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A Historical Overview of the Social Teachings of the Church: Problems, Prospects and Possibilities for Adaptation in the Church in Nigeria

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Chapter One

A Historical Overview of the Social Teachings of the Church: Problems, Prospects and Possibilities for Adaptation in the Church in Nigeria

Introduction:

The basic summary of this paper shall show that if we have faith, then we must be concerned for justice; once justice is secured, we have laid the necessary foundation for the effective expression of Christian love. Our submission is that a "Living faith" leads directly to a "loving action" in the transformation of the world. Such a world view is to be found in the great wisdom embedded in Catholic Social Teachings (Doctrine), a great source of light and of faith. It has been said and we know it as capable of changing the evil intentions of man, and of retranslating the "structural" and "personal" evil abilities of mankind through the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ into an "adumbratio" (a foreshadow) of the "already" but "not yet" understanding of the kingdom of God. Under this light, the human person has a dignity and right. Society has order. Justice, peace and love are not illusions or pet talk. Freedom and responsibility have a meaning. Life has a goal.

Guidelines of Catholic Soical Teachings.

In 1988, the Vatican Congregation for Catholic Education produced the GUIDELINES FOR THE STUDY AND TEACHING OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL DOCTRINE IN THE FORMATION OF PRIESTS." This guideline became necessary due to the emerging needs of conciliar renewal since 1965 and the need for the Church to bridge the frightening gap between FAITH and JUSTICE: the PULPIT and REAL LIFE; PRAYER and ACTION.

The guideline itself, divided into 6 chapters deals in each chapter with

(a) The nature of social doctrine;

(b) Historical dimension of social doctrine;

(c) Permanent principles and values;

(d) Criteria for judgement;

(e) Directives for Social action and

(f) Formation.

This is not the proper arena to go in detail on the guidelines.

Much of what is necessary for background information can be read up from the original document. I have introduced this latest guideline because it in essence deals with the topic I have been assigned to deliver a lecture upon during this annual academic — and — pastoral gathering of theologians, priests, social ethicists and concerned professionals which you are. My task is to present a lecture bordering on the history, problems, prospects, and possibilities for adaptation of the Church's Social Teachings in Nigeria. This topic assumes more interest for me as I have just arrived into Nigeria from a Scientific — Pastoral tour of Europe where for the past 6 weeks, I was attending, participating and delivering lectures in many countries and at the various organized centenary celebrations of the first Social Encyclical "Rerum Novarum" — written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891.

Commemoration of Rerum Novarum - Our Participation:

This attendance and participation took place at the Institute for Christian Social Sciences of the University of Munster, Germany where over 170 social ethicists, professors, professionals and academics from over 50 Universities and social centres within Europe deliberated on Catholic Social Teachings from a worldwide perspective. I was privileged to represent AFRICA and to present a lecture on the topic: "Catholic Social Teachings and the Third World". Thereafter, I was guest of the city of Osnabruck Germany and the university there, where under the banner of the "Osnabrucker Friedensgesprache", the issues of development, poverty, Islamic fundamentalism and religious warfare in Africa among others formed the focus for enlightenment, discussion and participatory reflection urging remedial and immediate pastoral action.

From 7th to 10th March 1991, under the auspices and invitation of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, in the Vatican City, several invited personalities and institutions convocated at the pontifical urban university,

Rome to share a work and reflection pilgrimage "to commemorate the centenary of Rerum Novarum" with the broad theme:

"THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHRISTIAN IN A WORLD OF GLOBAL CHANGE."

This later forum paid a courtesy call and shared audience with the Holy Father Pope John Paul II at his Vatican residence on 9th March. It was a thrilling experience as the Holy Father used the opportunity to reiterate the message of the guidelines mentioned above: "Today social Doctrine is called upon with increasing greater urgency to make its own specific contribution to evangelization, to dialogue with the world; to the Christian interpretation of reality; and to the guidelines for pastoral action in order to enlighten the various initiatives on the temporal plane with sound principles. Indeed, economic, social, political and cultural structures are experiencing profound and rapid transformations which put the very future of human society at stake and thus they need a sure orientation. It is a matter of promoting real social progress which, in order to effectively ensure the common good of all men, requires a just organization of these structures. If this is not done, there will be a return of great multitudes toward that situation of a "quasi — servile - Yoke" which Leo XIII Spoke about in "Rerum Novarum". (John Paul II; Address at audience 9.5.91.

For the study of Catholic Social Teachings in the Formation of Priests; (guidelines, Rome 1988 1:2; cf. Acta Leonis XIII (1891), page 90). Who would question the bold prophecy and clear language of this text? It is thus obvious, that the "grave drama" of the contemporary world caused by the numerous threats that often accompany human progress, cannot leave anyone indifferent. There is urgent and continued need for "the irreplaceable evangelising presence of the Church in the complex world of temporal realities which condition the destiny of mankind This "evangelising presence" led us to convocate in Harare, Zimbabwe a year earlier as AFRICAN HUMAN RIGHTS seekers. That meeting/seminar attended by many countries opened our eyes to the joys and sorrows of the continent of Africa. We have had several other opportunities to exchange ideas and reflect jointly on these issues bordering on the Social Teachings. Here in Enugu, the entire African continent and beyond responded to an invitation by Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) to join an inter-continental Symposium under the topic: "Catholic Social Teachings en-route in Africa."

The fruit of that rich Symposium has already appeared as book and shows the broad theme, desire, relevance, depth and extent which these social teachings bear upon and can bear on the continent of Africa, especially in helping analyse and change the situation, the attitude of people with an urge-for-orthopraxis. In the next few weeks, we shall be guests of the Episcopacy of the Austrian Catholic World to share their reflections and to con- tribute our own views on the Social Doctrine of the Church at a seminar to be organized by the Theological Faculty of the University of Vienna under the auspices of the Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace of the Austrian Bishops' Conference. The broad theme is: Catholic Social Teachings on a world-wide perspective. It is therefore my pleasure and joy, after the foregoing experiences, to ruminate with you on our topic for this seminar here at Eke, elucidating on the theoretical aspects of the problem and considering the historical and practical dimensions of Catholic Social Teachings.

The Competence and Limitations of the Church:

It is thus a heritage which must be preserved with fidelity and developed by responding gradually to the new emerging needs of human co-existence. We are very conscious of the competence and limitations of the Church in this field and pretence must not be made to provide a solution to the entire dramatic situation of modern world. In fact, the Church proposes no alternative ideology, no social, political or economic system. This is not the level of its action nor its competence.

On the other hand, the Church can and must, in "the light of the gospel" provide the principles and necessary guidelines for the correct organization of social life for the dignity of the human person and for the common good. "Its proper role is to interpret the moral value of social activities and to offer social guidelines which are in conformity with the Gospel's view of Human Dignity" (Carrier, H.S.J. The social doctrine of the Church revisited Vatican City, publ. by Institia et Pax, Rome, p. 12 cf. also JP. H. SRS.1 (1987).

During the 1960's and 1970's a debate took place in some Catholic circles about the social doctrine of the Church, its meaning, its present relevance and even its existence. This "doctrine" for some critics, represented nothing more than an ideological option in front of more operational ideologies such as socialism and communism. Others viewed the social teaching of the Church as a compendium of Papal Encyclicals, whose literal quotation

appeared of little help for understanding the role of the Church in modern societies.

Pope John Paul II had reason to consider these critics seriously for he wrote:

"*The Church's Social doctrine is not a 'third way' between liberal capitalism and marxist collectivism, nor even a possible alternative to other solutions less radically opposed to one another: rather it constitutes a category of its own. Nor is it an ideology, but rather the accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence, in society and in the international order, in the light of faith and of the Church's tradition. Its main aim is to interprets these realities, determining their conformity with or divergence from the lines of the Gospel teaching on man and his vocation, a vocation which is at once earthly and transcendent; its aim is thus to guide Christian behaviour. It therefore, belongs to the field, not of ideology, but of theology and particularly of moral theology*" (John Paul II; Solicitudo rei Socialis; 1988, No.41).

What is Catholic Social Teaching?

"The Church has formulated particularly over the past 100 years, and through the efforts of a very well-informed body of priests and laymen, a social doctrine which points out with clarity the sure way to social reconstruction. The principles she gives are of universal application, for they take human nature into account and the varying conditions in which man's life is involved.
They also take into account the principal characteristics of contemporary society and are acceptable to all" — POPE JOHN XXIII (Mater et Magistra, No. 220).

"This teaching rests on one basic principle: individual human beings are the foundation, the cause and the end of every social institution. That is necessarily so for men are by nature social beings. This fact must be recognised, as also the fact that they are raised in the plan of providence to an order of reality which is above nature" (Jn. XXIII MM (219).

"Rerum Novarum" written in 1891 has been considered as the birthday of Catholic Social Teachings. The document which spoke out against the inhuman conditions which were the normal plight of working people in industrial societies recognized the 3 key factors underlying a balanced economic life, namely workers; productive capital (property) and the state. The document insisted that their Just and equitable inter-relationship forms

the principle which guides the formation for a humane economic and social order.

A hundred years is not a long time in the life of a Church which has lived through near two thousand years. Yet, the hundred years since Pope Leo XIII issued the first social encyclical letter "Rerum Novarum" (The workers charter), discussing social and economic changes in 1891 have probably seen more changes in the world and in the Church than any previous century. 1891 to 1991, saw the colonization by a few European countries of over 100 countries of the world including the whole of Africa (except Ethiopia), much of Asia and entire Latin
America.

The turbulence in world history and in the Church over the last 100 years saw the hydra — headed effects of human horrendous tragedy expressed in 2 world wars (1914—1917) and (1939—1945). The number of the dead could never be known. These wars were followed by the cold war period (1950—1985); the rise, spread and fall of Communism; the growth of atheism; the incredible pest of hunger in the midst of plenty; the escalation of nuclear armaments; unbriddled selfishness and materialism; the movements of migrant peoples; the unquantifiable destruction of moral values and culture; All these happenings proved the incredible but latent ability of the human mind to conceive and to do evil. What have historians not written down? For us therefore who are part of this century it has been a most frightening era.

That the Church should have a social teaching is nowadays taken for granted. Entire Christian history in some way did always have one. In Romans 13:1—7, St. Paul reflected upon the relationship between Christians and the State. St. Augustine far back in the 4th Century considered the just war theory. The ownership of property always gained the attention of the early Church Fathers (Charles Avila, Ownership, early Christian teaching, London. Sheed and ward, W.Y. Orbis 1983). John T. Novaran in his book: (The Scholastic analysis of Usury, 1975) has discussed in detail the medieval school men and their views on the propriety of charging interest on loans. Further instances ~ abound. In the sixteenth century, Bartolome de las Casas and Francisco Vitoria, both of them Spanish Dominicans, wrote vigorously about the problems of colonisation and the treatment given to indigenous peoples in territories newly conquered by Spain. The entire Old Testament, the New Testament, the early

Church till our day has always had reason to reflect on social realities from the light of Faith. In 1864, Wilhelm Von Ketteler, Bishop of Mainz, Germany produced a Book: "The worker question and Christianity "and called for a just solution to the problems of society. All through 2000 years of Christendom, the church had gained experience of society and was constantly developing a Social Conscience, Social Teaching and moral criteria. It should have come as no surprise, therefore, when the Catholic Church, in the person of the Bishop of Rome, the Pope, began to speak out on social issues. Yet it did. Rerum Novarum produced shock waves throughout Europe and became a land- mark in the history of Christian Social principles. Not only has it proved to be the first in a long series, many later documents were composed explicitly to commemorate 'its publication, as some of their titles bear witness. Catholic "Social doctrine" or "Social Teachings" (the two terms are interchageably used, doctrine' referring to the theoretical aspect of the problems, "teaching' to the historical and practical aspects) constitutes a "rich heritage" which the Church has progressively drawn from biblical insights, the tradition of the early Fathers; Scholastic philosophy; theological reflection and the contemporary experience of the people of God struggling to live out faith in justice. (Ref. Schulteis, M + Henriot P., our best kept secret; The rich heritage of Catholic Social Teachings; CAFOD England. 1988, p.4).

Continuity and Identity:

The documents are systematic and contain reference formular that only could be peculiar to the unity and continuity of the tradition known to be Catholic, universal apostolic and Holy. The Popes hardly contradict one another. One truth is extended into another: one would be struck also, going through the various social Encyclicals (and there are over 10 of such now) to discover the tone, unity and variety of subject matter discussed as an organic whole. The Fathers of the Church maintain a common anthropological, ethical, theological and contextual view of man and history. Whether the topic of the Social Question be on the Family, property, economics, politics, culture, ecology, technology, capital, labour, armament, peace, Justice, Women, International trade, Aid, Development, Third World, Communism, poverty, war and Other global issues, the popes always had reason to recourse to earlier documents and to expand upon them. If there are changes in tone, this applies more or less to the distinctive character and personality of the Pope who is writing, Emphasis on a topic depends on the contextual historical reality of the place and time. Generally however, attempt has been made to look at the social question from a more global perspective.

In the words of Schulties and Henriot: "The body of Catholic Social Teaching is by no means a fixed set of tightly developed doctrine. Rather, it is a collection of key themes which have evolved in response to the challenges of the day. Rooted in the biblical orientations and reflections on Christian tradition, the social teaching shows a lively evolution marked by shifts both in attitude and methodology. What informs the teaching of John Paul II today differs from what informed the teaching of Leo XIII almost a century ago even though both ground their message in the same faith in the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. This means that the approach taken in the Church's social teaching has been undergoing some significant shifting, to which we should pay attention in order to appreciate its contemporary relevance." (op. cit; p. 11).

With the second Vatican council, a new period in the life of the Church was introduced emphasising that "it is the task of the Church-to hear, distinguish and interpret the many voices of the age" (Gs. 44).

A Shift in Attitude and Method in Catholic Social Teachings:

There has thus arisen a shift in attitude by the Church's central administration since the 2nd Vat. Council especially in matters affecting:-

(a) Political apathy:

(b) Responsibility for the world by a commitment to the humanisation of life;

(c) The Search and work for more Justice in the world which is now "a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel";

(d) Preferential option for the poor, the weak and the under privileged of this world.

Besides this shift in attitude, there has also been a shift in methodology of the Church's social Teachings, namely:

(a) The document *Lumen Gentium* of 1964 which emphasized the idea of church as "the people of God" corresponding to the original biblical Image but with consequences on our eccelesiological understanding, leading the church from a passive to a more active role in history.

(b) The document "Gaudium et Spes", No.4 of 1965 introduced a new method of "doing" theology by reading the "signs of the times" and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel." Theology thus was to move beyond the deductive and speculative levels to a historical and contextual level where God is manifested in an on-going revelation as the true God of history.

In the words of Pope John XXIII in Mater et Magistra there are 3 stages which should 'normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into action. "First one reviews the concrete situation;

Secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; Thirdly one decides what in the circumstances are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act." (n. 236).

(c) The methodology also implied a shift from the deductive to the inductive and historical principles implying a movement away from a rigidly interpreted, absolute definition of natural law ethic to a sincere search for the objectively true, which is seen also to be the objectively human.

"We must reaffirm most strongly that this Catholic Social Doctrine is an integral part of the Christian conception of life" (Jn. XXIII MM, 1. 222).

(d) The shift in methodology has moved from reason to the primacy of love. Reason is not discarded, no, not at all, but it is subjected to love which in this context has three meanings namely: "First love is at the heart of the virtue of justice and brings the actions of justice to their fullest potential, meaning and life. Second, love is the motivation to act on behalf of justice. Thirdly, the fundamental option of love, which the heart makes for God as the basis of our being produces moral action." (Op. Cit. p. 13).

(e) Finally, the new methodology in Catholic Social Teachings shows a praxis — orientation. Action speaks louder than words. It is as such an orientation to pastoral planning and action.

"The earlier methodology often led to social idealism. It isolated reason from a relationship of dialogue with experience, commitment and action. But from the praxis side, the starting point of pastoral and social reflection is people in their struggle, in their need and in their hopes. Praxis thus becomes a true force for understanding and developing all authentic social teachings." (p. 13) What this in effect means is that in the new methodology, Praxis is the action

that comes out of reflection, leading back to reflection and is the end result of an option which one makes in struggle for justice.

To put it in a direct way, acting correctly (orthopraxis) completes and complements believing correctly (orthodoxy).

Pope John XXIII in Mater et Magistra made this point very clear: "It is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church's social doctrine, the light of which is truth, justice its objective, and love its driving force" (n. 226, mater et magistra, Pope John XXIII), continuing on this matter, John XXIII adds: a purely theoretical instruction in man's social and economic obligations is inadequate. People must be shown ways in which they can properly fulfil these obligations," (No.230).

Looking back over nearly a century it is difficult to understand, not why Rerum Novarum was published at all, but why it had not been published much earlier. Nearly 50 years separated its appearance from the publication by Karl Marx of the communist manifesto in 1848. Yet when Rerum Novarum appeared the document thus because the Magna Charta for Catholic Social Teachings. In effect, Catholic Social Teachings is a developed body of teaching, guidelines, principles and applications developed in a rich fashion, especially during the past 100 years since 1891 providing a compelling challenge for Christian life and practical orientation.

Nature of Social Doctrine:

In this section, it is important to focus on the nature of social doctrine, outlining its constitutive elements, its autonomy, theological nature, continuity and development. In the guidelines for the study and Teaching of the Church's Social doctrine in the formation of Priests, released by the Vatican in 1988, these topics are treated in detail. In this lecture effort is made only at summary presentation to afford the necessary background towards a better understanding and appreciation of the discussion. Detailed study could be undertaken from the original sources.

1) Constitutive Elements:

On the constitutive elements and nature of social doctrine, "the Social Teaching of the Church draws its origin from the encounter of the evangelical message and its ethical requirements with the problems that arise

in the life of society. The needs that emerge from this encounter become the subject of moral reflection which matures in the Church through scientific research, but also through the experience of the Christian Community which must measure itself everyday against the various situations of misery and, above all, with the problems created by the appearance and development of the phenomenon of industrialization and of the socio-economic systems related to it.

This doctrine is formed through the use of theology and philosophy which give it foundation, and to the human and social sciences which complete it. It is projected into the ethical aspects of life, without neglecting the technical aspects of the problems, in order to judge them with more criteria. By basing itself "on principles which are always valid", it implies "contingent judgements" since it develops in relation to the changeable circumstances of history, and is directed essentially, toward "Christian action or practice." (guidelines, op. cit, p.9-10).

2) Autonomy — Social Doctrine:

The autonomy of social doctrine has since its inception in the 19th century taken place. Its sources, its foundation and object, its subject and content, its end and methods have helped to make Catholic Social Teachings an autonomous subject within Theology, located near the complex field of the science of moral theology and social morality. It is thus in both theory and practice a distinct discipline (J P ll: Laborem Exercens (4.9.81), n. 3, AAS 80 (1988) P. 57). "Thus it can be stated that social doctrine has an identity of its own with a well— defined theological profile" (guidelines op. cit. p. 10)

3) Sources, Foundation and Primary Object of CST:

The Sources of Social doctrine are sacred Scripture, the teaching of the Fathers and great theologians of the Church and the Magisterium itself. Its foundation and primary object are the dignity of the human person with its inalienable rights which form the nucleus of the "truth about men." (JP. 11, Allocution Esta Hora to the Third General Conference of the Latin American Bishops in Puebla, Jan. 28, 1979, Part I, n. 9=Ref. AAS. 71, 1979, 1979. P.195). This dignity of the human person and the complex problems it poses for man in society we call the "Social Question."

4) Subject of Social Doctrine:

The subject of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) is the whole Christian Community in harmony with, and under the guidance of its legitimate pastors, of whom lay persons, with their Christian experience, are active collaborators. Thus, the subject begins with man in his total societal humanity.

5) Content of Social Doctrine:

The whole content of social doctrine: in summarizing the view about man, humanity and society, reflects the whole man, Social man, as particular subject and fundamental reality of Christian anthropology. (Ref. guidelines, op. cit, p. 10—11, Paul VI, Populorum Progressio, March 26, 1967, No.13, AAS. 59 (1967) p.263).

6) Theological Nature of Social Doctrine:

The theological nature of Catholic Social Teachings was already pronounced by Pope John XXIII where in Mater et Magistra he wrote: "this Social doctrine is an integral part of the Christian conception of life" (John XXIII, MM N222 AAS, 53, 1961, page 453).

In other words, Social doctrine has a highly developed theological character as it oscillates between the Gospel and real life and unites both as Paul VI rightly recognizes "in strong bonds of an anthropological, theological and spiritual nature such that charity, justice and peace are inseparable in Christian promotion of the human person (Paul VI Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Nuntiandi (Dec, 8, 1975, nn. 29, 31 (Ref. AAS 68, 1976 PP. 25—26). This theological nature concurs with the Church's three-fold task in every age, situation and society, namely,

(a) announcement of the truth about human dignity and rights,

(b) denouncement of unjust situations,

(c) contribution to positive changes in society and real human progress (Ref. Vatican Council II, Gaudium et Spes, nn. 12ff, Ref. also John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, n. 1).

7) Three—fold dimension of Social doctrine:

Thus, as a science of revelation (theology), of act (philosophy) and of practice (humanities), the social doctrine of the Church envelopes a three-fold dimension which at the same time make up its structure, namely: theoretical, historical and practical. These three dimensions are interrelated and one would also add inseparable. (Ref. guidelines, Op. Cit, p. 11 and 12).

8) Continuity of Social Doctrine:

The term continuity is used to express the relationship between the documents, even if each one responds in a specific way to the problems of its times. In spite of differences in fomulation, methodological procedure and styles, the documents do not compromise the substantial identity and unity of its teachings (guidelines p. 16)

Due to its character of mediation between the Gospel and concrete social and human realities the need for esp responsive updatement to new world situations is accepted. (Paul VI. Evangelii Nuntiandi, p. 29).

The initial object of this doctrine was the so-called "Social Question," or the whole series of socio—economic problems which arose in certain areas of the European and American world subsequent to the "industrial Revolution." Today, the "Social Question" is no longer limited to particular geographic areas. It has a world—wide dimension (Paul VI Populorum Progression) and includes many aspects, including political ones, linked to the relationship between classes and the transformation of society which has already taken place and is still in progress. In any case, "Social Question" and "Social doctrine" are co—related terms. Thus, its continuity and development from Leo XIII in 1891 to John Paul II in 1991 shows that social doctrine preserves a substantial identity as a doctrinal "Corpus" with great coherency attentive to evolving situations and is not reducable to a closed system.

As an example, the "poor" which we refer to frequently are not the "proletarians" of Leo XIII in Rerum Novarum, nor the unemployed in Pius XI's Quadragesimo Anno. Today, the poor have emerged as an international, inter-cultural and inter-religious "club", largely great and found everywhere. They are in those rich Western and American Societies who until now are exclusively enjoying the goods of the earth with political freedom, societal liberalism and economic security.

They are also found in unquantifiable numbers in those parts of the Southern globe now etiquetted as Third World. In such areas, poverty has become systematized and almost Institutionalised. They are also found in the new emerging ex—communist countries where freedom, dignity and humanity until now were "foreign" concepts.

Futhermore, the problems of the "poor" no longer concerns only the unjust differences between classes, but today encompasses enormous imbalances between the so called rich and poor nations.

9) Permanent principles and fundamental values:

Let me state from the start that these principles have not been formulated by the Church organically in one single document, but are found throughout the entire span of the historical evolution of her social doctrine.

These principles are not complete, but simply indicate the important ones, such as the dignity of the human person, human rights, person society relationship, the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, human structures and community of persons, the universal purpose of created things, etc.

a) Human Person:

The human person is a creature of God, made in His image and elevated to a supernatural destiny transcending earthly life. Man therefore as an intelligent and free being, subject of rights and of duties, "is the primary principle and, one can say, the heart and soul of the social teaching of the Church" (Vatican II, G5 n.17).

Continuing, the church Fathers hold that "according to the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, all things on earth should be related to man as their centre and crown" (G5 n.12)

No wonder, the congregation for the doctrine of the Faith in "Instruction Libertatis Conscientia": on the Christian freedom and liberation of March 22, 1986 (AAS 79, 1987, p.586) say: "The Church will never tire but will insist on the dignity of persons, against all slavery, exploitation and manipulation perpetrated to the harm of people, not only into the field at politics and economics, but also in the cultural ideological and medical fields.

b) Human Rights:

Christ showed that he was always attentive to the needs of people, especially, the poorest. Human rights derive by an intrinsic logic from the dignity of the human person. It is thus the challenge and mission of the Church to promote and fight for these rights whenever the evil head of human degradation raises its arm.

c) Relationship between person and Society:

The human person is a social being by its nature — that is by its innate need and its co-natural inclination to communicate with others .This human sociality is the basis of all forms of society and of the ethical requirements which are inscribed in it. Man is not sufficient in himself to attain his full development, he needs others and society. Igbo culture solved this dilemma in existential wisdom by maintaining as J.S. Mbiti Once formulated it: "I am because we are, and since we are, I am."

d) The Common Good:

The common good is a fundamental value governing social life. John XXIII defines the common good as "all those Social conditions which favour the full development of human personality" (MM, AAS 53, 1961, P. 417; Pius XII Christimas message con sempre nuova, Dec. 24 1942, AAS 35, 1943, P. 13). Philosophically speaking, the "common good" is higher than private interests although it is in- separable from the good of human person. It commits Public authorities to recognise, respect, regulate, protect and promote human rights and faciliate the fulfilment of the respective duties. Infact, public authorities and the state itself exist to fulfil the demands of the common good. The Church considers the common good as a value in the service and organization of social life and of the new order of human existence guidelines, P.40) and therefore stresses its human meaning and ability to animate social structures in their globality and in their particular sectors. The Church encourages indepth transformations according to the criterion of social justice.

e) Solidarity and Subsidiarity:

Pope John Paul II in his recent Encyclical letter Solicitudo rei socialis has particularly underlined the importance of the principle of solidarity, identifying it as a human and Christian virtue (J.P II SRS nn. 39-40). According

to the principle of solidarity, each person, as a member of society, is indissolubly linked to the destiny of society itself and, by dint of the Gospel, to the destiny of all men's salvation. (Guidelines, p. 40).

"The ethical demands of this principle require all men, groups and local communities, associations and organizations, nations and continents to participate in the management of all the activities of economic, political and cultural life while overcoming any purely individualistic conception" (Vat II, GS nn. 30-32; John Paul II. Discourse Je desire to the 68th session of the International Labour Conference (ILO) United Nations, June 15 1982; AAS 74, 1982 pg. 992ff). On the other hand a very important principle governing social life is subsidiarity which is to be considered as the complement of solidarity.

The principle of subsidiarity maintains that, the state or any other authority should not prevent or take over responsibility from a person, group, or community or the other former levels of action where these have the competence and ability to carry out such activities and achieve expected results on their own level of competence. (Pius XI, Quadragesimo Anno, May 15 1931, AAS, 23, p. 203).

Subsidiarity principle protects the human person, local communities and intermediary bodies from the danger of losing their legitimate autonomy and competence.

The Church fights for subsidiarity in so far as this principle by reason of man's dignity, respect for what is most human in the organization of social life and the safe—guarding of the rights of peoples in relations between individual societies and universal society, (guidelines, op. cit; P. 41; John XXIII Pacem in Terris, April 11, 1963, AAS, pg. 294; John Paul II, Laborem Exercens, AAS,76, p.616).

f) Human Structures and Communities of Persons:

In modern day societies, there is the danger caused by technical and mechanistic concept of life that tends to reduce man as a 'cog in the wheel' of the state. Such structural threats do not leave room for the development of a true humanism. In many nations the state is transformed into a huge, administrative machine which invades all areas of life and drags man into a state of fear and anxiety causing his depersonalization, threatening his dignity as person, reducing his personal and social freedom among others.

The Church teaches (John XXIII, MM, AAS, P. 46) that associations, structures, private corporations, public and state apparatus are legitimate in so far as they reserve proper space for the person and encourage the growth of collaboration under the common good. Organs of State and human structures approach persons and invite them to participate in the common tasks of promoting the economy, forming labour or capital unions and creating intermediate bodies (J.P. II, LEN. 14), good implementation of these principles relating to person and structures enables the overcoming of all tensions between socialisation and personalisation.

g) The Universal Purpose of Created goods:

All through, the life of Christ and the witness of his followers on earth has shown that there is a universal purpose for all created goods, namely that all men and women share in them.

There is enough wealth for everybody but the distribution stumbles on unquantifiable greed, ignorance and egotism. The Church's social teachings affirms with this "characteristic principle of Christian Social Concern" (J P II SRS, n. 42) that the goods of the earth are for the use of everyone in order to satisfy their right to a life consonant with the dignity of the person and the needs of the family. The Vatican Council Fathers framed it this way: "In fact, God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people. Thus, as all men follow justice and unite in charity, created goods should abound for them on a reasonable basis." (Vat II GS, n. 69).

It follows that the right to private property, natural, valid and necessary in itself is not absolute and must be restricted within the limits imposed by its social function. John Paul II in laborem Exercens subordinates the unbridled claims to right of private property where unjust situations exist under the universal rights to property by all persons: "Christian tradition has never upheld this right to private property as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader contest of the right common to all to use the goods of the whole creations, the right to private property is subordinated to the right to common use, to the fact that goods are meant for everyone" (J P II LE, n. 14)

Finally Catholic Social Teachings shows that the values inherent in the dignity of the human person when lived show the sure path, not only a personal perfection, but also for putting a true humanism and a new social existence into practice. These values include truth, freedom, justice, solidarity, peace

and charity, which we call Christian love, extending to friends and enemies alike and seeing entire humanity as a global unity of brothers and sisters.

SECTION II

(b) Historical Overview of the various, Social Encyclicals:

1) Rerum Novarum, Encyclical letter of Pope Leo XIII, May 15, 1891; Acta Leonis XIII Pope (1891).

Historical Note:

Industrial capital in Europe and America led to terrible exploitation and poverty of the working classes at the end of the 19th Century. The document was inspired by the work of the
Freibourg Union, a Catholic Social Action Movement in Germany and by requests from the Hierarchy in England, Ireland and the USA.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Care for the poor;
- Rights of Workers;
- Rejection of Socialism as a solution;
- Role of Private Property;
- Duties of workers and employers;
- Return to Christian Morals;
- Role of public authority/Church, State, Association).

PIUS XI

2) Quadragesimo Anno, Encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI, May 15, 1931; AAS 23 (1931).

Historical Note:

Commemorates the 10th Anniversary of Rerum Novarum. Pius wrote at a time of world - wide economic and social depression which eventually led to the Second World War. He criticized abuses of both capitalism and socialism and tried to update Catholic Teachings to reflect the changed conditions. He broadened the concerns of the Church for the poor and criticized structures of oppression.

Major Areas of Concern:
- Overall view of industrial society and
- Role of Public authority productions;
- Stressed the need for both Capital and labour to promote the economy;
- Subsidiarity Principle;
- Sets conditions for reestablishing the social order;
- Calls for freedom of Association and Action;
- Heightens the role of the Church;
- Condemns Capitalism and Socialism;
- Justice and Social Order.

3) PIUS XII

- Discourse on The Solemnity of Pentecost for the 50th Anniversary of Rerum Novarum (June 1,
1914), AAS 33 (1941) pg. 195.
- Christmas Radio Message: on Peace and the International Order of 1939, 1940, 1950, 1955;
- On Democracy, 1944;
- Discourse on the dangers of the technological conception of social life and on the economic
enterprise and order of June 3, 1950 and September 9, 1956.

4) JOHN XXIII

Mater et Magistra, Encyclical letter of Pope John XXIII, 15 May 1961; AAS 53 (1961).

Historical Note:

Pope John XXIII who became Pope in 1959 issued this Encyclical popularly called "Christianity and Social Progress" to Commemorate the 70th anniversary of Rerum Novarum and in response to the severe imbalances between the rich and the poor peoples of the world. Pope John "internationalises" Catholic Social Teachings by treating for the first time, the situation of underdeveloped countries. He articulates the role of the Laity in knowledge and spread of the Catholic Social Teachings world-wide.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Updating knowledge of existing documents;

- Just remuneration;
- Denounces inequalities;
- Subsidiarity;
- Denounces under-development and careless over-population;
- Agriculture;
- Economic Development;
- Role of the Church;
- Catholic Social Teachings;
- International Cooperation;
- Socialisation.

JOHN XXIII

5) Pacem in terris, Encyclical letter of John XXIII, 1963.

Historical Note:

Written during the start of the cold war (East-West) and 1st year of Vatican II. Addressed to all "people of goodwill" under the title peace on Earth. Issued shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the erection of the Berlin Wall. Highlights the dangers and threat of nuclear warfare. A document on legal Ethics, it develops a philosophy of Rights - international co-existence. Peace on earth can be established only if the social order set down by God is fully observed. Relying on reason and the natural law tradition, Pope John sketches a list of ought and ought not for everybody.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Rights and duties;
- Role of Public Authorities;
- Common good;
- Christian world order;
- International Relations;
- Disarmament.

Vatican Council II

6) Pastoral Constitution: Gaudium et Spes, 1965:

Historical Note:

The overwhelmining majority of the world's bishops have their opinions expressed in this document. The document, Gaudium et Spes, or the Church in the modern world is the most important documentation of the Church's social tradition. It announces the duty of the people of God to scrutinize "the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel." In doing so, it aggress that change characterizes the world. These technological, economic, social, cultural and political changes present ample opportunities for progress and for humanity. On the other hand, they can bring many worries and tragedies upon mankind. The work of the Church in the world of today is to promote human dignity and the common good.

Originally this document was not scheduled to be considered separately by the council. However, Cardinal Joseph Suenes of Belgium intervened at the end of the first session and urged for consideration of issues more "external" to the Church instead of only discussing the role of bishops or the use of vernacular in the liturgy. The document was produced by a commission and altered by a 2300 member deliberative assembly. In its final form, it represents a shift from the rigid traditionalism of the council's preparatory committee.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Human dignity;
- Common good;
- Economic, Political, Social life;
- Signs of the times;
- Public Responsibility;
- Respect for Families;
- Right of Culture;
- Justice and Development;
- Peace.

PAUL VI

7) Populorum Progressio. Encyclical letter of Pope Paul VI, 26th March. 1967 (AAS, 59 1967):

Historical Note:

The document enlarges the scope of Leo XIII's treatment of the struggle between rich and poor nations. Here, Paul VI speaks of the challenge of development. He explores the nature of poverty and the conflicts it produces. He articulates the role of the Church in the process of development and sketches a Christian vision of development. The Pope calls for urgent action which respects the universal purpose of created things. He advocates economic planning and aid to promote development.

The development of peoples is the first encyclical devoted entirely to the international issue of development. He stresses the economic sources of war and highlights economic justice as the basis for peace, more than any other before him. Paul criticizes the basic tenets of capitalism, including the profit motive and the unrestricted right to private property.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Human aspirations;
- Structural injustice;
- Church and development;
- New Humanism;
- Economic Planning;
- International Trade;
- Universal Charity;
- Development the new name for peace.

8) Octogesima Adveniens, apostolic letter of Paul VI, 1971

Historical Note:

Octogesima Adveniens which is translated into English as a call to action is an open apostolic letter directed by Pope Paul VI to Cardinal Maurice Roy in 1971 who was then the President of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace in the Vatican. This document commemorates the 80th

Anniversary of Rerum Novarum, breaking new grounds with its call to individual Christians and groups to respond to situations of Justice and take Political action as a gospel option when appropriate.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Inequalities in international relations;
- Problems of urbanisation and modern societies;
- Christian Communities responsible for the future of the world;
- Political activity;
- World-wide dimensions of Justice.

9) Iustitia in Mundo (Justice in the World) Synod of Bishops, 1971

Historical Note:

The cold war period witnessed many local wars in the world. The document Justice in the World reflects the deliberation in 1971 of the Bishops Synod gathered in Rome to reflect on "the mission of the people of God to further justice in the world", to fight for peace; to criticize political and economic oppression which lead to war.

This document illustrates the powerful influence of local bishops Conferences in Asia, Africa and Latin America to settle problems on their doorsteps. After the 2nd Vatican Council, the collegiality of the Bishops is once again reaffirmed. Justice issues are Gospel issues which express Christian love and must therefore be seriously taken. Structural sin is discussed and rejected. The role of the Church must be that of witnessing to the truth via a just lifestyle, doing education work and soliciting for international solidarity on Justice and Peace issues.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Justice demands related to the Gospel;
- Development as a Right;
- Relationship between Justice and Christian love;
- Education for Justice;
- International Action.

10) Evangelii Nuntiandi, apostolic exhortation of Paul VI, 1975
It is also translated as evangelization in the Modern World.

Historical Note:

Written to commemorate the 10th Anniversary of the closing of Vatican II. This Exhortation was requested for by the 1974 synod of Bishops which discussed the topic of Evangelization but did not produce a document on it. Paul VI is interested in new ways of proclaiming the Good News to reach modern 20th Century man. Preaching the Gospel is now the full duty of every single Christian. Combating injustices and preaching liberation constitute elements essential to evangelization of the secular world. The document emphasizes the need for both the Institutional Church and individual Christians to promote Justice and peace.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Evangelisers: Christ and Church:
- Personal Conversion:
- Church and Culture;
- Justice and Liberation;
- Universal and individual Churches;
- Gospel and non-Christians

11) Labarem Excecens, encyclical letter of John Paul II, May 15 1981, AAS 73 (1981) 577-647.

Historical Note:

John Paul's 3rd Encyclical was written on the Commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum and discusses Human Work exclusively. The assassination attempt by the Turk Ali Agca prevented this for publication on 15/05/81. After his return from hospital, John Paul revised this work which appreared officially on 14/09/81.

The document is written almost entirely by the Pope himself. It does not even refer to Rerum Novarum in a footnote. Rare mention is made in this encyclical to other papal or conciliar documents. This Encyclical marks a new and more concrete style for social teaching, discussing the priority of the workers over the suppliers of Capital, structural injustice; nationalization of

certain industries to be controlled truly by the people: supports the rights of workers and unions; rejects any modified form of capitalism or marxism, refines the Church's teachings on property which absolute right is subjected to the universal ownership of all goods.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Man the subject of work;
- Dignity of Human work;
- Capitalism and Socialism;
- Property;
- Unions and workers Rights;
- Employment.
- Spirituality of work

12) Solicitudo rei Socialis; encyclical letter of Pope *(The Church's Social Concern); John Paul II; 1987, CF. AAS 80 (7988) p. 573.*

Historical Note:

Twenty years after the Encyclical letter Popularum Progressio (on the progress of peoples) by Paul VI, John Paul II celebrates that encyclical with a strong statement updating the social Teachings of the Church on international development in this Encyclical titled "The Social Concerns of the Church." This document is devoted almost entirely to problems of development the chief hindrance to which John Paul suggests, is the divisions of the world into the two power blocs of East and West. It is difficult not to see in the frequent use of the term
"solidarity union to which John Paul gave considerable moral and financial encouragement.

The Pope emphasises the moral/ethical dimension of development: surverys the difficult state of poor countries; refers to obstacles to development which he calls "structures of sin" and picks up several Justice themes challenging the affluent world to action.

The Social Question can only be solved through-Justice, organization of work and a meaningful orientation to life and to the world.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Authentic development;
- North-South economic imbalances;
- East-West ideological confirmation;
- Solidarity and the Church's Social concern;
- Option for the poor;
- Structures of sin;
- Ecological concerns.

12. Centissimus annus; John Paul II, Encyclical letter 100 years after Rerum Novarum; 15 May, 1991.

Historical Note:

Written to commemorate the centenary of Rerum Novarum, the lst of the Social Encyclicals:

Following global concern, world-wide interest and expectations on the future of Catholic Social Teachings, JOHN Paul II uses the opportunity of the centenary celebrations to launch the Church's Social Teachings in the fore-front for socio-economic-ethical, political and cultural progress for entire humanity and a good model for all times.

Major Areas of Concern:

- Reordering property ethics on the principle of Universal ownership of the goods of this world;
- Responsibility for the future of the world;
- Obligation to the third world;
- A new social culture (ecology, family, democracy,);
- A new value—culture.

Conclusion:
Practical guidelines for action:
Learning from the social Encyclicals"

Since this paper was delivered, several social encyclicals have been promulgated, for example, Deus caritas est and Caritas in Veritate of Pope

Benedict XVI and very recently Laudato si on the environment by Pope Francis in 2015.

SECTION III

PROSPECTS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR ADAPTATION OF THE CHURCH'S SOCIAL TEACHINGS IN NIGERIA

In August 1990, an Inter-continental Symposium was organized under the auspices of the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP), Enugu, featuring participation of over 100 theologians, priests, politicians, social workers, civil servants, lay persons, academic staff and others from several African and European nations. This symposium is on record as the only significant and continental reflection organized for the celebration of the centenary of Rerum Novarum. A communique, of 38 points was issued at the end of the 8 days of serious socio—pastoral hard-work and brain — storming sessions.

In attempting to present the prospects and possibilities for adaptation of the Church's Social Teachings in Nigeria, we have adequate material from the Communique of that Inter- continental Symposium as response.

Those points bear repetition here:

1. Lack of knowledge of CST

We observe that there has been insufficient knowledge of these Teachings in our continent over the past 100 years. This sad discovery has challenged us to urge that these Teachings be incorporated into the curriculum of catechetical instructions of the laity and that they be made a compulsory discipline in the theological formation of priests and lay religious. We also urge that centres for the spread of these Social Teachings, like the CIDJAP, be established by local Churches. We also support the call by SECAM for the establishment, in all dioceses in Africa, of "strong Diocesan Commissions of Justice and Peace in Line with the thinking of the universal Church. We further urge that Justice and Peace Committees be established in each parish and indeed in every Community where Catholics are found" (Communique, Roma, Lesotho, June '88 Pan - African Justice and Peace Conference, N.21).

2. Challenge to African Theologians

We also call on African Theologians to reflect on the contents of these Teachings in the light of our own peculiar faith experiences and circumstances of life with the purpose of drawing from their rich insights, deepening them in our thoughts and further elaborating them, with our background in view. This will help to provide a sound theological basis for healthy and edifying pastoral action.

3. The labour question is still valid

It is regrettable that a whole century after the publication of Rerum Novarum, those inhuman conditions of work which the Pope so courageously denounced still exist as the normal conditions of work in most countries of Africa. Workers are still grossly under-paid, many have to earn their living by working under dangerous and sub—human conditions, while legitimate strikes are, more often than not, forcibly suppressed and trade union leaders harassed and incarcerated and their unions sometimes disbanded. We condemn these excesses and call for the respect of the rights of workers to just wages, humane conditions of work and legitimate union activities.

4. Poverty and dependence.

We are grieved to see the wanton misery and suffering into which an increasing majority of our people are condemned to live especially through the implementation of certain forms of structural adjustment programmes by various African Governments. These economic reform programmes, however much they might appeal to foreign economic wizards and to the London and Paris Clubs, the IMF and World Bank, etc., are unacceptable because they subordinate the human person to other humanly defined goals of economic benefits. They thus contradict one basic principle of Catholic social Teachings namely that all economic and socio-political programmes find their justification as a service to man. In other words, the present sufferings are completely unacceptable because they lack a comparable justification.

We are scandalized that the suffering poor are taunted and their sensibilities insulted by the nouveaux riches who make a senseless and extravagant display of their often ill-gotten wealth. We appeal to the consciences of these rich brothers and sisters of ours that they should show mercy and

compassion toward their suffering neighbours, that they should show efficacious solidarity with the needy by sharing their wealth and good fortunes with them.

5. The Prophetic role of the Church

At all times and in all cases, especially in these hard times, the Church must be clearly seen to be on the side of the oppressed and suffering masses of the people. Her voice must ring out, with prophetic courage and insistence, against all cases of oppression and injustice. In this connection, there is need for an effective form of solidarity and collective action between the Churches in Africa to enable them speak out jointly against blatant and brutal injustice. For example, the case of millions of people killed, displaced and forced to be refugees in Sudan.

6. Development is for man

The issue of development, the quest for the upliftment of man, is of such a crucial nature that it deserves the support and active involvement of all members of society. We therefore call for the co-operation of individuals, societies, groups and institutions with governments in the great task of development.

It is sad to note that, despite the apparently spirited development efforts of various African Governments, most of our villages and towns show actual signs of retrogression in terms of increasingly unaffordable costs of staple foods, goods and services and general "poor-fare" state. The situation has not been helped by the volatile political instability of most African States. However, the development process does not have to wait for ideal conditions of economic, social and political institutions. It can and indeed must be started and sustained by those who take responsibility in all fields of society. The entrepreneurs and workers, especially, must co-operate in order to build-up the elements of a viable economy in the interest of all.

7. The Economy

For the development of a just society, there is the necessity for a sound economy based, in the first place, on the human and material resources of the country, but especially on the people who take initiative, who are finding new ways of production. Initiative and responsibility are very important qualities.

The 1980s are written off economically as a lost decade for Africa. National debts, declining commodity prices in the world market, and decreasing aid to Africa from the West made it impossible for even the best governments to improve their economies. By 1987 sub Saharan Africa of 450 million people (more than double the population at independence) has a total GDP of around USD 135 billion, about the same as that of Belgium, which has a population of only 10 million people.

8. Rural Development

In Africa, rural development is of the greatest importance since the rural population constitutes the productive hub of our economies. For it is only when production increases — in quantity and especially in quality — that one can fight hunger and misery. Rural development, therefore, must be pursued with vigour. It requires initiative and creativity - devising new ways of combining the experience of the area with new methods. A good way will be the co-operative basis. Here co-operators will need the assistance of agrarian experts.

9. Training of Youth

Although a vast majority of our population still earn their living by working in agriculture, an increasing industrialization calls for many skilled workers. Therefore, it is very necessary to train young people not only in schools but also in a "dual-system" which combines school knowledge and professional practice-training. An industrialized society needs many small and middle undertakings in the artisan and handicraft fields and also many skilled workers in industry. There may be other innovative activities to be undertaken in this respect.

Continuous training in all professions is a must for everybody and for the entire life time. This is to enable one meet the demands of constantly changing and challenging world.

10. The Public Service

The Public Service has to become much more effective and efficient. Our countries need not only trained personnel but especially the qualities of honesty, hard work, accountability and organizational ability.

11. Purpose of Economics

In planning development, it should be borne in mind that the true purpose of economic activities is neither to increase production as such nor to make profits or to exercise power but to serve man as a whole - respecting his material, intellectual moral, spiritual, and religious needs.

12. The social market Economy

As the economy is an integral part of society, the structure of society finally determines the growth and effectiveness of the economy. A modern Social Market Economy demands free and responsible entrepreneurs and, at the same time, freedom in the area of politics. The bankruptcy of the communist societies in Eastern Europe has proved it again in the past few months. Therefore, a Social Market Economy needs a moral framework which defines exact laws about the tax system, the right pay for labour, the role of trade unions, the importance of the Central national Bank, punishment of corruption, and guarantees fair competition, forbids monopoly, etc. A Social Market Economy can only be stable where there is a harmony in the ethical and religious fields.

13. Morality in public life

We are concerned about the decline of morality in public life. We, therefore, condemn, in the strongest terms, all forms of corruption, bribery, nepotism, the cult of mediocrity and political irresponsibility.

14. Responsibility of African leaders

African leaders and government functionaries must demonstrate in their actions rather than in their official statements their commitment to the principle of leadership by example. The prevalent practice in many countries whereby election or appointment to offices or positions of leadership is misunderstood and abused as a license for embezzlement of public funds is a negation of social justice and a great obstacle to the education of youths and future leaders in the ideals of probity and accountability in public life.

15. The negative role of multinationals

We equally condemn, in sharpest language, transnational and multi-national companies and foreign interests which connive with corrupt local leaders for

the pillage of our national resources, thereby worsening the already deplorable living conditions of a vast majority of our people.

16. Refugees and wars

We are greatly distressed by the unfortunate incidence of war and violence in many African nations, which has left many dead or wounded, ruined several economies and has brought an untold anguish and misery to a great many people. This situation, which keeps getting worse, burdens our continent with an unprecedented problem of 6 million refugees and 12 million displaced persons. We sympathize with our brothers and sisters who are unlucky to be caught up in the cross—fires of these regrettable conflicts and call on the warring parties to lay down their arms and seek the ways of reconciliation and peace.

17. The crisis of religious intolerance

In several of our countries today, there looms the danger of a religious, warfare between the two missionary religions, Islam and Christianity - a situation which has been caused by the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism. Sudan, for example is already caught up by a repressive, bigoted and brutal regime while Nigeria, in recent times, has come very close to a full blown religious warfare. We call for the exercise of restraint by these two religious groups.

18. Christian - Muslim conflicts

The evidence of tension between opposing religious groups is one of grave danger which calls for urgent and remedial action. Leaders of governments must steer clear of purely religious matters and stoutly resist the temptation of exhibiting, in any manner whatsoever, a preferential option for any religious groups. .

Leaders of those two religious groups themselves must sincerely and honestly seek ways of improving relationships amongst their opposing members.

- Christians and Muslims can learn to be more tolerant of each other if their leaders would help to spread accurate, true, and edifying knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of the opposing party among their followers.

- Another help will be to initiate formal dialogue between the two religions by engaging their scholars and theologians in jointly organized symposia, public lectures, and conferences. This will also be very useful amongst professionals like doctors, lawyers, and scientists.

- Regular forms of contact and exchange of ideas should be established between the two religious groups while areas of co-operation and joint pastoral action should be explored.

19. Partisan politics a vocation for Christians

We deplore the prevalent tendency among Christians to shy away from partisan politics as both unfortunate and dangerous. It is a distortion of right order and therefore a serious wrong for Christians with God-given talents for leadership to deny society of their services. We thus call on all Christians to take keen interest and an active part in politics as the platform with the greatest leverage from which they can truly be the salt of the earth.

20. The Clergy and Politics

While the clergy should not be involved in partisan politics, this exclusion does not exonerate them from the responsibility of taking interest in the actions of politicians whose decisions affect the welfare of their flock. Indeed, priests must help in the political education of the laity, conscientizing them to their responsibility for the improvement of society through a prudent, judicious and informed exercise of their political rights.

21. Rejection of Military coups

We are saddened by the high incidence of military coups and counter-coups in our continent which have often been accompanied by senseless killings and summary executions. We protest this evident cheapening of the value of human life and call on all our military personnel to respect the people's right to an elected government.

22. Education towards Democracy

In the light of recent and profound changes in the world political scene, we call for grass-roots education of the people in preparation for democracy:— sensitizing them to their rights and obligations before the law, to the power of the ballot, and to the importance of political choices, etc.

This all important political education must include the necessity of respect for the rule of law and for constituted authority. These are the two bases on which a firm democratic tradition can be established.

The quest for democracy in many countries today is a sign of hope. While the changes in Eastern Europe did not initiate the protests in Africa, they have certainly given support to the aspirations of concerned Africans. We note the efforts being made by Benin, Gabon, Ivory Coast, Nigeria and Zaire to have multi-party political systems. There is need now to initiate open discussions on the merits and demerits of one and multi-political systems.

23. Child Abuse and Neglect

We are greater concerned about the high incidence of child abuse, neglect and child labour among our people. For the child, by reason of his great needs and tenderness, has a right to adequate care and attention. We, therefore, condemn all forms of child abuse and, consequently, call on all religious men and women, members of governments and all in various positions of responsibility to confront the broad constellation of human forces and failures which adversely affect children.

24. Signs of Hope

There are, however, some signs of hope in the economic and political spheres in the 1990s. This hope is supported by the easing of East-West military tensions which might reduce armament and even bring in more foreign aid.

Besides, steps taken within regional economic blocks like ECOWAS, SADC, and the OAU show that there are serious talks about an African Economic Community by the year 2000. We encourage these initiatives.

25. The African Synod

The on-coming Special Synod for Africa is another great source of hope and can be an occasion of race, renewal and inspiration for the Church in Africa. Our fear is that, owing to their very demanding pastoral duties, the Bishops might not have sufficient time for the preparations for the Synod and, consequently, their input might not properly address the problems facing the Church in Africa. Therefore, we encourage all groups (parishes, priests' senates, religious orders, theological faculties, etc.) to read the

LINEAMENTA (WORKING DOCUMENT) and respond to it. We also encourage the Bishops of Africa to meet with various groups and discuss together their ideas, so that the Bishops can have a clear idea of what the Catholics in their dioceses think and believe.

We call on institutes like the CIDJAP to organize regional and intercontinental symposia of Bishops, theologians and lay people in preparation for the Synod. And, it is hoped, that the Synod will be truly African both in planning, statements, executions and orientation.

26. A practical and concrete Action: The birth of AAACASOT

Finally, this symposium has agreed and indeed hereby gives birth to an association for the promotion of Catholic Social Teachings in Africa which shall be known, called and addressed as: AFRICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS (AAACASOT) with its head-quarters at the Catholic Institute for Development, Justice and Peace (CIDJAP) Enugu - Nigeria.