a deep spiritual quest for meaning. The effects of modernization may be ambiguous, but they seem to trigger a search for spirituality in many instances. In some cases, religion provides a deep healing for people who feel threatened and marginalized by the economic reforms, especially among the retired, the workers of the state-owned enterprises, and the peasants. In the urban youth context, religion

[3]Guo Shujun, "Responding to the Phenomenon of Spiritual Hunger" (thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, 2002), 104-11.

may give a deeper meaning to modernization and stimulate it. In such case, the spiritual quest is coexistent with the rise of capitalism. Individuals who have acquired some wealth embark on a more personal and spiritual quest while continuing their engagement in the secular world. In fact, "religious fever" concerns all religions in China, mostly Christianity.

More Controls Imposed on Religion

During the Cultural Revolution, as the country was engaged in a political struggle that prohibited the cultural, economic and religious aspects of life, all religious activities were forbidden. In 1979, the churches re-opened, but under the control of the Communist Party. In the 1980s, different religions were allowed in trickles to gain independence. However, following the crackdown on student movements in 1989, the Communist Party has progressively tightened its control, and required the registration of all churches and temples. In 1994, the State Council issued regulations allowing only those religious activities approved by the Religious Affairs Bureau (*zongjiaoju*).[4] One event, however, led to a stricter enforcement of the religious policy, i.e., the prohibition of Falun Gong as an "evil cult" in 1999. For the first time since communist rule in China, the country's leaders realized that religious movements, which have been growing unnoticed in the nineties, could be adequately organized to challenge authority. Stories tell us that one Sunday in April 1999, Chairman Jiang Zemin was shocked at the sight of thousands of Falun Gong practitioners silently encircling Zhongnanhai, the compound of the State officials near the Forbidden City in Beijing. As a result, Jiang Zemin expressed recognition of the importance of religion in the following words, "In religion, there is no small matter." This state-

[4]People's Republic of China, "Document 144: The Administrative Regulations for the Management of Foreigners Participating in Domestic Religious Activities," and "Document 145: Administrative Regulations for the Management of Places of Religious Worship."

ment was a departure from the classical Marxist theory, which holds that religions will progressively disappear with the development of science and society. The communist leaders thought previously that the development of technique, science and economy would destroy all religious beliefs, even more efficiently than any political campaign. After the Falun Gong incident, they somehow woke up from their naïve slumber.

The Party recognizes that since religions are a permanent and important feature of society, political fights on religious control will continue and must therefore be kept under strict control. The tightening of the religious control follows a general reassertion of the central government over the local governments, which are seen as having achieved too much autonomy in the 1980s (in such strategic areas as taxation, justice, religion, etc). For instance, some Party meetings in 2002 dealt with the persons-in-charge of applying religious policies. All over the country, local officials who had been too lax in their application of religious policies or those who had contributed public funds for the construction of churches and temples were punished. The new leadership under Hu Jingtao and Wen Jiaobao has thus far continued this policy established by Jiang Zemin. However, even under Jiang Zemin, conflicts in the different administrations exist, such as the one between the more restrictive Religious Affairs Bureau and the more liberal United Front Work Department (*tongzhanbu*), or the one between the municipalities in Beijing.

With regard to the Catholic Church, the Communist Party looks at discussions on the establishment of diplomatic ties with the Vatican as a way of controlling Catholic activities and negotiating their responsibilities on the establishment of diplomatic ties. It does not necessarily grant an increase in freedom or autonomy to the Catholic Church. After the general move toward negotiation in the 1990s, the year 2000 represents the lowest point of Catholic activities with the unilateral consecration of five bishops in Beijing on January 6 and the canonization in Rome of 120 martyrs on October 1 (feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China).

The Fragile Emergence of Civil Society

Despite strict control, the religious fever is sustained by the emergence of a civil society in present-day China. Civil society is composed of self-governed associations through which citizens organize themselves and participate in public affairs. With the disengagement of the State from many sectors of public life, citizens are empowering themselves, creating numerous associations that promote their interests in the fields of economy, culture, religion, etc. These associations, unless they choose to go "underground" and operate illegally, accept a certain degree of political control from the government. Christianity as a faith lived out in organized communities is already contributing its share to the emergence of a civil society in China.

However, it is not enough for Christianity to promote a civil society by its mere existence; there is also a need to check whether Christian groups foster true civic values. After all, an organization promoting its own narrow interests at the expense of the larger society could function in a civil society, but would not necessarily be civic. What then are the civic values we expect from any civilian association? These groups should first be committed to pluralism, i.e., respect of plurality in society. Each group should acknowledge that it does not exclusively represent the legitimate needs of society. Therefore, it should first allow overlapping membership in different associations in order to moderate and expand loyalties and interests. Second, the group, while promoting its own particular interest, should also consider the interests of other people, with a genuine concern for the whole of society. Third, in its internal decision-making, the group should foster horizontal relations over vertical ones, fulfilling the democratic request of cooperation among members.

The Catholic Church and Civil Society

Now let us examine whether the Christian groups in China meet the requirements of civic virtues. First, let us take the case of the

Catholic Church. New studies have been done in the past five years, focusing on rural Northern China (Hebei and Shanxi provinces), which constitutes the bulk of the Catholics. For example, Richard Madsen describes the Catholic religion as an "ethnic religion."[5] For sure, they do not belong to any minority ethnic group but they think and behave like the minority ethnic people. Their Catholic identity is not chosen but determined by the single factor of being born from Catholic parents and ancestors, and raised in a Catholic village. Of course, most of the Catholics in the world received their faith from their parents, but they will one day have to personally stand for their faith.

However, the problem with a religion lived as an ethnic identity is revealed in the difficulties experienced by the Chinese rural Catholics in living their faith meaningfully outside their village. Confronted with the modern lifestyle in the cities, they are usually at a loss. Without the support of their "natural community," many stop attending Sunday mass. In the village, Catholics feel secure but they entertain a fear of the outside world. The communities, therefore, tend to be self-enclosed. Fr. Guo Shujun describes the Church as a "sealed house."[6] It is the center of public life in the village, having assembly meetings twice a day and reciting the rosary without any deep knowledge of the basics of the faith. Mixed marriages are tolerated but strongly discouraged. The ideal village is one that is composed entirely of Catholics, and where the Church takes charge of the main sectors of public life (education, health, etc). They wish that the whole Chinese society follow such model. They tend to consider other beliefs (Protestants), other religions (Islam) or non-beliefs as purely erroneous, and they stay away from their so-called contamination. They also protect the interests of their own group at the expense of society (for example, not abiding by the laws and regulations of the State). Finally, the vertical model of authority exercised in the com-

---

[5]Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 53-56.

[6]Shujun, 6.

munity, with the priest as the only legitimate power, tends to annihilate the democratic request for more participation from the faithful.

In terms of the requirements for the promotion of a civil and civic society we have discussed above, the rural Catholic communities in China clearly fall short in many aspects: weak commitment to a pluralistic society, passive collaboration with government officials, and undemocratic internal functioning. All these impediments reflect the difficulty faced by rural communities in keeping up with the pace of modernization and protecting their identity. At the theological level, those communities have not yet adopted the spirit of Vatican II, and are having difficulty in becoming a "participatory church" and in going beyond "ecclesial-centricity" in order to reach out to other Christians and non-Christians.[7]

However, the situation may not be as bleak as it seems. Some factors give reason for hope. First, since many rural Catholics migrate toward the cities, an urban Catholicism overcoming the trap of clannish identity may be underway. Some migrants may reshape their Catholic identity in the modern world. They may find new meanings to their faith while immersed in the secular world, and voluntarily assume an identity received previously by birth. Second, the situation in rural Hebei is not representative of mainland China. For example, in *God Aboveground*, Eriberto Lozada presents a Hakka Catholic village in Guangdong province that is engaging itself with modernity, reshaping a religious identity in the broader context of faithfulness to ancestral traditions and opening itself to social and economic changes.[8] Third, international relations with Catholic communities from abroad may contribute to the opening of the Catholic Church in China. The connections established between the Fujian province

---

[7]Aloysius Chang, "The Church in China: Ecclesiological Impasse? A Christological and Trinitarian Approach Towards a Solution," *Tripod* 12 (May-Jun 1992): 65-69.

[8]Eriberto Lozada, *God Aboveground* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 178-96.

and the Catholics of the Philippines promote this opening to the modern world, giving local Catholics more confidence to deal with the larger society. All these factors may contribute to a Catholic Church truly participating in the emergence of a civil society in China and respectful of modern civic values. Beyond the dazzling number of conversions, China could truly become more Christian in such a process.

Of course, it is acknowledged that the Chinese government restrains the emergence of civil society, which is felt as a threat to its rule. However, civil society should not be thought of as totally independent from the government. In fact, the key lies in managing an adequate relationship between civil society and political power. The tradition of the Catholic Church moves toward a kind of contract with the Chinese State, where religious freedoms are included in a political concordat. The political tradition of China also moves toward the same direction since religious practices have always been integrated into the political administration of the State, largely giving freedom to the local level. The strict control imposed by communist rule until today is somehow a departure from traditional practice, which was generally quite liberal in the past. Therefore, it is hoped that the Catholic Church's commitment to the government and to civil society will be reciprocated by the government's commitment toward freer development and greater protection of civil society in China, including all religious organizations.

In this regard, we can see a positive movement from both the Vatican and the Chinese government in trying to find ways of nominating bishops acceptable to both sides. It is said that among the 72 bishops of the Catholic Patriotic Association, two-thirds are also recognized by Rome.[9] It is hoped that this positive evolution will be formalized as a procedure between the government and the Vatican in establishing diplomatic relations in the near future.

---

[9]There are 110 official dioceses, but 40 are still vacant, without appointed bishops. Aikman, 5-18, 245-62.

Protestant Churches and Civil Society

The Protestant churches have been growing at a much faster pace than the Catholic Church. While the growth in the number of Catholics can be attributed to a natural growth in population, the increase in the number of Protestants is largely due to recent conversions (by personal decision) of individuals with no previous Christian background. As a result, Protestants (all denominations combined) are twice as many as there are Catholics. It has been recognized that Protestant churches have a more balanced sociological and geographical distribution, as the communities are found in both the poor (Henan, Shandong) and the rich provinces (Zhejiang, Fujian), and in the villages and cities. Their communities are usually wealthier and closer to the modern world than are the Catholic communities. Protestant churches also have a greater flexibility in structure compared to the rigid structure of the Catholic Church. While catechism takes one or two years in the Catholic Church, it may take only a few days to receive baptism in Protestant churches; and the latter do not rely on ordained ministers, but on lay people, to organize communities.

In his book *Jesus in Beijing,* David Aikman shows how Protestants are entering into—not away from—modernity. He explains that believers are not only found among peasants, but also among academicians, businessmen, scientists, artists, musicians, and even inside the Communist Party and the People's Liberation Army. The growth in the number of Protestants comes mainly from the "house churches"—communities not registered with the government. These communities usually meet in their homes, and are united by different evangelical networks covering a province or the whole nation. Among the major networks are the Fengcheng Fellowship, the China Gospel Fellowship (Tanghe Fellowship named after a county), the Born-Again movement ("the weepers"), the Eastern Lightning (movements born in Henan province), and the Little Flock (founded by Watchman Nee).

However, despite their fast progression and positive attitude toward economic and social changes, the house churches face a serious problem of orthodoxy. This problem is not easily solved by their

present structure; it divides their community and isolates them from society. Unlike the Catholic Church, which stands united under the common Magisterium of the universal Church (despite divisions in the legitimacy of power at the theological level), the house churches have differences grounded on the theological level. On one end are the fundamentalists who hold "fundamental beliefs" such as speaking in tongues, the inerrancy of the Bible, the physical resurrection of Jesus, and the second coming of Christ. On the other end are the modernists who view faith from a psychological and social angle, insisting more on the humanity of Christ rather than a strong emphasis on the supernatural dimension of the faith and on the divinity of Christ. Between these two extremes, many movements are developing, proclaiming their own beliefs independently of other groups. Without much theological formation, heterodox teachings can easily grow.

The main difficulty encountered by Protestant churches lies in their lack of institutional regulation to solve their theological differences, unlike the Catholic Church. Without a common ground, the different groups are likely to overemphasize their own theological specificity and anathematize all the groups that do not follow their doctrines. Since many groups follow the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, which was brought to China by nineteenth-century missionaries, they believe that only the people who belong to their own group can be saved, and all other Christians and non-believers will be damned. Most of the house churches hold the belief in millennialism, i.e., the coming of Christ at the end of the millennium. From the house churches, heresies can occur, such as in the case of the Eastern Lightning's teaching that Jesus has already returned as a Chinese woman named Deng, now believed to be in her thirties in Henan province. Therefore, all those religious beliefs unchecked and unregulated by a common belief create more divisions and intolerance among Protestant groups.

Conscious of the cost of divisions, some groups have recently tried to find a common ground. In November 1998, leaders of house churches in Henan and Anhui met secretly and chartered a "Confes-

sion of Faith."[10] The Confession attempts to find an ecumenical ground that clearly states the fundamentals of the faith and other theological statements that may be legitimate options but not binding for all. For example, the Confession does not forbid speaking in tongues, nor does it insist on the claim that speaking in tongues is evidence of salvation. In addition, it does not impose any directive on whether Christ will come before or after the tribulation.

The ecumenical movement inside the Protestant churches has been initiated by the national house church leaders and is still inchoate. How this new spirit of tolerance will be implemented concretely remains to be seen. Most Protestants still have a very negative perception of the Catholic Church and other religions. Since they believe in the imminent second coming of Christ, and that Catholics and believers of other religions are condemned to hell, they feel a strong urgency to evangelize. While this is good, it is not always respectful of and sensitive to the people to whom they preach. For example, some house churches, believing that Jesus Christ is soon to come back to Jerusalem, are reviving the "Back to Jerusalem" movement that was initiated by Jin Dianying in 1921 for the evangelization of Muslims in Xinjiang province and in the Middle East. For this purpose, groups are presently training hundreds of Chinese missionaries to convert Muslims in the Middle East, Hindus in India, and Buddhists in Southeast Asia who live in the "10/40 window" and constitute ninety percent of the world population not yet reached by Christianity. They hope to train 100,000 Chinese missionaries for the year 2007, just two hundred years after the coming of Robert Morrison to China.[11]

---

[10]Document translated into English in Aikman, 295-307.

[11]The "10/40 window" targeted by the Chinese "Back to Jerusalem" missionary movement consists of all regions between 10 degrees above the equator and 40 degrees below. Information on this movement is found at: http://www.backtojerusalem.com.

Obviously, the evangelization by these fundamentalist groups is opposed to the values of tolerance and respect held by civil society. They advocate a "new crusade" against the Muslims inside and outside China since the latter's religion is considered to be "the biggest obstacle on the road back to Jerusalem." In effect, they want to "conquer" Muslim lands for Christ. But this kind of evangelization does not seem very Christian, as it is not respectful of cultural diversity and historical lessons. We can easily imagine how this rash evangelization can provoke Muslim countries or India, even if it is conducted by Chinese missionaries, not by Westerners.

Concerning their relation with the government, the house churches are largely influenced by the American evangelical groups and by a tradition whose religious ideals are independent of the State, and therefore refuse any form of control from the State. They hold that the religious identity of their members has priority over their citizenship. The radical attitude of the house churches toward political power and the proliferation of different groups endanger their commitment to the rule of law. Although the house churches do not advocate rebellion against the government, they still show a weak commitment toward the rule of law. For example, they refuse to register the house churches in the Religious Affairs Bureau because they argue that it is contrary to Scriptures, instead of arguing on the ground of freedom of association as a human right provision in the Chinese Constitution. Therefore, they seem to imply that religious activities are outside the scope of law. This was clearly stated when they appealed to the government to "admit God's great power."[12]

Conclusion

The Christian fever in today's China is astonishing. It could be said that the Communist Party of China has facilitated it, since it has eradicated all the traditional religions (popular religion, Buddhism)

---

[12]*United Appeal* (22 Aug 1998) in Aikman, 295-96.

and life-meaning philosophy (Confucianism) that could have competed with Christianity. With the demise of Marxism, Christianity has been the first to fill the spiritual vacuum, thanks to its emphasis on individual salvation. However, the rise of Christianity should be checked against the requirements of a true civil and civic society. As we have seen, both Catholics and Protestants are challenged by the emerging civil society, since both boldly regard their faith to be the exclusive model for China. Although Protestants are more integrated in the modern world, they share a common zeal with Catholics: both hold that their faith is the only truth and they are not so interested in knowing about other faiths and in entering into a dialogue with them. Between Catholics and Protestants, ecumenism is nearly non-existent, and they tend to treat each other's faith with disdain. Therefore, ecumenism among the different Protestant groups, between Protestants and Catholics, as well as inter-religious dialogue, are necessary steps toward a fuller access to a civil society holding civic virtues of pluralism.

The aim is not to evangelize China as a country, but the Chinese people who experience the saving power of Christ in their individual lives amid their culture and society. Many Chinese individuals may, with good reason (even if they have adequately been introduced to the Gospel message), decide not to adhere to the Christian faith. This situation, however, does not make them "sinful." On the contrary, religious plurality, and even agnosticism, may be part of God's plan. A healthy development of Christianity in China should go beyond the number of conversions. Christians should show a strong commitment to pluralism in civil society.

Landas 18:2 (2004) 244-264

JESUS, EVOLUTION AND THE ENVIRONMENT

A Critique of the CBCP's Statement on the Environment

Gabriel L. Lamug-Nañawa, S.J.

In recent years, there has been a growing global consciousness of the environmental issue. There has been a steadily rising awareness throughout the world of how our lifestyle as a species has adversely affected the natural world. Numerous scientists, theologians, and other concerned citizens of the world have tried to call attention to how humankind—either consciously or unconsciously—has damaged the natural environment to an unprecedented extent. This phenomenon is also present in our own country, the Philippines. The rather widespread use by fellow Filipinos of cyanide and dynamite fishing, indiscriminate slash-and-burn farming, unrelenting and indiscriminate logging, etc., have eradicated natural habitats, upset the ecological balance and nearly driven a number of plant and animal species into extinction.

In our own country, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has responded to this situation by issuing "What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?"[1] a pastoral letter on ecology.

---

[1]Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, "What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?" (http://www.cbcponline.org/documents/1980s/1988-ecology.html).

Its purpose was to educate and to bring to consciousness the environment issue, which has an uncanny way of staying unnoticed if one does not have a realistic view of the whole global environmental situation. This paper will begin by discussing the CBCP document, first its strengths and then its weaknesses, and will present some ideas that may be helpful for possible future reformulations of the statement.

In the end, it is the hope of the author that this paper may be a small step in the direction in which the entire Church will eventually lead all of us, the entire cosmos, into a more responsible and meaningful relationship with creation and with the Creator.

Outline of the CBCP Statement

What follows is an outline of the statement, through which a comprehensive understanding of what the CBCP said can be attained.

"What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?"

I. Introduction
   A. The present situation of the environment in the Philippines
      1. The Philippines has many issues (e.g., political instability, economic decline, growth in armed conflict) but there is a more deep-seated crisis that lies at the root of many problems.
      2. All the living systems on land and in the seas around us are being ruthlessly exploited. Within a short period of a few years:
         a. Luxuriant forests have turned to brown eroded hills.
         b. Flowing streams are now dried riverbeds.
         c. Productivity of croplands has fallen.
         d. Fish catch is now shrinking.
         e. Coral reefs and mangrove forests have been extensively destroyed.
      3. The attack on the natural world only benefits very few Filipinos.
   B. What does our faith say about this situation?
      1. In the light of the Gospel, this assault on creation is sinful and contrary to the teachings of our faith.

2. How is creation related to God?
   a. God created this world.
   b. God loves the world and is pleased with it.
   c. God created man and woman in his image and charged them to be stewards of creation.
   d. God wishes to share God's divine life with every creature.

C. Many have already called attention to this situation.
   1. Tribal people all over the Philippines have seen the destruction and have cried out in anguish.
   2. Those who value and who credibly study ecology have tried to alert people about the devastation taking place.

D. There is now a call to appreciate, respect, and defend life.
   1. People motivated by religious faith should develop a deep appreciation for the fragility of our islands' life-systems, reflect on the beauty of the Philippines, and give thanks to God for the many ways he has gifted our land.
   2. Christian men and women are called to take action and to stand on the side of life, and to cherish and protect what remains of the bounty of the Earth. Otherwise, there will continue to be less nutritious food, poorer health, an uncertain future, which could lead to an increase in political and social unrest.

II. The Beauty and the Pain of the Earth

A. The Beauty of the Earth
   1. The typical scenery of a barrio has wide plains of rice paddies flanked by coconut trees with *cogon* grass on the hills behind. Although landscapes like this mean so much to us and are beautiful, they do not represent the original vegetation that God created. In fact, they show the heavy hand of human labor, planning and shortsightedness.
   2. Our meditation must begin on the original beauty of our land, rivers and seas, on the wonderful community of the living before human beings came. It was our tribal forefathers who showed sensitivity and respect for nature through their hunting and food gathering techniques.
      a. Forests. The Philippines used to be a country covered with a blanket of trees, with over 7,500 species of flowering plants, not to mention numerous animals, birds and insects. Through the forest, clear rivers flowed into sparkling lakes, which

abounded in fish and aquatic life. Birds with bright plumes and varying calls added color and song to the forests. Small and large animals roamed the forest and feasted on its bounty. God is the creator who fashioned this world of life, color, mutual support and fruitfulness.

b. Seas. The Philippine islands were surrounded with blue seas, fertile mangroves and enchanting coral reefs.

3. Creation is a long process. It took millions of years to mold and reshape this land with all its beauty, richness and splendor. This original state is a fruit of God's wisdom and goodness.
4. God intended this land for men and women to be the stewards of his creation, to care for it, to protect its fruitfulness and not to allow it to be devastated. And by protecting it, we ensure that farmers produce food that will sustain us.

B. The Pain of the Earth

1. Our Forests Laid Waste. A few thousand years after human beings arrived in the Philippines, much of the richness and beauty are already gone. Humans have forgotten to live peacefully with other creatures, hunting them relentlessly and destroying their habitats. Out of the original 30 million hectares, there are now only 1 million hectares of primary forest left. Loggers and *kaingineros* are wiping out even the few remaining strands of forest. Now only cocks are heard crowing, with no sign of the soaring eagle or the colorful hornbill.
2. The Hemorrhage of Our Lifeblood. The erosion of fertile soil is equivalent to losing 100,000 hectares of soil one meter thick each year. Aside from retarding and killing coral polyps, continued erosion threatens the food supply for a growing population.
3. Deserts in the Sea. Due to the dumping of mine tailings and other chemicals into the sea, together with the use of destructive fishing methods such as *muro ami* and dynamite, fish habitats are being destroyed. In fact, only 5 percent of corals in the Philippines are pristine. Chemicals poison land, rivers, and the sea—and these, in time, will poison us as well.
4. Recent Destruction Carried Out in the Name of Progress. The building of roads and the availability of electricity are usually called progress. However, the poor are as disadvantaged as ever and the natural world has been grievously wounded.

a. Lands produce less food.
b. Air in the cities is heavy with noxious fumes.
c. Forests are almost gone.
d. Rivers are almost empty.
e. Springs and wells no longer sparkle with living water.
f. Flash floods sweep through towns and cities.
g. Lakes and estuaries are full of silt.
h. Toxic waste and mine tailings are dumped into rivers and seas.
i. Poison is taken in by organisms; in turn, we feed on these.

5. Through our thoughtlessness and greed, we have sinned against God and creation.

III. We Can and Must Do Something About it

A. The bishops call on all Filipinos to recognize the urgency of this task and to respond to it now. Filipinos must be particularly careful to protect what remains of the forests, rivers, and corals, and to heal, wherever possible, the damage that has already been done.

B. Signs of Hope

1. Tribal People. Tribal Filipinos today still attempt to live in harmony with nature. They are living examples of how the exploitative approach to the natural world is foreign to Filipino culture.
2. Filipino Family Values. Parents, particularly mothers, care for and protect their children especially when they are sick. No sacrifice is too demanding when it comes to caring for a sick member of the family. These values of love, concern, and sacrifice for the sick and the weak must now include the wider sphere of our land, which is in need of healing.
3. Sensitivity to Beauty. Even in the poorest homes, parents and children care for plants and flowers.
4. Initiatives Already Taken. These concrete initiatives can effect real change if they can join together as one movement.
   a. Massive local resistance succeeded in suspending the Chico dam project and the Bataan nuclear power plant.
   b. The residents of San Fernando, Bukidnon and Madsalip, Zamboanga del Sur, defended with their own bodies what remained of their forest from loggers.

c. In the Santa Cruz Mission in South Cotabato, serious efforts are underway to reforest bald hills and to develop ecologically sound ways of farming.

d. The diocese of Pagadian has chosen the Eucharist and ecology as its pastoral focus for the year.

IV. Theological References

A. Our Vision

1. The new vision must come from an understanding of the world as God intended it to be. The shape of this world can be known by looking at how God originally fashioned it.
2. This vision is also grounded in faith. God created this beautiful and fruitful world for all his creatures and that he has made us stewards of his creation.
3. The relationship that links God, human beings and the rest of creation is emphasized in the covenant that God made with Noah. As people of the covenant, we are called to protect the land and to establish just human communities in our land.

B. Christ Our Life

1. Jesus lived lightly on the earth and displayed an attitude of respect toward the natural world. He was very much aware that all creatures in God's creation were related.
2. Christ is the centerpoint of human history and creation. The rich unfolding of the universe and the flowering of life are centered on him. Therefore, the destruction of creation defaces the image of Christ etched in creation.

C. Mary, Mother of Life

1. Mary is on the side of the poor and those who are rejected (cf. Luke 1:52).
2. As a mother, she is pained and saddened when she sees people destroy the integrity of creation.
3. Therefore, as the Mother of Life, Mary challenges us to abandon the pathway of death and return to the way of life.

V. What We Suggest

A. Individuals. Be aware of environmental problems around you and engage them from within your own circle of influence, your family and community.

B. Church

1. The Church as a community is called to conversion regarding the environment, the ultimate pro-life issue.

2. There is great need for a Filipino theology of creation, sensitive to our own unique culture and religious heritage.
3. Liturgies must deliberate on the beauty and pain of our world, our connection to the natural world and the on-going struggle for social justice.
4. Catholic schools should give special importance to the theme of peace, justice, and the integrity of creation.

C. Government
1. We ask the government not to pursue short-term economic gains at the expense of long-term ecological damage.
2. We suggest that the government group together all the agencies that deal with ecological issues into an independent department that will work with other departments for the welfare of the environment.
   a. This department should regularly publish a report on the state of the environment of each region and of the country as a whole.
   b. This department needs legislative teeth to ensure that its policies and programs are implemented.
   c. Research on the ecosystems of our land and the problems they face are also important.

D. Non-government. NGOs are important in developing a widespread ecological awareness among the people, and in monitoring and ensuring that the government does not renege on their commitment to work for the environment.

VI. Conclusion. This brief statement about our living world and its deterioration attempts to reflect the cry of our people and the cry of our land. As bishops, we have tried to listen and to respond to their cry. At the root of the problem is an exploitative mentality that is at variance with the Gospel of Jesus. We call for widespread education and immediate action.

Evaluation of the CBCP Statement

Strengths of the Statement

Explicitly on the Environment

The CBCP's "What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?" is the first document of its kind in the Philippines and is, so far, the only

one explicitly focused on the environment as a whole, aside from the one-page CBCP statement of concern in 1998 that focused on the Mining Act of 1995. "What is Happening to Our Beautiful Land?" calls attention to the environmental issue by juxtaposing the natural beauty of our land and the devastation we Filipinos have caused. It is a call for help, hoping to bring this issue to the level of consciousness by also making it an integral aspect of one's faith life.

From a somewhat theological perspective, the document acknowledges that the Philippines used to be very rich in terms of its natural resources—with all of us, in one way or another, contributing to its ruin. But it also provides hope by affirming the cultural traits that can help Filipinos recover what was lost, and by citing many concrete instances when Filipino communities, on their own initiatives, have defended their land against abuse. The sad state of our environment and the need for our immediate action are unmistakably the focal point of the document.

Filipino Symbols and Values

The document cites three symbols or values that provide signs of hope that the Filipino people have inherent cultural resources from which they may draw strength and guidance in the endeavor of environmental care and repair. These are: a) the indigenous peoples' regard for nature; b) strong family ties; and c) native appreciation for beauty in nature.

By citing the experience of Filipino indigenous communities, the document asserts that the Filipino people have, deep in their culture, an appreciation and regard for nature that is neither exploitative nor destructive. "Our forefathers and tribal brothers and sisters today still attempt to life in harmony with nature. They see the Divine Spirit in the living world and show their respect through prayers and offerings." This is made to show that it is possible for whole groups of people to benefit from but, at that same time, harmoniously co-exist with the environment.

The document also praised the Filipino family, underlining the love and care parents have for their children and the extent to which

they will go in order to keep them well and healthy. This attitude of concern for the weak and the sick may be extended outside the family to include the ailing environment. "The values we see in our families of patient toil, concern for all and a willingness to sacrifice for the good of others are the very values which we must now transfer to the wider sphere in our efforts to conserve, heal and love our land." Native to the Filipino family is a compassionate heart for the afflicted, which may be encouraged to include suffering non-human beings.

Finally, poverty has never hindered the Filipinos' appreciation for beauty. Even the poorest of homes will have flowers, pictures of beautiful houses on their walls, or at least some form of décor. By and large, Filipinos have an appreciation for beauty in nature, which eventually manifests itself in community-based efforts to resist the building of dams, the clearing of forests, etc., in order to preserve the beauty of the land.

Theological Basis

The document points to some theological basis to support its call for environmental action. For one, it consistently refers to God the Creator, as depicted in the two creation narratives of Genesis, and to our role as stewards of God's creation. Also, human beings and creation are bound by a covenant, initially made between God and Noah after the flood (Gen 9:19), which continues to bind us in preserving and protecting the integrity and beauty of God's creation.

The document also looks to Jesus Christ and finds theological relevance in two ways. First, it sees Jesus of Nazareth, through how He lived lightly on the land, as having the proper regard for creation. "We have much to learn from the attitude of respect which Jesus displayed toward the natural world. He was very much aware that all the creatures in God's creation are related." Second, taking off from Paul's theology of Christ and creation, it briefly says that "Christ is the centerpoint of human history and creation."

Finally, reference is also made to Mary as the Mother of Life, who listens to her children and turns to the side of the poor, the weak, and the rejected. "As a mother she is pained and saddened

when she sees people destroy the integrity of creation through soil erosion, blast-fishing or poisoning land." She, too, is troubled by the destruction of the environment and makes a call for us to "abandon the pathway of death and return to the way of life."

Weaknesses of the Statement

Unclear Motivations

Although the CBCP document makes a definite and unambiguous call to address environmental issues, it is not clear about the deeper motivations for doing so. It seems that the reasons for environmental action are varied and mixed together, with anthropocentric motivations as one of the strongest. In the section entitled "A Call to Respect and Defend Life," it says:

> We, the Catholic Bishops of the Philippines, ask Christians and all people of goodwill in the country to reflect with us on the beauty of the Philippine land and seas which nourish and sustain our lives. As we thank God for the many ways He has gifted our land we must also resolve to cherish and protect what remains of this bounty for this and future generations of Filipinos. We are well aware that, for the vast majority of Filipinos, the scars on nature, which increasingly we see all around us, mean less nutritious food, poorer health and an uncertain future. This will inevitably lead to an increase in political and social unrest.

The fact that creation nourishes and sustains our lives is not being denied. Our dependence on the natural world and our gratitude for what we receive are not being contested. However, if the adverse effects on ourselves of a polluted world is used as the main argument and motivator for action, then we have reduced the value of creation according to how humanity is affected by it. "Because the living world is interconnected, the poison is absorbed by marine organisms. We in turn are gradually being poisoned when we eat seafood." In several scattered places in the document, this type of reasoning is evident.

The role of God, as the document treats it—that of Christ's, for example—hardly seems adequate. Reference to Christ is only because of how he lived lightly on the land and because of the "attitude of

respect which Jesus displayed toward the natural world. He was very much aware that all the creatures in God's creation are related." The document goes further, however, speaking of Christ as the "centerpoint of human history and creation." Unfortunately, it does not go very far at all in explaining this theme and in using it as a basis for environmental action.

Nostalgia and Human Intervention

The first section of the document focuses on the beauty and desirability of the pristine, wild, and untouched form of our land. It describes dense forests, clear flowing rivers and sparkling lakes, rich vegetation, etc., before the coming to the scene of any man or woman. This "original" beauty is emphasized and praised so much, while apparently looking down on any or all kinds of human intervention.

> As you read this letter or listen to sections of it being read, scenes from your barrio may come to mind. In your mind's eye you may see well laid out rice paddies flanked by coconuts with their fronds swaying in the breeze. Or you may hear the rustle of the *cogon* grass on the hills behind your barrio. These scenes mean so much to us and are beautiful. Yet they do not represent the original vegetation with which God has blessed our land. They show the heavy hand of human labor, planning and sometimes short-sightedness.

A certain sense of nostalgia is communicated. An unbridled preference for untouched nature, for a state prior to human involvement, is put forward as the ideal paradise. At the same time, there seems to be a sweeping judgment of human participation as necessarily evil and destructive.

> We often use the word progress to describe what has taken place over the past few decades. There is no denying in some areas our roads have improved and that electricity is more readily available. But can we say that there is real progress? Who has benefited most and who has borne the real costs? The poor are as disadvantaged as ever and the natural world has been grievously wounded. We have stripped it bare, silenced its sounds and banished other creatures, from the community of the living. Through our thoughtlessness and greed we have sinned against God and His Creation.

It cannot be denied that the sad state of the environment today is due to human action, either intentional or unintentional. It is true that humankind's ignorance and greed have played major roles in forging the present environmental predicament. However, it would be a mistake to regard all kinds of human intervention as destructive. Moreover, it would be unrealistic, and perhaps even immoral, to leave nature absolutely untouched, allowing human beings to die from diseases or other living creatures from natural calamities.

One source of hope that the document provides is the example set by indigenous peoples who are able to live lightly on the land.

> Despite the pain and despoliation which we now have mentioned, there are signs of hope. Our forefathers and tribal brothers and sisters today still attempt to live in harmony with nature. They see the Divine Spirit in the living world and show their respect through prayers and offerings. Tribal Filipinos remind us that the exploitative approach to the natural world is foreign to our Filipino culture.

It seems that tribal peoples are being held up as the ideal example for living harmoniously with the environment. The document, however, does not elaborate further as to how and to what extent should the other Filipinos imitate their tribal brothers and sisters. Should Filipinos live like the tribal groups? How are we called to do so? If it is impractical to imitate their lifestyle literally, how should their harmony with nature be lived out in the modern and ambiguous world?

In addition, the statement seems to put the blame for environmental destruction solely on the deliberate and malicious actions by human beings who are motivated by greed coupled with a lack of respect for the common good. Although greed and conscious action are certainly part of the reason, the statement is practically silent on how our unconscious habits of consumption and the repercussions of human activity—of which we are mostly ignorant about—have contributed immensely to the sad state of the natural world today.

Static Worldview: Environment as Completely Other

The creation narratives figure in a number of places in the document, referring to God as creator of all, and humankind as the stewards to whom God entrusted creation. "The Bible tells us that God created this beautiful and fruitful world for all His creatures to live in (Gen 1:1 - 2:4) and that He has given us the task of being stewards of His Creation (Gen 2:19-20)." As stewards, we have been called by God to protect creation and to help it get "back on its feet," as it were.

> You might ask: Why is it important to remember the original state of our land? First of all, it reminds us of how God, in His wisdom and goodness, shaped this land in this part of the world... God intended this land for us, his special creatures, but not so that we might destroy it and turn it into a wasteland. Rather, He charged us to be stewards of his creation, to care for it, to protect its fruitfulness and not to allow it to be devastated (Gen 1:28).

Although there is evident scriptural basis for the call for environmental action, it seems that it does so within a static worldview. From this perspective, there is apparently no need for an evolutionary worldview; it is irrelevant. Action for the environment on the one hand, and evolution on the other, seem to be totally unrelated topics here.

The statement does, however, acknowledge that the process of creation took a very long time; in fact, it has a section devoted to this. But it is not referring to the dynamic phenomenon of evolution at all. The document simply means that it took a very long process for creation to reach its original pristine state of perfection, which no longer exists because of human action.

The working theological-anthropological framework in this document is this: God created everything, God entrusted creation to humankind and commissioned humankind to act as its steward, and it is now our responsibility, with God's help, to take proper care of God's creation, for our own benefit and for future generations. "The Bible tells us that God created the world, (Gen 1:1); that he loves His world and is pleased with it (Gen 1:4,10,12,18,21,25,31); and

that He created man and woman in His image and charged them to be stewards of His creation (Gen 1:27-28)."

The perspective of the document, which betrays a static worldview, is that God created everything perfectly from the very beginning. There was nothing wrong or lacking with God's creation. This original state of perfection is what is meant when the document refers to our beautiful land in its wild and untouched condition.

But now, we must work to repair the damage we have caused. Our role as stewards has now been highlighted. However, the direction of our task in caring for the earth is to help bring it back to its original condition, to the way God originally intended it to be. In fact, this is the emphasis of the document's vision. "This vision must blossom forth from our understanding of the world as God intends it to be. We can know the shape of this world by looking at how God originally fashioned our world and laid it out before us." We are asked to reflect on and refer back to the original state of creation's perfection, and to bring creation back to its original state since it represents the fullest reality of what can possibly be found in the present.

Thus, the document sees the world as having begun in perfection, slowly degenerated through time, and with no possibility of creative innovation and progress. The environment, therefore, is regarded as something completely other, as sharing no common history, and having no inherent relation with our very own identity.

Suggested Ideas

Intrinsic Value

There are a variety of reasons for doing environmental action—or any type of action, for that matter. Denis Edwards summarizes the general categories and argues for the intrinsic value of creatures based on their relationship with God, rather than on their usefulness to humans.

> It is not an ethical view in which everything is centered on human beings (anthropocentrism). Nor is it simply the alternative view,

> which would see everything centered on living creatures (biocentrism). It is not even simply a view which would see the whole Earth or the universe as the center of ethical discussion (geocentrism or cosmocentrism). Rather, the argument here is that all things have value in themselves because of their relationship with God.[2]

Any given action is done mainly because of its benefit to ourselves, or to the creatures themselves, to the system in general, or because of God. The intrinsic value of creatures is not based on its benefit to us or because of the creatures in themselves. Their intrinsic value is viewed from a theocentric orientation, deriving their value from their relationship with God.

To use destructive fishing methods, such as cyanide or dynamite, in order to increase catch and profit without care for its repercussions on the coral reef would be anthropocentric. However, to argue against these fishing methods, although legitimate—but in favor of the benefits the preserved coral reef would have for the human community—would also be anthropocentric.

What follows are five aspects of God's participation in or relationship with materiality, derived from Rahner's christology within an evolutionary worldview, which may be used to defend a theocentric view of the intrinsic value of all creatures. This also brings in an evolutionary view of the world, which is virtually absent from the perspective of the CBCP statement.

God is the Divine Press Within Creatures

Within and despite the universal influence of entropy, there are certain pockets within the universe and its processes that show a tendency toward complexity, organization and order, a concentration of energy that builds things up. Our presence here in this universe is made possible by a widespread tendency toward self-organization and also a capacity to cross critical thresholds into new stages of

---

[2]Denis Edwards, *Jesus the Wisdom of God: An Ecological Theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1995), 154.

complexity. This march toward self-organization and transcendence, which is observed through evolutionary change, occurs because of a power that comes from within the creature. However, this power is not due to the intrinsic nature of the creature but must be understood as the press of the divine being acting from within. God is at the heart of the evolutionary process, empowering it from within, continually drawing creation to a surprising and radically new future.

Christ is Present Within All Creatures, Pressing Toward Self-Transcendence

God is the absolute and dynamic power of self-transcendence at the heart of the universe, the divine nature that empowers the evolutionary movement from within. Since the press of the divine from within creation is admittedly Trinitarian, then the risen Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, is also at the heart of the evolutionary movement of the unfolding cosmos, radically and permanently one with the absolute being that empowers the universe. The divine nature of Jesus Christ is precisely the same divine nature that is creatively at work in all cosmic history.

Jesus, a Product of the Evolutionary Process

In an evolutionary worldview, what does Jesus as fully human mean? The man Jesus is necessarily a part of the evolutionary process: a product of the Big Bang, the formation of the Milky Way, the unfolding of our Solar System, the molding of the crust of the Earth, the development of life on the planet, and the emergence of consciousness. He, like us, is the universe come to consciousness, a person truly of the Earth, truly a part of biological evolution. He, too, is made of stardust. Jesus, as the product of the evolutionary history of matter, is the self-transcendence of the cosmos reaching out to God. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the cosmos reaches a climax and utters the "yes" to God's self-communication, a response that the whole cosmos has been moving toward throughout its history. In this one product of evolutionary history, the cosmos accepts God in a definitive and absolute way.

Enduring Role of Jesus' Humanity for the Salvation of the Entire Cosmos

What is the place or role of the humanity of Jesus after his death and resurrection? The human nature of the second person of the Trinity is not a quality that can be discarded after having served its salvific purpose two thousand years ago. The humanity of Jesus has an enduring role in our relationship with God—it is and will always be our way to God. The human reality of Jesus, continuing to exist forever as the reality of the Word of God, permanently mediates God's grace to us. As Rahner writes of Jesus, "This created human nature is the indispensable and permanent gateway through which everything created must pass if it is to find the perfection of its eternal validity before God." Our union with God occurs not through some purely mystical flights into the absolute, but through Jesus of Nazareth. Furthermore, not only is the humanity of Jesus eternally significant for the salvation of human beings, but this same humanity of Jesus is also eternally significant for the whole created universe.

Redemption of the Entire Cosmos

The universe has a life span. Just like any living organism, birth and death punctuate its life. Whether an open or a closed system, the entire universe as we know it will eventually come to an end. But just as we believe in the resurrection of the human body in a glorified form, we can believe in God's fulfillment for the material universe as well. God's power and intention to save embraces not just humanity, but all of creation. Therefore, God's redemptive action can be understood not only to mean the redemption of the human body, but the redemption of the entire cosmos as well. Our relationship with the cosmos is not terminated at death. Rather, the glorified body somehow becomes the perfect expression of this relationship. Matter itself will be taken up into the final consummation of all things in God.

It is evident that God did not simply create the universe and then hand it over to humankind for stewarding. There is a very intimate relationship, an intertwining bond, between God and creation, so much so that it is plausible to argue for the intrinsic value of all creatures due to God's relationship with materiality and our world.

God is the divine press within creatures, urging creation to cross critical thresholds toward active self-transcendence. Jesus, through the Incarnation, is forever deeply bound to some form of materiality, having emerged from the evolutionary process Himself and having allowed His humanity to be the gateway for the salvation of the whole created cosmos, which will somehow have a share in the beatific vision. In short, God did not create and use matter only to discard it after it has served its purpose. Creation has an abiding value for God. Creation is "indeed the voice of the divine, and to destroy one of them irresponsibly is to stop arbitrarily a mode of divine self-expression."[3] Therefore, intrinsic to creation is a value that we should recognize and respect as well, and not simply measure the worth of creatures based on the benefit we gain from them.

Creative Tension Between Human Dignity and Creatures' Intrinsic Value

The document seems to be both non-interventionist and also anthropocentric at the same time. This is not a contradiction. On the one hand, the document seems to unwittingly espouse a non-interventionist stance because it gives too much preference for the wild and untouched form of nature while characterizing human involvement as necessarily evil. This position also downgrades the dignity and disregards the unique giftedness of the human person. Here, the interpretation of "equality" is that human beings are simply one species among many others, having no more dignity and rights than any other creature. The insect has as much value as the human person. On the other hand, as has already been pointed out, the document can be viewed as being anthropocentric (i.e., creation derives its value from its benefit to human beings).

An alternative, which avoids these two positions, understands the human person as the cosmos come to self-awareness. Human beings, self-conscious descendants of the material world, bear and

---

[3]Ibid., 155.

represent all of creation. The material universe finds itself in them. Through each member of the human community, the cosmos presses forward toward self-consciousness. God has made matter in such a way that it becomes self-aware and capable of entering into a free and personal relationship with God. This view gives humankind and every human being enormous dignity. It highlights the unique giftedness of each human person, who is the most sophisticated concentration of consciousness and complexity in the entire known universe. At the same time, their inherent connection with and responsibility for the rest of creation are still affirmed. The recognition of human dignity remains balanced with creatures' intrinsic value.

> A Christian discipleship will need to recognize both the intrinsic value of all creatures and the unique dignity of human creatures. It will need to be committed to both ecology and justice. It will need to respect both the integrity of creation and the dignity of the human person... Social justice and care for the planet are not understood as competing options, but as part of one ethical stance. Action aimed at just economic and social conditions and action aimed at ecological sustainability are interrelated dimensions of the one praxis of discipleship.[4]

It is not right to hold up creation over humanity, in a non-interventionist orientation, and assume that humanity's actions are always and necessarily destructive. It is equally wrong, for human beings to lord it over creation and to determine its value in relation to them. Neither is creation equal in dignity with the human person; a human being and a dog do not have identical value. Maintaining that all creatures have intrinsic value—because of how God participates in their being—does not negate the affirmation of unique human dignity. Both values, human dignity and creation's intrinsic value, are to be held together in creative tension.

---

[4]Ibid., 157.

Single Evolutionary History

The universe is one. This tenet may be discussed on various levels, from different starting points. Rahner began with the relationship between matter and spirit. It is easy to give in to the temptation to regard human bodies as connected to the Earth and the rest of creation, while the spirits or souls of these bodies soar in a pure world beyond the bonds of matter. This dualism, while affirming complexity, manages it by elevating one dimension of life to the level of the divine, and reducing the other to nothing or to the demonic. But as evolution illustrates, spirit has emerged from matter. We can further make the claim that it is intrinsic to matter that it develops toward spirit. Matter and spirit, though distinct, are not separate; both make up one world. They share one common history in which matter has evolved toward spirit or consciousness. All of creation is radically and fundamentally one.

Accepting that matter tends toward spirit and that spirit emerged from matter, there is really no strict ontological duality that can be established between the human person and the rest of creation. The environment is not completely other, distinct and separate from ourselves, from which we simply draw resources in order to live, which we now have to repair. Since we are the universe come to self-consciousness, we, and the world from which we have emerged, belong to a single evolutionary history.

Our approach then to the environment is not as absolutely other, but as a profound part of our own selves. The elements that compose whales and stars are the same ones that run through our veins. We are all related in a very intimate way as companions, as family. We are one community, all of us bear a will to live from and for God.

Conclusion

Although this statement from Catholic bishops breaks ground by being one of the first to call attention to the environment, it remains very static and devoid of contemporary ideas such as evolution and

what this paradigm-shifting reality can mean for creation and our being its stewards. Basically, the worldview of the CBCP statement on the environment is traditional: God created the universe, which has an original, untouched and paradisiacal form. Concomitant with the coming of human beings is the widespread destruction of God's created world. Now, there is a call to help repair what we have done and, hopefully, bring it back to the way it was.

As we have seen, several recent ideas, all stemming from a deeper understanding of evolution, affords us with perspectives and values that enrich our estimation of and appreciation for God's creation. From evolution, we can affirm the intrinsic value of God's creatures, the dignity of the human person, and the power and presence of God throughout the single evolutionary history.

All of God's creatures, including humans, share a profound affinity with each other. Perhaps some of these ideas may be incorporated in the future in improving and reformulating the position and teaching of the CBCP regarding creation and our stewardship of the environment.

Landas 18:2 (2004) 265-282

FORMATION OF THE BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITY AS AN AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

Ma. Fe Mendoza, R.G.S.

It is only fitting that this mission conference sponsored by the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists and focused on basic ecclesial communities (BECs) in Mindanao, should take place in Davao City, close to where they started. The movement began in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in the deaneries of Lupon and Nabunturan of the Prelature of Tagum under the pastoral care of the Maryknoll Missionaries and some young diocesan clergy.

From the start, what were desired were Christian communities active in the life of the parish, and their formation was geared to this end. The first sign of their gaining ground was in growing liturgical participation. Then Martial Law was imposed in 1972. In the ensuing years, the hard times that martial law brought widened BEC formation to include the concern for bread, justice, peace, and love. The organization of the Church in Mindanao in 1971, through the First Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC I), provided a venue for the spread of the good news of the BECs. By 1974, the Second

---

*Lecture delivered at conference sponsored by the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists on February 13, 2004.

Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC II) had picked it up in the conference theme, "Building Christian Communities in Mindanao-Sulu in the '70s: The Self-Nourishing, Self-Sustaining and Self-Governing Community." The BECs all over Mindanao eventually became targets of suspicion as being anti-government, and they experienced hamletting, massacres, salvaging, and martyrdom. But they endured. Theirs is a glorious memory.

Nearly three decades later, the May 2001 elections took place following EDSA II. If anything, it was an eye-opener for the more attentive within the Church in Mindanao. The issue was to vote for the candidates of either the *Pwersa ng Masa*, the political party of the recently impeached President, or the People Power Coalition of the new administration. Tri-people Mindanao had been suffering under Abu Sayyaf terrorism and the all-out war of the Estrada government against the MILF, which was waging its own war of independence. How Mindanao voted was telling. In general, Muslims voted against the *Pwersa ng Masa* to protest the all-out war policy. Christians, on the other hand, voted for the *Pwersa ng Masa* in favor of the all-out war.[1] Among these Christians, undoubtedly, were the BECs. For those who had invested blood, sweat and tears in interreligious dialogue and in the formation of BECs, especially in the ardor of the early years, these results were a shock and a painful call to reflection. The results demonstrated two realities: (1) the exigency for interreligious dialogue as not yet being in the consciousness of most Christians, and (2) the fragility of the BECs.

The year 2001 was exactly ten years after the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) had decreed regarding BECs:

> Basic Ecclesial Communities under various names and forms—BCCs, small Christian communities, small faith communities, covenant communities—must be vigorously promoted for the full living of the Christian vocation in both urban and rural areas. Active

[1]Allan Nawal, "Mindanao Vote: Christians for PnM; Muslims for PPC," *Philippine Daily Inquirer*, 20 May 2001, A1.

non-violence will be a guiding principle in their approach to social change.[2]

As the "new way of being Church," in the language adopted by PCP II from the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), BECs can trace their missionary identity to *Ad Gentes* when it said in 1965: "The Church on earth is by its very nature missionary since, according to the plan of the Father, it has its origin in the mission of the Son and the Holy Spirit" (AG 2).

The year 2001 came eleven years after the promulgation of the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* in which BECs received the clearest affirmation since they began some twenty or more years earlier. Of them John Paul II said in no uncertain terms:

> A rapidly growing phenomenon in the young churches—one sometimes fostered by the bishops and their Conferences as a pastoral priority—is that of "ecclesial basic communities" (also known by other names) which are proving to be good centers for Christian formation and missionary outreach.... These communities are a sign of vitality within the Church, an instrument of formation and evangelization, and a solid starting point for a new society based on a civilization of love.
>
> ...[T]hese communities become a means of evangelization and of the initial proclamation of the Gospel, and a source of new ministries. At the same time, by being imbued with Christ's love, they also show how divisions, tribalism and racism can be overcome (RM 51).

What happened to the BECs, we have cause to wonder, in the intervening years between the end of the martial law regime and the elections of 2001? While doing research on BECs in January 2000, I was told of a Mindanao-wide survey that had been undertaken by a Church body. That survey might have given us some clues. Unfortu-

---

[2]Second Plenary Council of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), 267.

nately, that entity was closed down and the survey data were somewhere in Davao City, unpublished, inaccessible, and perhaps still waiting to be systematized until now.

No doubt the formation of the earliest BECs was adequate for their time. One recalls that social analysis was considered an integral part of it, a tool for BECs to understand the Philippine situation under martial rule, their own situation, and eventually their role as agents for social transformation. It would not be a hasty generalization to say that the formation modules of that time were tailored to their context. When, in 1986, the context began to change, we seemed to lose track of the BECs. Did they lose steam because they were no longer challenged, no longer persecuted? Not only of BECs were these questions being asked. Other hitherto vibrant initiatives were asking each other the same questions. *Quo vadis?* The context had indeed changed because democratic structures had been restored, but the shadow of the military was still there, we were still poor, and with globalization in full force with our entry into the World Trade Organization, we would be poorer still. How were the BECs coping? Did anyone ask?

Sustainable Formation: Does It Exist?

My topic is the formation of BECs as authentic communities at the service of mission, but it is not the intent of this paper to present a module for BEC formation. Rather, it aims to offer a screen on which to view BEC authenticity so that hopefully some formation modules may arise.

Our search is directed toward a framework for formation that is transhistorical, which is not bound to a particular history and is valid for all time. Our search widens to include a framework that is transcultural, which applies to communities anywhere in the world. Such a framework has already been offered, waiting to be appropriated, for nearly half a century now. I refer to the insight of the Jesuit theologian and philosopher, Bernard Lonergan, into human authen-

ticity and community. So extensive is Lonergan's contribution[3] to philosophy and theology in the postmodern world that the project of selecting that which directly applies to our task is a monumental one. What is more, his language is not known for being student-friendly, so that even the recognized Lonergan experts continue to call themselves ongoing students of his thought. But to venture in is to find the treasure. Lonergan's insight is valid for all times and all cultures because it is founded on a constant—the normative structure of human consciousness, that consciousness by which we are the image of God, and the very same structure of the human consciousness of Jesus.

Our screen will have three panels. The first panel is on the formation of the authentic individual, the child and the adult, the potential member of a BEC. The second panel is on the formation of the authentic community, the family and the neighborhood, the potential BEC. The third panel is on the redemptive mission of the Christian community, of which the BEC is a basic unit. For a fair treatment of Lonergan's contribution to our topic, there ought to be at least eight panels, but for the time available to us, we shall have to do with three, and hope for the best.

The Formation of the Authentic Individual

Lonergan uses a spatial metaphor to explain human development (for which we substitute the term "formation"). Formation occurs in two distinct modes. It moves from below upwards and from above downwards. The upward movement is *the way of achievement*; the downward movement is *the way of tradition, heritage, gift.* These two modes are interdependent. Both begin from infancy,[4] but the movement from

---

[3]The ongoing publication of his 20-volume collected works is with the University of Toronto Press.

[4]Bernard Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2/2 (Oct 1984): 10.

above is first in chronology; it creates the conditions for the movement from below to occur.[5] In a climate of affectivity, values are apprehended early on in the way of tradition, but their real assimilation and appropriation belongs to the way of achievement.

A. Formation as Achievement

The path of achievement takes us up the five levels of our consciousness: experiencing, understanding, judging, deciding, and loving. The single name given to each level is a signature, the principal conscious operation among the many that actually occur there, except for loving, which has its own dynamics. "Man achieves authenticity in self-transcendence."[6] To transcend oneself is to move to the next higher level. On these very same levels winds the downward path of the way of tradition, heritage, gift.

Now, before we proceed any further, we hear a word from Bernard Lonergan, an invitation. And the invitation he calls "self-appropriation" is to discover oneself in oneself. As we go through his thematization of human consciousness, we are invited to locate the operations in ourselves and later conduct personal experiments.

1. Experiencing and Its Images. Experiencing is simply to be conscious. It involves the operations of our external and internal senses by which we become aware of objects. By the external sense of seeing, we are aware of the visible; by hearing, of sounds; by touching, of heat, cold, texture; by tasting, of flavors; by smelling,

---

[5]For some reason, Lonergan did not elaborate as much on the way of tradition, heritage, gift. Frederick Crowe, widely recognized as his most authoritative interpreter, does this in his two books: *Old Things and New: A Strategy for Education*, supplementary issue of *Lonergan Workshop* 5 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1985); *Appropriating the Lonergan Idea*, ed. Michael Vertin (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1989).

[6]Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972), 57. Inclusive language was in use at a later time. This paper will quote Lonergan exactly as he wrote.

of odors. By the internal senses of imagination and memory, the images from external sensation may be recalled, combined or woven into fantasy. Simultaneously, I transcend myself in a three-fold manner when, as a bell rings, I am aware of the bell, I am aware that I am hearing the bell, and I am aware of myself hearing the bell. For me to be fully conscious in this way, I must heed what Lonergan identifies as the built-in transcendental precept of this level: *Be attentive!* Beyond this, Lonergan declares, "Now mere experience has to be enhanced by deliberate attention."[7]

2. Understanding and Insight. The higher animals share the sensitivity of experience with us. What makes us the self-transcendent animal is that we ask questions that follow upon deliberate attention to the data of experience. They are questions for intelligence: what, why, what for, how? Wonder, the prime mover of understanding, Lonergan describes as "that tension, that drive, that desire to understand, that constitutes the primordial 'Why?'" And he continues, "Name it what you please—alertness of mind, intellectual curiosity, the spirit of inquiry, active intelligence, the drive to know. Under any name, it remains the same and is, I trust, very familiar to you."[8] Then picking up from Aristotle and Aquinas, Lonergan would have us observe: "We can all experience in ourselves that, when we try to understand something, we form for ourselves images, by way of examples, in which as it were we inspect what we desire to understand."[9] Intelligence as it were plays around with the images, including those from the remote past or from wider inquiry, until, in a flash,

---

[7]Bernard Lonergan, "Christology Today: Methodological Reflections," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J.F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1985), 78.

[8]Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 2, *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 38. Translated quotation from *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 84, a. 7c.

[9]Ibid., 34.

insight comes. A situation may be very complex. Then there can be many insights. But for any and every situation, all the significant questions must be asked. Only then can there be the final insight. Self-transcendence at this level would have us obey the transcendental precept: *Be intelligent!* Ideas arising from insight must then proceed to expression or formulation in a concept that can take the shape of a simple declaration or a scientific theory.

3. Judging and Fact. The question at the level of judging confronts the formulated understanding: Is it so? Could it really be? It is the question for reflection. It reviews the task of understanding by validating or invalidating its direct insight. "Insights are a dime a dozen," Lonergan warns, "so critical reasonableness doubts, checks, makes sure." Evidence for the insight is marshaled and weighed in obedience to the transcendental precept: *Be reasonable!*

This higher plane of reflective understanding heads for reflective insight by ascertaining that there are no conditions whatsoever that stand in the way of my being able to say: It is so. When this point is reached, self-transcendence now goes beyond myself to what is independent of myself, not what appears to me or what I imagine, not what I think or wish, not what seems to me, but what is so. Confirmation of understanding is the judgment of fact.

The fulfillment of the first three levels of self-transcendence occurring at the first three levels of human consciousness is Lonergan's account of the dynamic structure of human knowing. What powers the dynamism is the unrestricted desire to know. The structure is normative. If I bypass or neglect any one of the three levels, then I would not truly know. Fidelity to the entire process of knowing requires *intellectual conversion.*

The greater portion of what we know, we do not acquire by our own acts of knowing, the so-called immanently generated knowledge. Most of what we know we receive from others in the way of tradition, heritage, gift. But this is only cognitive self-transcendence. Now Lonergan invites us to "the larger dynamic structure of human living."[10]

4. Deciding and Value. We have come to the existential and responsible level, the level of deliberating, deciding, and acting on truth and value. It is the level of moral consciousness, the level on which consciousness becomes conscience. Our questioning shifts to the question for deliberation that leads to the judgment of value: Is it worthwhile? When we ask, "Is it worthwhile?" what we intend is value. Here Lonergan situates feelings as our initial response to value. And we respond, he says, according to some scale of preference. Then we may ask, "Is there a normative scale of values?" Lonergan says there is. There are vital, social, cultural, personal, and religious values in an ascending order.[11]

The self is at the center of every level of the drive for self-transcendence. At every ascent, it takes on a greater significance. The self is more significant as intelligent than as attentive, more significant still as rational, but in moral self-transcendence, the self is identified with the very value upheld and the action taken. At a critical point, "the subject finds out for himself that it is up to himself to decide what he has to make of himself.... On reflection it appears that deeds, decisions, discoveries affect the subject more deeply than they affect the objects with which they are concerned."[12]

At this level, the transcendental precept is: *Be responsible!* "Is it truly good or only apparently good?" is the question for discernment. Here responsibility is greatest. I am my decisions and my deeds. Whether the deeds and decisions be good or evil is determined by

---

[10]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 221.

[11]Ibid., 31. See Brendan Lovett, *On Earth as in Heaven: Corresponding to God in the Philippine Context* (Quezon City: Claretian, 1988), 19-46, 59-79. His treatment of the normative scale of values incorporates the values assumed by Lonergan as underpinnings of vital values, that is, the ecological values: physical, chemical, botanical, and zoological values.

[12]Bernard Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," in *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 4, *Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan*, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 226.

the person, at every instance, in the project of "the free and responsible subject producing the first and only edition of himself."[13]

Moral conversion is necessary for authenticity at this level. It consists in the ongoing struggle to place value ahead of satisfaction, others' needs before our personal wants, educating our conscience, as well as our feelings, taking full responsibility for decisions made and actions taken, especially when they are flawed or unpopular, being willing to pay the price for authentic living.

5. Loving. Now the dynamism that powers the operations of consciousness "are just successive stages in the unfolding of a single thrust, the eros of the human spirit."[14] "Self-transcendence," says Lonergan, "reaches its term not in righteousness but in love and, when we fall in love, then life begins anew. A new principle takes over and, as long as it lasts, we are lifted above ourselves and carried along as parts within an ever more intimate yet ever more liberating dynamic whole."[15] Such is the love of husband and wife, of parents and children. Such is the less conspicuous loyalty to country that yields personal good to the good of the country. Such finally is God's gift of his own love flooding our hearts through the Holy Spirit he has given us (Rom 5:5).[16] *Religious conversion* consists in gratefully accepting God's unconditional love and in desiring to also love others unconditionally. Complete self-transcendence is reached when one falls in love with God. Being in love with God is "not the product of our knowledge and choice."[17] It is a gift.

---

[13]Bernard Lonergan, "The Subject," in *A Second Collection: Papers by Bernard Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. W.J.F. Ryan and B.J. Tyrrell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 83.

[14]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 13.

[15]Bernard Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," in *A Third Collection*, 175.

[16]Ibid., 175.

[17]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 106.

Is there also a transcendental precept at this level of self- transcendence? Yes. *Be in love!* "Being-in-love," says Lonergan, "has its antecedents, its causes, its conditions, its occasions. But once it has blossomed forth and as long as it lasts, it takes over. It is the first principle. From it flow one's desires and fears, one's joys and sorrows, one's discernment of values, one's decisions and deeds."[18] Being in love takes over every level, but without violating its integrity. One who is in love becomes more attentive, more intelligent, more reasonable, more responsible. For those who have ever been in love, this is familiar territory.

B. Formation as Tradition, Heritage, Gift

1. Loving. As formation, as achievement has its dynamism, so also does formation as heritage. Frederick Crowe, Jesuit friend and foremost interpreter of Lonergan, addressing educators, says:

> Just as the upward development was powered by the capacity for and the drive toward intelligibility, truth, and the good, so the downward development is powered by the love and responsibility of the educator for the child, and the corresponding love for, and ensuing trust in, the educator on the part of the child. This form of communication begins and ends in love.[19]

Crowe continues and names the shape of love as "the patrimony which parents in the family, adult citizens in the community, leaders in the nation, humanitarians in the world confederacy, hold in trust from a preceding generation and hand on in fidelity to the next."[20]

In Lonergan's abbreviated account, formation as handed on, "begins in the affectivity of the infant, the child, the son, the pupil, the follower."[21] The ultimate origin, then, of the way of heritage is God's

---

[18]Ibid., 105.

[19]Crowe, *Old Things and New*, 75.

[20]Ibid., 75.

[21]Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," 181.

grace; it is God's love mediated first and foremost through the affectivity between parent and child. In reciprocity, the upward and downward paths of formation intersect. We initially see this in the home and in the school. But do we see it at other times?

2. Deciding. Lonergan continues, "On affectivity rests the apprehension of values."[22] In the same way, we have learned that meanings and values in a culture are caught more than taught. With a sense of helplessness, we watch the progressive diminishment of the traditional carriers of values. At the same moment, materialistic and narcissistic values shrill their way into our lives through the mass media and information technology with such regularity that we soon grow accustomed to them. Crowe recalls Lonergan answering a question about violence in movies with the remark that "there is violence in Sophocles too, but violence that raises profound moral questions, not violence that merely provides two hours of diversion for an empty mind."[23]

3. Judging. To continue the sequence of downward formation, Lonergan says, "On the apprehension of values rests belief."[24] Judging, in the way of gift, is directed by values handed down and accepted by belief. For a time we rely completely on a set of judgments which we accept from others who have had the experience and understanding to inform their judgments. With widening experience and increasing understanding, judging becomes more and more one's own. This is not to deny the permanent place of belief in one's life.

4. Understanding. "On belief," Lonergan proceeds, "follows the growth in understanding of one who has found a genuine teacher and has been initiated into the study of the masters of the past."[25]

---

[22]Ibid.

[23]Crowe, *Old Things and New*, 80. The occasion was the Boston College Lonergan Workshop in Jun 1982.

[24]Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," 181.

[25]Ibid.

The process for understanding in the downward movement is more complex, as Crowe explains: "The act of understanding occurs in the upward movement of the pupil, but it is assisted from above, by an understanding already formed (in another, however) and moving in the downward path of tradition."[26] In family and school, rules of politeness can be accepted not just as rules to be obeyed but as acts of consideration for others that one would desire for oneself. This lays the foundation for understanding those beliefs and traditions that guide us more securely in judgment when internalized and owned because they are first understood. The adolescent who has had this kind of background in formation will still undergo the crises of adolescence. S/he will still grapple with ambivalence between dependence and independence, with sexuality, with deciding what to do with his or her life. But the enterprise will be less bloody.

5. Experiencing. Lonergan concludes: "Then to confirm one's growth in understanding comes experience made mature and perceptive by one's developed understanding."[27] Once again we take an interpretation from Crowe who explains that, in the downward movement of formation, understanding "must wait on experience of life, if it is to be real and not merely notional.... data on reality accumulate slowly in experience of life, a day at a time, over long years. There is no possibility of compressing it into the sort of instant process that is much favored today for making coffee, taking a photograph, and the like; there is no instant experience...."[28]

To conclude the first panel, authenticity then results from the observance of the transcendental precepts: Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible, be in love! Lonergan observes that while "unauthenticity is realized by any single act of inattention, obtuseness, unreasonableness, irresponsibility... authenticity is

---

[26]Crowe, *Old Things and New*, 81.

[27]Lonergan, "Natural Right and Historical Mindedness," 181.

[28]Crowe, *Old Things and New: A Strategy for Education*, 84.

reached only by long and sustained fidelity to the transcendental precepts."[29] He then concludes: "The fruit of authenticity is progress.... The fruit of unauthenticity is decline.... However, beyond progress and decline, there is redemption. Its principle is self-sacrificing love."[30] Already from the first panel we realize that the double path of formation is long and arduous.

The Formation of the Authentic Community

Love is the takeoff point from the individual to the community. Love "transforms an 'I' and 'thou' into a 'we' so intimate, so secure, so permanent, that each attends, imagines, thinks, plans, feels, speaks, acts in concern for both."[31]

Three factors led Lonergan to his insight on community: the emergence of the human sciences, of postmodern existentialist philosophies, and of the notion of culture as historicist, empirical, pluralist, of culture on the move. For all three, meaning is a central concern. All three had a bearing on his concern about where the world was going.

Lonergan simply defines society as any form of human togetherness. "The ideal basis of society is community."[32] And "community is an achievement of common meaning."[33] That achievement is derived from a moral principle, a religious principle, or a Christian principle.

---

[29]Lonergan, "Dialectic of Authority," in *A Third Collection,* 8.

[30]Ibid., 9-10.

[31]Lonergan, *Method in Theology,* 33.

[32]Ibid., 360.

[33]Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," 226.

> The moral principle is that men individually are responsible for what they make of themselves, but collectively they are responsible for the world in which they live. Such is the basis of universal dialogue. The religious principle is God's gift of his love, and it forms the basis of dialogue between all representatives of religion. The Christian principle conjoins the inner gift of God's love with its outer manifestation in Christ Jesus and in those that follow him. Such is the basis of Christian ecumenism.[34]

How common meaning is achieved is explained in this way:

> Common meaning is realized by will, especially by permanent dedication, in the love that makes families, in the loyalty that makes states, in the faith that makes religions. Community coheres or divides, begins or ends, just where the common field of experience, common understanding, common judgment, common commitments begins and ends.[35]

Lonergan adds:

> The common meanings constitutive of communities are not the work of isolated individuals nor even of single generations. Common meanings have histories: they originate in single minds; they become common only through successful and widespread communication; they are transmitted to successive generations only through training and education. Slowly and gradually they are clarified, expressed, formulated, defined, only to be impoverished, emptied out, and deformed.[36]

However appreciative we are of community, we are reminded that community is imperfect. In community, as in the individual, there is progress, decline, and redemption. Community progress is the fruit of authenticity, of obedience to the transcendental precepts that apply to common experience, common understanding, common judgment,

---

[34]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 360.

[35]Ibid., 226.

[36]Lonergan, "Existenz and Aggiornamento," 226-27.

and common commitments. The principle of progress, Lonergan says, is liberty. It is the liberty of the men and women on the spot.[37] Community decline is the fruit of inauthenticity, of disregarding the transcendental precepts. The principle of decline is bias. Its Christian theological equivalent is sin.

There are three biases that generate decline. All three are aberrations to which common sense is subject. Briefly, *individual bias* is yielding to egoistic needs and interests so that consciousness and its norms are made subordinate to their pursuit. *Group bias* operates similarly, except that the needs and interests are those of a group within the community or society. Intelligence is placed at the service of one group's needs and interests over and above the common good so that ideologically-justified class conflicts and rebellions ensue. Contemporary theology would call group bias "social sin." A third bias is the *general bias of common sense.* It differs greatly from individual and group bias, which both generate conflicts that are overt. General bias works unnoticed. By its disregard of other ideas in favor of the practical, general bias not only short-circuits present intelligent development, it sets off a cumulative underdevelopment that leads to the isolation of science, religion and culture in a social deterioration whose residue Lonergan terms the "social surd." It sounds familiar. The most apparent destructiveness of general bias is its disregard of the long-term consequences of short-term benefits. General bias lies behind many of history's ecological disasters, failed government projects, and post-colonial regrets.

---

[37]Bernard Lonergan, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 3, *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*, ed. F.E. Crowe and R.M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 259.

The Mission of the Basic Ecclesial Community

Where can society turn for redemption?

Community's susceptibility to bias is a given. Therefore, provisions must be made for a constant renewal of community. There must be individuals, groups, movements and organizations to call communities continually to conversion. This is where, for Lonergan, the Church has its proper place. As community, the Church is an achievement of common Christian meaning. Its central common meaning is redemption through self-sacrificing love actualized in the life, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This common precious memory inspires fidelity to the four transcendental precepts and a leap to the fifth: Be in love!

As in every community, the meaning of which the Church is a carrier is at once cognitive, constitutive, effective, and communicative. Lonergan draws out the implications of this for the Church:

> To communicate the Christian message is to lead another to share in one's cognitive, constitutive, and effective meaning. Those, then, that would communicate the cognitive meaning of the message, first of all, must know it... Next, those that would communicate the constitutive meaning of the message, first of all, must live it... Finally, those that would communicate the effective meaning of the Christian message must practice it.[38]

The Church's redemptive activity is a process to be exercised both within itself and in society. The Church as process of redemption is a process of communication that effects the encounter of faith and culture. Inculturation of the faith, which is communicated in Scriptures, tradition, liturgy, doctrine, and others, will truly have taken place when there results a transformation of culture beginning in the domestic Church, which is the family and in the BEC.

---

[38]Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 362.

Lonergan was once asked to present a "theological perspective on how a community of love adapts and directs itself for effective mission and witness."[39] In summary, his presentation is a brief analysis of the dynamic structure of human history as progress and decline, and the "law of the cross" as redemption.

The Law of the Cross (Mark 8:34, 35; Matt 16:24, 25; Luke 9:23, 24; John 12:24, 25; Matt 5:11, 12, 28-48) is the doctrine that "understands suffering and death as the result of sin yet inculcates the transforming power of Christ, who in himself and in us changes suffering and death into the means for attaining resurrection and glory... As Christ's death is a principle of salvation, so also are our own deaths, whether understood physically (Phil 3:20, 21), ascetically (Rom 8:13; 1 Cor 9:27), morally (Rom 6:11; Col 3:1-4), and sacramentally (Rom 6:4; 1 Cor 11:26; Col 2:12)."[40] The Law of the Cross is the law of self-sacrificing love.

The mission of the BEC is simply to be in love. Formation to anything less demanding than this loving is to squander our BECs away!

---

[39]Lonergan, "The Transition from a Classicist World-View to Historical Mindedness," in *A Second Collection*, 7.

[40]Ibid., 8-9.

Landas 18:2 (2004) 283-294

BASIC ECCLESIAL COMMUNITIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Some Missiological Challenges

Manuel G. Gabriel

Allow me to present the missiological framework that I will use in reading the development of Basic Ecclesial Communities (BECs) in the Philippines; it is none other than the task of "New Evangelization and Conversion."

Threefold Task in the Mission of the Church

In *Redemptoris Missio,* John Paul II's encyclical that seeks to establish the permanent validity of the Church's missionary mandate, the Holy Father presents three tasks or critical sets of activities that are vital to the realization of the Church's mission today (cf. RM 33).

The *first task* is directed to "peoples, groups and socio-cultural contexts in which Christ and His Gospel are not known" or to new Christian communities that have not yet incarnated the faith in their environment and, at the same time, have not proclaimed it to others. This is missionary activity or *missio ad gentes,* properly speaking.

---

*Lecture delivered at conference sponsored by the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists on February 13, 2004.

The *second task* refers to the evangelization of other Christian communities. Young Churches must manifest fervor and seriousness in practicing their faith. They must try to bear witness to the Gospel in their given milieu and to respond to the mission entrusted to them by Christ. This task covers what John Paul II calls the activities that will reinforce the maturation in faith of the young Churches and Christian communities.

The *third task* pertains to "countries with ancient Christian roots" or in some cases to younger Churches, where Christians have "lost a living sense of the faith, or even no longer consider themselves members of the Church, and live a life far removed from Christ and his Gospel." What is needed in this alarming situation is a "New Evangelization" or "re-evangelization."

It is to be noted that all these three tasks are of one origin and one purpose, the mission of the Lord himself. The Church's *missionary activities, pastoral care,* and *"New Evangelization"* are mutually interdependent. They exist among the various saving activities of the Church (cf. RM 34).

Task of New Evangelization and Conversion

Later in the encyclical, John Paul II simply refers to the task of a "new evangelization" or "re-evangelization" (cf. RM 34). However, the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) is more explicit in articulating the conceptual linkage between new evangelization and conversion. This is clearly seen in the Decrees of PCP II (Article I). It declared that the forging and implementation of a five-to-ten-year National Pastoral Plan would be a process of "new evangelization" and "conversion." The new evangelization should bring about a change of paradigm, a shift of pastoral orientation and priorities in the Church, a collective conversion of mind and heart among all the faithful of the Church. It is a basic conversion that is being referred to, a change in worldview and consciousness, a new way of living the Christian faith.

Parameters and Indicators

To illustrate more concretely the practical import of the concrete task of a new evangelization and conversion, it is helpful to present some indicators:

1. Shift from Center-based Concerns to the Marginalized and Unevangelized. To re-evangelize the established Churches, there is a necessity to move out of the center of power and go to those who have been disempowered, to shift from the hub of tradition and influence to the recipients of largesse from the top. The Churches have to *start from the context and life setting* of those who have been marginalized not only by social institutions, but particularly by the institutionalized Church systems. Hence, PCP II has enacted a decree that has instituted pastoral planning to start from the barrios to the parish, from the diocese to the region, leading to a National Pastoral Plan, covering a period of five-to-ten years. The deeper concern of the statute is for the Church to take the vantage point of the marginalized and unevangelized in its process of re-evangelizing these communities.

2. Shift from Individual Sanctification to the Re-evangelization of Cultures. When the Church talks of the "new evangelization," it puts a concrete, specific focus on the significance of inculturation. John Paul II's discourse to the International Council for Catechesis (September 26, 1992) stated this in no uncertain terms: "the task of inculturation as the integral diffusion of the Gospel and its subsequent translation into thought and life, still constitutes the heart, the means and scope to the new evangelization."

The PCP II documents, on the other hand, stress the evangelization of culture particularly by stressing the development of an "inculturated and holistic" Filipino spirituality. The inculturation of Christian faith must take into account the heart and soul of the Filipino people, their spirit and character as a nation. This is evangelization of cultures at its very core, inculturation in its full realization.

3. Shift from the Uncritical Absorption of the Forces of Modernity and Globalization to the Full Evangelization of Modernity and the Modernization Process. It seems paradoxical that the Christian socio-philosophical framework that has given birth to the rise of modernity and globalization now renders the living of that faith irrelevant and ineffective. Christian believers in this age find themselves struggling amid the pressures and demands of secular living.

On the other hand, the forces of globalization seem to be relentless in uprooting the cultural foundation of small communities particularly among poor, developing countries. Globalization is set to provide a new technocratic culture with its own language and lifestyle such that indigenous, local communities cannot but succumb to the might of their influence.

How do we evangelize this modernization process? Where do we begin? Where do we go? The process of the new evangelization and conversion seems to hold the answers to these questions, coming as they do from the experiences of believers struggling to live their faith in a modernized and modernizing milieu.

As a beginning, Christian communities will have to recognize that the modernization process in itself is ambiguous. It is neither good nor bad. They have therefore to acquire and adapt processes of integral formation where they can discern the nature and impact of modernization and the dimensions of globalization. Being able to establish basic communities of faith and to undergo the process of value formation redounds eventually to a critical responsiveness to the challenges of modernization processes.

4. Shift from Poverty Alleviation to the Promotion of Peace Processes in the Task of Re-evangelization. The new evangelization process encounters not only the dire poverty that the marginalized poor suffer from, but also the impact of the present political instability in the world on their security and destiny. Poverty alleviation and justice are the twin faces of integral human development. But, given the global phenomenon of escalating terrorism, the

issues of poverty and justice have found a new context and perspective.

Considering the global dimension of terrorism, many local Churches have adopted a "peace process" as a new strategy that combines the aspects of development and justice. We cannot be effective in eradicating poverty and injustice without directly aiming at the process of peace-building at the very grassroots, among the peoples of varying cultures and faiths. Fostering the peace process seems to be the main strategy for the integral development of communities in our diverse societies today.

How is the Church to re-evangelize these communities? Without yielding to the temptation to cower in fear, what can be done so that re-evangelization is effectively anchored in peace processes?

These are the questions that BECs in the Philippines will have to reckon with. The answers that they discern will integrate them into the international effort to build terrorism-free societies and communities.

5. Shift from Faith-Information to Integral Faith Formation. The new evangelization brings with it a new paradigm or perspective. Formation has to link faith and life to the context and setting of communities, using the light of the Gospel in its reading of the signs. It integrates the mind-heart-body components of the human person, as well as the person-community-society levels of human life.

Most importantly, such integral faith formation is rooted in the concrete faith-experiences that are found in the communities. Through reflection on these experiences, people grow and they are enabled to conceptualize, analyze and develop their critical processes. This experience leads them to transform the very conditions that have oppressed them.

Integral faith formation, therefore, is empowering the lay faithful to become subjects of the task of evangelization and not mere objects of a banking-type of religious education. It equips them to evangelize the secular arena of Christian life, equipped with the convic-

tion that the Spirit of the Risen Christ will always be with them until "the end of time."

Missiological Challenges to the BECs in the Philippines

Using these parameters of the new evangelization and conversion, we now look at BEC development in the Philippines and identify crucial challenges to their birth, growth, and expansion. Given the varying experiences of BECs in the country and without prejudice to their unique historical origins and pastoral-theological presuppositions, the use of these indicators could facilitate the identification of what may determine the future of BECs in the country.

1. The Urgent Demand for Shared "Conversion." The BEC growth in the Philippine Church from the 1960s to the present has evolved from different concerns and theologies. The sixties were focused on how to implement Vatican II's description of the Church as a "people of God," painfully moving from the model of the Church as an institution. The seventies were confronted with the issues raised by the First Quarter Storm generation: the call to organize the poor, deprived and oppressed in order to achieve full liberation from the socio-political structures that dehumanized them. The formation of BECs has acquired a political relevance, and the Church has truly immersed herself with the grassroots. The eighties struggled to resolve the identity of the BECs, changing the name *Basic Christian Communities* to *Basic Ecclesial Communities*, in order to stress the direct link between these grassroots communities and the local Church. This shift was seen as the best follow-up to the "people power" manifestation at EDSA I. BECs were deemed to be the way the Church could continue the gains of the EDSA spirit. And in the 1990s, PCP II's agenda for renewal put the BEC on center stage, defining it as a way to achieve a participatory Church, a Church of the Poor.

Consequently, for more than forty years, BECs have developed in varying contexts. They have been nurtured by the different

ecclesiological orientations of their organizers and promoters, be they bishops and priests, missionaries, religious or lay leaders. They have grown in leaps and bounds, depending on the socio-political temper and tempests of the times.

At this present juncture, all BEC proponents have to level with themselves and ask: Do we have a common understanding of BEC identity and the mission in the Church? Do the bishops and clergy, religious and concerned laity share a common paradigm in making BECs a "new force for evangelization," a "new way of being Church"? From my perspective, this is the first challenge that the framework of re-evangelization invites us to consider.

The National Pastoral Consultation on Church Renewal (NPCCR), convened in January 2001, ten years after PCP II, has called for conversion in its introduction to its pastoral priorities. The assembly statement declared that to achieve "a more participatory Church, a Church more authentically of the Poor, and a truly missionary Church," the entire Church must undergo a "radical conversion of mind and heart" (NPCCR, 7). The stress is on the *whole Church.* BECs will not fully and effectively thrive if bishops and priests, the religious and missionaries, the grassroots' leaders and the BECs themselves do not experience a change of paradigm, a shared conversion. The local Churches where BECs have become "a new way of being Church" have done so because all the stakeholders (bishop, religious, priests and laity) have journeyed together in their life of faith.

On the other hand, bishops and parish priests whose paradigm of the Church and its mission still fits the pre-Vatican II mold have tended to discourage even the inception of BECs in the parish communities. Some merely pay lip service to it. Others, if not the majority, half-heartedly encourage their existence, only as they reinforce the traditional practices and hierarchical loyalties. A shared paradigm shift remains a challenge for all sectors of the Church to embrace.

2. Adopting the Vantage Point of the Marginalized and Unevangelized. The *task of re-evangelization* directs the Church to *be always missionary* to Christians who need to renew and revive their

faith, and to those neglected and deprived by the evangelization process. Re-evangelization has a clear, strong bias for the unevangelized in societies and for those marginalized, especially in faith.

The BECs in the Philippines need to look at themselves squarely and confront critical problems apropos to the unevangelized and marginalized in faith. As human communities, BECs go through a process of institutionalization. They are formally organized, linked to the parish and diocesan systems. The leaders and ministers undergo formation and training and, in due time, possess a high profile in the bigger community, with newly-acquired positions of power and status.

The BEC units also meet regularly, to deliberate on matters affecting their environment and setting. They conduct prayer meetings and Bible studies, and find mutual support for their problems, especially those affecting their finances and family life. For years, the process of institutionalization continues. And sooner than they realize, the BECs may already be isolated from the mainstream of the grassroots and unevangelized. Rather than being a witness to the Lord's saving presence among them, they have become exclusive in their concerns, protective of their comfort zones.

The challenge of re-evangelization should draw out these BECs from being fully institutionalized so that they are again motivated to reach out, serve and transform the world of the unevangelized. The BEC leadership needs to fix its gaze on the "uninvolved" in their respective communities, the "no longer involved" due to interpersonal issues or ecclesial conflicts, those outside the fold who cannot and will never get in, and the families of different faiths and religions. It is from these sectors that BECs can draw new life and direction, avoiding in the process the pitfalls of institutionalized thinking and living out of the faith.

3. Re-evangelization of Culture and the BEC. The third challenge that the task of re-evangelization and conversion urges BECs to address refers to the relationship between Christ and culture, particularly the question of inculturation.

In *Ecclesia in Asia*, the Apostolic Exhortation of John Paul II that expounds on "Jesus Christ the Savior and His mission of love and service in Asia," the pope highlights the dire need to present the mystery of Christ to the local Churches in Asia "according to their cultural patterns and ways of thinking" (EA 20h). For John Paul II, culture is the "vital space within which the human person comes face to face with the Gospel" (EA 21a). Persons and societies interact with one another in the context of culture and cultures. And, the transformation of cultures will have immediate impact and effect on the individuals and communities. Hence, the local Churches today have to take into account the vital task of evangelizing culture and cultures through the process of inculturation.

There are two concerns relevant to the BECs and the task of inculturation that need to be underlined in view of Philippine society today. The first is the strong influence of the *"showbiz" subculture* in mainstream Philippine culture.

It should be a cause of alarm to the Church that not only has the "showbiz" lingo and lifestyle affected and altered the Filipinos' way of life, but also that more people in show business or the entertainment industry have become endorsers of various consumer products. They portray themselves as those who will save the country from poverty and oppression. And for the past thirty years, some of these personalities have also become stalwart proponents of religious fundamentalism. The so-called "born again" Christians have taken root among all sectors of Philippine society because the leading evangelists, those whose lives have been transformed by their faith in Jesus and in Jesus alone, are the "mega-stars" and stars of the showbiz industry.

Among those deeply influenced by the *"born-again" personalities* are the *impressionable young people* today. The recent research and studies on Filipino youth—conducted by the Ateneo de Manila University, McCann Youth Study 2000, and the CBCP Commission on Youth—have all shown that the stars that the youth look up to as "role models" are those "born again" Christians whose lives they emulate.

The issue at hand is not so much the theological validity of the "born again" sects but the kind of faith that they effectively offer to an increasing number of Filipinos. *It is a faith that is highly privatized, a concept of salvation that is centered on Jesus alone, where only Scripture is the source of revelation.* It is a kind of *faith that tends to negate the value of culture* and whatever strikes the human and the secular.

The inculturation of faith into the general culture of people has been effectively neutralized by a faith-life focused on the feeling of being saved by one's individual faith in Jesus alone. The dynamic relationship between Christ and culture has been simplified by a worship that guarantees material blessings and prosperity. The intrinsic value of culture is negated in favor of a one-sided, fundamentalist-interpreted Gospel.

Among the sectors that are badly hit by all this, the youth are a special concern. They are the ones who have consciously and unconsciously caught the values and worldview, the lifestyle and subculture of people in the entertainment and sports industries; these individuals have become "role models" and "idols worth emulating."

What alternatives do BECs have to offer? The more basic question is: Has there been a significant presence of the youth in the BECs? Has their role been adequately recognized and given effective encouragement? These are concerns that BECs have to look into to ensure the continuity of the Church's mission among and with the youth.

4. Re-evangelization of Modernity, Globalization and the BECs. The task of re-evangelization brings to the fore the eventual confrontation of our Christian faith with the modernization process and the state of globalization in our contemporary world. We live in societies whose vital plan is being shaped by modernity and globalization. They are characterized by "anonymity" and massification, by mobility and utilitarianism. What do we do to re-evangelize these life-forces in our societies?

While BECs might all the more be needed vis-à-vis this kind of society because they promote more personal interactions and a sense

of belonging, as well as greater mutual support and witnessing, another phenomenon persists. This reality is focused on the transformation of rural communities into new urban centers that tend to promote self-contained homes and houses, families and individuals. What kind of BECs need to be organized among such new urban centers? Are there other models of BECs, as some BEC proponents advocate? Typical attempts have been made in schools and office-based BECs. How is their ecclesiality to be understood and lived?

Likewise, the globalization process that is sweeping all nations in the world tends to create a homogenous culture, one that thrives in consumerism and technocratic manipulation. What happens to the BEC's emphasis on respect for the variety of cultures, on the process where the Gospel of Jesus Christ gets truly incarnated into the diversity of the human condition? What do we do to the rootedness of the BECs in the local life-setting, language and cultural arts, history and identity? In both cases, BECs do play a very urgent role, namely, to guarantee the task of being Church that focuses on deep personal, faith-based interactions, amid the modernization and urbanization process.

5. Re-evangelization and Peace Process Through BECs. The challenge of the peace process in our country, through poverty alleviation and education for justice, knocks persistently at the heart of the BECs. After all, the natural setting and normal womb for the peace process should be grassroots communities, the people at the base, where there is cultural contiguity. Without these communities, the peace process becomes a theological opinion under discussion in the classroom, or some political agenda in international fora, a blueprint on the desk of local officials and development workers.

The cultivation and strengthening of BECs can hasten the peace process because it is in these communities that the social and racial traumas can be healed, that the element of trust can be re-established, and that the rebuilding of life can begin. BECs will have to recognize and accept this daunting task and challenge: *peace process* among the people, where they travel on the rough, winding road that leads to their full, integral development.

Conclusion

Like contours in the landscape, all this presentation has achieved is a general discussion of the key challenges that await the evangelizing mission of BECs in our country.

The paradigm of "New Evangelization and Conversion" has provided the essential signposts to the fundamental question: *How do BECs evangelize?*

BECs are indeed a strong "force for evangelization" (RM 51) in all local Churches today. BECs still remain a strong sign of hope for the Church of the future.

Landas 18:2 (2004) 295-308

REKINDLING THE BEC FLAME
Questions and Reflections

James H. Kroeger, M.M.

This 2004 mission symposium has three distinct components, all focusing on the evangelizing mission and potential of the Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC). As envisioned by the sponsoring body, the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists (PACM), two speakers would each address a pivotal dimension of the theme; their presentations would be followed by a discussion period, during which the audience would have an opportunity to delve more deeply into the pastoral dimensions of the topic. This third phase would be concluded with a final, integrating synthesis.

The first presentation by Ma. Fe Mendoza focused on the formation of "authentic community" as a prerequisite for any depth growth in the BECs; insights from the thought of Bernard Lonergan into human authenticity and community shaped the discourse.[1] Manuel

---

*Synthesis delivered at conference sponsored by the Philippine Association of Catholic Missiologists on February 13, 2004.

[1]Fe T. Mendoza, *Basic Ecclesial Communities: Authentic Formation and Interreligious Dialogue: A Lonerganian Perspective* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 2001).

G. Gabriel, using the missiological framework of "New Evangelization and Conversion," sought to read the development of BECs in the Philippines; the speaker also outlined five key missiological challenges to BECs within the local Church of the Philippines.[2]

This piece notes the rich highlights of the discussion period, which reflect the concerns of the Mindanao-based audience with its more than three-decade experience of forming, living, and renewing the BECs in their midst.[3] It provides an overview synthesis to the entire deliberations of the mission symposium. It is noteworthy that all three presenters (Mendoza, Gabriel, and Kroeger) have lengthy BEC experience both in Mindanao and on the national level; all have completed doctoral studies in missiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and are active members in the PACM.

Exploring the Mission Potential of the BEC Movement

Participant: As a religious sister, I have previously attended some mission symposia, but I see the need for additional gatherings where the lay leaders, bishops, priests and religious can come together for in-depth discussions on the BECs and their role in evangelization. The content of Sr. Mendoza's presentation was challenging; she held out to us the ideal of authentic community. If we do not follow Christ's law of love, which includes his passion, death, and resurrection, we squander everything in the BECs. We also face great challenges from the media that takes a "showbiz" popularity approach to education and government, to life in general. How are we really go-

---

[2]Manuel G. Gabriel, *Towards Church Renewal and Spirituality in BCC: A Manual for the Initial Formation of BCC Leaders* (Quezon City: Lay Formation Institute, 1985).

[3]James H. Kroeger, *The Philippine Church and Evangelization: 1965-1984* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1985), 373-89; "BCCs and the Philippine Church," *World Mission Magazine* 10:9 (Oct 1998): 4.

ing to make the BECs instruments of evangelization in this situation? What will be our guiding paradigm for BEC formation? What are our qualifications—if we hope to engage in BEC ministry? Are we willing to make genuine sacrifices? It is easy to talk about a paradigm shift, but are we willing to personally invest ourselves in the BECs? As seminarians, religious, and priests, are we really able to identify with the ordinary people and "speak their language"? Are we really being authentically missionary in our approaches to the BECs?

Gabriel: Thank you very much for those probing questions. First, I believe that your idea is very much on target; lay leaders in the BECs, bishops, priests and religious must sit down together and explore their understanding of the mission of the Church.[4] I can testify that there is a real openness among bishops to understand better the ramifications of evangelization. The CBCP Episcopal Commission on Mission and the National Mission Council have taken these questions to heart. The "mission of the Church" has to be clarified and deepened; there is the need for "new evangelization" and genuine conversion. Formation programs in seminaries and religious houses clearly must have a mission focus; the role of Catholic schools often needs a clearer focus. In a word, all sectors of the Church need to collaborate in this endeavor.

BECs are now being presented to us as the "new way of being Church"; they are the most fundamental unit of the local Church. BECs have great potential for effective evangelization. Considering all the various possibilities, BECs are the best vehicle for the evangelization of the marginalized.

Mendoza: It is striking that many religion teachers in Catholic schools express their frustrations and often think about quitting; they feel that their message often falls on deaf ears. We have to remember

---

[4]Richard Rohr and Joseph Martos, "Community for What? The Goal of Evangelization," *Emmanuel* 97:8 (Oct 1991): 438-41, 452-53; Martin R. Tripole, "Is the Church Primarily Mission or Community?" *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 82:10 (Jul 1982): 52-62.

some basics. Our first teachers are our parents. However, teachers in the schools are also very important for the formation of values. And what about the seminarians in the audience? As future teachers, will you be effective in forming values—both through your preaching and lifestyle?

Participant: As a priest I appreciate the searching questions asked by the first sister-participant. I am inspired to search more deeply. I know that many priests, sisters, and BEC leaders are really thirsting for in-depth formation on mission and evangelization. They are frustrated when the discussion on mission centers so much on the October mission collection; where are some creative initiatives on "mission formation?" I would like to hear the thoughts of some of the young people here; based on the two presentations, what are your insights and questions?

Participant: I am a lay person, working in a diocese for thirteen years in the organization of the BECs. I agree with Msgr. Gabriel's position that if we do not have a *shared* conversion and a *shared* theology, everything will collapse in the end. I recall that the Claretian model of BEC that I experienced was very "people-oriented"; it was effective. Eucharist was a very central component; much formation was given. However, when there was a change in the parish priest, a different program was introduced. We started again at square one. Then some missionary sisters came, and they introduced another approach. It is also my experience that in some places the BEC today is becoming only an institution. I want to ask the presenters: Can you propose common modules for BEC formation that are built from a shared theology and a shared conversion?

Gabriel: Your question is: How we can assure that there is a shared conversion in the local Church? I recall that the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines (PCP II) stated that the Church in the Philippines "shall put itself in a more active state of mission" (Article I, no. 1) and this will be done "by forging and implementing a five-to-ten-year National Pastoral Plan." This is to start from below and reach all levels of the Church; this is to be a process of new

evangelization and conversion. The goal is to build up the local Church and achieve an inculturated spirituality.[5] The words are clear, but the process, moving from below to above, has not been achieved. There have been attempts, but they often have not been linked into the grassroots. Then, when a change in personnel takes place, the individual's own theology and consciousness (and biases) enter into the BECs. A true pastoral planning process has not been implemented; often, there is no common, guiding pastoral vision in the diocese.

Secondly, we cannot be looking for uniformity. What we are searching for is "shared direction." Recall that there were two gatherings of the National Secretariat for Social Action, Justice and Peace (NASSA) [1997 and 1999] during which participants came from all over the Philippines; all the many models of BEC were represented. After many days of discussion, it was agreed that there can be no model or models that are applicable to everyone and all situations. The needs, the situation, the struggle of each diocese and parish will shape the form of the BEC. Thus, the *response in faith* is what ultimately shapes the BEC. This is where *integral faith formation* must enter the picture. This is where the local situation of justice and peace comes in. What is central is the surfacing of the main direction. You must also consider the dynamics of both *developing and sustaining* the BECs. NASSA has developed a fine, three-day workshop on the sustainability of BECs. These kinds of consultations are definitely part of BEC ministry—to arrive at a common, shared understanding. So, the ideal is not uniformity; it is unity among diversity; it is a shared vision among diverse community experiences.[6]

---

[5]Renato A. Ocampo, "Pastoral Implications of Basic Ecclesial Communities: A Commentary on the PCP II Text," *Landas* 8:1 (Jan 1994): 27-35.

[6]Ted Gresh, *Basic Christian Communities in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Cardinal Bea Institute, 1977); Amado L. Picardal, *Basic Ecclesial Communities in the Philippines: An Ecclesiological Perspective* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1995).

Mendoza: We must admit that it is very difficult to accept a renewed vision, and this includes our BEC vision. I recall Lonergan's words: "The principle of progress is liberty." It is the freedom of the men and women "on the spot," in the actual situation. We are familiar with the expression: *kada pari, hari* (every priest is king). This is often the complaint of BEC leaders: when the parish priest changes, then the paradigm also changes. Then the BEC leaders do not know what to do. How are we really going to move together? The historian Arnold Toynbee says: When you notice great shifts in civilization or culture, you should look for the "creative minorities" who foster this change. It will not be a large group of religious having a conference on BECs that will bring about change; one needs people who are willing to begin even though it will be bloody. Genuine, authentic BECs begin in this way.

Participant: It is true that BECs began in faith communities; they emerged from the desire of people to belong to this local faith community. It has happened in some places that the local Church authorities began to formulate a long list of "requirements" for a group to be recognized as a BEC. These rules and regulations became very institutionalized; sacraments and Church services became linked to fulfilling many requirements (e.g., if a local community does not have its own catechist, the priest will not come for the fiesta; if individuals do not have a BEC "membership certification," they will be denied the sacrament of marriage, etc.). How can we call the BEC an "evangelizing community" when laws seem to dominate and they are imposed upon people who have never really been well evangelized to begin with? Sometimes, people feel trapped.

Gabriel: It is good to recall that the origins of the BECs are similar to the origins of the early Gospel communities. They begin in faith, centered on Jesus and his passion, death, and resurrection, the paschal mystery. That is why the birth of the Church (ecclesiogenesis) is through the BECs. Look at the letters of Paul; he formed communities around the Word of God and the Eucharist. It is also valid to say that the BECs were part of the strategy of the missionaries: they formed communities, set up barrio chapels, they made the Word of

God and the Eucharist the center of community life.[7] So, let us not think that the forming of communities (we call them BECs) is a new strategy.

I know that here in Mindanao the Mindanao-Sulu Pastoral Conference (MSPC) was very instrumental in promoting BECs. MSPC was seeking to implement the vision of the Church as "People of God." It was a shift from a highly institutionalized vision to a communitarian vision. Here in the Davao area, the missionaries and local clergy sought to make this shift. However, times have changed. There were the effects of the martial law years, narrated by Sister Fe. Many BCCs (they were still called "Basic Christian Communities" at that time) faced great difficulties. They tried to respond to the Vatican II call to read the "signs of the times." There was the turbulence of the 1970s, the people power of the 1980s. The BECs were struggling to be truly present in the lives of people living with all these societal and political pressures. Out of all these events, different forms and experiences of communities emerged. All this emphasizes the urgency to sit down and reflect: Where are we going? Really, what is the paradigm shift? Regardless of our beginnings, how do we now confront the challenges? Yes, I agree with you regarding the danger of institutionalizing BECs that are cut off from the very mission for which they were established.

Participant: We have seen the need for the paradigm shift in our vision of the BECs. However, the central question is: How are we going to make this paradigm shift? We know the necessity and we have the desire, but *how* are we to go about it?

Gabriel: There are three things that I find important in bringing about transformation or change. The first thing is rootedness in the vision and mission of Christ; it is he who defines what we are to do in the Church. The second aspect is being rooted in the situation and the people you are serving; you must share people's lives and situa-

---

[7]Catalino G. Arévalo, "The Church as a Community of Faith," *East Asian Pastoral Review* 20:1 (1983): 40-47.

tions, their hopes and struggles. The third element is the *how*. This only comes third and concerns the "tools" one will use to produce change. Theologians today speak about "doing theology" and the inductive method. Change comes as one engages in pastoral planning, linking the ideal and vision with concrete life realities; it also demands that the grassroots and marginalized are included in the process—right from its inception.[8] Pastoral planning also means using Scriptures to enlighten the present context.

Many strategies can be adopted, depending on what you wish to achieve. For dioceses it is necessary that the *entire diocese* undergo a pastoral planning process; the *whole system* must undergo the process of renewal and conversion. In brief, this is the *how* of effectively promoting BECs. Let me just add one observation. Frequently, one has to analyze both the positive, as well as negative motivations of people involved in this process; one often does meet resistance to implementing the BECs. When you begin to initiate change, there will be resistance; thus, it is necessary to plan for change.

Participant: I am the pastoral director in our diocese, and I get many complaints from priests regarding the presence of various "faith communities" in the parishes. We have tried to analyze the documents of PCP II on this question, but we did not find any help on how the "faith communities" could be harmonized with the BECs. Many such groups (Neo-Catechumenal Way, Couples for Christ, *Bukas Loob sa Diyos*, etc.) claim that they are really BECs. How can we seek to "harmonize" the BECs and these "faith communities"?

Gabriel: First, it is necessary to distinguish between these various groups and the BECs. The groups may be ministries or organizations of renewal, but they cannot properly be called "local Churches" or BECs. The word "basic" has two senses; the sociological meaning of basic is that it is the grassroots or the *masa*. These "faith groups"

---

[8]Orlando B. Quevedo, "The Basic Ecclesial Community as a Church Model for Asia," in *A Church on the Threshold*, ed. Michael T. Seigel (Rome: SEDOS, 1998), 193-204.

are a special community, but they are not "basic." The second meaning of "basic" is theological; the base community is seen to be the most fundamental unit of being local Church. It is worthwhile to refer to the 1977 FABC Colloquium on Ministries in the Church.[9] There the Asian bishops talk about the three levels of being local Church: (a) the diocese, (b) the parish, and (c) the basic Christian community. All three must be interrelated. And, the most basic is the BEC. So, where do various groups, associations, mandated organizations, and "faith communities" enter?

Ecclesia in Asia (EA 25d-e) gives a good principle to follow; these groups must be integrated into parish/diocesan life. They must not become "parallel churches"; the goal is to be "well integrated into the life and mission of the parish and Diocese" (EA 25e). In some places, the renewal groups find this very hard to accept, since they have been so used to being organized and to function as "parallel churches." PCP II (Nos. 610-13) is very explicit in noting how to organize these "faith communities." They should be conceived in the spirit of the BEC; they should be aligned to the BECs, particularly in their ministries. These groups have their own charisms, but they are to be at the service of the entire local Church. Members of these groups should participate actively in their local BECs; they should not use the BECs as "fishing grounds" for new members for their special groups. This is a difficult challenge, particularly since many of these "faith communities" have provided a true "conversion experience" (which many BECs have not given—often because of their overly structured set-up). That is why the loyalty of many renewed Catholics today is to their movement, not to the local Church. Clear, focused direction and alternative sources of renewal must be provided by parishes and BECs. These are some key points regarding the crux of this challenge today.

---

[9] James H. Kroeger, "Theology of Local Church: FABC Perspectives," in *Becoming Local Church: Historical, Theological and Missiological Essays* (Quezon City: Claretian, 2003), 31-54.

Mendoza: I recently attended a pastoral assembly in one diocese, during which they confronted this very problem. Representatives of all parties were present, and genuine dialogue took place. Dialogue is a key dimension of the building-up of the local Church; dialogue is more effective than statements that outline the expected behavior of people from these "faith communities." Remember that the Holy Spirit also works in these faith communities. So, I say: Let a thousand flowers bloom, but also, let there be dialogue.

Synthesis and Integration

Kroeger: It is now my pleasant task to offer an integrating synthesis to the discussions we have had on the evangelizing role of the BECs in the local Church of the Philippines. I have organized my thoughts around five specific themes, areas of insight and concern for rekindling the enthusiasm and commitment of Church personnel in fostering truly missionary BECs.

1. BECs as Communities of Faith. One participant questioned the *how* of fostering BECs. The response of Gabriel was to highlight the necessity of being "rooted in the faith." One clear pillar for building BECs is to be anchored in the vision and mission of Christ. Gabriel also emphasized the need to be rooted in the people and their situation; this is another pillar. We have to be very clear about the kind of communities we seek to form. They are to be a *communio de Trinitatae,* formed in the likeness of the love relationship of the Trinity; they are also to be a *communio de hominibus,* formed from the people and their concrete situations. These two dimensions must be integrally linked into all BECs. In a word, BECs emerge from a faith-response. As Mendoza mentioned, "We achieve our authenticity in self-transcendence." Never forget that BECs are faith-communities. If there is over-institutionalization with many laws, regulations, and procedures, then BECs can lose their identity and focus. BECs must be grounded in love—of God and fellow-Christians; otherwise, they will lose their way.

BECs are really to be "icons of the Trinity," God's love made manifest in concrete community. The BEC process must start "from the beginning," from a Trinitarian vision. As I was thinking about my response, some words of that old song taken from *The Sound of Music* came to my mind: "Let's start at the very beginning, a very good place to start. When you read, you begin with A-B-C; when you sing, you begin with Do-Re-Mi." So, "when you form B-E-C, you begin with the Tri-ni-ty." Whatever you may think of my "*Sound-of-Music* Theology," we must admit that BECs are fundamentally faith communities; they emerge from faith and their goal is to strengthen the faith of the participants. In BECs, people are evangelized; they are also to become active evangelizers.

2. A Paradigm Shift. A second theme I heard today frequently focused on the need for a paradigm shift in BEC ministry. Yes, over the last forty years as we have tried to receive and implement the Second Vatican Council, there has been a paradigm shift. In terms of ecclesiology, we are moving (or at least struggling to move) from a "universalist" ecclesiology to an ecclesiology of the local Church, from an ecclesiology "from above" to an ecclesiology "from below." We hold that these are *basic* ecclesial communities; we opt for an ecclesiology "from below" as our starting point. This "new way of being Church" demands the development of common meanings and directions among people at the base.

Related to this theme is another question I heard frequently: Are seminaries, catechetical centers, religious education programs, and novitiates really "houses of formation" for this new way of thinking? Do they propagate this BEC way of being Church; do they promote a "renewed integral evangelization"? Has the new paradigm become operative?

3. BEC: An Instrument of Renewal. Our discussion has asserted that BECs are intimately connected with renewal: renewal of individuals, communities, dioceses; renewal of parish life and structures. This does not primarily mean that BECs are now going to provide more programs, more services, more formation, demand more

expenses, etc.; everyone will become exhausted in the process. BECs foster renewal by engaging people in serving one another; they become "communities of mutual care." People get involved, they serve, and they wash each other's feet. This is the model of Church that BECs promote—at the local, parish, and diocesan level. As people are renewed in this vision, they will also renew parish community life.[10]

Implementing this vision will not happen automatically. It demands dedication and work. It requires focused pastoral planning (a theme emphasized in our mission symposium); it needs a "shared vision" among BEC members. There is no magic formula to bring this about; it needs commitment. As we sang so frequently this past year while preparing for the Fourth World Meeting of Families held in Manila, it takes "self-sacrificing love." Yes, "Only Selfless Love" will build authentic BEC faith-communities.

4. Communities of Salt and Light. During our intermission, students from the John XXIII Catechetical Center led us in song and dance, using the popular liturgical melody: "Salt and Light." It is most appropriate to employ that image to describe BECs. They are to be *communities-in-mission*,[11] communities of salt and light.[12] This vision should shape BEC formation, so that members are truly salt and light (cf. Matt 5:13-16)—to one another, to the wider parish, to members of other churches and religions, to the world at large. This means that issues of justice and peace, interreligious dialogue, transformation of culture, peace-building and peace processes, pro-life

---

[10]Arthur R. Baranowski, "Small Christian Communities and the Parish," *Church* 5:4 (Winter 1989): 38-40.

[11]Una O'Neill, "Community for Mission," *The Way Supplement* 61 (Spring 1988): 62-75.

[12]United States Catholic Bishops, "Communities of Salt and Light: Reflections on Parish Social Mission," *Origins* 23:25 (Dec 1993): 443-48; Wilton Gregory, "Viewing the Church as 'Communio': Three Challenges," *Origins* 33:24 (Nov 2003): 409, 411-13.

advocacy, etc., are integral to living the BEC vision; these—and many more—are all concrete pathways for BECs to become communities of salt and light.

The world today experiences modernity and globalization. Issues of local and international terrorism are constantly present. Poverty and violence are realities confronting many. Our BECs make these experiences of our brothers and sisters their sources of reflection and action; we try to take the viewpoint of the marginalized and unevangelized.[13] Constantly, following the vision of *Gaudium et Spes*, our communities seek to "scrutinize the signs of the times and interpret them in the light of the Gospel" (GS 4).

5. Spirit-directed Communities. Our mission conference spoke often of the important role of the Holy Spirit. BECs are creatures, products, communities created and shaped by the Holy Spirit, the principal agent of evangelization (RM 21-30). Our BEC ministry is not just a human effort; BECs are Spirit-driven, Spirit-directed communities. The Spirit gives multi-form gifts to the Church; the BECs must allow many gifts, talents, and contributions to flourish. If there is unity from the diversity of gifts, this can be a forceful witness to the world. As I listened today, it is as if I heard a warning: Do not quench the Spirit! Do not over-structure the communities, demanding many certificates and signatures before admission to the sacraments or the performance of services. Over-institutionalization does not come from the Spirit. I am not saying that structures and procedures are not necessary, but we do have to evaluate our communities to discern if we have crossed the line and fallen into a kind of anti-Spirit institutionalization.

Our Church understands herself as a community that needs constant renewal, reform, and conversion, an *ecclesia semper reformanda.*

---

[13]Mary Ann Charity B. Durano, "The Pastoral Vision of Francisco Claver and Orlando Quevedo on the Role of Basic Ecclesial Communities in Social Transformation within the Philippine Context" (MA thesis, Ateneo de Manila University, 2003).

This adage has proven true in the past; its applicability remains a present, a constant, a permanent feature of Church life. Hopefully, the BECs will experience the Spirit's presence as they seek to renew themselves to meet the ever-changing signs of the times. May the Spirit breathe fire, energy, enthusiasm, and boldness (*parrhesia*) into the BECs here in Mindanao and throughout the entire country. Let us do our part to "fan the flame of God's gift" (II Tim 1:6) in the Christian communities we serve. Renewed in the Spirit, our BECs will be manifestations of a local Church that is truly missionary. Let us commit ourselves to live the vision of the BEC as an evangelizing community. Let us not squander the great gift of the BECs. *Veni, Sanctae Spiritus!* Come, Holy Spirit!

BOOK REVIEWS

CATHOLIC SPIRITUALITY,
ITS HISTORY AND CHALLENGE
By James J. Bacik
New York: Paulist Press
2002, xii, 175 pp., paper, ISBN 0-8091-4060-8
Reviewed by Joaquin C. Yap, Jr.

James Bacik's book is a welcome addition to his growing roster of short but accessible and highly informative studies of contemporary spirituality. Having previously written *Spirituality in Transition* (1996) and *Spirituality in Action* (1997), he now discusses the relationship between spirituality and theology, a recurring theme in what is ostensibly a historical survey of (primarily American) Catholic spiritual experience. As he puts it, he wishes to explore "the role of theology in channeling the energy of [today's] spiritual revival in constructive directions" (ix).

In his "Introduction," Bacik gives a helpful definition of what he himself admits is an elusive term. Spirituality, he writes, refers both to lived experience and a distinct academic discipline. As lived experience (which is Bacik's main concern), spirituality can be described in terms of one's relationship to the triune God: "It has to do with

worshiping God the Father, putting on the mind of Christ and listening to the Holy Spirit" (ix). For Bacik, spirituality has both centripetal and centrifugal dimensions; while one is drawn into a deeper and more intimate relationship with God, one is also propelled outward in vital action in the world at large.

The book is unevenly divided into two parts. Part One, entitled "The Relationship between Spirituality and Theology: History and Theory," is the more substantial section, yet it is only 75 pages compared to 100 pages of Part Two, which is entitled "Practical Applications: Theological Reflections on Common Experiences," and consists of twenty-seven brief essays on various subjects previously written by Bacik. To the author's credit, these short articles (ranging in topic from prayer and meditation to John XXIII and the CDF's *Dominus Iesus*) certainly display a happy marriage of spirituality and theology; here one finds penetrating spiritual reflection grounded in solid theological understanding.

Karl Rahner is Bacik's primary theological mentor. Rahner, along with Sandra Schneiders and Bernard Lonergan, is given a wide hearing as a theologian who succeeded in bridging the gap between theology and spirituality. Bacik writes: "Theology done well is always spiritually relevant. For Rahner, the way to close the gap between spirituality and theology is to do theology better. At its best, theology is nourished by prayer and leads to prayer" (63). This line alone makes reading the book a worthwhile endeavor.

James Bacik combines erudition, broad knowledge of various topics, a clear and elegant style, good training in systematic theology, and a profound regard for the spiritual life. This is not to say that the book is flawless. It is all too clearly written from an American point of view; the statistical trends are all drawn from the experience of U.S. Catholics. Bacik himself acknowledges this in his "Introduction"; nevertheless, one wishes for a more wide-ranging and "catholic" perspective. The author is occasionally guilty of easy labeling ("The average parish contains conservatives who prefer traditional forms of piety such as the rosary, benediction and Marian devotions, and progressives who are more attuned to Scripture reading,

liturgical participation and faith-sharing groups"), and more consistently susceptible to citing Rahner *ad infinitum.* Still, this slim volume makes for easy and informative reading; in itself, it is a fine example of how spirituality and theology can and should combine in a profitable way.

SEXUAL DIVERSITY AND CATHOLICISM: TOWARD THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORAL THEOLOGY

Edited by Patricia Beattie Jung with Joseph Andrew Corey
Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press
2001, xxx, 311 pp., paper, ISBN 0-8146-5939-X
Reviewed by James T. Bretzke

Just a few years ago I was engaged in a conversation with a colleague on theses for a comprehensive exam in sexual ethics which he had drawn largely from Gerald Kelly's 1941 classic *Modern Youth and Chastity*—widely used in Catholic colleges in the 1940s and 1950s. Kelly's work contained five crystal clear and practical moral principles meant to guide young people in choosing the good and avoiding the evil in the sexual arena, such as "every directly venereal action is against the law of God, and a serious sin of impurity." The remaining four principles were likewise concerned directly in one way or the other with aspects of legitimate and illegitimate causing of venereal pleasure. This moral message was simple and clear: sexuality boiled down to sex, sex was dangerous since it ultimately concerned when one could and could not licitly engage in venereal pleasure at the peril of one's soul. My colleague maintained that Kelly's principles, founded on the unchanging pillars of human nature and the natural law, were just as valid today as they had been in the days of our parents who had used this book in their college theology courses.

Clear as this version of sexual ethics may have been, the theology of the human person developed in Vatican II, and continued through the writings of John Paul II, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and reiterated most recently in the Congregation of the

Doctrine of the Faith's "Letter on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World" all put the accent on the development and integration of the whole human person, in all of his and her biological, psychological, emotional, spiritual, sociological and cultural complexity, rather than just on what aspects of venereal pleasure can be lawfully tolerated.

Since the theological anthropology of "whole" person affirms each individual's dignity and uniqueness, this means that there will be some necessary diversity that goes beyond merely our genetic make-up or DNA code. In developing a contemporary sexual ethics that is faithful to this view of the human person, how then can we deal with the notion of sexual diversity within the confines of Catholicism? Should not the role of moral theology be to lay down absolute norms founded in the natural law lived out in our human nature that is unchanging and common to all? Yet, even though these questions seem to suggest clear-cut answers, the authors of this volume present an understanding of the sources for theological reflection on both sexuality and its various lived expressions, which are morally complex if nothing else.

The fifteen essays in this book are divided into the "Introduction" by Patricia Beattie Jung, followed by sections on "Interpreting Church Teachings," with the lead essay by Bishop Thomas Gumbleton, the only non-lay contributor. Other sections are: "Interpreting the Bible" (looking at hermeneutical issues, sexual violence, and same-sex issues in the Old and New Testaments presented by biblical scholars), "Interpreting Secular Disciplines" (with contributions by psychologists and philosophers), and a final section on "Interpreting Human Experience" (with essays by two lay Catholic women ethicians, Cristina Traina and Mary Hunt).

The book also contains a helpful index and list of ecclesial documents cited in the various essays. While not every area is given the same focus or breadth of treatment, by and large the essays are quite well-written and a good attempt has been made to incorporate a balanced variety of issues, viewpoints, and approaches, including special attention to the insights that the various disciplines of theology,

Scripture, ethics, and the social sciences might bring to a better understanding of sexuality—in all of its rich diversity and moral complexity. Since the issues are rarely simple, neither are the questions raised nor the answers tentatively proffered. While this collection may not propose solutions with the same clarity as Kelly's Modern Youth and Chastity, it helps to broaden our perspectives on the morally complex world of sexuality. Theologians and educated lay persons alike should find it a helpful stimulus to deeper reflection on these issues.

COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH
Edited by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana
2004, xxx, 525 pp., paper, ISBN 88-209-7651-X
Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

For the first time in history, the Holy See has published a comprehensive sourcebook of the Church's social teaching. This is a significant achievement as some statistics indicate. The compendium has a 30-page introductory section and 525 pages of text. One finds 193 pages of references, of which 26 are "source" references (Scripture, councils, papal and church documents) and 167 are "subject" references (themes and topics). There are 1,232 detailed footnotes.

The idea of a compendium was proposed by John Paul II in his 1999 apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in America*, when he noted: "It would be very useful to have a compendium of approved synthesis of Catholic social doctrine... which would show the connection between it and the New Evangelization" (EA 54). The same pope had noted earlier in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis:* "The teaching and spreading of her social doctrine are part of the Church's evangelizing mission" (SRS 41). The pope's dream has now become reality.

The compendium was written by the Pontifical Council for Peace and Justice (PCPJ). The endeavor began five years ago under Cardinal François-Xavier Nguyên Van Thuân, then PCPJ president; his illness and death caused unavoidable delays. The project was guided to completion by Cardinal Renato Raffaele Martino, current PCPJ president. Martino pays tribute to his predecessor by noting that the compendium carries "the seal of a great witness to the Cross who remained *strong in faith* in the dark and terrible years of Vietnam" (xxvi).

This attractively produced and "user-friendly" volume begins with an introduction on "An Integral and Solidarity Humanism" (1-9), followed by twelve thematic chapters (13-325), and a conclusion that advocates "a civilization of love" (326-331). Some examples of the thematic chapters are: "The Church's Mission and Social Doctrine" (Two), "The Family, the Vital Cell of Society" (Five), "Safeguarding the Environment" (Ten), and "The Promotion of Peace" (Eleven). Although the content is not, in fact, new material (popes have spoken these truths frequently), the creative synthesis in a one-volume, handy compendium is a welcome gift.

This reviewer found several fresh and enlightening perspectives in the volume. Clear linkage is made between the Church's social teaching and her mission of evangelization (3-4). The text is presented as an instrument for fostering ecumenical and interreligious dialogue (6). The pivotal role of the laity in propagating Church social teaching is emphasized (xxiii). The compendium includes several enlightening thematic sections on such areas as "women and children" (169-170), "globalization" (203-207), "biotechnology" (267-270), "terrorism" (288-290), and the "civilization of love" (329-331). A fitting piece of artwork (Lorenzetti's "Allegory of Good Government") adorns the cover and an explanation of its meaning is printed on the inside cover of the book.

This compendium is destined to become a standard reference work for Church social vision and involvement. Already available in Italian and English, the work will be published in other languages, as well as in local editions. It challenges Christians to continue their

personal witness in the social arena; it also encourages the development of new community programs for authentic humanism within today's social structures.

The Church's social teaching has often been described as "Our Best Kept Secret"; this fine volume stands to achieve much in making the rich and profound patrimony of the Church better known, loved, and practiced.

101 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON VATICAN II
By Maureen Sullivan, O.P.
New York: Paulist Press
2002, xiii, 135 pp. paper, ISBN 0-8091-4133-7
Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

Maureen Sullivan's book on the Second Vatican Council forms part of the Paulist "101 Questions and Answers" series, which has reached nearly twenty volumes. This fact already alerts readers to the kind of book and its style that they will meet. Sullivan, a Dominican who holds a doctorate in theology from Fordham University and is an assistant theology professor at Saint Anselm College, arranges her 101 questions and answers into a generally chronological presentation of the "event" that was Vatican II.

The book opens with a brief "Introduction" which notes that a "popular primer on Vatican II" is needed today to show that "the Council's charter is not a dead letter" (3). In addition, the Council, which was "the biggest, most famous, historic adult education project ever held" (2), is not well known or appreciated by many Catholics.

Two foundational chapters present "The Calling of Vatican II" and "The Players, the Tensions, the Media" connected with the Council. In a total of twenty-three questions and answers, Sullivan introduces the background and protagonists of the Council; this material helps ordinary readers and students (one of the book's intended audiences) to understand the "workings" of a Council, Vatican II in particular. It is noteworthy that the author has thoroughly researched

her material, even travelling to Sotto il Monte to interview Loris Capovilla, John XXIII's long-time personal secretary (28).

Each of the next four chapters is devoted to one session of the Council (1962-1965). In forty-one questions and answers, Sullivan moves from "So, how did the conciliar debate finally begin?" (33) to "How did the Council end?" (69-70). The treatment presents the substantial questions facing Vatican II, the personages that were pivotal in the process, the growth in thinking during the debates, the outcomes and decisions finally reached. Along the way, Sullivan inserts many popular details about the Church and the Council; for example, she treats John XXIIII (43), the role of the conservatives (33-34, 46-48), Paul VI's birth control commission (56-57), nuns changing their habits (62-63), the role of Xavier Rynne (36, 45). On balance, Sullivan achieves an overall enlightening and enjoyable narrative of the Council.

Two substantial chapters describe "The Church Right after the Council—The Early Years" and "The Church Today—The Legacy of Vatican II." Here Sullivan narrates what happened after the Council in various areas: liturgy, theology, Catholic life and morals. She also chronicles how Vatican II's "new charter for the church" (1, 3) was implemented and what challenges still face the Church. A brief "Epilogue" rounds out Sullivan's presentation.

Several additional features enhance this volume. The table of contents reaches seven full pages, because it provides all of the 101 questions Sullivan answers; this allows readers to quickly locate any particular aspect of the Council they are interested in. Appendices provide the Latin and English titles of the Council's sixteen documents, as well as the dates of promulgation. One finds a helpful glossary of theological terms, as well as suggestions for further reading and an Index. This reviewer particularly appreciated Sullivan's approach in providing short explanations of key Council concepts within her narrative; some examples are: collegiality (11, 45, 119, 124), criteria for dissent (57-58), the Church-world relationship (58-62), religious freedom (69), and the "reception" process (74-75, 99, 114, 125).

Readers desiring a clear synopsis of the Council and its significance will find this an adequate first look. Of course, other sources are necessary for an in-depth discussion of Vatican II, the best of which is the Alberigo/Komonchak *History of Vatican II* (Orbis Books, currently four volumes). Sullivan has used her Council knowledge and clear-writing skills to communicate well; her work prompts one to say: "the Council was a special gift of the Spirit to the Church; Vatican II remains alive today."

WAS THE CHURCH TOO DEMOCRATIC?
COUNCILS, COLLEGIALITY AND THE CHURCH'S FUTURE
By Norman Tanner, S.J.
Bangalore: Dharmaran Publications
2003, xvi, 82 pp., cloth, ISBN 81-86861-59-9
Reviewed by James H. Kroeger

This book is the outcome of a lecture series, a fact that accounts for the manner of presentation—short, conversational, eminently crisp and clear. The volume presents the six Bishop Jonas Thaliath Lectures given in Bangalore, India, in 2003.

Tanner is a recognized authority on Church councils, having edited the two-volume *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils* (Georgetown, 1990) and authored *The Councils of the Church: A Short History* (Crossroad, 2001). Currently, he is professor at the Gregorian University (Rome) and serves as book review editor of *Gregorianum.*

This work explores the role and impact of councils in the life of the Church. The author believes that councils were central to the evolving identity of the Church, particularly during the first millennium; this heritage offers much hope for ongoing Church renewal in subsequent eras (e.g. Trent, Vatican II). This "council" potential is to be realized on several levels in general, regional, national, and local assemblies and synods. Tanner asserts: "The most important lesson of all is surely to recognize the action of the Holy Spirit in the councils. They are such a miracle of grace that without the Spirit

they cannot be understood" (13). How does Tanner unfold this general thesis?

In presenting the six lectures included in this book, the author addresses: (1) the pivotal importance of the first seven councils and the lessons to be learned; (2) regional or "grass-roots" councils; (3) the demise of regional councils and the deleterious consequences; (4) collegiality in Vatican II; and, (5-6) application of Vatican II thought to ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.

This slender volume contains much to recommend it, presenting the Church's conciliar experience in an engaging manner, asking provocative questions: "too Democratic"? Tanner is able to creatively communicate the formative influence of the councils on the very identity of the Church. In addition, the conciliar tradition has kept the Church relevant, "up to date, indeed ahead of its time" (19). He also makes a strong case that shows "the demise of regional councils after the period of the early church as one of the gravest wounds in the history of Christianity" (26).

The book communicates many lessons to be gleaned from Church history: the importance of discussion and consensus within the Church; the amazing achievement of the early councils in their delicate faith formulations that have, for the most part, endured down to today; the positive potential of episcopal collegiality as a cornerstone for renewal as envisioned by Vatican II; cautions against a false expectation that the Church will be (or ever was) fully united on all levels of doctrine and governance; the caveat against putting too much focus on the reform of the papacy and of the Roman curia (very "human" institutions). In brief, reading this volume renews one's realistic enthusiasm for the Church to become an authentic community in today's fragmented world.

A few reservations remain. Does the title of the book, though provocative and enticing, reflect the dominant content of the work (possibly better represented by the subtitle)? There is a curious absence of any discussion about the Federation of Asian Bishops' Con-

ferences (FABC) when regional episcopal associations and contributions are presented (50-53, 61-65).

On balance, this work is stimulating and rewarding. Much history of the Church councils (context, questions faced, major decisions, wider impact, lessons to be learned) is presented concisely and creatively. The extensive presentation of the Second Vatican Council informs and enlightens. The book is professionally produced, containing an index and footnotes; it has a table of the councils and a helpful map, showing the locations where councils were convened. In words addressed to Saint Augustine, who was invited to the council of Ephesus, but died before the invitation reached him: *Tolle, lege*—take and read!

CONTRIBUTORS

James T. Bretzke, S.J., S.T.D. from Gregorian University, Rome, is associate professor of Theology and Religious Studies at University of San Francisco.

Manuel G. Gabriel, D.Miss. from Gregorian University, Rome, is rector and parish priest of St. Andrew Cathedral, Parañaque City, Metro Manila.

James H. Kroeger, M.M., D.Miss. from Gregorian University, Rome, is associate professor of missiology and systematic theology at Loyola School of Theology.

Gabriel L. Lamug-Nañawa, S.J., M.A. from Loyola School of Theology, is a missionary in Timor-Leste.

Ma. Fe Mendoza, R.G.S., D.Miss. from Gregorian University, Rome, teaches at St. John Vianney Theological Seminary and St. Mary's Theologate in Mindanao.

Thierry Meynard, S.J., Ph.D. in Chinese Philosophy from Beijing University, is a lecturer at Fordham University, New York.

Luis Antonio G. Tagle, D.D., S.T.D. from the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC, is bishop of Imus, Cavite, and a lecturer on systematic theology at Loyola School of Theology.

Joaquin Choy Yap, Jr., D.Phil. from University of Oxford, England, is assistant professor of systematic theology at Loyola School of Theology.