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New Communities, New Ministries, by Bavarel

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common to all. John Chrysostom thundered against the accumulation of wealth as robbery and murder. God has sole Ownership; there is solidarity of humankind; ownership should respect a person-to-person relationship. Augustine rejected the absolutist and exclusivist Roman concept of private ownership and taught the Christian doctrine of the sharing of God's created goods.

Chapter 8 is Avila's neat synthesis of the social teaching of the five Fathers on private ownership. It is a patristic attack on the ideology of unjust ownership and wealth as robbery and idolatry, and the Christian alternative program of self-sufficiency and community. The concluding ninth chapter is the author's own retrieval of the fourth-century Christian thought on property, which has remained a secret for so long and yet has something to say to our modern First, Second, and Third Worlds.

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NEW COMMUNITIES, NEW MINISTRIES. By Michel Bavarel. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1983..

Michel Bavarel is a Swiss Catholic journalist who has travelled widely through Africa, Asia and Latin America. In this book he describes Catholic communities, forms of evangelization, and the problems faced. The strengths of this book include the author's descriptive style, which brings the reader with him to the scene, plus an approach free from religious or ideological bias, and a warm sympathy for the people he meets on the way. From his interviews he elicits valuable insights into the religious life of the people in the area. Hence this small book is a valuable introduction to Third World religious life, which like an appetizer leaves the reader wanting more and often reluctant to move on with the author to the next stop on his journey.

The author deals with four main themes in four parts of the book, by vividly describing a religious situation in a particular country and then moving on to another example. The four themes are cultural indigenization, lay leadership in Christian communities, Third World poverty and the Christian response, and finally political and economic repression and liberation.

In dealing with indigenization, the author takes us to an animistic ritual in honor of deceased ancestors in Madagascar. Here the ritual has been accepted by Christians and integrated into the Christian religious world view as a kind of symbolic representation of the communion of saints. Dealing with the same theme, there is a visit to a typical Spanish Catholic village fiesta in honor of the patron saint. The village is high up in the Andes among the Peruvian Indians. In this case, two religious traditions exist side by side:

Spanish Catholicism and the pre-Incan Pachamama religion. Bishop Dalle, a Frenchman, explains the Peruvian mentality in this way: "In each of these persons there coexist zones that are Christian and others that are pre-Inca One truth does not necessarily exclude another and the two systems can exist side by side without coming into conflict. Nevertheless we can see that they don't believe in the same way we do." Author: "What do they believe?" Bishop: "I'd really like to know" (pp. 23-24).

From an interview with Fr. Edmond Prezet at the Buddhist monastery at Nang Pa Pong in northeast Thailand, we learn that the problem is one of mutual understanding between the Catholic minority and the Buddhist majority, which makes the Catholics outsiders in their own land. Fr. Prezet explains the objective of his apostolate in this way: "I make no attempt to bring anything to the Buddhists. If they want to receive anything from me that is up to them. My goal is to reveal Buddhism to Christians" (pp. 28-29).

The last episode dealing with this theme takes place in the Moslem village of Gafsa, Tunisia. Here Fr. Maurice Garau carries on an apostolate of dialogue with the Moslem community by means of Christian service as a licensed male nurse, and through a long friendship with Ali Mehrez, the local imam. This friendship, based on the service of God and mutual respect for each other's religion, is deeply touching in a land that has known Moslem-Christian conflict.

The third theme of Third World poverty is explored through descriptions of slum poverty in Bombay and the work of the Helpers of sisters and Mother Teresa's group in aiding the dying, and of a people's organization called BULA (Bombay Industrial League for Development). There are also descriptions of the work of two nuns, Catholic Sr. Emmanuele and Coptic Sr. Sarah, among the rag pickers of Cairo; as well as the work of Laotian refugee sisters in a Laotian refugee camp in Thailand, and that of Fr. Brian Karvelis, pastor of the Transfiguration Church in Brooklyn, among Puerto Ricans, and refugees from the Dominican Republic and Ecuador. These are small dedicated efforts, heroic but inadequate to the vast problem of poverty in the Third World. In a response concerning the awareness of the problem among Indian Catholics, Bishop Simon Pimenta says: "I'm afraid [there is no awareness] . . . We have mostly Catholics of the traditional type who are satisfied with coming to Mass on Sunday. They have their job and their house and they are satisfied with their life" (pp. 63-64). What the Bishop is saying about the Catholics of Bombay, can be applied to too many Catholic churches throughout the world.

The last section of the book, entitled Repression and Liberation in Third World Countries describes, the condition of the sugar workers on the island of Negros in the Philippines; the economic oppression of female textile workers in South Korea; the witness of missions in Zimbabwe during the recent

civil war and the persecution of the Basic Christian Communities in El Salvador. While the author does not specifically mention the basic tension in these situations, it does emerge from his descriptions. Can the Church be true to the Gospel in siding and struggling with the poor and oppressed and not become involved in the social and political revolution required to change the situation? The work of the National Federation of Sugar Workers in Negros, and the imprisonment and murder of union organizers are described. It should be noted in this section that the material refers to past happenings and thus may need some updating. In South Korea the problem is the exploitation of girls who work in the textile mills under bad working conditions and low pay in order to enrich the corporations that help account for the Korean economic miracle. During the national revolution against the White government in Zimbabwe, the Church in its missions among the blacks was in sympathy for the aims of the black revolutionaries, but was the object of their hatred as being a relic of White colonial domination. Caught in the middle, priests and laymen were killed by the revolutionaries, thus witnessing with their lives to the Gospel of Christ. In El Salvador the dilemma of the Basic Christian Communities (BCC) and of the Church as institution is most apparent.

The people who make up the Basic Christian Communities are basically sympathetic to the Popular Revolution Front, an alliance of Christian and hard line Marxist groups, because these are the only forces effectively working for the liberation of the people from the economic and political oppression of the haciendero right and the cruelty of the military. Because of this basic sympathy, and presumably because of the cooperation by some of the BCC members in the revolution, the whole BCC movement has been subjected to a violent persecution – members, leaders, priests and sisters who work among these communities – leading to the murder of one Archbishop, a number of priests and sisters, and countless more among the poor members of the El Salvador Basic Christian Communities. This persecution is typical of other military dictatorships, some now abolished, in Central and South America. Apparently typical of the situation is this: "The priest of the altar tells the people, 'Since I was here last you have had hard times.' And then he reads off the names of the parishioners who have been killed" (p. 109).

The book concludes with a social and theological rationale written by Robert Masson. It is well written and presumably was thought necessary to explain the sociology and theology behind Bavarel's descriptions. Some may find it helpful but it really doesn't seem to add anything, for Bavarel's message is already clear, since one picture (even a word picture) is worth a thousand words.

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