

DEVELOPMENT AND SPIRITUALITY:  
PERSONAL REFLECTIONS OF A CATHOLIC

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In this paper I concentrate on two points of the Guideline Questions: question three, "Collaborating with the United Nations and its Specialized Agencies," and question four, "Developing Multireligious Initiatives." I endeavor to reflect on these points as a Catholic. The perspective from which I write is on one hand that of the United Nations, with whom I have worked as an NGO, consultant, and religious advisor for over 30 years; on the other hand, my experience working on religious and interreligious programs in over 85 countries around the world. I am writing in my own name, not as an official of any office in the Catholic Church.

I will reflect on the following points:

- (1) Looking at the United Nations as a Catholic: what the UN offers, and questions it raises;
- (2) Elements that can contribute to the formulation of a process on religion and world order;
- (3) A program that offers a model on religion and world order.

Looking at the United Nations as a Catholic

The UN came into being in 1945 to seek peace among nations. To achieve this, the whole UN thrust was to work within the context of development.

But what development? The model of civilization presented at the time the UN began, and until the Group of 77 and the Group of Nonaligned Nations were formed, was the model of "developed" countries, of advanced countries as are found in Europe and the USA, or "Western European and other states." This meant that development was equated with economic progress. As the UN progressed, this notion was expanded.

Two current definitions of development are used in the UN:

Sustainable Development. "Development" and "sustainable development" are interchangeable. Sustainable development is "[the] development that meets the needs of the present without compromising

the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." ("Sustainable" does not equal environmental protection.)

Human Development. "Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical ones are to lead a long and healthy life, to be educated, and to enjoy a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights, and self-respect." (This is the "human capital" Mahbub Ul-Haq speaks of as being more relevant than GNP.)

More insight into the centrality of development comes from scanning two documents by H.E. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* and *An Agenda for Development*, in which it is stated that the coming century should be the Development Century; development is the most important task facing humanity today, but this concept of development is complex and multifaceted; development must be seen in its own right; what is development, and what is "non-development"? Development looks at times like something mainly economic, but it is much more; therefore a common or new framework to carry out resolutions, etc., by UN conferences is necessary to embrace the full notion of development.

A religious perspective on the UN means for me a view of political realities in the world -- and the UN expression of those realities in documents, declarations, conventions, etc. -- from the standpoint of the inspired books that are part of the arsenal of humanity and of the major religions and spiritual traditions. From this perspective we can see what ethical and moral issues and problems need to be addressed today which, though politically delicate or even dangerous, would benefit nevertheless from the illuminating teachings of these same holy traditions.

Since the beginning of my exposure to the UN I have been intrigued by an apparent inconsistency in the UN: on the one hand the centrality of the issue of development, and on the other, the overt exclusion of religion and spirituality as essential elements to express the totality of development. This apparent inconsistency gave me my focus for the issues I have followed, and continue to follow, with the UN. My research and work with members of the UN diplomatic corps, NGOs, and international civil servants convinced me that sooner or later we would have to address the key issue of spirituality and development, religion and development. I saw that there was a great deal to learn from the wisdom and political vision of the UN's founders in making development the central focus of a global organization whose purposes include maintaining peace and security, developing friendly relations among nations, achieving international cooperation, and being a center for harmonizing the actions of nations to attain these ends.

But because development per se is rarely mentioned in the Charter, I decided to work on spirituality and development in the UN in order to see whether (and how) the UN dealt with religious, moral, and ethical issues affecting nation-states. Why? Because it was evident that there was a need to look at the connection between development, peace, security, and human rights, and to focus on several difficult questions: Does religion have anything to contribute to development? Is religion merely a cultural expression of a country? Is religion, as expressed in countries where UNDP, UNICEF, and other UN agencies organize programs, an obstacle or even a deterrent to development?

Coming to a religious perspective on the UN, I will make the general comment that, theologically, the UN has given the world new insights into what in several religions is called the Kingdom of God. These new insights come from the fact that in the UN all nations have a "home"; and even though it is a political "home" to formulate laws and propose forms of legal cooperation, the UN still offers a view of what is

possible if there are united nations. This information can provide what is called by some Christian theologians a view of "the signs of the times", i.e., how God is working in the world today. If this material were compiled in a treatise on spirituality and development as seen at work in UN documents, conferences, committee meetings, etc., it would lead to new insight into "the Kingdom of God."

I believe that the UN offers us the first scripture written by communities rather than by a single inspired author. This scripture is the composite of all the basic documents of the UN, starting with the Charter and including the relatively recent Agenda for Development; all the plans of action, declarations, and conventions agreed on through fifty-one years; the frequent conferences; the unique symposia or consultations of UNESCO, UNDP, UNITAR, etc. It is a scripture because beyond all politics -- and perhaps even because of all politics -- we have for the first time a compilation of inspired documents dealing with nearly all the problems that affect living organisms. It does this through a painful, tedious, and long consensual process among representatives from over 180 countries. It does this to offer national governments, as well as regional political bodies, a background and a context from which can be enacted new laws for the good of people. All documents are couched in UN jargon, i.e. legal terms for an international political audience, but the voices of the people are there, and these are "signs of the times" for all who believe that God is continuing to speak to us today.

The UN has also given us the first global forum: a venue in which all problems can be addressed. A simple study of the titles and sequence of UN conferences since 1945 will undoubtedly show this. The annual documents produced by the UN bring us up to date on the global voices of God. The UN meditation room, and the minute of silent prayer or meditation at the beginning of each UN General Assembly, place "the greatest gathering of nations . . . under the symbol of silent prayer or meditation," in the words of U Thant. The UN is where "moral and ethical issues are being brought one after the other to the world organization." The UN is creating codes of ethics and conduct, one of the greatest being the Charter itself. The UN "extends the power of our hearts and souls." The UN thus has become "a cathedral where we can worship what is best in each other." "Little by little a planetary prayer book is being composed (at the UN) by an increasingly united humanity seeking its oneness." Knowing this spiritual side of the UN led U Thant to say that the most significant event of our times was the signing of the UN Charter. This spiritual side of development, and therefore of the UN, was clearly stated by Mr. Joao Da Costa, Executive Secretary of UNCSTD (the UN Conference on Science and Technology for Development) in 1979:

Development must be total, i.e., it must transcend the purely economic domain, to include the social, cultural, political, and spiritual dimensions.

See also:

The ultimate end of development is a civilization of love.

A religious perspective is something relatively new in UN discussions because the UN has been far too dominated by outdated models of civil society which have taken for granted that nation-states either have to have a total separation of church and state -- without studying the full meaning of such a metaphor -- or have to be a theocratic nation-state. This error has to be corrected. I believe there is a need for research, critical analysis, and dialogue among the different disciplines, so that we may find out whether it is realistic and futuristic to speak of a religious perspective on the UN that can be put side by side with an economic perspective, a parliamentarian perspective, a humanistic-ethical perspective, a perspective as shown in annual reports of the secretary-general and heads of UN agencies, or a perspective from individual religions or spiritual traditions. This would offer a venue that addresses all issues affecting human beings and the world from a fully comprehensive context. I firmly believe, though, that for a religious perspective to be realistic, fit for a political environment, and of a caliber that can be studied at universities, meetings of transnational corporations, and so on, this perspective needs to come from what I call a "religious spirituality" vantage point.

I mean by religious spirituality a very deep and universal form of spirituality that expresses the essence of religion by connecting the transcendental with the immanent, the eternal with the temporal, through a series of significant and revealing prayers, values, beliefs, rituals, and offerings that were learned from one of the original religions. I call it religious spirituality to distinguish it from spirituality per se which has inundated the Western world in recent decades and is characterized by a series of values, actions, rituals and lifestyle that are usually partially or totally separated from any known religion in the world.

It is universal. I have seen it in animist, Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, and other believers, especially including those impregnated with a strong indigenous spirituality.

It is behind all religions. It is not necessarily overtly a part of the creed, worship, or institutional life of a religion, but people have it from the present or past practice of a religion and it is embedded in their unconscious, to say the least. It cannot be understood without religion. If directed gently and respectfully, it will even lead many people back to their religion of origin.

It is the greatest expression of what the secretary-general of the UN once called the "resilience of the Spirit" that continues to tell the UN researchers, the leaders of government and economic institutions, that their job on development is still not complete because "the Spirit" has not yet been given its proper place in global documents.

It is manifested by a childlike attitude, rational knowledge combined with a quasi-mystical approach to reality, and more frequently than not with growing interreligious activities. Because of these characteristics that manifest it and make it different from spirituality per se, it is religious spirituality that keeps open the doors for further flowering of development, challenges the present limits of human development, and is starting to channel the clamors of the Spirit coming out of the nascent experiences of interreligious dialogue and cooperation.

Development UN-style has experienced an explosion fifty years after World War II, to the extent that today it makes us understand that "values" and "spirituality" are elements of development that are crying out for recognition. The questions raised today at UN conferences and peacekeeping missions by the

values and spirituality aspects of development touch the core of postwar conflicts and clashes; they also offer a powerful ray of light to illuminate what is needed to touch the heart of people in such a way that conflict will change into conversation, and political confrontations into artful discussions on how to live with a political problem, knowing we will not or cannot solve it.

A few examples:

s Nearly six decades after the Easter Uprising, the centuries-old Northern Ireland problem, which started with famine and opposing religious views and was mired in what seemed to be political issues, has given way to painful steps toward "understanding" one another, looking deeper than the stereotyped boundary and confessional issues; it is now beginning to address spirit, justice, and equity issues such as how to create an environment in which people live together, where loyalty is accepted toward London or Dublin. It is becoming a discussion of the spirit.

s In ex-Yugoslavia, after the iron grip of Communism was lifted, the people and countries involved realized that the deeper issues of one's religious and ethnic values had never been addressed. And so today, after bloody warfare and after NATO, the UN, and even religions have shown their inability to stop the war, what is slowly, painfully, falteringly but unmistakably emerging is the absolute need to accept both the fact that some people in the Balkans are and will remain Orthodox, others Muslims, and others Catholic, and that the factual territorial issues will remain real, delicate, and alive in the region. Through it all there comes the question: how can we live together? Noble and painstaking efforts by the UN, by churches and mosques, by Muslim and Orthodox and Catholic "countries" were needed, sorry to say, to highlight the enormous and centuries-old complexity of the issues, so that people, religions, nations, and international organizations would get down on their knees and pray for a different view of the issue.

s Political issues in Liberia, Sudan, Algeria, India/Pakistan, Punjab, Sri Lanka, and the powerful questions in Iran, Iraq, etc., on whether I'm a Sunni or a Shi'ite, a defender of the Islamic worldview, fundamentalist, or fanatic -- are a piercing cry to feel the sacredness of Islam. The devastation of the Ayodya Mosque in India, together with the assassination of Gandhi, then of Indira Gandhi and her son, are very enigmatic and dramatic cries for a deeper understanding of values, religious rituals and cultural mores, and the teaching of history.

s In Europe, Bulgaria fears the Turkish menace. Turkey has not pardoned Russia for taking Central Asia. Germans and Poles are at loggerheads. Hungary wants a part of Romania. Slovaks got separated from the Czech Republic. The Irish do not want the British in Ireland. The Basques do not want Spain as it is. Romania wants Moldavia, and so on. Still, there are definite moves today toward a "United States of Europe," going far beyond economic or political union into some sort of "new" Europe.

Another issue that has recently come to the consciousness of the UN is the concept of global governance. It is a question that naturally arises because of the nascent global civil society. It presents questions for pursuers of development because it makes the world see that every institution has a contribution for development, and that development can only be real if it calls all peoples and governments to a sense of human solidarity. Global governance calls for a new vision, challenging people as well as governments to realize that there is no alternative to working together to create the kind of world they want for themselves and their children. Unfortunately, and similarly to its treatment during the entire fifty years of UN development work, the spiritual and religious contribution to global governance is excluded, or mentioned in very cautious terms. Global governance is portrayed as essentially a civil ideal. It will not work, though, unless it is also presented as a religious ideal.

### Elements That Can Contribute to a Process on Religion and World Order

What elements are needed to translate a religious perspective on the UN into a movement toward greater development, peace, and global justice in the world? More specifically, how do we envision a world order in which the "Catholic voice" in the UN would help member states, NGOs, and other international institutions to contribute toward this movement, and in which the "Catholic voice" would at the same time be influenced by them in Catholic teachings and positions?

I mean by "Catholic voice" the very rich teachings and guidelines coming from: (1) recent popes, starting from the epochal appearance of Pope Paul VI at the UN, all the way to the very powerful speech of Pope John Paul II to the UN on the occasion of its 50th Anniversary in 1995; (2) the teachings in official Church documents; (3) the strong and very influential activities of Catholic NGOs throughout UN history, including the enormous influence of some outstanding Catholics who through their powerful example inspired some of the most challenging movements alive today in the UN, including le Pe`re Joseph, who created "Le Quatrie`me Monde"; the founder of the International Catholic Child Bureau; the Franciscan eruption into the UN with the special charism of Francis for peace, justice, and a great love for the environment; the different educational and humanitarian Catholic NGOs; and so on and so forth.

To energize the movement toward a better world order mentioned above, the Catholic Church, like all other religious groups, needs to create a process born of an attractive, Catholic, global vision for the twenty-first century, sufficiently comprehensive to include all Catholic voices throughout the world. To make this process realistic and attractive, there is a need to diagnose again and again the role of religions and spiritual traditions today, the increasing contributions of interreligious dialogue and cooperation, and the unique contribution of Christianity.

This paper cannot be a total presentation of such a process. I will point out six key elements that need to be incorporated and inspire the process. I hope this will help to stir all concerned to give the world and the UN an uplifting future-oriented "Catholic voice" in the UN and other international organizations.

#### (a) The Context

I believe that the theological context for this process should be how the Church is trying to work for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and what it needs to be more Kingdom-oriented; how the mystery of the Incarnation can become a true human universal, reaching and benefiting all five billion people in the world; and how this search of the Catholic Church can become incarnated in different parts of the world.

This theological context, though, needs to be inserted into a global political context within which to address these key issues; and this political context needs to be born primarily, though not exclusively, from the plans of action formulated at recent UN conferences, which show a shift in the UN direction from ways to foster predominantly economic development so that there may be no more "developing" countries, to a world created by concentration on social development, with the challenging and life-giving new role recognized for the environment in the formulation of world plans. The UN needs to be congratulated for making social development the center of future concerns and plans.

## (b) The Basic Questions

The basic questions that arise regarding what can inspire a comprehensive world order are, in my opinion, the following: What is the appropriate relationship of the human person with the Creator, with other human beings, and with the environment? What needs to be affirmed or changed in the beliefs, teachings, and practice of world religions, so that this vital relationship will bring about new concepts of what a country -- a nation-state -- can mean in the future?

I would like to offer six of the elements to be included in the process that will lead to greater respect and love for the contributions of the Church to a new world order, and that need to be included in the formulation of a "Catholic voice" for the future. (I leave for a future paper the formulation of an entire process.)

### (1) Knowledge and Application of Key Church Documents.

The first element is the knowledge and application of some key Church documents, in order to portray how the teachings contained therein will contribute to a better world. I personally have always found inspiration, challenge, and above all intellectual stimulation and security in the major documents resulting from papal letters, encyclicals and speeches, as well as from the Pontifical Committee "Justitia et Pax" and the Pontifical Council on Dialogue among Religions. These documents are born from a global context, they cover extremely interesting, difficult, and at times new religious areas, and they give one an intelligent and well-formulated Catholic view of the subjects dealt with. As I write, I have before me several copies of *Pro Dialogo*, the official magazine of the Pontifical Council on Dialogue among Religions, which offers current speeches by the Pope and information on interreligious conferences and consultations. I also have a pile of documents from "Justitia et Pax," because they too deal with issues that are on the cutting edge of society today.

A process for the future requires that these documents be put into curricula for Catholic schools and programs at the level of parishes, dioceses, seminaries, retreat houses, and so on, so that our people can

better understand the magisterial aspect of the Catholic voice and hopefully commit themselves to a Catholic view of global events.

## (2) A Catholic Voice on the Economy.

The second element to be included in a future process is a Catholic view of today's economy. I do not mean only a moral appraisal of economic trends, which is very important, but an insertion into the basic realities of the modern economy, and from this practical basis to give the world a "Catholic voice" on the economic trends that so profoundly affect the life of every person on earth. The problem is how to do this. For example, in the Commission on Global Governance document *Our Global Neighborhood: The Basic Vision*, it is stated that economic well-being is of fundamental importance for all human beings. Because the Group of Seven is not recognizing this, the document suggests the establishment of an Economic Security Council which could have the same importance as the UN Security Council.

We need a Catholic voice on the issue of economy. I am fully aware of some of the papal and episcopal teachings on this matter, and of some of the excellent contributions of Catholic economists, but I feel that the Church needs to express spiritual and moral values in economic language, accepting the reality that the first principle of global economy is the law of supply and demand. If spiritual and moral values do not become components of the world economy, global civilization will increasingly be a form of neocolonialism in which the northern countries will undermine the southern countries -- in other words, in which the poorest nation-states will be excluded from international economic processes, as they are at present. We need Catholic voices that are realistic, moral and hope-giving to the poorest of the world.

## (3) A Future-Oriented Model of The Church.

The third element is the model of a Church we need to help create the future world order. In my many years of work with interreligious and/or international political groups, I have found this probably the Catholic voice's greatest need in order to be more credible. The Church of the future needs to come across primarily as a community of believers, rather than as an institution with a hierarchical structure. I believe ours is a hierarchical Church, and I love and respect it, but in my experience I have seen this aspect overstressed to the detriment of other Catholic believers who have an enormous contribution to offer the world. At times this is also expressed by overly emphasizing the teachings on the charism of each group that pertains to the Church: laity, religious, clerical, hierarchical. It makes it appear as though that distinction gave credence to what is said by members of each group, rather than what is said by the community of believers, or some of its prophets "not accepted by their own."

A consequence of this is the apparent fear of theologians by the Vatican; its occasionally belligerent attitude at UN conferences; a certain defensiveness; and an overemphasis on ideology, which I believe sometimes leads to unnecessary and painful divisions and to the decrease of a challenging Catholic voice in the marketplace and in other intellectual and political environments.

We increasingly need a Church that is not centered on itself, but is ever finding new ways of expressing the fact that it exists only to point people and countries toward the Kingdom. There are extraordinary examples of the Church doing this, and many examples can be given to prove it, especially in the field of humanitarian help and the search for justice and freedom of religion; but, like other institutions, the Church needs over and over again to find ways of dealing with some of the crucial trends and realities that will mark the society of the future. It is not an easy role.

#### (4) A Model of the Church as Seeker of Truth.

The fourth element, one of the burning issues of today, is for the Church to find, and find again, ways of dealing with other religions as equals. I know the theological implications of this point; I also know the enormous growth that has occurred in the Church since interreligious dialogue became a daily component of Catholic life. I still insist, though, that our Church needs to appear not as an owner of the truth but as a seeker of the mystery of God on earth, together with believers of other religions. In this sense there was a remarkable assertion in a Vatican document: that the Church cannot impose itself, that it needs to be a disciple seeking the total truth.

Many in the Church are working with this mentality, but I would like to see our Church express more and more the fact that Catholics, no differently from members of other faiths, have also at times sullied the truth and the search for truth; how we have sometimes assented intellectually to a specific ideological or dogmatic point without linking this assent to a vital way of seeing the relationship of truth with love. In my interreligious work I have found this particularly noticeable and at times painful. I firmly believe that a very delicate issue is how belief in a truth is expressed (as if only one group of believers owned it). The search for truth sets all believers on journeys that periodically raise questions not easily answered, which therefore can become apparent or real distortions of the truth.

#### (5) An Examination of Syncretism and Irenicism.

A fifth element to be included in a process for arriving at a safe world order is the issue of how the Church deals with syncretism and irenicism. I thank our Church for clear teachings on this subject, as seen *inter alia* in two recent pontifical letters. In my experience of working with "new age" groups, with people searching for a personal identity they could not find in their religion, and so on, I have seen dangerous expressions of syncretism and irenicism, as for example in the "cafeteria" type of personal religious life that includes a mishmash of different religions; in an overemphasis on spirituality and a de-emphasis on religion with its doctrinal teachings; in considering that the Christian religion is only a cultural expression of a people and not a religious commitment to discipleship to Christ. I have seen people struggle with the issue of "the obedience of faith," which at times requires the submission of one's intelligence and will to God who reveals. In my own personal life, the more I become involved in interreligious work, the more I feel the need of the Eucharist, the sharing of Jesus, the enlightenment of the Magisterium, the quietness of prayer.

Having said this, I still believe that before the twenty-first century begins we need a congress on syncretism in which the participants will not be just members of the hierarchy -- leaders from different religions, theologians, academicians -- but representatives of the common folk who in their daily devotional life may be practicing syncretism or irenicism, even though they do not even know the meaning of the concepts, much less fathom the depth of its consequences.

We need in that congress to ask questions such as: What is syncretism today? Is syncretism a natural consequence of living in a secularized world? Should we see the adoption of different forms of Christianity by indigenous peoples, with their veneration of ancestors and their love of nature, as a form of syncretism? Who is God and who is Jesus? What does Incarnation mean for five billion people? What does the fundamental principle put forward at the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi, "to be together to pray but not to pray together," mean in today's stage of interreligious dialogue? What is the connection between prayer and/or meditation and the deepening of the sense of the ultimate Reality? Let no one fear the supernatural power of such a conference on syncretism: it will deepen each one's faith and allow all to enter more deeply into the heart of "the other"; above all it will give an essential element to the future world order that only religions can give.

#### (6) A Clear Teaching on Human Sexuality.

A sixth element for a vibrant contribution of the Church to the society of the future is a clear and ever-richer teaching on human sexuality. My work with different religions and with diplomats has convinced me that one of the most important, though difficult, tasks of the Church today is to be a bright moral voice on the issue of human sexuality. The discussion of this essential expression of human life has entered the social consciousness of the world as unexpectedly as an erupting volcano.

In recent UN conferences this matter has proven to be one of the most controversial and most debated issues. The Church has taken a clearly stated position. The encyclical "Evangelium Vitae" of March 25, 1995 presented, in four illuminating chapters, the teachings of the Church on all aspects of life, including sexuality. Earlier (November 1, 1983), the Church had done the same in the document "Educational Guidance in Human Love." I believe Catholics need to understand this teaching in a spirit of faith. By that same token, I also believe that because this issue has blown into UN conferences with the force of a summer storm for which no one -- neither politicians, nor diplomats, nor governments, nor Church leaders -- was prepared, there has resulted a sense of defensiveness, of limiting the discussion on human sexuality to stands on abortion, etc. rather than inspiring a search for more enlightenment on this issue.

At times I have wished that official representatives of our Church at international meetings would show less defensiveness and more understanding of countries, organizations, and individuals holding different opinions. Having said this, it is my belief that, as the new world order takes concrete forms, the Church will be looked to as one of the main champions on education for a healthy human sexuality. For this, all Church members need to be better educated on all aspects of human sexuality and concentrate more on the long-term respectability of the Church's position, rather than reacting defensively or belligerently in order to refute attacks or insults from some international groups who think they alone have the truth in this matter. If the Church does not take this long-term approach, I fear there will be many more

discussions and debates, and name-calling meetings rather than the meeting of minds, and that this will cause considerable delay in giving the world more future-oriented norms on human sexuality.

These are some basic elements I believe the Catholic Church can contribute, both to help the world define shared global ethics and to add religious components to global governance. These elements need to be discussed, corrected, and, most of all, seen within a broader context of religion and world order. I hope they will also be coupled with contributions from other religions and spiritual traditions.

### A Program That Offers One Model for Religion and World Order

The last point of this paper is an offering of the Catholic Church's program to prepare and celebrate the new millennium. The program is contained in an apostolic letter of Pope John Paul II to members of the Catholic Church. I believe this letter can be a starting point for the elaboration of an interreligious model on religion and world order.

The apostolic letter is centered, of course, on Jesus Christ. This centering, though, is formulated as a modern presentation of the mystery of Incarnation of the Word to shine forth and illuminate the twenty-first century, and the presentation of a Jubilee 2000 as a hermeneutical key to the Catholic Church's opening of the twenty-first century. The Pope states that we need a vision for the twenty-first century, and he offers one that comes out of "God's intervention in human history." He further states that the world, and the Catholic Church, need purification and a conversion.

The Pope goes on to show how in the Vatican II Council, the Church questioned herself and her own identity. He shows, too, how the Church followed up on this questioning attitude by organizing special synods in which specific issues were discussed as seen on different continents. He gives guidelines for a new world order. Some of the guidelines are the formulation of doctrine on social teachings against the background of the danger of nuclear war; the validity of the papal journeys; the annual papal messages on peace since 1968. He forcefully points out that the year 2000 requires an examination of conscience for everyone in the Catholic Church. He emphasizes the need for forms of dialogue with different religions, which he calls "circles of dialogue of salvation."

This program is, of course, a Catholic one; for it to be used in a more international and interreligious context, it will have to be coupled with programs from other religions and UN agencies. The program does, though, help people see how to move toward religion and world order.

### Conclusion

I offer these personal reflections as a contribution to the present Symposium, and look forward to learning from others who have contributed papers. I hope and pray that in the end Global Education Associates will be able to move toward the next step to create a true process for Religion and World Order.