Integrity of mission in the light of the Gospel. LISTENING TO AND Bearing the witness of the Spirit  WESTERN EUROPE

The public rumour of the kingdom of God in and from Western Europe: ♫ notes and glimpses from France

The integral mission challenges in our World

Who shall send us a rumour of Good News?

Picture 1

Brûlure de la Foi (Faith burn) – painting by Gilbert Louis, bishop of Châlons en Champagne

“Only people inserted in practice can think and reflect theologically; theology is situated at the intersection of Christian faith and the thinking, the culture, the feelings, the behaviour of people in a determined historical moment… For me, to theologise is to write a love letter to the God I believe in and to the people I belong to...

Gustavo Gutiérrez
At the world Social Forum

For me - with my husband, in the communities we are part of, near and far -, it has been to sing a love song to the God we believe in and the multicultural people we belong to (cf. Pict. 4 & p.11).

Introduction

From where do I speak ?

I would like first to situate myself so that what I am going to say can be put in context. This context is a quest of discipleship since my early years, in the West of France, in a loving and demanding dialogue that was never interrupted for 60 years. This context is also a responsible but exacting love for the Roman Catholic Church in which I came to know the Triune God in and from whom I have been living in profound happiness. Finally this context is a common call, in our couple, call which has been recognised de facto in the different communities we have lived in – be they elective, parish, diocesan, ecumenical… - to be as much as possible, in that Church, a sign of the Covenant and ultimate happiness proposed to each person we go by and, in some mysterious way, to the whole world.

Moreover, if, for nearly 30 years, my work for Missio-France, has brought me to know and visit a number of countries that were geographically far away, my training as a translator and my local insertion, as a family, have brought me to explore and cross non geographical...

1 Cover of an interesting reflexion of the French Bishops Commission “Arts-Cultures-Faith”: La foi au coeur des cultures et des arts (Faith at the heart of cultures and arts), Paris 2004.
frontiers in dialogue and mission which I consider as highly fundamental for our global village, whatever the local setting is: hard sciences, especially as it is the domain our 3 sons have invested professionally, discoveries on evolution, explorations of psychology, intellectual and ethical plurality, exclusion gap… in short the great contemporary challenges in which we navigate and are more or less conscious actors.

From this locus, my ongoing conviction and what gives me energy to go on is the strength and determination of Faith.

The more I live and work, the more I experiment and think that the real emergency in our predicament is to comfort each and one another to live by what is deepest in us: the call to life in universal fraternity excluding any discrimination and the new means of communication give us more possibilities for a worldwide fraternity as long as we keep vivid the vision of the Kingdom and our decision of true discipleship. I am very much touched by the fact that France has put that word on the façade of all our townhalls. We may have a problem in writing explicitly in the European Constitution our religious heritage, but on all our public monuments, we have the affirmation of this most Christian reality, from the beginning, even if” laicised”: Fraternity.

I have a small lexical problem as a woman, as the fact that women are included in fratres has not been so clear throughout history but we are working at that in several associations – civil and ecclesiastical …

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I-A short analysis of the present situation in our West end of Europe and Church

A. From the sociological point of view: a crisis situation, an immense thirst for spiritual values, an eclectic fair of offers.

A crisis situation

Of course, I do not bring you a scoop. Many former times have known crisis, but our time seems to be characterised by a more general and radical crisis. The crisis is perceived as general because it seems to affect all aspects of our life and all domains of society: School and training in relation with employment, family in its traditional form, access to health, institutions (political, religious, trade unions…). Most observers in Western Europe agree: man and woman today are disoriented, tossed about, manipulated and exposed to every wind of doctrine up to panic. Disengaged from the traditions of history, orphans from ideologies, both actors and victims of a de-institutionalisation, which affects all aspects of social life, detached from the Christian sources of the civilisation where they were born, hardly able to build projects in an ephemeral environment, on the threshold of an unclear future…

2 NAE 4 (Vatican II’s Declaration on the relation of the Church to non-Christian religions – to-day we simply speak of “religions of the world”). GS ((Vatican II’s Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the modern world) extends the game of relations to all the human societies, taking their inner differentiation - a characteristic of modernity – very seriously.

The crisis is perceived as **fundamental** because radical questioning and even deconstruction is the rule everywhere, though in different measure. Nothing is taken for granted any more. We experience it difficult to find minimal references on which we can agree and construct. Even when things “function”, it is not always possible to see why and how. And the answers given to some questions could be quite different some time later, so there is a general lack of confidence and trust on the medium and long term.

The “hypermodern” persons are not-at-ease with the new individuality that they claim but have to construct without much help or support. Their great temptation is then to forget the predicament in a consuming bulimia, in drug addiction of all kind or in violence against themselves or others.

The number of suicides is terrible, especially among younger and oldest people. In France, it is the second cause of death for the 15-24 and the first for the youngsters around 30.

**A huge thirst for spirituality**

In such a situation more and more people in leading position recognise that there is a necessity to regain a minimum of motivations and convictions and therefore, to find landmarks and values. **This gives our word and witness a great responsibility.**

Archbishop Doré of Strasbourg says that he has been impressed, in his recent pastoral visits to youngsters preparing confirmation, by the tonality of questions asked: *What is culpability?; Is God interested by bad people? What do you think of fidelity in marriage? My friend committed suicide: have you something to tell me about that?* (Doré 1)

There seems to exist an immense perplexity and maybe a true openness. **Do we listen enough?** Is our time available to walk along with our contemporaries? We, committed Christians and mission minded scholars, should be the first to discern and echo that quest, to help its awareness and formulation, to promote its blossoming and respect and work as much as possible towards its nourishment (in former times we would have talked of fulfilment, but we happily have learnt humility).

**Wall painting of La Vitoria (Chile)** received from our Latino partners and published on the cover of our franco-belgian review “Mission de l’Eglise” [Photo de Jacques Lancelot].

**An plethoric fair of offers.**

Today we stand in front of a plethora of offers. We are flooded with ads, solicitations, phone calls and E-mails, we are asked for, “re-claimed” everywhere, in some way (in French, an ancient word for ads is “récldame” = “re-claim”): on radio, TV, in the street, in the magazines

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4 Sociologist J-P Willaime (1, p.104-405) introduces the term as opposed to « postmodernity, used in the 80s and which seemed to imply a break from modernity. In fact it is rather a radicalisation of the last.

and papers... really everywhere! What does not appear in the media, what is not promoted there is considered without real importance, even non-existent. On the contrary, what appears in there is somehow automatically considered as true and has right to exist. Among other things, the reality shows are there to prove it. And look, the most exotic offers are able to be echoed there, to have their plausibility and credibility recognised. Therefore, we have in fact to affirm that belief is not receding in our society. Indeed trust is shattered, but credulousness is in exponential development even though, according to the last surveys, “good old reason” seems to come back\textsuperscript{6}.

B. Church and Christian Mission in Western Europe

Why do I introduce the Church naturally when I speak of Christian Mission? Because in my context, if “the Church is by nature missionary”\textsuperscript{7}, at the same time “Christ accomplishes his mission through his Church”\textsuperscript{8} even though different images of the Church come across the various denominations\textsuperscript{9}. In a catholic view, only the Church, as a whole, can assume the missionary task in all its integrity.

Christ sent His life-giving Spirit upon His disciples and through His disciples established his body, the Church, as the universal sacrament of salvation.\textsuperscript{10}

Today as before, the Church is called to be the concrete sacramental presence of God’s Love, as it has fully manifested itself in Christ.

That is why, in the Roman Catholic perspective, evangelisation is intrinsically an ecclesial act.

Sociological data

You remember that Staline asked how many “divisions” Pope Pius XII could count on.

Today in Western Europe we have to be lucid and honest on our “forces” and “means”. But we do have to relativise. One cannot but be sensitive to the important decrease of cultic practice, especially among youngster. But we must not nostalgically exaggerate the real conversion of former full Sunday churches. In the same way, we must not think totally de-christianised a quantity of “faithful” who have loosened their participation in Sunday mass.

Integral practice hold together socio-political practice to establish the conditions of the kingdom of God and worship practice, with a plurality of expression.

And again I give as strongly emblematic the drawing by my Friend Jean-Pierre Molina of the French Protestant Popular Mission: the Body of Christ is in the consecrated elements, yes, but specifically where people are in most need of the Good News.

picture 3

*Ceci est mon Corps. This is my Body [ J.P. Molina]*

“For me, Christ, the Risen One, is united to each person and therefore, The Blood of Christ today is first the blood poured in Haiti, in Iraq, in Palestine, in Israel, and at the same time for us, Christians, the blood poured in the chalice, the body given to us in the Eucharist”\textsuperscript{11}.

\textsuperscript{6} CSA Survey on values, published in *Le Monde*, 17.04.03, and compared to the preceding one, 1994.

\textsuperscript{7} AG (Vatican II’s Decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity)

\textsuperscript{8} RM 9

\textsuperscript{9} AFOM 2 « Church » (M. Spindler).

\textsuperscript{10} LG 48
Therefore, the “Christian practice” cannot be measured only in terms of church attendance.

**The Matthean image of the righteous**

If we look at the 5 important discourses, which Matthew gives us throughout his gospel, they are starting with the Sermon on the Mount (5-7) and ending with the vivid images of the ultimate judgement of all nations. Then, at the real end of history, what will be the most important “when the Son of Man comes in his glory” and “separates the sheep from the goats”? To the first he will say:

> Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you give me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me. Then the righteous will answer him, Lord, when did we see you hungry... thirsty... a stranger... needing clothes... sick or in prison...? ”

The King will reply, “I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did to me”.

The universalist interpretation – most usual among francophone exegetes and based on the expression “the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world” – does not put any other condition to be men and women signs of the kingdom than to make oneself the neighbour of the least in the eyes of the world. The divine is made near the human\(^\text{12}\).

**Paradigmatic data**

In 1991, (broadly at the same period as John Paul II’s *Redemptoris Missio* and the Document from 2 Vatican entities, *Dialogue and Proclamation*), David Bosch’s *Transforming Mission* was a landmark in the Theology of Mission. It underlined what it called the “new paradigm of mission”: mission could not be thought any more as a movement going from western Churches - the ancient Christendom churches – to mission lands, but rather from reciprocal interchange between churches. The missionaries who brought the Gospel had given place to partners who learn together to welcome the Gospel in its always new reality.

13 years later, the new paradigm has been enlarged and deepened.

**Enlarged**, because of the horizon given by the globalisation context. As Bob Schreiter wrote in *Sedos* October 2001, the working hypothesis to-day is that we are progressively passing from the context of colonisation - with its geographical, civilisational and outreach model – to a new structuration of our universe with a new conscience of our ecological, economical and cultural *interdependency*, and a *paradoxical atomisation*. Then, we are now desperately

\(^{11}\) Gérard Daucourt, bishop of Nanterre, near Paris, and a member of the pontifical council for Christian Unity, on the eve of his pilgrimage to Istanbul/Constantinople for the 800th commemoration of the rampaging of the City by the Crusades, to embrace the Patriarch and share with him the good news “Christ is risen, truly risen” (Easter 2004).

\(^{12}\) To prolong this section, see Philippe Bacq’s most interesting article in *Lumen Vitae* n°1, 2004: “Relire les évolutions actuelles à la lumière de l’Evangile” (Rereading current developments in the light of the Gospel), esp. P. 26ff. The new *Lumen Vitae* Review is a joint venture between mission/evangelisation oriented Catechetical/Pastoral centres in Belgium, Canada and France.

For a recent courageous application, see the controversial stance of the French Bishops’Committee for migrations and Itinerant people: “Quand l’étranger frappe à nos portes” (When the foreigner knocks at our doors), *Documents Episcopat* 7-8 2004. A powerful poetic expression on the same theme can be experienced in the 6 hours’theatre opus by Ariane Mnouchkine: *Le dernier caravansérail – Odysées* (The last caravasera – Odysseys), Vincennes, Théâtre du Soleil, 2003-2004.
looking for a new grammar concerning our identities. This loss of reference marks encourages refuge in closed communities, protecting themselves from “the other” considered exclusively as a menace.\textsuperscript{13}

**Deepened** because the ancient goal of “planting local churches” in former “mission countries” seems to have been largely successful but the specificity of *Ad Gentes* mission is still here. *Ad Gentes* mission is travelling to human groups where God speaks in languages we have not decoded yet (Jean-Yves Bayziou, *Spiritus*, n° 170, 3/2003). And the missionary person still needs to quit him/herself, his/her language, his/her culture, his/her world vision and style of living for a living dialogue which listens and offers.

**Deepened** also because we have had several shocking events in the world - in particular:
- April-June 1994 the Rwanda genocide when Christian fraternity was dramatically belied.
- 9/11 2001 and its consequences: the temptation to absolutize the camp of the good ones and the camp of the bad ones in terms of religions and cultures. And recently in Iraq, we have had, once more and stunningly, the evidence that good and bad are not in 2 separated camps but that conversion is dramatically needed throughout the whole human world.

**II In such situations, which fundamental attitude do we try to adopt to bear the witness of the Spirit?**

**First attitude: stop lamenting! And encouraging one another to do so**

As Bishop Doré said to the priests in his diocese, last November, we lose a lot of time and energy, we dilapidate our joy of living in complaints and disparaging: analysis is necessary, critical discernment is precious, stand back lamenting and counting points is quite another attitude which should be excluded.

The apparent quantitative presence of Christianity in the west is decreasing but, as sociologist Danielle Hervieu Léger puts it: “the Church is probably in a phase of her history when she has never been as estimable as now”\textsuperscript{14}. The Church and most Christian witnesses appear to be no longer “arrogant” but fragile as their master.\textsuperscript{15}

And maybe they are no longer massively visible - except for given special times like the World Youth Days which took all the uninterested journalists by surprise and even a number of catholic leaders – but they are **present** in a lot of ways in ordinary and public life. To paraphrase an ad for a big store: **“There’s always something happening” with the Catholics**.\textsuperscript{16} In fact this observation can be extended to Christians as a whole: many initiatives concerning both challenges - the faith intelligence in our cultures and the social inscription of that faith - are often taken up in ecumenical groups/associations/events, especially at the grassroots level.

There are a lot of “interest networks” which come together at a given time (“temps fort”) and organise an “event”, for ex, young musician believers of different denominations organising

\textsuperscript{13} For the other considered as a source of grace, see Comeau 1.

\textsuperscript{14} D Hervieu-léger 1

\textsuperscript{15} Rouet 1

\textsuperscript{16} Muller & Bertrand 1
musical evenings, in local churches or on the market place, which will bring together those who appreciate their kind of music; theatrical productions; biblical groups ...
The aim of these events is to express the joy to know Christ, or specific evangelisation (new and anew), mission awareness and sharing, especially in view of and during Mission month in October each year.

One area where progress has to be made is certainly common ecumenical witness i.e. the different Christian communities together. For, though at the grassroots common witness to the Kingdom is being lived and at the intermediate level, biblical and theological sharing is sought for\textsuperscript{17}, different texts and actions or omissions from the Christian authorities have recently been lived with difficulty\textsuperscript{18}. Common Mission forums have aborted and the misunderstandings from lack of real knowledge and conversion are still a deep pain inside the Body of Christ and a scandal for the world.

Happily, a good number of disciples dwell in Jesus’ prayer and promise of oneness, thus living, working and reflecting non discouraged under this eschatological blessing.

Second attitude: trying hard to think and to do so together

In my Roman Catholic denomination, the diocesan synods have opened a new consciousness of the baptised person’ responsibility, in Church and Society. And not only have they opened consciousness, but also put people to the task, in an experiential way, in the midst of the world the Christians have been sent to (Mt 28) and with the brothers and sisters of other visions. So there has been a new apprenticeship of responsible reflection, with its difficulties and dead ends, but insufflating our Christian Hope in collective enterprises. In those synods, the theologians have mixed with the grassroots faithful and even the person of goodwill interested to reflect with others on the local/global meaning of life. And the theologians have learnt a lot in a real “crossing of different kinds of knowledge”.

We have experienced a real training effort of all the forces. The accent has been put on the qualitative rather than the quantitative. The effort specifically concerns “formaction”, putting an accent not exclusively on the intellectual side, but also on the “experiential” side, knitting them together to be more relevant to the predicaments of our integral life.

In that effort, one can perceive a great need of reminders of the universal dimension of all our interests and actions. The mission minded teams have been active in giving that core to all the renewal thrusts, in network with other associations, services and movements, especially those working with people of different cultural backgrounds.

In Church life, Mission teams have been steadily developing their links with other groups like the catechetic teams, the vocation teams, the “new communities”, the pastoral teams... to really act that core principle, Mission is integral to Christian life.

\textsuperscript{17} See the work of the Groupe des Dombes, on relations between Protestants and Catholics in France and the hope-full creation of a similar group of 11 orthodox and 11 Catholic theologians this July (in La Croix, 6.07.04). See also Jean-Marie Aubert’s AFOM Report in the tabled papers for this Conference
\textsuperscript{18} We shall receive with interest the echoes of the 38\textsuperscript{th} international ecumenical Seminary which gathers 70 people from 20 countries in Strasbourg on Eucharistic hospitality while I am finishing these lines (1-8\textsuperscript{th} July 2004)
Third attitude: “fraternising” in solidarity, near and far

The Mission teams are part of the solidarity network in each diocese and actively instilling their prophetic Message in the alternative movements of civil society. The proposition of Faith is addressed to all, in all the dimensions of their selves: body, spirit, emotions, social life.

In this hour of liberalism, exclusion is raging around and away. Increasing economic gaps are breaking our societies apart. In the economic and financial war we experiment, the enemy is invisible. That war has no front, nevertheless it makes poor in millions and kills more people than open conflicts, but in silence. In the dominating system: “the private wins over the public reality, the profitable over the useful, the strong over the weak”. The system cannot be accepted as such by us Christians: it needs to be analysed from the standpoint of the poor and also needs committed people to correct and change it where necessary.

It is on the everyday ground of human life that Christ has given us a rendez-vous: “The Word became flesh and lived for a while among us”

God himself teaches us to be fraternal: As regards brotherly love, there is no need for me to write you. God himself has taught you to love one another (1Thes 4:9)

The mission of the “presence” amongst the most needy is a model that attracts a lot of youngsters, especially in “new communities” that have taken on the fire lit by the great religious orders “Many of these groups have developed rapidly after Vatican II (especially in the charismatic trail of the 70s), and have taken an international dimension, with the desire to announce the Gospel in all kinds of circumstances”. The ancient orders have developed lay branches in relation to their spirituality and they have divided their bigger communities into small cells sharing day-to-day life in difficult suburbs, most of the time with a lot of migrant people. Suburbs with more than 30 cultural communities are not rare in the big city suburbs and the sharing of their difficult living condition is a witness that is highly valued by the populations.

This is really listening to the Spirit in context at the same time near and far. The missionary “good adventure” of living and announcing the “Beatitudes” – in Spanish: “bienaventurados/as…” formerly in faraway contexts, is in fact going crossways from everywhere to everywhere, far and near.

Fourth attitude: dwelling in Christ and dialogue

“Sent in mission by Christ, we don’t have the privilege of the relation to God, but a particular mission to refer to Jesus as God’s image or legible icon of the mystery of God’s love”. Islam

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21 Alain Durand I
24 manuscript of the visit to suburban protestant congregations. Missiology to the Western culture program, ecclesiology team, May.
is the second religion in France and most of our big cities are “mix-cities” to take up the motto of a multiethnical association. In my diocese of Evry, in Paris Suburb, very near the new Cathedral set on “Human rights Square” along with the Townhall and Commerce Chamber, stands a large Mosque and the biggest Buddhist temple in Europe is being built. The relation between the different religious authorities is positively alive and many sharing groups come together to discuss life in the city, religious convictions pray... and act in partnership with the most excluded. When the world events threaten to elicit violence between communities, the authorities - with their faithful - exchange “visitation” on respective “holy days” and explain that when the “most religious” are the most violent, they disfigure the image of God in the face of the world. Many by their presence, reflection and sensitive testimony bear witness to the God of love, source of their steady hope and action.

I am not saying that there are no dramatic events and situations, but as pointed out in picture 2, faith in the God that lived his love for Human up to loosing his life and promised his presence along the days helps us to keep eyes and courage lifted beyond the immediate predicament.

Fifth attitude: following Christ, the healer. What salvation for the present time?26

From the origins of the Church, Christian communities have walked Jesus’teaching and attitude to the most fragile... In French, the first hospitals were significantly called “hôtels-Dieu” (God’s hotel).

Today we are experiencing profound shifts in contemporaneous therapeutic and spiritual quests. IAMS Healing workshop is also probing this reality.

Indeed “We live in a world where inequalities are increasing, where the gap between the rich and the poor is deepening. At the same time, the affluent Western societies experience a profound disappointment in regard to the promises of the sixties. A fragility feeling is spreading everywhere. A number of our brothers and sisters, more or less adapted to the Western economic and financial model and to a secular society, experience a thirst for well-being, but also for meaning [as we have seen in section A]. This leads them to turn out to new spiritual and therapeutic offers. They embrace the hope to find there... at least support and sometimes serenity to assume their difficulties. This quest is often oriented outside the established Christian churches and in fact calls for an inculturation able to draw on the great spiritual intuitions of Christianity. Nowadays, we cannot dissociate health and salvation. Nevertheless we cannot identify one with the other. New Christian propositions are being born [...] aiming to touch the persons in their integrity [...] without concealing the part of suffering and finitude present in any human life. The Risen One invites to fullness, as soon as today, but this cannot be received without going through the denial and abandon of oneself, to which the Easter Mystery invites each and every Christian27.

Fundamental attitude – “Cantus firmus”: Through Christ, in the Spirit, with eyes lifted to our God

26 Cf. Bernard Ugeux, « Evangéliser et guérir. Quel salut pour aujourd’hui », in AFOM1, p. 89-117. I just give you his suggestive conclusion (somewhat abridged), but the whole chapter – which also refers to IAMS last Conference in South Africa – is most stimulating.

All these efforts are being put in a renewed context of Bible study, spirituality and prayer. Indeed, this public rumour of good news is first found throughout the Bible and specifically following Jesus Christ in his incarnation, public life, experience of death/Resurrection.

In the Gospel, Jesus often lifts his eyes to the Father. He is seen going to the wilderness to pray. He is seen lifting his eyes to the Father before accomplishing miracles. He often tells to do the Father’s will and to pray him with confidence.

The monasteries have never been so looked for to retire, reflect, pray in the midst of a hectic life. During Holy Week 2004, 5000 people have gone there for a retreat. And as there was not enough hosting possibility, monasteries have developed E-mail retreat leaflets, to help people to “retire in their ordinary life”, in communion with all the praying places at that time. Pilgrimages, the experience of the praying feet (cf. psalms) are also flourishing anew. They have to be evangelised, as all other aspects of our life, but they open the heart for that. They have to be evangelised, as all other aspects of our life, but they open the heart for that.28

The offer by our Mission Services of prayerful accompaniment of dioceses around the World has experienced increasing success among all generations. An exchange of interest by information, prayer and sharing has been weaving a fabric of integral communion.

**Conclusion in form of poetic vision and prayer song**

I invite you to come back to

**Picture 2 (wall painting, La Victoria, Santiago, Chili)**

Bearing the witness of the Spirit is first, perceiving her signs in the manifestation of the God of life, especially in the sorrows, dramas, and predicaments of the world, in those we become neighbours of (Luke 10, 34). These manifestations are numerous at micro and macro level. Even a number of mass-media make an effort to show not only the signs of horror, but also the signs of hope. And how could the Christians not be in first line to spread this rumour of good news, with the treasure they have possessed throughout history, even in earthen vessels (cf. 2Co 4,7), with wonderful ups and dramatic downs but always steady burning Presence (Mt 28 20; Lk 24,32).

Then it is working, each Christian at his own level, with others, so that the fears brought by the bad sides of globalisation be contradicted, with priority for the smallest ones.

And for that we so need to call to the Spirit of holiness and wholeness, who will guide us into all truth (John 16, 13) and thank her, for she has already answered our prayer (cf. John 11,41). For the Wind that makes the sails inflate and sings the rumour of good news is not us, but it will not sing the Good News if we do not trice up our sails, whatever the present weather.

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Member of AFOM (Francophone Ecumenic Association for Mission studies)

**Picture 4 (with the music and Chorus in tongues) in transparency on the painting “the burning of Faith” (picture 1) + p.11 the 7 verses in French and English – the chorus can be sung in tongues, the verses can only be sung in the original French.**

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28 *Mission de l’Eglise n°143*, april-June 2004,
Plenary paper for the IAMS assembly in Malaysia 2004

POUR QUE DIEU SOIT DIT / MAY OUR LIVES SING THE PRAISE OF GOD

C. 1 Pour que Dieu soit dit
A l'homme d'aujourd'hui
Dans un concert de voix nouvelles;
Pour qu'il soit chanté
En mots de vérité
Qui font écho à ses merveilles,

R/ VIENNE DANS LES COEURS
L'ESPRIT DE SAINTETE!
QUE NOS LEVRES CHANTENT
LE DIEU VIVANT MANIFESTE!

C. 2 Pour que l'Homme en croix
Suscite notre foi
et nous conduise à sa lumière;
Pour que soit connue
La Pâque de Jésus
Jusqu'aux limites de la terre R/

C. 3 Pour que soient semés
Des grains de liberté
Qui voient le jour dans la confiance;
Pour qu'un monde en paix
Rêvèle un Dieu qui est
"Briseur de guerres" et de violences ; R/

C. 4 Pour que soit debout
Le Peuple de l'amour,
En vrai témoin de l'Evangile ;
Pour que nous soyons
Chemins de communion
Vers la Fontaine des eaux vives ; R/

C. 5 Pour que chaque humain
Découvre le chemin
Vers la Cité d'un ciel en fête ;
Pour qu'il trouve joie
Dans l'harmonie des voix
Où Dieu l'entend mieux que lui-même ;

C. 6 Pour que l'univers
Apprenne à tout jamais
Le chant nouveau du Maître unique ;
Pour que les croyants
De tous les continents
Forment le choeur de son Eglise ; R/

C. 7 Pour que soient rendues
Par le Seigneur Jésus
Gloire et louange à notre Père,
Pour que dans l'Esprit
Monte l'Eucharistie
Vers le Dieu saint qui nous libère, R/

Vs 1 May God be proclaimed
In the depths of every human heart
With new voices in new ways;
May the truth
And wonders of God
Be shouted from the rooftops

Ch/ May your Holy Spirit
Come and fill our hearts
That our lives may sing
Endless praise to God the Lord of Life!

Vs 2 May the Crucified one
Stir up our faith
And lead us to the light;
May the Cross reveal
The Resurrection of Jesus
And be known to the end of the earth Ch/

Vs 3 May seeds of freedom
Be sown
And come to light with hope;
May the world living in peace
Witness to a God
Who “crushes warfare” and violence; Ch/

Vs 4 May all true witnesses
Who proclaim a Gospel of love
Stand tall;
May we walk in communion
On the way
To the fountain of living water; Ch/

Vs 5 May every living being
Find the way
To the heavenly city rejoicing;
May they find joy
In the harmony of voices
Where God is heard; Ch/

Vs 6 May the whole universe
Learn the new song
Of the one Lord;
May all believers
Over the continents
Sing his praises in his Church; Ch/

Vs 7 May God be glorified
And praised
in the Lord Jesus,
That the Eucharist
Raise up in the Spirit
To the God of Freedom,

Words by Claude Bernard
Music by Christian Villeneuve
Some Books & Reviews which can help share in a written form – classic on paper - or electronic on the web - our experience and reflection.

- Bueno de la Fuente, Eloy, Roberto Calvo eds (Dean and Professor at the Faculty of theology of Northern Spain) *Diccionario de Misionologia y Animación Misionera*, Burgos, 2003.
- Comeau, Geneviève, *Grâce à l’autre, le pluralisme religieux une chance pour la foi* (By the other’s grace, religious pluralism, an opportunity for faith), Paris, Ed. de l’Atelier, 2004.
- Commissariat Général au Plan, University Institute of Florence, J. Monnet Chair of European Studies, *Croyances religieuses, morales et éthiques dans le processus de construction européenne* (religious, moral and ethical beliefs in the process of European Construction), Paris, La Documentation française, 2002.
- Conseil national de la solidarité, *Partager au nom du Christ ; Evangile et solidarité, réflexion biblique et théologique*. (To share in the name of Christ; Gospel and solidarity, a biblical and theological reflection.
- Doré, Joseph [Archbishop of Strasbourg], “Un évêque diocésain s’adresse à ses prêtres” (A diocesan bishop addresses his priests) in *Documents Episcopat*, 3-4 2004.
- Muller, Colette, Bertrand, Jean-René, [geographers] *Où sont passés les catholiques ?* (But where have the Catholics gone?) Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2002.
- Moynagh, Michael, *Changing world changing church*, 2001 translated into French in a collection run by the French Evangelical Fellowship, collection which has the significant title evangile@notreculture.fr
- Christian van Nispen tot Sevengaer, *Chrétiens et Musulmans, frères devant Dieu ?* (Christians and Muslims, brothers in front of God ?)
- Rouet, Albert [Archbishop of Poitiers], *La chance d’un christianisme fragile*, (the opportunity of a fragile christianity) Paris,
- Simon, Hippolyte, [present Archbishop of Clermont-Ferrand, Centre of France] *Vers une France païenne*? (Toward a pagan France ?)

**Among the Reviews :**
- *International Review of Mission jem@wcc-coe.org*
- *Mission de l’Eglise biblio-p@opm-cm.org*
- *Mission DEFAP-Protestant Mission Department).defap.mission@protestants.org*
- *Perspectives missionnaires p_regard@bluewin.ch*
- *Sedos Bulletin sedos@pcn.net*
- *Spiritus spirifr@aol.com ; Spanish edition spiritus@ecuanex.net.ec*

**Among Colloquia and Congresses which have been recently taking the pulse and encouraging the reflexion**
- 16-18 octobre 2003, Leuven/Louvain la neuve (Belgium) a colloquium which “questioned in a refreshing manner the meaning of mission to-day” (Compte-rendu in *Mission de l’Eglise* 144, 2004, p. 75-78)
- Congreso nacional de misiones :*Es la hora de la misión !* (It is time for mission). Burgos (Spain) October 2003.

**Among Websites (to be completed by the other participants)**
- *www.cec-kek.org* Conference of European Churches
- *www.comecc.org* Bishops’ Conferences of the European Community
- *www.cef.fr* (French Bishop’s Conference with all its ramifications)
- *mission.cef.fr* (Missio-France)
- *www.temoins.com*
- *www.christian-research.org.uk*