

MISSION AND SOCIETY: MOVING TOWARD GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Through an integration of storytelling, theological reflection, analysis, action and prayer, participants at USCMA's 1999 annual conference began to articulate the context and vision of mission in our times. On October 29 - 31st over 200 USCMA members and missionaries gathered in Arlington, VA to listen to various voices of mission and discuss the interaction of mission and society today. They told stories of their experiences of mission; the joys and the struggles, and shared their hopes for growth, change and renewed energy for mission today.

Presenter Roger Schroeder, SVD from Catholic Theological Union, introduced participants to aspects of the new concept of narrative theology; focusing on the practice of trading stories as a means of theological reflection. This methodology, ". . . points to the validity of our experience as the place where God is revealed to us and the starting point for doing theology", Schroeder stated. He went on to describe the missionary process as a "gift exchange" where people from diverse backgrounds have cultural gifts and stories of faith which they share with the missionary. "Articulating a clear and compelling vision of mission is a challenge in an age of plurality and change," said Vicki Armour-Hileman, a Maryknoll Lay Missioner and USCMA Board member who attended the conference. "We can begin to define that vision by listening to one another's stories and finding the essential unity that underlies our experience."

Storytelling continued throughout the conference as Rev. Joan Maruskin of the United Methodist Church of York, PA shared how people in the York community united to free Chinese asylum seekers whom recently arrived in the U.S. She explained how contact with these refugees has helped her congregation and community reflect on the centrality of hospitality to the Christian faith. Using the Bible as both a guidebook and handbook, Rev. Maruskin led participants along the journeys of countless refugees and migrants. From Adam and Eve expelled from the garden to John exiled on the island of Patmos, she helped participants reflect on the rejection or hospitality that was given to aliens throughout Scripture.

According to the analysis of 140 stories received from individuals serving in over 22 countries and the table reflections of those gathered, today's missionaries are grappling with the challenges of ministering to people in a globalized society that is becoming more impoverished. Collaboration, community, dialogue, globalization, mutuality, inclusivity, mission in the U.S., local churches, laity, systemic analysis and advocacy are some of the major themes that emerged from the table talk at the conference. The insights gleaned from table conversations at this meeting will support preparations for the Mission Congress which takes place in Chicago in September.

On Saturday afternoon participants converged on the steps of the U.S. Capitol. Coming from of reparation and reconciliation focusing on the plight of the poorest countries suffering around the world, they stood together to participate in a simple yet moving service under the burden of international debt. This witness emphasized the continuing growth in solidarity with people whom the missionaries have come to know in the far reaches of the world and right here in U.S. neighborhoods and towns. It also expressed communal hope for a more just sharing of the earth's gifts and wealth.

Saturday evening conference participants worshiped with the multi-cultural parish community of Our Lady Queen of Peace parish in Arlington. After being challenged to give a radical response to the call of God's word by homilist Tony Gittins, CSSp and filled with songs of jubilee and justice, they proceeded to the parish hall where a delicious Salvadoran feast of homemade papusas, (a Salvadoran tortilla specialty), salad, plantain with cream and dessert awaited them. Maria Linares, a member of the parish, originally from El Salvador, along with 2 other women of the parish prepared and served over 400 papusas! The hospitality and generosity of the parish was greatly appreciated by all. The evening concluded with a starlight tour of Washington, DC and a meditative walk at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial; once again helping us reflect on the struggles which face us as we engage and challenge our globalizing society, hoping to move toward global community and greater solidarity.

FROM THE DIRECTOR
Rosanne Rustemeyer, SSND

2000 CE . . . A Year of Jubilee . . . a Holy Year

The clear air and beautiful autumn colors of late October welcomed us – the 200 participants of the USCMA annual conference – to the steps of the US Capitol. We gathered for a moment of prayer and witness. Truly we had come from around the world. More than 30 conference participants were from cultures other than the U.S. There were another 30 participants who had just recently returned from overseas ministry or had traveled here for the purpose of the conference. We stood together singing, “God is going to do it! Jubilee!” With robust melody invading the clear air of this space, we stood together to participate in a simple yet moving service or reparation and reconciliation. It was a Jubilee moment!

In those minutes of prayer and conversation between representatives of the global north and the global south, it became evident to me that the title. . **MOVING TOWARD GLOBAL COMMUNITY** had been an appropriate choice. I realized that not only is global community possible it is this call to solidarity that makes a future based on the *Common Good* attainable.

From the Jubilee South participants we heard:

We ask only Solidarity. The international debt is one of the main stumbling blocks keeping the poor of the global South from their God-given liberation. And so we ask you, our brothers and sisters from the global North, to raise your voices. Stand with us and work in solidarity with us. We do not ask you to speak for us but to amplify and echo our voices in calling for change of policies, priorities and values from those that create death and destruction and prevent us from our own self-determination to policies, priorities and values that fulfill, give life, and allow us to live out our call from God.

I share this experience from the conference because I believe these kinds of graced moments bring new perspectives to the work of Mission. I feel the energy and direction needed for accomplishing Jesus’ mission in this new era can be uncovered through a deep Christian spiritual renewal. This return to the scriptural foundations for mission will provide some of the clarity of purpose for which missionaries hope.

May the peace of the Christmas Season and the grace of the Holy Year be special for each of us!

Message from the President of the Board

Sr. Christine Beckett, GHMS

Blessed Holiday Greetings from Kentucky!

As the year comes to a close on the brink of a new millennium USCMA continues to discern the movement of the Spirit and seeks to embody the mission of Christ through our activities. This fall I had the wonderful privilege of participating in the first Mission Congress of America and the Sixth Mission Congress of Latin America held in Parana, Argentina in September. It was an historic and inspiring celebration of mission and a challenging call to continue the journey. Participants included people from all over Latin America, North America and the Caribbean. A month later the USCMA annual conference in Arlington, VA, “Mission & Society: Moving Toward Global Community”, enabled us to reflect together on becoming a Jubilee people, a community of reconciliation, stories and hope embracing the difficulties of our world together.

At our Annual Conference board elections resulted in one new person being elected and three re-elections. Our new board member is Mr. Jim Lindsay, executive director of Catholic Network of

Volunteer Service, an organization with whom we collaborate on a variety of projects. We welcome Jim to the board and look forward to continued collaboration and friendship. Jim has taken Theresa Hicks place on the board. Theresa has completed two terms on the board, the maximum allowed. She brought much wisdom, insight, creativity and joy to the board and will be missed. Ms. Mary Jo Runnoe, Sr. Demetria Smith, MSOLA and Fr. Al Utzig, SCC were re-elected to the board.

In conjunction with the Springtime for Mission process and looking forward to the Mission Congress in 2000 the USCMA board has entered into an initial planning process that will carry the Association into the next decade. Before the Conference the board shared an energizing hour of brainstorming and hopes at the October board meeting. We will continue this process with a day of retreat at the Spring Board meeting.

As a new year, yes, a new millennium approaches I pray that you are filled with all wisdom, joy and courage for the journey of faith and mission that lies ahead of us.

Jubilee 2000 Update

Debt Legislation

This fall, Jubilee 2000 rejoiced in a few small steps forward in the campaign to cancel the debt of the world's poorest countries. On November 19th, Congress passed an omnibus spending bill that included significant new financing for debt relief for impoverished nations. Congress agreed to finance President Clinton's pledge, made last September, to cancel 100% of the debts owed to the US (i.e. bilateral debt) by over two dozen nations, many of them in Africa. For this purpose, \$110 million was appropriated in the bill for this fiscal year. No money was included in the FY2000 foreign aid bill to fund a US contribution to the HIPC/COLOGNE Trust Fund to pay for multilateral debt cancellation (debts owed by countries to the IMF, World Bank or regional Development Banks). There is, however, agreement to authorize the revaluation of IMF gold reserves and to authorize the transfer of funds from the IMF's "Special Contingency Account-2" so that the IMF can use these resources to reduce debt owed to it.

Pressure from Jubilee 2000 and member organizations also helped ensure that emphasis was placed on participation, transparency and poverty reduction in the countries whose debts would be canceled and that no binding requirements for further trade liberalization by recipient countries were attached to the agreement. Significantly, the agreement includes a provision that IMF resources would be applied only to debt relief and through a facility separate from the IMF's structural adjustment lending facility.

Rolling Fast

The Rolling Fast in which Jubilee supporters have agreed to fast for one or more days during the last 100 days of 1999 in support of cancellation of poor countries' debts has attracted more than 35,000 participants around the country.

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On Dec. 1st in Washington, some of the members of the Jubilee 2000 Steering Committee, RWG members and others were fasting. They demonstrated on the East Capitol Steps, reiterating the message, "Yes! to Life. No! to Debt."

Major Jubilee event for 2000

Mark your calendars!! On April 9th, 2000, a major Jubilee event will be held in Washington. On that day, it is hoped that at least 100,000 Jubilee supporters from around the country will come to Washington for a significant demonstration on the Mall. Other programs are being planned around this central event. April 9th is just one week before the spring meetings of the IMF and World Bank Boards.

A.L.V.

THE PEOPLE MEET THE WTO IN SEATTLE

"The powerful of the world in Seattle want to adopt international policies on business without

listening to civil society, Bishop Diarmuid Martin, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace - Dec 2nd, 1999

The world listened and watched as 50,000 protesters brought their message to the streets of Seattle during the November 30th to December 3rd, 1999 Third Ministerial Meeting of the WTO (World Trade Organization). Because of this many have asked: "What is the WTO? Who are the protesters?" "What do they want?" I was a protester in Seattle and I will briefly write about these questions.

What is the WTO?

The WTO is a powerful global commerce agency set up in 1995 as a result of the Uruguay Round of GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs). Its membership is made up 135 countries and it has two main objectives:

1. to promote and extend trade liberalization (by breaking down national "barriers" to trade), and
2. to establish a mechanism for trade dispute settlement.

In reality it is a powerful body of unelected bureaucrats, who deliberate in secret with an aim of turning the entire world into one big market. It not only sets basic rules on trade in goods (as the GATT did), but it also regulates in new areas such as food, environmental standards, telecommunications, banking, investments, patents and copyrights.

Who are the protesters?

The protesters were the young and not-so-young, with people from all continents and many countries. Among the groups represented were students, labor, the environment, health, farmers, women, Jubilee 2000, academia and religion. Before coming to Seattle, people organized for the most part by e-mail and through the Internet and planned several non-violent protests and a series of "teach-ins" which took place in several downtown churches, including the Catholic, Methodist, Congregational and Lutheran churches.

The protesters came because they are concerned that during the past five years the WTO has worked in secret and their decisions have contributed to the concentration of wealth in the hands of the rich few; increasing poverty for the majority of the world's population; and unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. The protesters message was expressed in a statement signed by over 1,120 organizations from 87 countries, part of which stated; "members of international civil society oppose any effort to expand the powers of the WTO through a comprehensive round of trade liberalization. Instead, governments should review and rectify the deficiencies of the system and the WTO regime itself." (To obtain the statement and/or sign on write to ronnieh@foe.uk)

The protesters were united in their opposition to the WTO. However, there were different opinions on which tactic to use. Some wanted to abolish the WTO, while others believed they could reform it. This will be resolved in the future as more people are involved.

The media focused on the violent "battle in Seattle". The protesters had not planned this and were not responsible for it. The battle happened when the police over-reacted with tear gas and pepper spray on the protesters when a small group of "anarchists" - not affiliated with the protesters - began destroying property downtown.

What do they want?

As we move into the new millennium the protesters want people, not corporations and wealthy elites, to have control of setting the direction of globalization. They are asking for participation on the part of citizens and more transparency and accountability on the part of governments and corporations. This is echoed in Bishop Martin's statement, "The WTO cannot continue giving orders and speeches from the top without the support of civil society. Civil society must participate. Citizens are the owners of the great plans for development."

The various workshops were well attended and designed to bring people together around various issues. (Due to the arrest of some protesters and other events, some workshops ended earlier than scheduled to allow people to demonstrate.)

Monday was Environment and Health Day with such presentations as "The Human Face of Trade:

Health and the Environment,” “Make trade Clean, Green and Fair” and a Jubilee 2000 sponsored Human Chain of 30,000.

Tuesday was Labor and Human Rights Day, the day scheduled for the opening ceremonies of the WTO (which were canceled due to unrest) and the day of many demonstrations. There were also educational sessions on “Labor Rights and Living Standards” and “Trading Away Human Rights? The Role of the WTO.”

Wednesday was dedicated to a series of workshops on Women, Democracy, Sovereignty, and Development. In addition, there was an all day seminar on “No Patents on Life: A Workshop on Biotechnology, Intellectual Property and the Global Economy.”

Thursday was Food and Agriculture Day. The workshops addresses such issues as: “Naming the Problem: Corporate Control and the Industrialization of Agriculture”, “What are We Trading Away?” “Food Security and Food Safety,” “Beyond Globalization: Towards a Socially Just Agriculture in the new Millennium.”

Friday was Corporate Accountability Day with an all day workshop scheduled on “Who Rules?: Corporate Accountability.”

What do we do Now?

Bishop Martin believes it is necessary to launch a publicity campaign in all countries, so that citizens become aware of global questions. We are challenged, then, to do as one woman from Seattle stated, "During this Advent season, I just know something is struggling to be born - here! Here in our city. I can see it and feel it and I want so much to be a part of it!"

By Maura Browne, SND de Namur

Congreso Misionero Americano - American Mission Congress)

On the 28th of September over 3,500 adult delegates, including 150 bishops and over 600 priests, representing all Latin American and North American and Caribbean countries gathered in Parana, Argentina for the sixth Latin American Mission Congress, COMLA IV and the first American Mission Congress, CAM I. After the Synod for America in 1997 it was decided that North American and Caribbean countries should be invited to participate fully in a mission congress for America as a symbol of collaboration and solidarity, as one united gathered church. The US delegation of 55 included six bishops, directors of mission offices, and representatives of major mission sending organizations and communities, including members of the USCMA staff and board. The title of the Congress was *AMERICA CON CRISTO, SAL DE TU TIERRA, AMERICA WITH CHRIST, GO FORTH FROM YOUR LAND/SALT OF YOUR LAND*. (There is a play on the word “sal” which means salt and go forth in Spanish). With a theme of “Jesus Christ, life and hope for all the peoples”, the Congress aimed to motivate all the churches of America, “so that they will announce Jesus Christ, the Savior, to all peoples, through witness, service and dialogue” (COMLA VI - CAM I Preparatory Document). There also was a simultaneous Congress for the *Infancia Misionera*, the children’s groups of the nations gathered.

Instead of staying in hotels or university housing, delegates were received in homes around Parana, the capital of the Entre Rios province. The tremendous amount of work that had gone into preparing for and receiving the congress was evident. Schools were closed for the week and over a thousand young people guided participants to each event and offered assistance for any of their needs. Each parish served as a meeting place for the delegates housed in that parish. And hosted some of the celebrations and liturgies. Delegates were extremely impressed with the hospitality of both the host families and host parishes. Their welcome and attention during the week were incredible!

With opening and closing liturgies that included the people of Parana (over 30,000 in attendance) and an evening of cultural celebration, the gifts of differing cultures, customs, beliefs and languages were honored and embraced. The atmosphere was filled with festivity and camaraderie as fellow missionaries from the hemisphere and beyond gathered to pray, share, learn and deliberate the mission of Christ in the church of America. All the prayers, presentations and songs were translated into the four main languages represented in the group: Spanish, Portuguese, French and English.

Daily there were keynote addresses and panel presentations representing themes such as “Kerygma Today,” “Globalization Challenges To the Church’s Mission” (featuring a keynote by Cardinal Francis George, OMI, Archbishop of Chicago), “Local Church -- Responsible for Mission” and “the Central Role of Mission.” Each afternoon thematic groups gathered in classrooms around Parana discussing ten areas in light of the morning’s presentations such as the Kerygma, Mission Spirituality, Inculturation, the Role of the Local Church, New Evangelization, Inter-religious Dialogue, New Aeropagi- new fields for evangelization and others.

These discussions and reflections in small groups led to conclusions announced to the participants on the last day. Some of these conclusions focused on the concern for the growing gap between the rich and the poor in our world. The congress also encouraged participants to challenge the spirit of indifference that accompanies the secularization and individualism that are permeating global society, to foster greater collaboration between laity, religious and diocesan clergy; to be proactive in formation and sending of these groups within and outside this hemisphere, and to continue efforts at inculturation throughout all mission enterprises. There was also a recommendation for an inclusive mass telecommunications network for evangelization and justice in the Americas; making use of technology for the benefit of all, especially enabling the poor to have access. The congress strongly recommended that all catechetical programs include mission spirituality and mission formation. Congress members asked for a more active role of women in the planning and decision making of the Church’s mission and ministries. The next Mission Congress of America will take place in Guatemala in 2003. The coordination has been assumed by not only the Guatemalan church, but the Central American church as a whole. For more information about the Congress and its conclusions or presentations by keynote speakers please contact the Congress website: www.comla-cam.org.

A Visit to Villa Amelia

Shanty town of Buenos Aires

After attending COMLA VI - CAM I, Alison Arnold Ryan, the Director of Cabrini Mission Corps and Megeen White, USCMA Associate Director, visited several lay missionaries in the shanty towns surrounding Buenos Aires. The contrast between the wealth of the business and billboards along the widest avenue in the world (Nuevo de Julio Avenue) in downtown Buenos Aires and the narrow trash laden dirt paths of Villa Amelia was profound. They visited a Cabrini School in Villa Amelia where Cabrini Mission Corps missionary Tom Hollywood teaches English and has set up a library for the school. In the midst of a community beset with violence, drugs and poverty, the 700 students at the school (K-9) are rays of hope and energy. Eager to have their children learn in a safe environment with dedicated teachers families in the community struggle to keep them in school. The school has two shifts to accommodate all the students; half attend in the morning and the other half in the afternoon. Additional classrooms are being built to meet the school’s increasing needs. Students are primarily recent indigenous immigrants from Bolivia, Paraguay and Uruguay.

They also visited with Mr. Raul Besiere and Ms. Elvira Ferre, a couple from Buenos Aires who direct the activities of the school. Elvira, a teacher, has been in a relationship with the Cabrini sisters since high school. She began to work at Cabrini schools in 1978. In 1986 she became the vice principal of the school in Villa Amelia. Her husband Raul is a former colonel of the Argentine military. His first encounters with the school, when he was driving Elvira to work, were fairly negative; his car fell into a hole and he found the neighborhood very dirty! But when he had a few months sabbatical from the military he decided to work at the school and fell in love with the students, teachers. Thus, he left his military career and came to the Cabrini School full-time.

Raul and Elvira still commute from central Buenos Aires each day and work hard to obtain funding for projects in the school as well as continue giving students and teachers individual attention and care. They struggle along with the teachers and other employees at the school, to instill positive and hope-filled values in these children in the midst of an environment of despair. They are both very supportive of volunteers at the school. There is a great missionary spirit at the school and this couple has found their mission here. With Tom and the other teacher they share a witness of love, service and solidarity that shines as a beacon in the darkness of a community struggling with poverty, prejudice, drugs and violence.

BOOK REVIEWS

Prophets and Pioneers: Who will Speak?

The Catholic Network of Volunteer Service held their National Conference, *"Prophets and Pioneers: Who Will Speak?"* in Denver, CO, November 12-14, 1999. Several USCMA members attended and said it was a great success! Participants listened to the wisdom of pioneers, prophets and saints of yesterday and today and then were challenged to speak prophetically as those had done so before them. Congratulations CNVS! Next year we will be together at Mission Congress 2000!

Popular Catholicism in a World Church: Seven Case Studies in Inculturation. Edited by Thomas Bamat and Jean-Paul Wiest. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999. 314 pp. Paper. \$24.

The book's subtitle expresses very well its content and focus. Whereas most recent studies in inculturation have tended to be theoretical and general, this book offers seven case studies in "popular Catholicism" and shows how it has been the agent of the encounter of the Gospel with specific cultures. By "popular" is meant "those sectors of society who do not enjoy much wealth, status, or power" (6). By "popular Catholicism" is meant "the complex of beliefs and religious practices of self-identified Catholics who belong to the popular sectors of societies" (6). The seven communities in which popular Catholicism was studied are located in Chile, Ghana, Hong Kong, India, Peru, St. Lucia, and Tanzania.

The book contains an excellent introduction by the two editors outlining the genesis of the project issuing in the book, its epistemological presuppositions, and its results. The theological reflections on popular Catholicism practiced in these seven communities by Kosuke Koyama, Ivone Gebara, Lamin Sanneh, and Michael Amaladoss are illuminating, especially the last's, which is highly recommended. After this book, it is no longer possible to regard popular Catholicism simply as an inferior form or aberration of religiosity; rather it should be seen as an authentic way of living out the message of the Gospel. This book is a must-read for all missionaries!

Written by Rev. Peter C. Phan Distinguished Professor of Religion and Culture at the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

RESOURCES

ST. PAUL'S MAJOR SEMINARY, SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA

St. Paul's Major Seminary was founded in Gbarnga, Bong County, Liberia in 1974 for the training of diocesan priests for Sierra Leone, Liberia and the Gambia. All went well until 1989 when the Liberian civil war broke out. The seminary library at the time with over 20,000 volumes was lost. The seminary was then relocated in neighboring Sierra Leone.

The seminary spent a few months at the Pastoral Center in Kenema and was then moved to the Diocese of Makeni in September 1990. Once again the seminary adjusted to the local conditions and functioned optimally until December 1998 when the rebels entered Makeni and occupied the seminary premises. The library and all other facilities were lost.

In September 1999, the seminary was relocated to Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone. So far, things are going well and with the signing of the Peace Accord, there are hopeful signs of peace continuing.

For now, however, the seminary is in desperate need of books and staff. Any offers in terms of books or talents will be a great service to the Church in Sierra Leone. Please take time to consider helping out!

For more information about how to get involved and where to send materials for the library please contact: Rev. Joseph Kamanda, Archdiocese of Freetown and Bo, Josephite House, 1200 Varnum St., NE Washington, DC 20017, Phone: 202-269-3329, Fax: 202-526-7811, E-mail: jtkamanda@juno.com.

(co-sponsored with Stony Point Center, held at Maryknoll)

May 21-26 **“Why Look for the Living Among the Dead?”**
New Conversations About the Jesus We Preach
Nonie Gutzler, MM

For the schedule of the entire year please visit the website above or write: Maryknoll Mission Institute, Rogers Building, Box 529, Maryknoll, NY, 10545-0311
Tel. 914-941-7575, Fax. 914-923-0733.

They Named Him Emmanuel

As we celebrate God with us

may we share our love joyfully in care for one another.

**Wishes for a Blessed Holiday Season from the USCMA Board
and Staff**