

## CHARITY AND JUSTICE IN THE RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS: THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY FOCUSED ON THE CHURCH

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There is no doubt that the Church has played a significant role in the work of Charity and Justice in the Relations among Nations. My paper underscores the need for a process of creating a movement of thought derived from the practice of global solidarity among diverse organizations in the Catholic Church as well as in ecumenical and interfaith groups. If the PASS has always been studying the on-going processes and ideas of the active role of Civil Society in resolving the basic social question as a result of economic globalization and commercialization, it is equally imperative for PASS to understand on a much deeper level the on-going movements nationally and internationally of Church entities and interfaith groups which since the 1950s have been striving to practice Charity and Justice in the relations among nations. A study of this nature may bring a new enlightenment of the possible organic stage of growth of programs towards global solidarity implicitly motivated and further deepened by Christian Love and Faith and/or by values of their respective religious persuasions.

This paper contains also my personal testimony of the global solidarity that I have experienced in the five decades of my life first as a Young Christian Worker and later as Professor and President of a Manila-based Social Science Graduate School with a difference in that it integrates the various learning components of its programs – the academic, research and social development of grassroots partner communities towards transformative praxis rooted in a Living Faith.

In the context of economic globalization, the statement that the UNDP reports have repeated time and again and of which we have been made conscious of ever since the industrialization process started is the structural divide plaguing our national and international community.

Simply put it has often been said that there is 'the great gap between the rich and the poor' – a structural divide, that multiplies other aspects of the divide – cultural divide (dominant world culture and the local/'popular' cultures), the economic divide, the social divide, the divide between urban and rural, the gender divide, the intergenerational divide, the digital divide, and the divide between the person and the natural environment. The manifestations of these divides for the great majority of people among countries and in each country, are: monetary poverty, violence, and degradation of the environment. I begin to realize that *Deus Caritas Est* speaks essentially of the verity of the Christian calling for us Christians and Christian churches of manifesting God's Love among people especially in the work of Justice, Peace and we would add, 'Integrity of Creation'. It seems to be a Christian challenge of society to heal what has been fragmented in the wholeness of life and all life-forms.

In our national and international community that is becoming more and more complex, monolithic solutions to issues that are embedded in statements abound: 'Education will solve the problem of poverty'; 'Fight terrorism and peace will reign in our land'; 'We need to focus on the work for and among street children'; 'All peoples must be educated towards a democratic way of living'; 'Religion is the answer to all our ills'; 'Commercialism on a world level brings international competitiveness without which there cannot be progress'; 'Global standards lead to quality of education and business'.

In my country, former President Marcos in 1974 made the remark, 'The export of manpower is the best weapon for economic growth', Today, Filipinos are economic refugees in 190 countries of the world. Indeed, it is the overseas workers that prop up the Philippine economy. But the out-migration from the Philippines, of at least two thousand daily is telling of the state of well-being of families and communities in the country. On the front page of a national Philippine Daily (The Philippine Star, Vol. 21:325, March 20, 2007) two contradictory news items on the front page of the newspaper are entitled 'GMA: Our Economy is a Wonder', and 'SWS: Hunger at Record High'), a finding of a prestigious research outfit, the 'Social Weather Stations (SWS)'. Five days later, The Philippine Star, March 25, 2007, had the following headline on the front page: 'It is P1-Billion War on Hunger: Jolted by Survey, GMA orders funds for feeding programs'. Again, this is another monolithic solution to a basic problem of people. Prescriptions of such nature are meaningless in the face of the gap between the rich and the poor. Despite almost five development decades, the gaps have become monstrously wider as reported by a series of United Nations Human Develop-

ment Reports while the complexity of the world situation remains a stark reality. All these gaps, 'divides', and 'disconnects' breed violence, dehumanization and exploitation, and degradation of the environment. It is in this context that *Deus Caritas Est*, by Pope Benedict XVI was promulgated. The question posed to us is: what has been the role of the Church in Charity and Justice in the Relations Among Nations?

To all the problems of the modern and post modern world, the Church, the known expert in humanity has, since 1891, come up with the social encyclicals (which proclaim the 'Gospel in the Modern World') striving to shape the social conscience of all persons of various strata by instilling respect for the dignity of persons, respect for the person's right to work and employment, to a just wage, the relative right to property, and the right to organize. Summarized in the Compendium of Christian Social Teachings, values of human dignity and integrity of creation, common good, principle of subsidiarity and solidarity become the measure of whether or not families, neighbourhoods, communities, society and the global world indeed live and do justice, peace and integrity of creation.

Many social movements I have known since the early 1950s, such as the International Catholic Young Christian Workers, have educated young workers to live up to their human dignity as well as the dignity of work. Chaplains have helped shape the conscience of the leaders of the young workers. Later some of these leaders have been able to occupy strategic positions as government legislators and national executive positions in their respective countries. As leaders of various institutions, they have excelled in their regard for the common good by instituting policies that take care of the marginalized sectors. I, for one, witnessed global solidarity at the young age of 21. I had to participate in the International YCW Day in 1957, when 30,000 workers were gathered in the grounds of St. Peter's Square singing the Kyrie. We made the Stations of the Cross at the Coliseum. And celebrated the event in Terme di Caracalla. But what is striking about this gathering was that the young workers from a developed country had adopted some worker-leaders of a developing or underdeveloped country by means of an educational fund campaign, dramatically demonstrated by some walking to Rome or by merely collecting small contributions in order to spend for the journey of one or another young Christian worker from the third world. It was my first experience of international solidarity. By analogy, there is no way to bring about an improvement in bridging the divides in society except through a sense of a profound solidarity at every level of society up to the global level.

Today there are many organizations and associations in the Church that are trans-national. There are trans-national religious congregations, professional and other types of associations. Individually they have made strides in the works of 'charity' and 'justice' to benefit those who have little in life.

It is to be noted that dissemination of the Christian Social Teachings of the Church is the role of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace of the Vatican. Caritas Internationalis, for instance, is a worldwide network with all their counterparts in Catholic and even non-Catholic countries in the world. They have addressed the issues of pastoral training and formation, of relief and rehabilitation, of livelihood programs of the government, of alternative trade and generally, of the basic needs of the poor. We have the Holy Childhood that addresses the poverty needs of children in the world.

Another significant network in the church doing justice, peace and development work are the CIDSE organizations whose secretariat is in Brussels, Belgium. These are Catholic Development Agencies in Europe that must have been inspired by the Christian Social Teachings. CIDSE (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) is a coalition of 15 Catholic development agencies in Europe and North America 'which share a common vision on poverty eradication and social justice and a common strategy on development programmes, development education and advocacy'.

It is to be noted that in August 2006, CIDSE came up with two documents on Governance and Development Cooperation: 'Civil Society Perspectives on the European Union Approach' and 'The World Bank's Strategy on Governance and Anti-Corruption', the result of a survey conducted with their partners in the developing world. These documents have been sponsored by 12 of 15 CIDSE organizations with the participation of 22 of their partners in the developing world. The 12 sponsoring organizations are: Broederlijk Delen (Belgium); CAFOD (United Kingdom); Caritas, Spain, CCFD (Comité Catholique contre la Faim et pour le Développement), Center of Concern (U.S.); CORDAID (Netherlands), Fondazione Giustizia e Solidarietà (Italy); Koordinierungsstelle (Austria), Manos Unidas (Madrid, Spain), MISEREOR, Germany; Secours Catholique (France) and Trocaire-Caritas (Ireland). Partners in the developing world in the foregoing studies cited are the following: The Asian Social Institute (ASI), Manila, Philippines; Caritas Cameroun; Catholic Economic Justice Network/America, Kenya; Christian Aid, Burundi; Centro de Investigación y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos (CIPRODEH), Honduras; Forum National Dette et Pauvreté, Cote d'Ivoire; Centre de Promotion Agricole du Senegal (CPAS), Senegal; Civil Society for Poverty Reduction (CSPR), Zam-

bia; Hakikazi Catalyst, Tanzania; Istituto Comboniano, Mozambique; Integrated Pastoral Development Initiative, IPDI Philippines; Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR), Zambia; Kenya Debt Relief Network (Kendren), Kenya; La'O Hamutuk, East Timor; Luta Hamuluk, East Timor; Peace Tree Network, Kenya; Salesian Delegation of Mozambique, Mozambique; Tanzania Ecumenical Dialogue Group (TEDG), Tanzania; Transparency International, South Africa; Uganda Debt Network (UDN), Uganda; Laves, Angola; and a bishop, Abba Tesfaselassie Medhin Bishop of Adigrat Eparchy, Ethiopia.

On an even more personal level, I am aware that my own institute, the Asian Social Institute (ASI), a social science graduate school oriented towards social transformative praxis from the perspective of Christian Social Teachings towards Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation, survived and developed only because of Church-related development institutions. Misereor of Germany, for instance, has given to ASI financial grants which have been a big help to our physical plant needs (3 buildings), library needs, large-scale scholarships for Filipino students, then later for foreign students especially of Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, China, East Timor, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, Thailand, Malaysia, Japan, South Korea and the Philippines. Misereor has given grants for outreach students in the Philippines and for a library. The Katholische Jungschar of Osterreich and Katholische Frauenbewegung have been helping our social science graduate school by granting tuition subsidies to Filipino graduate students and to a two-month international diploma course for community development workers. Some of these member development agencies of CIDSE become mediating agencies for government funds marked for the third world.

Last February 19 – March 5, 2007, I was invited by the Catholic Women's Organization in Austria the 60th year of their foundation and 50th year of their Family Feast Fast Campaign. The latter movement is a way of raising funds for their projects in the Third World. Through a soup meal event, a bowl of soup is sold at 2 Euros in parishes. On special occasions the soup meal is held in plush hotels with famous chefs offering soup recipes and participated in by prominent government officials, governors, bankers, businessmen together with church hierarchy. The Catholic Women's Organization in Austria raises funds sometimes doubled by the authorities in attendance. I have seen children in Austria shining the shoes of parishioners to collect money for children of developing countries. This has given me the idea to simulate the same educational fund-raising campaign in the Philippines with many more people in soli-

ilarity for a shared cause of uplifting humanity. The Austrian Women jointly with the Youth Organization do not only raise funds... they have an educational campaign to raise social awareness for a cause. They expose themselves to the conditions of the beneficiaries of their partner organizations in the third world. They also call some self-empowered leaders from the third world to their country in order that they may themselves speak about their situation to the women, men, children and youth with whom they share their stories. The mutual openness to each other, the attitude that money is not power, and that sharing spells strength making for a deeper bonding in body-mind and spirit.

I have seen that some of these Catholic women are involved in an ecumenical cooperative bank formerly known as EDCS (Ecumenical Development Cooperative Society), founded by the World Council of Churches in 1975, now re-named Oikocredit where Christians and Churches contribute share capital of US\$250 and this is loaned out to cooperative enterprises in the world. At the moment their program's thrust is to loan money to micro-finance institutions in the third world – also a thrust of the World Bank to resolve poverty alleviation. Among alternative trade organizations in the world, there is an overarching organization known as FAIR TRADE. Their member organizations both from the developed and the developing countries live by certain trade principles. One of the principles of Fair Trade is: fair wages for workers and fair prices for the buyers and consumers. In Austria, I visited a Fair Trade Quality Shop selling goods from partner Fair-Trade member organizations in the First World and I asked them whether they have the goods of SAFFY Handicrafts from the Philippines. (SAFFY Handicrafts is the brand name of a sister organization which was established by a religious sister with our Priest-Founder and once was an affiliate of our Asian Social Institute [ASI] and is now independent from ASI). And to my surprise, it was on sale in the Quality Shop in the center of Vienna. They showed it to me. I had a picture taken holding a capiz shell lamp in order to show it to the Board Members of SAFRUDI (Social Action for Rural and Urban Development Foundation in Manila, Philippines). There I saw that every product in that Third World Shop is a symbol of solidarity. There are organizations connected with Alternative Trade such as GEPA in Germany that one time made a loan from Oikocredit. GEPA pre-pays farmers for their coffee-beans, from farmers' co-ops in the third world countries. SAFRUDI while being helped to market their products through the alternative trade organizations also contributed share capital to Oikocredit. Thus,

Coffee, Chocolate, Handicraft Products become symbols of global solidarity. In the area of communication, one can cite the London-based World Association of Christian Communication (an ecumenical organization) with its counterpart in the Catholic Church, led by His Excellency, Most. Rev. Archbishop John P. Foley, President of the Pontifical Council for Social Communications that promotes communication for integral evangelization, development and social change. People in communication assist children and youth in schools to try to critique the subliminal consumerist values promoted by the advertisements: being, not having; big is beautiful; the package, more important than the product.

For the poorest of the poor, there is the Grameen Model of Banking, adopted in the world. But the Grameen beneficiaries should graduate from livelihood projects to small businesses and then to industry. I am a Chair of the Board of the Center for Small Entrepreneurs which was facilitated by our Social Science Institute (ASI). This Center has a very dynamic and creative manager. With some funds from an NGO in Belgium, they have trained what they call 'Entrepreneurs for Others'. After seven years of operation, they were able to have a Trade Fair participated in by 150 small entrepreneurs in a famous mall in Manila, where in addition to the trade fair, they also had a launching of a book with the stories of successful small entrepreneurs. Representatives of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in the Philippines, spoke words of esteem and recognition for the economically self-empowering work and related values this small dynamic group is preoccupied with. They instil in people who can barely cope with the difficulties of being-in-business, pride for their talents and capabilities to create more equity in life-chances. With a rigid training for small entrepreneurs, they will soon be a strong organization; they have already made connection with the organization of Entrepreneurs in Belgium. In Asia, there is the Asia Friendship Society, involved in community development in 19 countries of Asia, a Japanese-based organization where the members are of different religious persuasions – Protestants, Catholics, Hindus, Buddhists, Taoists and Muslims. I was once asked to give a talk on 'Spirituality and Total Human Development' to them. The NGO Protestant Minister, Rev. H. Murakami, founder and head of the organization, told me, 'They need to be given spirituality because of the high incidence of suicide (30,000 a year in Japan). It seems they do not know anymore the meaning of human existence'.

A qualitative study of the World Bank (2000), 'Voices of the Poor Crying Out for Change', defined poverty as 'powerlessness and ill-being' with the

following manifestations derived from the thematic analysis of the stories of 20,000 poor women, men and children in 23 countries:

1. Livelihoods and Assets: precarious, seasonal and inadequate
2. Places: isolated, risky, unserved, stigmatized
3. The Body: hungry, exhausted, sick, poor appearance
4. Gender Relations: troubled and unequal
5. Social Relations: Discriminating and isolating
6. Security: lack of protection and peace of mind
7. Behaviors: disregard and abuse by the more powerful
8. Institutions: disempowering and excluding
9. Organization of the Poor: weak and disconnected
10. Capabilities: lack of information, education, skills, confidence.

The Call to Action requires programs of action that will bring about the following shifts:

- From material poverty to adequate assets and livelihoods
- From isolation and poor infrastructure to access and service
- From illness and incapability to health, information and education
- From unequal and troubled gender relations to equity and harmony
- From fear and lack of protection to peace and security
- From exclusion and impotence to inclusion, organization and empowerment
- From corruption and abuse to honesty and fair treatment.

And we could add:

- From environmental alienation to environmental integration.

It is quite significant that the World Bank Study has this to say about the study and I quote (see box):



### The Challenge to Change

Listening to voices of poor people is a beginning, but only a beginning. At worst, it may only lead to a change in rhetoric. It sounds good to have elicited the voices of the poor. Quoting their striking statements as we have done in this book may make an impression. But the crux is deeper change. Poor people can be heard, quoted and written about without the hard step of changing policies. And policy can be changed without the even harder step of changing what actually happens on the ground. The voices of poor people cry out for change. Commitment to deep change demands a lot. Three domains for change stand out: professional, institutional and personal.

The professional change that is required is a paradigm shift. It concerns professional concepts, values, methods and behaviours in development. It entails modifying dominant professional preconceptions with insights from participatory approaches and methods. It implies starting with the realities of the poor. To do so is not to deny the validity of other approaches and methods. It is, rather, to introduce a different starting point and point of reference that other approaches and methods can complement. It demands that professionalism include reflection on the implications of decisions and actions for poor men and women.

Institutional change is cultural and behavioural. To the extent that organizations reward domineering behaviours, they are antithetical to the sensitive, responsive and empowering approaches needed to give the needs and interests of poor people priority. These behaviours are dictated by the norms, rules, rewards, incentives and values implicit in organizations. Organizations that affect poor people's lives include donor agencies, government and their departments, the private sector, NGOs, universities and training institutes.

Personal change is fundamental to the other two. Changes that are professional and institutional and changes in policy and practice all depend on personal commitment and change. The self-evidence of this statement should not detract from its force, for eventually it is individuals who make a difference, including individuals who behave and act differently even when surrounded by rot, corruption and indifference.

The need and opportunity to act and to change are greatest for those who are wealthy and powerful and who never come in direct contact with poor people. For them it can be hard to know the effects of their actions and inactions. It can be easy and tempting not to know. Few politicians, policy-makers, senior bureaucrats, staff of international agencies and the influential elite have had the chance to learn from poor people. This book is no substitute for direct experience, but we hope that, however modestly, it will help to bridge this gap. Those who speak through these pages were generous with time they gave to the study. They shared their experience. Many have suffered traumas of war, violence, hunger, sickness, debt, exploitation, exclusion, harassment, pain and fear. Many wondered whether anything they said would make any difference.

Will *Voices of the Poor* make things better for those poor people who took part or for the hundreds of million of others like them or their children? The answer is that it depends. It depends on the vision, courage and will of all touched by this study. It depends on us all.

*Source: Deepa Narayan et al., Voices of the Poor. Crying Out for Change. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Oxford University Press. 2000, 314 pages.*

The Churches, Christian Schools and Universities, and all Christian-Motivated Development Agencies need to be studied in relation to how their Concrete Practice of Love, of *Agape* strengthens the consciences of people to the Kingdom Values and expressed in the Compendium of Christian Social Teachings as proclaiming Human dignity and Integrity of Creation, Common Good, Principle of Subsidiarity and Solidarity. The Spirit works where it wills. I believe that the facilitators of the participatory action research sponsored by the World Bank have personally been transformed as gleaned from their concluding statements. For organizations that have been working towards social structures that bridge 'gaps', 'divides' and 'disconnects', it is imperative to listen to the Spirit that has moved the researchers of the World Bank study to derive valuable insights that resonate in the hearts of those who struggle with the materially poor for more equity in life chances.

It is for us, members of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, to discover for ourselves how to connect with those who are in the practice of Love or *Agape* where working for justice is in fact the minimum requirement on our part to manifest God's Love for our fellow human beings. All our reflections in this Academy could theorize from the experiences of Church organizations that have tried to witness to the goal of Global Solidarity, which is the more authentic Globalization being called for by the Christian Commandment of Love. Indeed there should be a study of how Global Solidarity already in practice among several Church entities could be enhanced to strengthen a movement of thought, inquiry and action which will fill us with the divine energy to create models from experience that becomes a counterculture to the kind of Economic Globalization that fragments body, mind and spirit; that alienates people from Mother Earth, that atomizes families, communities and the Global Community. As PASS, to be part of the Global Solidarity Network in the dimensions of a movement of thought and inquiry, motivated by Gospel Values and Christian Social Teachings may help to nurture an understanding of the appropriate programs of action seen from the perspective of a holistic development frame, if not of an engaged spirituality that will prevent our work of justice and charity from being endangered by 'special interests' and 'power' (Benedict XVI, *Deus Caritas Est*, December 25, 2005, n. 28).