AECD: Its Implications for the Philippines Urban and Industrical Development

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INTRODUCTION

THE AECD in Tokyo was an interesting, enlightening, and inspiring gathering. This is the first thing I wish to say. It was heartening to see the integration of the social science dimension of development with the theological, philosophical, and the humanistic approaches to development. The Conference enabled the advocates of these disciplines, often at odds with one another, to discuss and learn new viewpoints, and in so doing, agree as to what development really means in terms of people.

The workshop which I attended dwelt on the role of the Church in urban and industrial development. Ten countries were represented there and the 15 participants came from all walks of life — university professors, labor union leaders, priests, and social welfare workers. The sessions were therefore very much enriched by the broad perspectives which the members brought to them. In some four days of meetings, we were able to hammer out a document which the plenary session readily accepted after some minor revisions. My task here is to present the basic points and recommendations of that workshop and their applicability to the Philippine situation.

THE WORKSHOP STATEMENT

The final workshop report is divided into four sections. The first says basically that the Church, here taken to mean the members of all the Christian Churches of Asia, must appreciate some basic assumptions about development. The second section discusses the nature of Asian urbanization and industrialization, pointing out some of the differences from the Western version. The third section emphasizes the role of the Church in urban and industrial society. Fourth and finally, the five workshop resolutions end the statement.

I. Assumptions on Development

The Church must appreciate that developing countries need industrialization. While one may argue that a nation's agricultural base remains extremely important, he cannot deny that the developing countries of Asia need industrialization for at least two reasons: first, to raise people's levels of living for greater self-development and humanization; and second, to give their nations greater bargaining power and stature in the community of nations. Indeed, development and industrialization appear to be synonymous.

Not only must industrialization occur. It must occur rapidly. This was the second assumption. A commitment to industrialize is not enough, therefore. We must also build speed into our thinking. Otherwise, the frustrations of rapidly rising but unfulfilled expectations among the Asian masses may lead to violent revolution. New strategies to hasten industrialization need to be created to support, or where called for, supersede traditional development approaches. These have to consider realistically the poverty of the Asian masses. Thus, for example, the emphasis given to savings as a means of building up a capital level necessary for industrialization may not be realistic, given the poverty of most Asians. Hence, more relevant techniques need to be created.

A footnote to the notion of rapid industrialization came up in the discussion of the "green revolution." The impressive surpluses that improved grain technology has yielded—in

our case IR-8, IR-22, and other "miracle" rice varieties—now make possible higher levels of living. This breakthrough is recognized as hopeful and encouraging. At the same time, it should not lull us into a false sense of security. For the success of the "green revolution" in Asia has thus far been limited largely to the wealthier farmers. Only they possess the knowledge, money, and access to the facilities necessary to maintain this technology. So, the initial advantages seem to have gone to those farmers already somewhat better off anyway rather than to the mass of poor tillers of the soil. We still have far to go in solving the problem of feeding the Asian population.

Another problem allied to rapid industrialization is the cybernetics and automation trends already engulfing Asia. In the midst of huge labor supplies, large corporations frequently find computers and heavy machinery more efficient than human labor. While one can argue that these machines eventually create new jobs, their labor-saving capacity does eliminate positions formerly manned by numerous hands.

The third assumption raised in the workshop held that the modernization of technology on the farm and in the city will not stem the rural-to-urban movement of peoples. On the contrary, it may even accelerate the flow for some time to come. The symbiotic relationship of village, town and city needs to be better understood.

II. The Nature of Asian Urbanization and Industrialization

Industrialization can be achieved through various kinds of strategies, not just one. Those selected depend on one's assumptions about the society, the nature of man, and his rights in society. The problem, therefore, is to help identify both the assumptions and the strategies that fit in with them. Perhaps more important questions are what priorities these strategies are to have, and who is to make the decision on priorities?

A second notable characteristic of Asian urbanization appears in the rapid growth of cities despite the slow rise of industrialization. Asia has been called over-urbanized in that

its cities hold large populations without a true industrial base to support them. Huge agglomerations of people mass without the corresponding job opportunities open through industry. In the West, by contrast, rapid growth paralleled the industrial phase.

To speak of Asian cities as though they were identical, however, places the analyst in a precarious position. For great differences exist among them stemming from historical circumstance, culture, and adaptations peculiar to specific technological environments. Urbanization trends differ from country to country. While it may be necessary for analytical purposes to cluster countries by region, one must at the same time recognize that every country, indeed every city, presents a unique situation.

A fourth point on the nature of Asian urbanization and industrialization: migration to cities stems from the push factor of a stagnant countryside and the pull factor of anticipated opportunities in the city. It is not just the attracion of industry as it largely was in the West, whose rural areas could hardly be called deteriorating in the nineteenth century. The poverty level in the Asian countryside today is quite evident and certainly acts as a push factor for people who cannot make do in that setting. Dissension and dissidence also breed in the populace a fear for their lives, giving further impetus to outmigration.

Yet, when people do get shoved out of the countryside and drawn to the city, too often they find that their new environment does not contribute substantially to their human development. Thrown into densely populated sections of the city, they face the reality of extremely limited access to power, participation, and opportunity once there. Nonetheless, it should also be recognized that lower income groups can and do find solace and security in the personalized, crowded neighborhoods of cities. They even resist government and private efforts to change their lifestyle to a more ordered but depersonalized one. Squatter communities are notorious for trying to prevent their bodily transfer from inner city slums into

more spacious suburban areas or neat high-rise housing. Apparently this is not the milieu they find conducive to a sense of security and wellbeing.

How ironical that while in the West high-rise buildings are being deemphasized as housing schemes for the poor, these same plans are now gaining ground in Asia! Cultural background apparently makes a difference in whether a group takes to high-rise apartment dwelling or not. Chinese in Singapore and Hongkong seem to do all right in multi-storey housing but Malays and others exhibit less satisfaction, preferring the small separate one-family units traditional to the society. As far as some slum residents are concerned, even though their actual housing standard may be quite poor, the close, pseudo-barrio setting apparently compensates for it. This is not to say that one should not try to improve these housing enclaves; it is merely to point out that one should try to improve the housing but at the same time build into it the personalized type of environment many urban residents seek.

How can we help the urban poor better cope with the metropolis? Training facilities available in cities lie beyond the unskilled migrant's capacity to pay. In any event these classes are rarely adequate to handle the huge tide of people moving in. Newcomers in Asian cities therefore try to create jobs, whether it be "watch your car" boys guarding for a fee, or sidewalk vendors hawking their wares, self-employed entrepreneurs who cannot find ready-made industrial-type positions. There arises an excess number of barbers, beauticians, hawkers and service workers of various kinds, all underemployed and barely eking out a living.

This means, in addition, that a large proportion of the urban labor force does not have the advantage of a strong trade union to ensure their welfare. Not being in regular jobs, they cannot organize for collective bargaining purposes. Rather they rely on many informal associations, like those of jeepney or kalesa drivers, unified by ties of friendship yet also weakened and fragmented by these highly personalized links. Even the industrial trade unions may be found want-

ing if they allow themselves, as a number do, to be taken, over by primarily selfish leadership interests instead of acting as a group working for the members' welfare. How then does one ensure that these disparate service personnel obtain access to power? One might look to the students for an answer, for they display a remarkable degree of effective organization despite their diverse origins. The city is the place where they congregate. Their dissatisfaction with the urban environment has led to a uniform clamor for change, often resulting in open and violent conflict which almost every Asian city has faced. But because of their militancy and numerical strength, victory lies within their grasp, as scene after scene of capitulating politicians has shown us.

A number of other features of Asian cities were mentioned at the AECD, to which I shall make only passing reference. One is the realization that while the fact of poverty strikes the visitor's eye, he must remember that great wealth also abounds in Asian cities, although largely concentrated among a few. Alongside the urban poor exist many wealthy Asians. Surely they have specific roles to play in the human development of the Asian urban masses. Another element of city life emerges in the tensions giving rise to mental illness. Still another appears in the over-concentration of industry in the primate city. In almost every country of southeast Asia, only one metropolitan center dominates the entire nation. Urban sprawl is concentrated here, making it difficult to spread opportunity to regional cities or the rural hinterlands. Development therefore becomes lopsided in favor of the primate city. We have only to look at Manila's position in relation to the rest of the Philippines to see the veracity of this observation.

Finally, this second section of the statement closes with the exhortation that the ordinary citizen *can* effect his own and his city's development. For the disadvantaged, Church and voluntary organizations may help him attain these ends. Or, if he is already well placed, he may use these agencies to see to the enhancement of urban life for those with less than he.

III. The Role of the Church

The mission of the Church in an urban-industrial society, therefore, is to serve as a catalyst. It should aim toward the building of a humane society where human dignity is respected and guaranteed to every individual, and where the opportunity for integral human development is provided to each person. This means the restructuring of societal institutions for service, not exploitation.

The Church can play its part by reorganizing itself and intensifying its efforts to achieve these ends, largely through:

1. *Encouraging direct action on the community level.* Fellow citizens should participate and cooperate with one another in programs aimed at improving levels of living and the common welfare;

2. *Fostering more local initiative and responsibility for decision-making among community residents.* Church leaders should be exhorted to depart from an authoritarian mode in dealing with the laity, so that both groups may achieve greater flexibility in adapting to the new needs of a changing society;

3. *Insisting on competence as well as dedication among Church leaders.* The latter, in particular, are often high on dedication but low on competence when dealing with programs outside the familiar range of church endeavors; and

4. *Protesting injustice.* The Church can exert pressure in favor of legislation geared to eliminating the deficiencies of urban life.

IV. The Workshop Recommendations and their Implications for the Philippines

Preliminary Observations

Before specifying the Workshop recommendations, let me make two preliminary observations. First, compared to many Asian countries, the Philippines has already initiated a number of these recommendations. It would be easy to become

smug on this score, unless we remind ourselves that we are after all the only predominantly Christian country in the region. It would be a sad reflection indeed on Christianity as a way of life if we had not already put some of these procedures into practice as part of our Christian ideology of development.

The difficulty is that it is hard to say to what extent our social development programs can be attributed to the Church as an institution or to the Church as a community. The latter refers to Filipinos in general who happen to be members of the Church. It is easier to point out the efforts of Christians per se in a country where they form the minority.

My second preliminary observation concerns the attention given to new Catholic Church programs initiated in rural-agricultural rather than urban-industrial areas. Parish priests and church laity have feverishly been learning about community development—everything from fertilizer and improved seed selection to credit union organization and leadership training. Although one might say that the impetus for rural development activities stems from the parish churches located in towns, therefore making the effort urban-centered, one cannot deny that the thrust is in the rural mode. The more direct effect of the Church does however appear in towns and cities, where people are apparently more aware of their formal duties as Christians. Yet much remains to be done. New strategies are called for in metropolitan Manila and the other large cities to make urban life more meaningful. Here the Church has its strongest grip and yet its weakest hold.

The Resolutions

Turning now to the resolutions, the Workshop members state that in view of the nature of urban and industrial problems outlined in their statement, they urge the Christian community to:

1. "Evaluate and strengthen effective programs initiated by Churches in the field of urban industrial devel-

opment, and encourage the pioneering of new efforts in the same field, such as organizing industries where workers could also become shareholders and partners in management and organizing cooperatives.

2. "Request theological seminaries and other educational centers at the local, national, and regional level to actualize the programmes of study and training of clergy and lay people, and theological students in particular, to enrich their theological perspectives and to enable them to acquire both the knowledge and the skill necessary for significant involvement in the increasingly emerging urban industrial societies, particularly in regard to such issues as the role of the trade unions, just wages, conditions of work, sharing of profits, and systems of ownership of urban lands and capital goods. The Churches must set the example in relation to these matters by treating their own employees justly.

3. "Work out techniques of cooperation which would ensure the participation of urban peoples, particularly young workers in local and national policy formation, and secure these skills and knowledge through organizing people to generate and exercise power for the solution of what they consider their immediate problems, and assist members of Churches to find techniques of working with labour unions to initiate and strengthen them.

4. "Convince existing Church service agencies, especially in the fields of health, education and social services, of the need to examine themselves critically, not only in meeting immediate needs but in effecting changes in the institutional structure.

5. "Establish structures of cooperation locally, nationally, and regionally, not only among the churches but with all peoples who share our ideals, to combat urban industrial problems."

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PHILIPPINES

The Church enjoys a dominance in the Philippines unique in all of southeast Asia. But this very position can lead to complacency unless her leaders and membership remain militant about her role in society and see to it that her people continue to find meaning and relevance in the structures and causes she espouses.

Regarding the urban-industrial setting, the Church as an institution can maximize its effectiveness by fostering strategies that crosscut parish units. Urban dwellers form associations based on interests which are not necessarily neighborhood linked. Occupational groupings, trade unions, student crowds and the like may hold out much more meaning than groupings based on the residential criterion. Management personnel meet to discuss subjects of mutual interest; office secretaries go bowling together during their lunch hours; uncomfortable commuters grumble in chorus about the inadequacies of the mass transportation system. Even when people like squatters or the local basketball team unite on the geographical principle, the parish church can hardly cope with the numerous interest groups that abound in its territory. Much more specialized ministries have to be developed with common interest as the focus of activity.

The geographical concept of the parish, especially in larger cities, cannot alone fulfill urban man's spiritual and social needs. Except for certain poverty pockets, neighbors simply do not know one another, nor do they care to in numerous instances. The center of urban man's existence is the time he spends on the job, in the setting of office, factory, school or transportation vehicle. His waking hours at home occupy only a small part of his daily round. His meaningful social networks span the city. Even should the parish church try to establish itself as the center of community life, its space is simply insufficient, its staff too limited to handle the potential crush of the dense population of potential participants surrounding it. While the parish unit can provide some leadership in community endeavors, it must share this role with the many other civic and social associations that

abound in a city. Moreover, it needs to supplement this technique by developing non-parish-based programs geared for urban man at work.

A second area which the Philippine Church might investigate in her attempts at updating is that of better training for her functionaries. This can be done in the Church's own colleges and universities, which might themselves undergo academic improvement, or in secular institutions of higher learning which offer the needed subjects. In particular, an improved grasp of the social sciences will go far toward helping church personnel understand and analyse the needs of society and the rapid change to which all modern entities, including the Church, are being subjected.

Too long has the Church allowed its programs to operate on a hit-or-miss, self-perpetuating basis, giving little effort to evaluating the success of its projects. Here, then, is a third strategy for the Church. The social sciences now have the techniques to determine whether or not action programs are yielding what they are expected to. There is no longer any excuse for a bureaucracy to continue in existence just because it has always been there. It can be known by its fruits through independent social science evaluation research. Let the Church's action programs be as flexible and subject to review as are others in the secular society.

Finally, the Church's great contribution in the urban-industrial sector can come through its ability to organize people into effective action units. Only in this manner can the powerless make their presence and needs felt. Mass action is the key strategy of the day, and Church figures must do their share in giving power to the powerless. While this may be a new role for the Church, I have no doubt that the image of the fighting Church is one to which the urban masses will take very readily. The Church has already established itself in the urban Filipino's perception. What it needs to do now is push forth as the champion of the powerless, and as mediator between the rich and the poor to see that human

justice triumphs.   A theology of urban-industrial man will bring greater clarity to this approach.   If moreover, the Church can set the example of using its wealth positively by helping the poor, few will begrudge it the power it now holds. For it will stand in the service of man, a role which Christ embraced many centuries ago.

COMMENTS

MR. QUINTIN S. DOROMAL

On the subject of the urban-industrial development of our country I would like to underscore three notions.   These relate really to the observation made in the paper read in Tokyo that people tend to flock to the cities because of insecurity and the lack of opportunity in the rural areas.   People go to the cities because of the promise of better wages, opportunities for employment, social security, better educational facilities for their children, and because of the fascination of town life.

First: should we not accelerate the development of regions throughout the country other than those in the area of the bigger cities? Lest the excuse of lack of government funds be given, perhaps we should be encouraging, not government, but the business community to assume responsibility for this development? The government could then lend support through some incentive provisions, e.g., some form of tax incentives. Perhaps too, laymen involved in government councils of decision or associated with pressure groups or vested interests should be encouraged to steer development planning and action toward areas beyond such large urban complexes as are found in the Greater Manila area.

Second: The Churches should expand their reach in their search for funding and for other forms of support for projects of development. Perhaps there are many still who want to help but who have not been asked.

Third: If people tend to flock to the cities, maybe the Churches have also been partly responsible. We have established many of our best facilities here in the Manila area, e.g., schools. Some among us have even closed down their smaller schools in the provinces supposedly because they could not afford these anymore. People will naturally go to those places where they are likely to find the best facilities, e.g., in education, for their own needs and for those of their children.

As a parting remark, I would like to make the observation that industrialization need not mean "high-falluting" pieces of machinery; it also means modernization, e.g., in farming or in fishing methods.