



Mission Update

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MISSION CONGRESS 2005

Jennifer Taylor
St. Vincent Palotti Center



Mission Congress 2005 gathered 335 missionaries in sunny Tucson, Arizona October 13-16, to explore new models for mission in the context of globalization. Mission Congress 2005 focused on the theme, "Horizons and Possibilities: The U.S. Church in Mission with the Global Community." Sr. Irma Isip and Roberto Chené facilitated the Congress, which

engaged participants in deep listening and dialogue. Through lively discussion, challenging speakers and celebrative multicultural prayer and liturgies, the participants reflected on the question: "What is the responsible contribution of the Church in the United States in mission with the global community?"

Sr. Eva Lumas, SSS, challenged participants to consider the power of faith and culture as integral to the witness of the gospel. Eva shared the powerful story of her life as an African American woman in the Catholic Church who experienced racial challenges growing up. She found ways to build bridges with her surroundings and is now a model for multi-culturalism as well a voice for the voiceless.

Most Rev. Gerald Kincanas, Bishop of Tucson welcomed the Mission Congress attendees to the Diocese of Tucson and challenged the group to be transformed by their experiences on the border. He affirmed the mission spirit with an anecdote about a young child's response to the question, "What's the most important part of the church?" The child responded, "The exit sign, because that tells us to take what we learned and go out to help others!"

Mission Congress 2005 also urged participants to reflect on the meaning of solidarity as it calls us to transformative reconciliation and peacemaking. An Assistant Professor of Cross-Cultural Studies at Catholic Theological Union, Dr. Michel Andraos, who has had a personal experience as an immigrant, stressed that reconciliation must be integral to mission. Thirty million people worldwide are in refugee camps and the political war on terror has shifted attention away from the failure of systems, Andraos stated. "Today, we need a theological response to the war on terror," in order to begin to model the role of reconciliation in peacemaking.



One of the unique aspects of the Congress was that it offered a retreat-like atmosphere. Instead of the typical

WE PRAY...

For people all over the world searching for God and truth: may they encounter the Lord Jesus.

- Holy Father's Prayer Intentions

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FROM THE DIRECTOR**MICHAEL MONTOYA, MJ**

I began my term as Executive Director on December 1, 2005. For the month prior, Sr. Rosanne Rustemeyer had been very generous in sharing her time and wisdom, making sure I learned as much as possible and meet as many people as permitted by time constraints. In a period of two weeks, we had 19 meetings. By the end of the month, it felt as if I had been at the office longer than I actually had been. Words do not suffice to say how grateful I am for what she has shared. Thank you, Sr. Rosanne, for all you have done and for all that you continue to do for USCMA! Numerous members have sent their best wishes and prayers; allow me to add mine as well.

In this issue of Mission Update, you will see and read about the Mission Congress 2005 held in Tucson, Arizona, October 13-16, 2005. The pictures and articles offer but a glimpse of a rich, deeply spiritual experience. The multicultural and intergenerational make-up of the group gave a broader and deeper perspectives of mission as has been lived and experienced by the participants themselves. Their passion for mission was palpable. Thank you for your support in making this event a success!

We have chosen "Reconciliation as a New Paradigm of Mission" by Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S for our Periodic Paper to further deepen our reflection on mission today. As he has written, "The experience of coming to terms with a violent past, the need to end hostility, and the slow work of reconstructing broken societies have pushed reconciliation into the limelight, especially bringing it to the attention of those concerned with the work of the Church." We cannot agree more. This article is both timely and relevant.

Still basking from the spirit of Mission Congress 2005, we now enter this new year renewed and full of energy. We already started the preparations for our Annual USCMA Meeting and Conference to be held at Notre Dame, IN October 1-3, 2006. We will relay more details as soon as we have them. Meantime, please mark your calendar and plan to join us. Your presence and your sharing

continued

of stories are what make the Annual Conferences even more exciting and life giving.

USCMA is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. It is a time to give thanks for all the blessings received. While USCMA traces its roots from the Mission Secretariat in 1949, which later became the United States Catholic Mission Council, its present mode was approved by the Annual Assembly of the Board of Directors in May 1981.

Our history as an Association and the story we choose to tell is filled with faces and stories of people and missionaries in the field who have continuously inspired the Association in kindling the fire of mission in the US Church. We celebrate this passion for God's mission as together we enter our 25th year as USCMA. And as Dag Hammarskjöld said, "For all that has been, thanks. For all that will be, YES!"

From Mission to Mission Celebrates 25 Years!

Since 1980 From Mission to Mission has assisted returning missionaries as they process their mission experience and transition back to their home culture. Lay missionaries, priests, religious have participated in facilitated workshops that help them rediscover the gifts of their mission experience within their current reality. This can be a difficult period for missionaries no matter how long one has been away. Many returning missionaries have found these workshops an invaluable part of their transition process.

From Mission to Mission recognized its 25th anniversary with a wonderful celebration at Mission Congress 2005.

****CORRECTION****

In the Fall '05 issue of *Mission Update*, the Periodic Paper was inadvertently attributed to John Fullenbach. Eleanor Doidge and Roger Schroeder, SVD co-authored the article. We apologize for the mistake.

USCMA Staff

Michael Montoya, MJ, Executive Director

Charlotte Cook, Associate Director

Kathleen Bullock, Associate for Operations

Anne Louise Von Hoene, MMS, Accountant

Questions / Comments re: Meetings & Conferences
meetings@uscatholicmission.org

Questions / Comments re: *Mission Update* / Current Topics
news@uscatholicmission.org

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table discussions usually found at conferences, the Mission Congress consisted of several “dialogue communities” that gathered periodically throughout the Congress to discuss questions and themes from speakers, presenters and dialogue sessions. These communities were one way that participants could incorporate the reconciliation model for mission by creating safe spaces that encouraged enhanced listening and the meaningful sharing of stories and perspectives.



With this model of reconciliation and desire for understanding, it was only appropriate for the Congress to utilize its proximity to the border to address the issues of immigration. Rev. John Fife, Pastor at Southside Presbyterian in Tucson, spoke about the work of Humane Borders and No More Deaths, which deal with the growing number of deaths of immigrants crossing the border. He warned of the dangers of unrestrained capitalism that leads to the unequal distribution of wealth, exploitation of labor and the devastation of the environment, which are felt much more intensely on the border. For Fife, “The Church is the only institution that meets the criteria” needed to address these problems and realities faced on the border.

Immersion trips to the U.S./Mexico border and area Native American reservations challenged Congress participants to envision a community free of restrictive borders. BorderLinks, a nonprofit that offers year-round immersions, organized opportunities for participants to experience the reality of the border in a way that hearing about it third-hand could not have provided.



Some Congress participants experienced the Asian Catholic community in Tucson. In a visit to the local Vietnamese parish Vietnamese, Koreans, Filipinos, Chinese and Sri Lankans joined to proudly share their arts, foods and religious cultures. During the post-lunch tour of the church the host group impressed the visitors with the strength of their traditional faith. All Asian communities share a common heritage of early

persecutions and reverence for the sacrifice of early martyrs.

Although Mission Congress 2005 addressed many of the negative effects of globalization, the Congress made a point to also celebrate the gift of Christ’s mission at work in the global community. This celebration included a diverse representation of cultures through prayer, food, dance and music. Some of the highlights were the First Nation peoples that led the Congress in a traditional prayer; the evening spent braving the unusually cold and wet weather at the historic San Javier Mission; and the musical dance performance by the Tongan community during Saturday’s Mass and banquet. The closing ritual was a particularly poignant moment when each participant was asked to take a piece of yarn from the table centerpieces and bless one another as the yarn was tied around each other’s wrists. These blessings were the final words spoken at the Congress before parting ways.



Sr. Rosanne Rustemeyer, SSND and Mary Jo Klick, who served as coordinators of the Congress, expressed gratitude for the willingness of participants to share so personally from their mission

experience. “We feel that this was the major reason for the fulfillment of our hopes for Mission Congress 2005. We believe from the experience of the Congress that global community is not only possible but already exists. To become aware of this communion is a graced moment.”

There were an increased number of young adults in attendance compared to Mission Congress 2000, which was evidence of the efforts of the Congress’ organizers to encourage participants to bring a more diverse group from their congregations and organizations. A five member delegation from Bolivia found the Congress to be an excellent venue for dialogue about migration issues and economic justice.

Mission Congress 2005 was sponsored by the Catholic Mission Forum, a collaborative effort of Catholic Network of Volunteer Services, Conference of Major Superiors of Men, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Society for the Propagation of the Faith, United States Catholic Mission Association, USCCB Committee on Home Missions, USCCB Committee on World Mission, USCCB Secretariat for the Church in Latin America.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

The Year 2006 has been designated UN Year of Deserts and Desertification. We are interested in learning about any related programs our members are involved with. Please contact us at ccook@uscatholicmission.org with names and contact information. Thanks so much.

BOOK REVIEWS

Two books recently published by Orbis are a must for anyone working or interested in the area of HIV/AIDS: *Grant Me Justice! HIV/AIDS & Gender Readings of the Bible*, edited by Musa W. Dube and Musimbi Kanyoro and *When God's People Have HIV/AIDS* by Maria Cimperman, OSU.

The former is an excellent resource written by women of the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians with the Bible as its base. Over half of the Africans living with HIV are women. But African women have heeded the challenge in Proverbs (24:10) "Don't give up and be helpless in times of trouble." With justice as its central theme this small volume offers readers "justice-oriented ways of re-reading the Bible in the light of HIV/AIDS." The current times force African women to think about life and its meaning in different ways. Using texts from Genesis, Job, Ezechiel, Matthew, Mark and John, the contributors challenge readers to re-look at some of the myths held as beliefs for too long. Some of these are: women are not victims; women are resilient; adolescent girls are at particular risk; not all women who are infected or at risk of becoming infected do not practice high-risk behavior; affected people are vital to the process of effective change; and change is possible.

"God's people have HIV/AIDS, and our calling as disciples is to bring our theological and human resources to the service of God's people." Cimperman asks the challenging question "What kind of moral theology must we engage in, in a world where we encounter HIV/AIDS?" She points out that theology and praxis

cannot be separated from the reality of the world with AIDS." With questions for reflection and discussion at the end of each chapter this book can be used in a variety of settings from personal reflection to classroom discussions.

Both books exhort Christians to read the signs of the times and to respond as Jesus would.

Using 235 proverbs familiar to Americans, Stan Nussbaum, in his recent book *American Cultural Baggage: How to Recognize and Deal with It*, has provided a unique way for Americans to look at themselves as they enter into a different culture. Nussbaum provides questions that non-Americans might ask their American guests about US culture, especially when our cultural norms seem in conflict with one another and with non-American norms. Also included in this small but valuable volume are cautions to Americans about potential conflicts that can arise between themselves and their non-American hosts over cultural values. Nussbaum has provided us with an easy-to-read book that should become part of the preparation program of anyone planning to work in another culture. He has used the experiences learned from living and working in Africa for many years. This book might also be useful to share with people in the host country with whom Americans will be living and/or working. Recent immigrants might also find this book useful as they try to understand their new country of residence.

2005 MISSION APPEALS

USCMA is grateful to have been invited by seven diocesan Mission Offices to participate in the Mission Coop Plan. We thank each of these offices and the 19 parishes that welcomed us. The generosity of the parishioners to whom we spoke has been most gratifying. We give special thanks to each of you who spoke on our behalf.

Brooklyn

Blessed Sacrament	Octavio Duran, ofm
Epiphany	Joe Regotti, MLM
Our Lady of the Presentation	Gabriel Garcia Gonzalez, ofm
Sacred Heart	Octavio Duran, ofm

Chicago

Immaculate Conception	Patrick Rearden, op
St. Bartholomew James	Chukumwa Okoye, C.S.Sp.
Sts. Peter and Paul	Rose Cecile Espinoza, SSND

Los Angeles

St. Paul of the Cross	Rosalie Callen, CSJ & Eleanor Ortega, CSJ
St. Philomena	Manuel Baeza, mcej
St. Stephen	Arturo Aguilar, SSC

Las Vegas

St. James the Apostle	Anselm Nkuanga, CICM
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Paterson

St. Mary	Girard Kohler, C.S.Sp.
St. Rose of Lima	Girard Kohler, C.S.Sp.

Philadelphia

Old St. Joseph's	Bill Christy, C.S.Sp.
St. Josephat	Girard Kohler, C.S.Sp.
St. Mary of the Assumption	Charlotte Cook, staff

Youngstown

Immaculate Conception	Girard Kohler, C.S.Sp.
Sacred Heart of Mary	Anthony Anomah, C.S.Sp.
St. Patrick	Freddy Washington, C.S.Sp.

Periodic Paper #4 Winter 2005

RECONCILIATION AS A NEW PARADIGM OF MISSION

Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S.



Robert Schreiter, C.P.P.S., is Vatican Council II Professor of Theology at Catholic Theological Union, and Professor of Theology and Culture at the University of Nijmegen in the Netherlands. He has written extensively both on questions about mission and on reconciliation. Among his books are: "Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order" (1992), and "Mission in the Third Millennium" (2001). He serves as theological consultation for reconciliation and peacebuilding programs to Caritas Internationalis, the umbrella organization for 162 relief and development organizations in the Catholic Church.

The Emergence of Reconciliation in the Discussion of Mission

There have been references to, and echoes of, the theme of reconciliation in the theological discussion of mission throughout the previous century, but it is only in the last decade and a half that it has emerged as an important way of talking about Christian mission. David Bosch's 1992 magisterial work, *Transforming Mission*, makes no mention of it. Stephen Bevans and Roger Schroeder's recent book, *Constants in Context* published in 2004, on the other hand, has multiple references to reconciliation. What has happened?

The experience of trying to come to terms with a violent past, the need to end hostility, and the slow work of reconstructing broken societies have pushed reconciliation into the limelight, especially bringing it to the attention of those concerned with the work of the Church. The fact that many recent conferences on mission have been taking up this theme, and that it figures in the title and preparatory documents of the Conference, indicates how far we have come.

In this presentation, I would like to explore how reconciliation might be seen as a paradigm or model of mission. I begin by looking at how the idea of reconciliation might be seen as revealing to us the heart of the Gospel. Then I will look at the understanding of reconciliation today, both as a *process* for engaging in mission, and as the *goal* of mission.

RECONCILIATION: THE HEART OF THE GOSPEL

Although the word "reconciliation" does not occur as such in the Hebrew Scriptures, and only fourteen times in the New Testament, the Bible is full of stories of reconciliation, from the stories of Esau and Jacob, and Joseph and his brothers, to Jesus' parables, especially that of the Prodigal Son. These stories show the struggle that goes on in trying to achieve reconciliation. Many of them end before reconciliation is actually reached — something that mirrors much of our own experience.

It is the Apostle Paul especially who sets out the Christian understanding of reconciliation. For Paul, God is the author of reconciliation: about this he has no doubt. We but participate in what God is bringing about in our world. One can discern three processes of reconciliation in which God is engaged. The first is God's reconciling a sinful humanity to God's own self. This is set forth especially in Paul's Letter to the Romans (5:1-11), where Paul describes the peace we now have with God, who has poured out love in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. We have been reconciled to God through the death of his Son, Jesus Christ. It is through Christ that we have now received reconciliation. This act of God's, reconciling us, rescuing us from our sins, is sometimes called *vertical reconciliation*. As such, it is the basis for all other forms of Christian reconciliation. It is also central to Paul's own experience of Christ, having been converted from his persecution of the Church to being made, "out of due time", an apostle of Jesus Christ.

The second kind of reconciliation of which Paul speaks is brought about between individual human beings and groups in society. The paramount example of this reconciliation is between Jews and Gentiles. Here the description of how this reconciliation is effected through the blood of Christ is presented in Ephesians 2:12-20: the Gentiles, without hope or promise, are made alive together in Christ, who has broken down the wall of hostility that divided them, and made them fellow citizens in the household of God. This second kind of reconciliation is sometimes called *horizontal reconciliation*.

The third kind of reconciliation situates God's work through Christ in the context of the whole of Creation. In the hymns beginning the Letters to the Ephesians and Colossians, God is seen as reconciling all things and all persons — whether in heaven or on earth — in Christ (Eph 1:10), making peace to reign throughout all Creation through the blood of Christ's Cross (Col 1:20). This kind of reconciliation is sometimes called *cosmic reconciliation*, and represents the fullness of God's plan for Creation, to be realized at the end of time.

Paul sees the Church participating in the reconciling work of God through a ministry of reconciliation, captured

succinctly in Paul's presentation of this in II Corinthians 5:17-20:

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All of this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (cf. NRSV).

It is the vertical reconciliation that makes the horizontal and cosmic dimensions possible. It is within this framework of vertical, horizontal, and cosmic reconciliation that we are to see Christian mission. That mission is rooted in the *missio dei*, the going forth of the Holy Trinity in the acts of creation, incarnation, redemption, and consummation. Through the Son, God has brought reconciliation to the world, overcoming sin, disobedience and the alienation we have wrought. Christ reunites us with God through his saving death, which God confirms in the Resurrection and the revelation of transfigured life. The Holy Spirit empowers the Church to participate in this ministry of the Son and the Spirit in reconciling the world. The Church itself is in need of constant reconciliation, but becomes the vehicle for God's saving grace to a broken and disheartened world.

One might summarize this biblical understanding of reconciliation under five brief headings:

1. God is the author of all genuine reconciliation. We but participate in God's reconciling work. We are, in Paul's words, “ambassadors in the name of Christ” (II Cor 5:20).
2. God's first concern in the reconciliation process is the healing of the victims. This grows out of two experiences: the God of the great prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures and the God of Jesus Christ cares especially about the poor and the oppressed. Second, so often the wrongdoers do not repent, and the healing of the victim cannot be held hostage by unrepentant wrongdoers.
3. In reconciliation, God makes of both victim and wrongdoer a “new Creation” (II Cor 5:17). This means two things. First of all, in profound wrongdoing it is impossible to go back to where we were before the wrongdoing took place; to do such would be to trivialize the gravity of what has been done. We can only go forward to a new place. Second, God wants both the healing of the victim and the repentance of the

wrongdoer. Neither should be annihilated; both should be brought to a new place, a new Creation.

4. Christians find a way out of their suffering by placing it in the suffering, death and Resurrection of Christ. It is this patterning of our suffering in that of Christ that helps us escape its destructive power. It also engenders hope in us.

5. Reconciliation will only be complete when all things are brought together in Christ (Eph 1:10). Until that time we experience only partial reconciliation, but live in hope.

THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION AS PROCESS

How does the Church participate in this reconciliation? What concrete forms does it take? Because of the wider interest in reconciliation in the world today — it is far from being only a Christian concern — the language of reconciliation is often unclear. At times it has been manipulated and distorted to serve other ends. As Christians we need to be as clear as we can about what we mean by reconciliation and how we go about the ministry of reconciliation.

Let me begin by saying that reconciliation is both a *process* and a *goal*. It is both an ongoing work in which we participate and a final point at which we hope to arrive. Let us first look at it as a process. I will focus here on the horizontal or social dimension of Reconciliation. The Church participates in the vertical dimension through its sacraments and in the cosmic dimension as well, both in its liturgy and its concern for all of Creation. These too constitute part of reconciliation as a model of mission. But because the thinking on the horizontal dimension is more recent and new to many, I will devote more time to it here.

Participation in the horizontal dimension of reconciliation is about participating in God's healing of societies that have been wounded deeply and broken by oppression, injustice, discrimination, war, and wanton destruction. This healing begins with *truth-telling*, the breaking of the codes of silence that hide wrongdoing against the poor and vulnerable members of society. Truth-telling also means overcoming and correcting the lies and distortions that bring unearned shame on the innocent and isolate people from one another so as to exercise hegemony over society. Truth-telling has to be a constant effort to tell the whole truth, both for victims and about wrongdoers. Truth-telling as a practice in this sense must encompass four things: It must be a truth that resonates with my experience of events, it must be in language I can understand, it must

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conform to my understanding of truthfulness, and it must come from someone I can trust.

For a Christian, truth-telling is more than relating facts in a credible manner. It involves also

God, who is the author of all truth. Truth in its Hebrew sense ('*emet*) is part of the nature of God: it is reliable, it is enduring, it is steadfast, and it is faithful. It is truth-telling at this deep, theological level that is the basis for healing a broken society. What that means on a practical level is that the Church must endeavour to create safe, hospitable spaces where truth can be spoken and heard, where the silence can be broken, where pernicious lies can be laid bare and overcome.

With truth comes the pursuit of *justice*. To seek justice with no effort to establish the truth runs the risk of engaging in vengeance instead of true justice. The struggle for justice (and it is a struggle, wrongdoing does not give up easily) is many faceted. It involves *punitive justice*, that punishes wrongdoers in a lawful way to show that a renewed society acknowledges the wrongdoing that has been done and will not tolerate it in the future. Second, it involves *restorative justice* which restores the dignity and the rights of the victim. Third, it requires *distributive justice*, since the unjust wresting of a person's goods makes healing and the creation of a just society nearly impossible. Finally, it requires *structural justice*, that is, the restructuring of the institutions and processes of society so that just action becomes part of the rebuilt society. Reallocating resources, equity in human rights, guaranteed access to health, shelter, food, education and employment are all part of creating a just society.

A third aspect of reconciliation as a process is the *rebuilding of relationships*. Without relations of equity and trust, a society quickly slides back into violence. Work on these relationships has to happen at many levels. For victims, it involves the *healing of memories* so that one does not remain beholden or hostage to the past. It is an overcoming of the toxin that memories of violence, oppression, and marginalization contain. It means *repentance* and *conversion* on the part of those who have done wrong, acknowledging the wrongdoing and taking steps to approach the victim in order to apologize and make reparation. It means making the difficult journey toward *forgiveness*. Here the process of rebuilding relationships is often short-circuited. Amnesty is given or impunity is bestowed on the wrongdoers even before the victims are allowed to speak. A shroud of forgetfulness and oblivion is

drawn over the past. Forgiveness is not about forgetting the wrong done, but about coming to remember it in a different way — a way that removes the toxin from the experience of the victim and creates the space for repentance and apology by the wrongdoer. Forgiveness means remembering the past, but remembering it in a way that makes a different kind of future possible for both victim and the wrongdoer.

RECONCILIATION AS GOAL

Truth-telling, struggling for justice, working toward forgiveness: these are the three central dimensions of the social process of reconciliation. In all the situations I know, they are never undertaken on a level playing field; the consequences of oppression, violence, and war are not predisposed to honesty, justice, and even the good intentions of all parties. Nor are the processes, for the most part, orderly. And they never seem to be complete. In fact, we usually experience them as truncated, prematurely foreclosed, hijacked by the powerful. What are we to do? This brings me to the other understanding of reconciliation; namely, reconciliation as goal. Talk of reconciliation skips too easily from the end of overt violence to an imagined peace. It circumvents the messy and protracted process of truth-telling, seeking justice, working toward forgiveness. We expect peace to blossom and flourish after long periods of war. We expect democracy to rise up, phoenix-like, from the ashes of dictatorship and authoritarian rule. But such is not the case. We can find ourselves acquiescing to half-measures, half-truths, compromised solutions.

It is important not to confuse reconciliation as *process* with reconciliation as *goal*. In order to follow the process, we must fix our eyes on the goal. For Christians, it is God who is working reconciliation; we are but agents in the process, participating in what God is doing. God is our strength; God is our hope. It is God who is bringing this about. Here we experience the difference between optimism and hope. Optimism is what grows out of the confidence in our own resources and capacities. It comes out of us. The enormity of wrong and sin that we face in protracted war and oppression far exceeds what we are able to accomplish. Hope, on the other hand, comes from God. It is God leading us forward, like he did Abraham and Sarah. We live in faith, the assurance of things hoped for (cf. Heb 11:1). With our eyes fixed on God and God's promises, we can maintain the strength of heart, of mind, and of will to continue our participation in what God is doing for the world.

THE CHURCH: A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY AND OF HOPE

So where does this place the Church? Its participation in the *missio dei*, understood here as God's reconciling the

world to Himself, is marked especially by three things. First, the ministry of reconciliation makes the Church a community of memory and, second, a community of hope. Its mission, in word and deed, of the message of reconciliation makes possible what is perhaps for many the most intense experience of God possible in our troubled, broken world.

The Church is first of all a community of memory. It does not engage in the forgetfulness urged by the powerful upon the vulnerable and poor — to forget their suffering, to erase from their memories what has been done to them, to act as though the wrongdoing never happened. The Church as a community of memory creates those safe havens where memories can be spoken of out loud, and begin the difficult and long process of overcoming the rightful anger that, if left unacknowledged, can poison any possibilities for the future. In safe spaces, the trust that has been sundered, the dignity that has been denied and wrested away, has the chance of being reborn. A community of memory is concerned too about truthful memory, not the distorting lies that serve the interests of the wrongdoer at the cost of the wronged. A community of memory keeps the focus of memory as it pursues justice in all its dimensions — punitive, restorative, distributive, structural. Not to pursue and struggle for justice makes the truth-telling sound false and the safe spaces created barren. A community of memory is concerned too with the future of memory, that is, the prospects of forgiveness and what lies beyond. The difficult ministry of memory, if it may be called that, is possible because it is grounded in the memory of the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ: the One who was without sin and was made to bear our sin, so that we might become the justice of God (cf. II Cor 5:21).

Living in the memory of what Christ has gone through — suffering and death, yet not forgotten and indeed raised up by God — is the source of our hope. Hope allows us to keep the vision of a reconciled world alive, not in some facile utopian fashion, but grounded in the memory of what God has done in Jesus Christ. Paul captures this well in another passage in the Second Letter to the Corinthians:

“But we hold this treasure in clay vessels, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies” (cf. II Cor 4:7-10).

Reconciliation belongs to God; not to us. Despite all we go through, we do not lose heart, since we carry the death of Jesus in our bodies, so that through us his life might be made visible. This is the vocation of the Church, its calling to the ministry of reconciliation, its proclamation of the death and Resurrection of Christ in the Church’s own body. So, God’s reconciling work can be made known to a broken world as he “entrusted to us the ministry of reconciliation” (II Cor 5:18) through our preaching. Mission, as our Orthodox brothers and sisters have so helpfully reminded us, is the liturgy after the liturgy. Our action is not just political action or action for justice (although it is also all of these). It is participation in something much larger than ourselves: the work of the Triune God in bringing about the healing of the world.

Ref.: Conference on World Mission and Evangelism, *Come Holy Spirit - Heal and Reconcile (Called in Christ to be Reconciling and Healing Communities)* Athens, Greece, 14 May 2005.

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**USCMA
3029 Fourth St., NE
Washington, DC 20017-1102
Phone: 202-884-9764
Fax: 202-884-9776
E-Mail: uscma@uscatholicmission.org**

DEBT: SOLUTIONS AND PROBLEMS

Lucianne Siers, OP

Remember the efforts of Jubilee 2000 when many of us joined the campaign to cancel the debts of poor countries? Were there any successful governmental initiative as a result of our efforts?

As you may recall, poor countries were lent money at very low interest rates in the 1970s. The price of oil soared making oil producing countries rich. They deposited their profits in Western banks to earn interest. The banks subsequently loaned the money to developing countries at a very low interest rate. Some of these loans were for useful purposes but much of this money was used to benefit dictators rather than benefit the people.

When the recession hit the industrialized world in the 1980s the banks raised interest rates. Many countries still owed more than the original loan even after years of repayment. At the same time poor countries were earning less from their exports as prices were falling. In addition, lenders often attached conditions to debt relief such as demanding privatization and forcing cuts in public spending including buying basic medicines and employing teachers.

In 1996, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative was set up by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to reduce poor countries' debts. It was reformed in 1999, but it is still failing the world's poor.

As of 2005, eighteen countries have completed the HIPC process and are now receiving some debt relief. These countries are: Benin, Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia.

The HIPC initiative is not designed to cancel 100% of debt but to reduce debts to a level which the creditors claim is sustainable. Where debt has been cancelled, it has made a real difference. For example:

- ❖ Mozambique has introduced free immunizations for children.
- ❖ Benin invested in rural primary health and HIV programs, safe water supplies and anti-malaria programs.
- ❖ Tanzania abolished primary school fees leading to a 66% increase in attendance.

- ❖ Malawi is training 3600 new teachers every year and has abolished primary school fees.

But in spite of this progress, HIPC is too limited. Only 38 countries are eligible and of these only 28% have qualified to enter the initiative preliminaries. Countries which are extremely poor and severely indebted are not even eligible for HIPC.

The current problem with the HIPC initiative is that the process is decided and controlled by creditors. Furthermore, crises for indebted countries are caused by the demand for cuts in health care and education or privatization of basic services. Rather than promoting growth, poverty reduction or stability, the measures are designed to protect the assets and interests of the creditors. Elected parliaments and civil society of the HIPC nations do not have a voice in these decisions.

Hence, there is still a great need for the Jubilee debt cancellation campaign and other initiatives that promote a just cancellation of debt.

The issues continue to be:

- ❖ Calling for cancellation of unpayable and odious debt for all countries with no harmful conditions attached.
- ❖ Only an established rule-based independent framework for managing sovereign debt disputes can bring about a structural shift in the way debts are generated and managed.
- ❖ Finding ways in which the poorest and most indebted countries can become eligible for cancellation of their debts through HIPC or another program.

For more information contact:

Jubilee USA Network: www.jubileeusa.org
 Jubilee Debt Campaign: www.Jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk
 Catholic Agency for Overseas Development: www.cafod.org
 Center of Concern: www.coc.org
 American Friends Service Committee: www.afsc.org

USCMA 2005 RESOLUTIONS

Three resolutions were presented to and passed by the US Catholic Mission Association membership at the Annual Meeting in Tucson, AZ in October 2005. Areas of need targeted for attention include northern Uganda, Immigration Reform and Millennium Development Goals. Each of these resolutions challenges members to take action as individuals and as religious communities.

A joint resolution with Africa Faith and Justice Network focuses on the civil war that has been raging in northern Uganda since 1986. Children in particular have been targeted for abduction to serve as child soldiers and/or as sex slaves. We are called upon to urge both the US Government and the Government of Uganda to take actions to bring about a peaceful negotiation and to make the protection of children a priority.

The resolution on immigration reform acknowledges that the current US militarized border enforcement is a failed policy. Members agreed to support the efforts of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops' call for reforms in *The Catholic Campaign for Immigration Reform*. We are challenged to study Catholic Social Teaching regarding migration.

The final resolution is a follow-up to one passed in 2004 on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Following the G-8 Finance Ministers plan for multilateral debt cancellation in June 2005 this resolution asks members to learn more about the MDGs and to urge the US Government to use these Goals as a basis for foreign development assistance. The resolution also expresses support for the JUBILEE Act (HR 1130) which would require the US Treasury department to work in appropriate multilateral settings to achieve 100 (percent) cancellation of the debts of 50 impoverished nations so that the money can be used to achieve the Goals.

USCMA ANNUAL MEETING

The highlight of the 2005 Annual Meeting was the introduction of Michael Montoya, MJ as the new Executive Director of U.S. Catholic Mission Association.

This meeting of the US Catholic Mission Association took place in Tucson October 16, 2005. The approximately 150 participants Members elected four new members to the Board of Directors and re-elected four Board members for a second term.

Deacon Mickey Friesen, Director of the Center for Mission in the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis; **Bill Morrell, OMI**, Vicar Provincial and Director of Mission and Ministry in the US Oblate Province; **Rachel Tomas Morgan**, Director of international Service Learning and Justice Education at the Center for Social Concerns of the University of Notre Dame; and **Andrew D. Thompson**, National director of the St. Vincent Pallotti Centers were elected for two-year terms. **Thomas Johnson, FSC, Michael Linden, SJ, Suzanne Moore, MM** and **Wilfred Steinbacher, GHM** were re-elected for a second term.

Presentations to the membership included the Annual Financial Report, information about the 2006 USCMA Conference, and an update on the Continuing Committee on Common Witness Consultation in Liberia in January 2006. The new website was shown and some of its features were highlighted. The responses from the Missioner Survey are being tabulated and will be published in spring 2006. Three resolutions were presented to and passed by the membership.

Ted Keating, SM outgoing Executive Director of CMSM and the Mission Committee of CMSM were recipients of the US Catholic Mission Award. Ted was recognized for "his insightful leadership with the Catholic Mission Forum and his tireless efforts in highlighting mission issues for the membership of the Conference of Major Superiors of Men."

The next Annual Meeting will take place during the 2006 Conference at the University of Notre Dame, October 2006.

ECUMENICAL ADVOCACY DAYS FOR GLOBAL PEACE WITH JUSTICE

"Make All Things New"

Washington, DC

March 10-13, 2006

www.AdvocacyDays.org

RESOURCES & UP-COMING EVENTS

Orientation Days to the UN

May 17-19
Church Center, 777 UN Plaza, NY City
Contact: Lucianne Siers, OP
Telephone: 201-333-2454
Email: LSiers6720@aol.com

Maryknoll Mission Institute

March 20-24 *The Psalms*
Maryknoll Sisters Center
Ossining, NY
Telephone: 914-941-7575
Email: missinst@mksisters.org

Cross-Cultural Re-Entry Workshops

February 14-24, 2006
San Antonio, TX
March 23-26, 2006
Rosemont, PA (near Philadelphia)
Contact: Julie Lupien
Telephone: 720-494-7211
Email: missiontocommission@qwest.net

Global Economics Workshop

May 31-June 2, 2006
Church Center, 777 UN Plaza, NY City
Contact: Lucianne Siers, OP
Telephone: 201-333-2454
Email: LSiers6720@aol.com

Overseas Ministries Study Center

March 6-10 *Mission to Children at Risk*
March 20-24 *The Psalms*
March 27-31 *Culture, Interpersonal Conflict & Christian Mission*
April 3-7 *The Family in Mission*
April 17-20 *Christian Approaches to World Religions*
May 1-5 *Isaiah 40-55: God's Mission, God's Servant*
May 8-12 *Personal Renewal in the Missionary Community*
490 Prospect Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Telephone: 203-624-6672, x 315
Email: study@OMSC.org

ORBIS BOOKS RECEIVED AT USCMA

A SELECTION OF BOOKS PUBLISHED BY ORBIS BOOKS, MARYKNOLL, NEW YORK

Korean Women and God: Experiencing God in a Multi-religious Colonial Context, Choi Hee An, 2005

What's Faith Got to Do With It? Black Bodies/ Christian Souls, Kelly Brown Douglas, 2005

Small Christian Communities Today: Capturing the New Moment, edited by Joseph Healy and Jeanne Hinton, 2005

War and the Christian Conscience: Where Do You Stand?, Joseph J. Fahey, 2005

Christianity in Culture: A Study in Biblical Theologizing in Cross-Cultural Perspective, Charles H. Kraft, Revised 25th Anniversary Edition, 2005

Dispossessed: Life in Our World's Urban Slums, Mark Kramer, 2005

Practical Theology: "On Earth as It Is in Heaven," Terry A. Veling, 2005

Torture: Religious Ethics and National Security, John Perry, 2005

Globalization and Catholic Social Thought: Present Crisis, Future Hope, Edited by John A. Coleman and William F. Ryan

The Evangelization of Slaves: And Catholic Origins in Eastern Africa, Paul V. Kollman, 2005

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITION

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC MISSION ASSOCIATION (USCMA)

The Administrative Assistant is responsible for the editing, proofreading, design, layout, printing and distribution of the Association's publications, website, for maintaining and updating the Association's database, for serving as liaison with the Association's members, partners and vendors. The A.A. is also responsible for processing all incoming payments (check or credit card). Experience in cross-cultural mission desirable. Familiarity with Catholic Religious Congregations preferred. Proficient computer skills: MS Access, Word and PageMaker desktop publishing. Strong communication skills essential, especially writing. Position is full time. Possibility of flexible schedule. Salary negotiable. Excellent benefits. Application Deadline January 27, 2006. To request job description or to send your resume (and three references) Contact Fr. Michael Montoya, 3029 4th Street, NE, Washington, DC 20017 or via e-mail to uscma@uscatholicmission.org.



*“We have seen his star
as it rose and have come
to do him homage”*

*Merry Christmas &
Happy New Year
from all of us at
USCMA!*



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