

EDITORIAL

Experts agree that the problems affecting the economy of Africa are structural; consequently, structural solutions are required. Many home-spun development programmes have been proposed and adopted in African countries since independence: five year development plans, ten year development plans, etc. None of these caught the attention of the whole continent as the 1980 Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000. Today, we are pretty close to the "apocalyptic" year 2000; and yet Africa appears to be farther away from human well-being (the result of integral development) as was the case at independence.

Many voices narrate to us the causes of the on-going impoverishment and dehumanization of Africans. The economy of the continent is said to be dependent on the vagaries of nature and the world market; the people of the continent are exploited by the ruling elite and foreign predators. Finally, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), whose programmes must religiously replace any local make, have taken over the supervision of African economies in order to suck the last milk from mother Africa. There is little cause for cheer.

All the contributors to this issue of our **BULLETIN** favour a view of development that is integral and sensitive to the local needs of Africans. They also have faith in the ability of Africans to find solutions to their problems if permitted by a hostile international economic order.

Three contributions (by Waliggo, Ike and Simson) were drawn from a symposium on **The One Human Right for All and the Many Forms of Life** held at the Faculty of Theology, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-University, Frankfurt (19-21 November 1992). We are grateful to Obiora Ike, a member of our association, for drawing our attention to the papers and for suggesting that they could be edited and published in our **BULLETIN**. B. Ikegwonu's paper is an edited version of a presentation he made to treasurers of Religious Congregations in Rome (June 1992). Finally, the articles of Kukah and Mihevc were prepared for this issue to

highlight the functioning of money in the church and the theological underpinnings of the World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs).

Our contributors in one way or the other censor the World Bank and IMF programmes. These bodies which are controlled by the United States of America like to assume the image of "the knight in shining armour battling to eliminate poverty in the Third World".¹ But the records are there to show them as the worst enemies of Africa. Their version of SAPs is systematically destroying humans and the eco-system.

The contributions to this issue argue that it does not suffice to reject the World Bank's murderous agenda, nor to propose an African Alternative to SAPs² which takes the African context fully into consideration. In addition to these, we insist that the Better Life programmes for Africa must be founded on a sound ethical footing. Blue-prints like the Lagos Plan of Action will remain a dead letter unless humans are changed. Sacrifices must necessarily be made in order to change the living conditions of Africans. Cooperative development insists that the change must take place simultaneously in Northern and Southern countries. The self-sacrifice which cooperative development calls for involves a move away from self-interest in order to realise the collective interest. This is bound to cause pain. The resolve to make such a sacrifice may be made easier when motivated from religious convictions. Renewal in the religious practices of humankind may inspire practitioners to work for the realisation of the integral development of humans all over the world.

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1. S. McDonagh, "A Knight in Shining Armour with a Disastrous Record", *The Irish Times*, Tuesday, September 15, 1992, p. 12.

2. See United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation. A Popular Version*. Addis Ababa, 1991.