

HOLISTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT VIS-À-VIS EVANGELIZATION IN AFRICA

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing that concerns the community of men and women, situations and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, and relations between people, is alien to evangelisation. Evangelisation will be incomplete if it does not take into account the mutual demands continually made by the gospel and by the concrete, personal and social life of the people. Hence there is a profound nexus between evangelisation and human promotion. This can be highlighted through links of an *anthropological order*, because men and women who are to be evangelised are not abstract beings but are subject to social and economic situations. This also includes links in the *theological order*, since creation cannot be dissociated from redemption. These orders extend to the very concrete situations of combating injustice and restoring justice. This challenge of human promotion equally includes the link of the eminently *evangelical order* which is that of charity.² Against this backdrop, it is the responsibility of the Catholic Church, especially, in Africa “always and everywhere to propagate moral principles including those pertaining to the social order, and to make judgments on any human affairs to the extent that they are required by the fundamental rights of the human person or the salvation of souls”³.

THE NOTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

The notion of the human person is central to all human problems of underdevelopment and so a stand has to be taken by every philosophy, every religion, and every culture. The human person is the most paradoxical of all realities: a being who is simultaneously spirit and body, closed and open, existent and yet constantly in progress. The human person is a being in a state of tension between the two principles of his composition, between himself and his fellows, between himself and his Creator⁴. The paradoxes of the human person point to two facts: the obvious fact that man is a child of nature, subject to its vicissitudes, compelled by its necessities, driven by its impulses, and confined within the brevity of his years which nature permits its varied organic form. The other fact is that man is a spirit who stands outside of nature, life, himself, his reason and the world.⁵ These paradoxes are exactly what define the human person.

All the same, there have been different conceptions of this concept of the human person through history. We shall briefly expose the classical, medieval (Christian), and modern views.

THE CLASSICAL NOTION OF THE HUMAN PERSON

All modern views of human nature are adaptations, transformations, and varying compounds of primarily two distinctive views of man:

- i.) The Classical antiquity of the Greco-Roman world, and
- ii.) The Biblical view.

These two views were actually merged in the thought of medieval Catholicism. Boethius, one of the most cited of this class, defines the human person as “individual substance of a rational nature”⁶.

The classical view (Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic) of man may be regarded as one

in its common conviction that man is to be understood primarily from the standpoint of the uniqueness of his rational faculties - *nous* (in Greek). The *nous* which may be translated as "spirit" basically emphasizes the capacity for thought and reason. Plato and Aristotle share a common rationalism and a common dualism in their notion of person.⁷ The rationalism practically identifies the rational with the divine; for reason as the creative principle is identical with God. The dualism has the consequence in the doctrine of man of identifying the body with evil and of assuming the essential goodness of the mind and spirit. The Stoic view is more immanent in both the world process and in the soul and body of man than in Platonism, yet man is essentially reason. However, these three major conceptions which define the classical era do not exhaust Greco-Roman speculations about human nature.

CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE HUMAN PERSON

While the classical view is determined by Greek metaphysical presuppositions, the Christian perspective is the ultimate presuppositions of the Christian faith. The Christian faith presupposes the Creator of the universe and the goodness of all His creation. The human person, according to biblical tradition, is a created and finite existence in both body and spirit.

The Christian view of man is understood primarily from the standpoint of God, rather than the uniqueness of his rational faculties or his relation to nature. He is made in the 'image of God' - *imago Dei*. The high estimate of the human stature implied in the *imago Dei* stands in paradoxical juxtaposition to the low estimate of human virtue in Christian thought. Man is a sinner by virtue of his insufficient adherence to God's commands and laws of his nature. His sin is basically the wrong use of his freewill and its consequent disorder in the natural course of things. The freedom of his spirit causes him to break the harmonies of nature and the pride of his spirit prevents him from establishing new harmony and thus loses the union with his Creator.

However, the human spirit has the special capacity of standing continually outside of itself in terms of indefinite regression to survey the world and determine his action. The human spirit searches for meaning for its existence outside of him. It is in this emptiness that the self can find meaning in life which is beyond itself or the world. Christianity measures the depth of the human spirit in terms of its capacity for self-transcendence. There is therefore a strong belief in the immortality of the soul.

In Christianity, man is an individual but he is not self-sufficing. The law of his nature is love, a harmonious relation of life to life in obedience to the divine centre and source of his life. Man violates his nature when he seeks to make himself the centre or source of his own life.

MODERN VIEW OF THE HUMAN PERSON

"The modern view of man is informed partly by the classical, partly by the Christian and partly by distinctively modern motifs."⁸ The various compounds of these conceptions of human nature, involved in modern anthropology, leads to various difficulties and confusion which Reinhold Niebuhr summarises as follows:

- i.) The inner contradictions between idealistic and naturalistic rationalists; and between rationalists, whether idealistic or naturalistic, and vitalists or romanticists.

- ii.) The certainties in human nature in modern culture which modern history dissipates, particularly about the individuality of the human person as projected by the Renaissance.
- iii.) The certainties about human nature, particularly the goodness of man (sinlessness of man) which stands in utter contradiction to the known facts of history the lacunae therein.

Nonetheless, the Christian conception of the human person can serve as a possible source of light for the confusion of modernity. But in our contemporary time, our culture has been shifting back to a dominance of the 'unitary' self-experience. This paradigm shift is catching up with Christians too, at least with the more theologically literate Christians. There is motion for theologians and scripture exegetes to decry the Hellenistic, Platonic body/soul division and recall us to a more biblical view of the human person. The word 'soul', they propose, should be substituted with 'self', 'person', or even 'personality'.⁹

WHO THEN IS THE HUMAN PERSON?

The human person is a being that is composed of body and soul, spiritual and material. He is a consciousness being who relates freely with reality as a whole and relates personally with his infinite source, God. Man, as such, is a personal being who can only act in a concrete body, in history here and now, in dialogue with another, constantly exposed with his fellows to painful experience of the world through his own deeds. The ontological constitution of man explains his eternal validity, his responsibility, his dialogical relationship with the divine, his vocation to the supernatural destiny, his dignity and immortality.¹⁰

In the Western conception, the human person is primarily constituted of his very essence (absolute constitution) as an end-in-himself and also as related to others (relational constitution) which makes him the central focus of all actions and development, especially, for the Magisterial Church who underlines a third element: the *transcendental* which facilitates his communion with his creator.

In our African understanding, the human person is not a substance that is rational, abstractly cut off from human and communal links, isolated and alone in the island of his world. Rather, the human person is the human being born into a human community, from which he derives not only existence but also values, goals, and capacities to realize himself in communion with others. He is the concrete existing human being with other humans with the project of communal development.¹¹

The constant and general foundation of the African dimension to life is the *spiritual view* of the human person. Africans have a deeper, broader and more universal concept which considers all living beings as connected to the realm of the invisible and the spirit. In particular, the human person is never considered as mere matter limited to this terrestrial existence, but acknowledged in the person, the presence and power of another spiritual element in virtue of which human life is always related to the afterlife. This spiritual concept, perceived, analysed, lived and reflected on, is expressed in different ways from culture to culture.

THE PROBLEM OF POOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA

Africa is now home to the world's largest number of least developed countries. The continent further boasts of the largest refugee population in the world. Furthermore, it is a

*theatre of endless conflicts, civil strife, and gross human rights abuse. Whereas standards of living in other continents have risen over time, in Africa present standards of living are no better than they were two decades ago. High unemployment, inflation, civil strife, poverty, refugee crisis, desertification, diseases, malnutrition – the list is endless – appear to be the only legacy the continent is capable of passing on from one generation to another.*¹²

Africa in particular and the third world countries in general have continued to struggle for social and economic emancipation after about fifty years of political independence. It is a self-evident reality that Africa is underdeveloped. We have been continually bedevilled with glaring symptoms of underdevelopment such as high level of unemployment, poverty, hopelessness, state-organized killings, religious killings, oppression, hunger, inequality, lack or collapse of infrastructures, high rate of illiteracy, huge debt burden/unequal foreign exchange rate, social anarchy and chaos, devastating ethnic wars, low technological advancement, political instability, human right abuses and flagrant disregard for rule of law, etc. Socio-political and economic indicators show that Africa has achieved little or no success in its post independence development efforts.

We must accept this reality and work towards a brighter future. This sympathetic situation provokes a concern for the African scholars in general, theologians not exempted. Apart from the religious relevance of theology, theology has an overwhelming influence on how men order their political, social, economic and moral behaviours. Moreover, theology is particularly concerned because the holistic human development is a necessary path to lift humanity in Africa from these pitiable conditions that debase and degrade people to a more dignified state, culminating in human salvation.

The term 'development' as employed in this work is an all-encompassing, all-embracing and multifaceted phenomenon which expresses itself in economics, politics, culture, morality, material, freedom, human rights, etc., and as such, we can say that development is the progress recorded by man in all facets of human endeavour. It consists of improvement recorded in the material and non-material aspects of life.¹³ The basic question then is: Why is Africa not developed? Or pushing it a little further still: Why is Africa not developing? The causes of our problems that hinder us from parleyng with our Western counterparts are not far fetched from us; others (Westerners) only contributed to them. We must begin to accept the blame so that we too may know that the solution also lies in our hands. It is not enough to keep blaming our colonial masters. Most of these evils are perpetuated by us: bribery and corruption, egoism and greed, unpatrotism, moral decadence, insecurity, injustice, etc.

Scholars have written and spoken much on the different reasons for African backwardness. For instance, Samir Amin argues that the global capitalist order is unjust because it is organized in a way that African states are continually on the receiving end. To him, it is a case of a world between master and servant with Western societies playing the master and thus perpetually reaping the fruit of the situation while Africa is constantly exploited.¹⁴ According to him, Africa cannot develop as far as they continue to depend on Western aid. Thus, the solution to the problem lies in the de-linking of Africa from the global world order and from

Western subjugation.

It is a truism that cultural values shape and influence one's attitude to life and people of different cultural backgrounds react differently to one similar phenomenon. It follows therefore that the continued imposition of foreign models or theories of development which do not take cognizance of Africa's peculiarities will spell doom for Africa.¹⁵ For instance, the economic system of Open Market Economy (capitalism) has succeeded not only in infesting Africans with the instinct of selfishness but has also aroused unhealthy competition of survival of the fittest among Africans such that traditional value of communal solidarity is discarded for individual achievement. Individualism has replaced the communalistic view of traditional African life. Privatization is at best a capitalist principle aimed at robbing the state or the masses of the control of public facilities, enterprises and companies.¹⁶ Privatization can not bring the good things of life to the vast majority of Africans because the same set of bourgeois who organize the sales will buy. The resultant effect is that the rich grow fabulously richer and the poor wretchedly poorer.

Also, the traditional African politics has been fundamentally distorted. The idea of good governance in today's Africa is all about the liberal form of democracy, thus discarding the traditional African form of politics which involves the direct participation of every member of the community in discussing issues and arriving at a conscious decision making. The inherent unhealthy competition that is embedded in the nature of liberal democracy contradicts the very nature of the communitarian African set-up. It breeds opposition and extreme selfishness which is alien to African society. Although there had existed, some form of opposition in the traditional African politics, it was not as fierce and destructive as what is obtainable today. Democracy, in African experience, is simply a hijack and abuse of power by the class of the rich to consolidate their grip on the economy and, by extension, expand the frontiers of capitalism. "Democracy in finality as it is the case in contemporary Africa is being used to sell and nurture crude capitalism in the African continent."¹⁷

From the foregoing, we may make bold to say that the problem of underdevelopment in Africa is a crisis of ideological conflict. By ideology we mean the vibrant motivating force that enable a people to define their existence and all their ways of living.¹⁸ Ideology defines a people's identity, guides and constitutes a set of goals for their progress and development. Thus, values which are very fundamental to the life of the people, must be seriously considered in development policies and paradigms for the society.

THE CHURCH'S STRATEGIES TO AID HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

The Church has at its close attention the development of humanity who thrives towards escaping the miseries of life. The Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes* (GS) 1) states that the joy, hope, grief and anguish of the poor and underprivileged in this present age, is thus the joy, hope, grief and anguish of the Church. To whom does the responsibility of educating the people belong, if not the Church, who received this mandate from her founder to bring the Good News to the poor, to tell prisoners that they are prisoners no more, to tell blind people that they can see, to raise the down trodden and to tell everyone about the coming of the kingdom of God (Lk 4,18).

Evidently the Church had put in place some machineries in progress to attain this goal, bearing in mind that the misery of humankind especially in Africa, culminates in ignorance, endemic hunger and starvation.¹⁹ Little wonder then, the Conference of Latin American Bishops at Puebla stated that "the best service we can offer to our brother is evangelization, which helps him to live and act as a son of God, sets him free from injustices and assists his overall development."²⁰ In a bid to realize this aim, the church delved into that holistic human development which entails the intellectual, moral and spiritual development, while not neglecting the socio-economic and political aspect of development.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Pope Pius XI in his Encyclical letter on the development of people retorted that the reason for the Church embarking on Christian education and development of people hinges toward guaranteeing them a wider share in the benefits of civilization. In this modern era that the world is geared towards becoming a global village, it would be apt for the intellectual power of Africans to be developed. More so, the acclaimed world powers have classified most part of the continent as underdeveloped third world. Some humanists would agree firmly with the claim that the underdevelopment of the state is the underdevelopment of the people.

The Church has put in place the re-creation and reinvigoration of the Catholic Schools across the length and breath of the continent. This is to aid as well as heighten the intellectual prodigies of many Africans to meet the challenges of the 21st century. These 'Mission Schools' as it is fondly referred to in most parts of Africa, are by no means mediocre and would not compromise the high standard it clamours for. Hence they are furnished with modern academic gadgets, coupled with professional and enthusiastic teachers, whose duties include the eradicating of ignorance that beclouds one to violence and the instilling of knowledge which breeds freedom. We are in no way putting up a claim that there had never been an eager longing for intellectual advancement, rather we are of the opinion that the Church plays a prominent role in reaching this point of human development.

The involvement of the Church in aiding Africans reach the apex of intellectual ingenuity was made manifest many years ago when she led great minds like Origen, St Athanasius, St Cyril, St Cyprian, and St Augustine to prominence. The Church at this stage recount its hay days of African history and yearns to aid in repositioning the church in Africa. Cardinal Montini, who later became Pope Paul VI, heard the salient cry for the upliftment of the intellectual life in Africa during his private visit to Nigeria in 1962.²¹ In his exhortation of the people, he reiterated that as soon as academic vibrancy is instilled, the prowess of the Church is invariably enhanced. The extent to which the Church must assist in the development of people in Africa, is "measured by her right and duty to watch over the entire education of her children in all institutions, public and private, not merely in regard to religious instruction they are given, but in regard to every other branch of learning and every regulation insofar as religion and morality are concerned."²² The Church by no means plunges on the rights of parents to educate their children nor is she in conflict with the state rights.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Just like St Paul who wrote to the people of Galatia instructing them on the need to develop their spiritual life, so does the Church through its *Magisterium* alert the people in Africa on the need to separate the things of the spirit, from the things of

the flesh.²³ A developed spiritual life entails the manifestation of love, kindness, gentleness, self control, joy, peace etc. To promulgate these virtuous aspects of human life in the Church in Africa, would amount to taking a giant step in their holistic development.

The Church brings to fruition this desire of hers, through her support for pious societies, devotional activities, retreats and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The Church's unquenching zeal for prayers and the silent listening to the voice of God is unfathomable. The Second Vatican Council clearly outlined the indispensability of prayers which act as an identifying mark on the Church and of genuine Christian.

The Council further advises on the need to be engrossed in the words of the scriptures. The various dioceses try to bring to limelight this plea of the Sacred Council by creating various commissions for evangelization of the people. Their resultant effect culminates in the institution of Biblical societies like the Catholic Bible Instructors Union (CBIU), who aid the presbyters to instill the word of God in the faithful. With the guidance of the Church, Basic Christian Communities are set up to foster the teachings of the Church in families and micro communities.²⁴

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

An authentic moralization of social life will never be realizable unless it begins with people and has people as its point of reference. Indeed, living a moral life bears witness to the dignity of the human person.²⁵ It is obviously the task of people to develop those moral attitudes (such as justice, honesty, truthfulness etc.) that are fundamental for any society that sincerely wishes to be human. More so, it is the duty of everyone, and in a special way, of those who hold various forms of political, judicial, ecclesiastical or professional responsibilities with regard to others, to be the conscience of the society and the first to bear witness to civil social conditions that are worthy of human beings.²⁶

As regards this, the Church has inculcated the basic moral guiding principles into the curricula of her schools. She uses this medium to teach the youth the fundamental good that can be gained from living a holy and chaste life. To this effect, the Church enjoins the people to support the cause for the respect for life (Pro-Life). As is evident in the developed countries, individuals and groups are putting up structures that are inimical to the defense of the unborn child. The Church in Africa teaches and promotes abstinence since it is the right means of assisting them also to flee from sexually transmitted diseases (STD) or contacting the dreaded HIV and AIDS.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Having been besieged by apartheid, civil wars, dictatorial regimes, tyranny and economic mismanagement, individuals in Africa tend to have suffered lack of personal initiative. Those in the corridor of power have neglected the development of some sectors of the economy, leaving the people in a sub-human condition. Sectors like health care, education and women empowerment get little or no attention. Instability caused by some African leaders have bewildered and crumbled the socio-economic and political development of humans in Africa. It has become almost impossible for individuals to rid themselves of the impending affluence of their corrupt leaders.

The Church in her wisdom, thus craves for socialization which is aimed at

satisfying both personal and common right of citizens. Such socio-economic rights include; right to health service, right to housing, right to work, right to education, right to procreation and right to leisure, which guarantees a more holistic development of the human person.²⁷ Against the backdrop of critiques who claim that socialization reduces human automatons, the Church states categorically that it enhances that ability of humans to fully develop personal characteristics and reconstruct the mindset of the society.²⁸ Thus every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural programme must be influenced by the awareness of the primacy of each human being.²⁹ In no case, therefore, is the human person to be manipulated for ends that are contrary to his or her own development. The person should not be a *means* for executing economic, social or political projects imposed by some authority, even under the auspices of an alleged progress of the civil community as a whole or of other persons. It is therefore pertinent that public authorities should be very vigilant and alert so that restrictions placed on freedom or any onus placed on personal activity will never become injurious to personal dignity, thus, guaranteeing the effective practicability of human rights.³⁰

To get to this point, seminars and lectures on reorientations are further imbued in the activities of the Church. Furthermore, the Church in Africa encourages the people to know their right and to exercise their civic rights in the society without fear or favour.³¹ She promulgates the acceptance of free and fare political exercises and the rejection of politics of bitterness, which characterizes the African polity. She brings to the awareness of the populace, the adverse effect of one selling ones vote for paltry sum. Through the Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), the Church fights against the injustices that permeate the African society. The unlawful detention of innocent persons and the deprivation of basic welfare are intensely battled against by this outlet of the Church. As a result, many persons have been reunited to their families and have gotten new lease of life. Aside the JDPC, many other outlets of the Church as well as religious orders have delved into the enhancement of the life of many. The evidence of this is seen in the numerous charity homes, hospitals, orphanages and refugee camps found all over the continent. This aims at meeting the demands and needs of the destitute and less privilege in the society. The Church acknowledges her limitations in reaching out to all, thus she welcomes assistance from generous corporate bodies and philanthropists in other to keep these agencies running.

THE CHURCH'S AIM FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

1. The Church aims at the promotion of the human person which falls in line with the gospel of Christ who lifted up the status of humanity by feeding the hungry, curing the sick and raising the dead. The dignity of every human person, irrespective of their physical or mental conditions must always be held in high esteem. Hence, the development of persons in Africa must not necessarily be for the purpose of conversion. It should not be geared toward Christians alone but to all and sundry. This is a true fulfillment of the divine injunction which says 'go ye into the nations and teach...'³²
2. Another aim of this development of the Church in Africa is purely for the formation of good citizens, who would be viable and useful to the society. For it enumerates clearly the fact that a good human formation which leads to good citizenry, will in turn produce good Christians.
3. The development of humanity in the Church in Africa is thus carried out for the purpose of creating a level playing field for both the persons in Africa and those from the rest of the world. This forms the bases for total intellectual

nourishment that the Church has always hoped and aspired for.

4. It also aids in making out of Africans, a balanced personality. We notice this balance of socialism and spirituality in the lived experience of the African fathers of the Church, African martyrs and saints. Their holistic approach to life earned them their place in the Church.

5. The goal of every human being is to attain God's kingdom, thus, the Church uses this medium of development to help Africans to long tirelessly for that kingdom where happiness joy and peace would reign forever.³³ This viewpoint was masterly captured by St Augustine who claimed that God created us for Himself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in the Lord.

6. Another goal that could be drawn from the Church's developmental endeavour is the plea to remedy the iniquitous aspect of African history where Europeans subjected them to slavery and apartheid. This revisit seems apt because many Africans have looked upon themselves as inferior to the other races.

THE PROSPECTS OF HOLISTIC HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Today, Africa has met with progress which is taking it to the new forms of life made available through scientific technology. For this reason, while values, which have been handed down ought to be respected as a cultural legacy, there is no less a duty to give them new meaning and new expression. In the face of modern civilization however, the Church views with great respect the moral and religious values of the African traditions, not only because of its meaning, but also because it sees them as providential bases for spreading the gospel message and beginning the establishment of the new society in Christ.

Peaceful development and stability of institutions are prerequisites for progress in Africa today, so that all citizens may participate actively in building up the new society. This cooperation is now being increased by social planning, the study and implementation, which are the noble task of present day Church in Africa. Through the social and economic development which transcends the old and narrow tribal limits, a civic sense is being fostered by all. Among the obstacles that impede the maximum realization of human development, especially, in Africa, is racial discrimination. Thus the Second Vatican Council loudly and explicitly condemned racism in its various forms as being an offence to human dignity. We draw attention also to the fact that Catholic Bishops, especially, in Africa have not failed, as recent events have revealed, to cry out where necessary, in the defence of violated rights.³⁴

Furthermore, the forces of an expanding economy have brought about in Africa, an increasing and necessary interdependence between different ethnic groups, which indicates that one group cannot progress without the aid of the others. This need for general cooperation is a summon to lay the spectre of mutual fear and to examine ways, and promote mutual understanding and sincere cooperation for the common good. More so, the inner transformation of the human person, in his/her being progressively configured to Christ, is the necessary prerequisite for a real transformation of his/her relationship with others. "It is necessary then, to appeal to the spiritual and moral capacities of the human person and to the permanent need for his/her inner conversion, so as to obtain social changes that will really be of benefit to him/her."³⁵

With its social doctrine, the Church seeks to proclaim the gospel and make it present in the complex network of social relations. It is not simply a matter of

reaching out to the human person in the society, but of enriching and permeating society itself with the gospel.³⁶ For the Church therefore, tending to the needs of the human being means that it also involves the society in its missionary and salvific work. The way people live together in society often determines the quality of life and consequently the conditions in which people understand themselves and make decisions concerning themselves. For this reason, the Church in Africa is not indifferent to what is decided, brought about or experienced in the society. She is attentive to the moral quality, which are the authentically human and humanizing aspects of social life. The society with its politics, economy, labour, law, culture, is not simply a secular and worldly reality, and, therefore, alien to the message and economy of salvation. Society in fact, with all that is accomplished within it, has the human person as its primary concern.

Thus, the movement towards the identification and proclamation of human rights is one of the most significant attempts of the Church in Africa to respond effectively to the inescapable demands of human dignity.³⁷ We must acknowledge that the prospects of achieving holistic human development, is not an easy task, because there are many economic, social, political and even religious obstacles. However, with a spirit of resoluteness, we are optimistic that everyone will find it advantageous to bring to fruition the message of charity in the gospel, creating an atmosphere of understanding and dialogue instead of mistrust and fear, thus laying a lasting social foundation for the future of our continent and the world at large.

CONCLUSION

Being aware that its essentially religious mission includes the defence and promotion of human rights, the Church in Africa develops this pastoral commitment in a dual dimension. This is exercised in the proclamation of the Christian foundations of human rights, and in the denunciation of these rights. For greater effectiveness, this commitment is open to ecumenical cooperation, to dialogue with other religions, to make appropriate contacts with other organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, at the continental and inter-continental levels.³⁸

The primacy attributed to technology and scientific research as ends in themselves, the emphasis on appearance, the quest for image, communication techniques; all of these phenomena must be understood in their cultural context and placed in relation to the central issue of the human person, of integral human growth, of the human capacity to communicate and relate with other people, and of the constant human search for an answer to the great question that cuts across life.³⁹ Nevertheless, the Church trusts in the help of the Lord and His Spirit who is the surest guarantee for respecting justice and human rights, and for contributing to peace.

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