

Answered Prayers

Anderlecht in Brussels, Winter 2005/6 Missionhouse of Scheut

Father Jean-Pierre Bénit: This is a part of the old church. You still have here what they call the mausoleum, the crypt of our founder, the Father Théophile Verbist, who went to China in 1865, 68, he died in La-ho-ko.

The founder, Théophile Verbist, kneeling in front of the world with the cross, offering in fact his life and the life of the all of the about three thousand people who became members of the society CICM, Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

We enter here through the gate of happiness.

Chinamuseum, Scheut

Father Jean-Pierre Bénit: ... but then in this area, some people also, they just stay for a while, for a couple of years and then they look for something else. Except, of course, when you become a Priest, then you are Priest forever, for lifetime. Now, as you see, when we look at the Protestant Churches, the Pastors, they are like Priests also. But they get married, they can get married. That's different. But when you enter a Congregation like ours, it is a religious society, you are there for a lifetime.

In the missions we work with lay-people also, they get a salary from us, so as long as they want to have it in this way ... You have also another type of people, like those Catechists who give their free time to help. They do that for a couple of years ... but they are not members of the society. Of course, when you become member of the society you also have all the advantages: you are taken care of. Of

course you don't have salaries, but they take care of you, when you get sick or when you get old ...

Henrik Wolff: *So you have safety?*

Yes, you have safety. It is like in a family, like in a big family. They provide for everything and you serve as much as you can according to your qualities. But there is no salary. You put all together, those who get their salary, you put all together ...

H. W.: *And you still have the three vows of course to give, like, they are?*

Jean-Pierre Bénit: Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, those are the three vows.

Townhall of Anderlecht Archives

Gregory de Cock: Stonebakery, for the roofs and so on.

That is the Ninove Allée with the old convent of the Peres de Scheut.

This is the Chaussée de Ninove at Scheut.

This is the Chapelle des Peres Missionaries de Scheut.

The first church of the Missionaries.

Café "Chez Adele".

Café "Perfecta", brewery also.

This is the building for the old people, in the years, I think, 1910.

This is inside the yard with the hypomobilecars going with the milk-bottles and so on.

The wall surrounding the buildings, and we have on the right the Chaussée de Ninove.

Much older, in 1903, postcard of course.

**Anderlecht,
ANDERLECHTENSIA,
Historical Circle of Anderlecht**

Robert Diederich: He (**Marcel Jacobs**) is the founder, he's the real founder of that Historical Circle. (Laughter) Oh yes of course, you deserve it.

Marcel Jacobs: C'est une documentation sur ...

Robert Diederich: These are all the documents. Mr. Jacobs is a collector and he gathers everything, everything relating to Anderlecht and to its history.

That must be about 1910, something like that, that is the time when the seminary was under construction. But you see the spires are already present. You know what a spire is?

Henrik Wolff: *Yes, of course. It must have been quite a beautiful place.*

Robert Diederich: Yes, it was a beautiful place. So, these are postcards, dating back from 1925. So you can follow the evolution, the development. 55, about 55. This I have known, personally.

It (the Chapel from the 16th Century) was located in the heart of the larger church.

This has all disappeared, as you know.

So, they began to destroy the church on the 28th of August 1974, in the morning he (**Marcel Jacobs**) heard it on the radio and in the evening it was already (demolished). So, they began the destruction with the oldest part of the church. And it was too late, when Mr. Jacobs went there in the evening it was already demolished.

You can see a painting, a remaining painting. It disappeared as well? Yes.

So Mr. Vanden Branden, (Jean-Pierre Vanden Branden was at this time curator of the museums of Anderlecht) about whom I spoke to you a minute ago, came just in time to save the stones, but he had to call the mayor, the Bourgmestre d'Anderlecht to interfere, because the priests were selling those stones to a private person, to a collector. And one had already been sold. But he could save many of them.

There was an item in the newspaper, in the *Soir*, there is a claim against the Fathers in Scheut.

H. W.: *So the demolition was without autorisation?*

Robert Diederich: Yes, it was not authorised. But the buildings were not classified, so they had the right to do whatever they wanted.

And, maybe we can come back to the destruction of Scheut, because it was a premonition of what we have to feel today. It's a pity - so as Mr. Jacobs said - it's a pity that for practical, economical, financial reasons you had to destroy a part of your own past. It is as if you would destroy a part of your life, of your origins, you know. Maybe we have photographs, but we ourselves and our children will never be able to see again what existed really. It's as if you were destroying the marketplace in Brussels. It's just the same, you know. You have pictures of it, photographs, you have a lot of documents which allow you to imagine how it was but the reality would disappear. And that's what happened in the sixties.

People thought on *vas faire table rase du passé*. That means they wanted to make *Tabula Rasa* with the past. Finish with the past, because it was the beginning of a new period, people wanted to forget what had happened during the Second World War and there were new social ideas, people wanted to make everybody happy. And the symbol of that new era was the World Fair in Brussels of 1958. So it was the time when people dreamt of holidays every weekend, of having a car of their own, of having a fridge, of having dishwashing-, of having washing-machines and like that. So, more comfort at home and also more leisure. People dreamt ..., there were dreams of a society of leisure.

People would work less, earn enough to enjoy themselves really and so on. This was the dream of the "golden sixties" as we call them.

It was the beginning of a far driven materialism.

And you have something, you could say, we had the idea of a society which was more collective. There were manifestations, socialist ... And they were more collective, people were more ... they spoke about ... voting together. Having solidarity. Today we are living in a more individual world, a world which is made for individuals. We are cocooning ourselves, we live in closed rooms, the pubs - in Belgium at least - are no more successful. People begin to drink at home.

Anderlecht Missionhouse of Scheut

Father Jos Bastiaensen: ... more and more no young people came in anymore, and then in the sixties Father General and his staff moved to Rome because we became an international congregation, so our headquarters were build, were in Rome (CICM Headquarters). So they moved out and so at that time we had a lot of buildings but no people inside anymore. We had still the Church, and several Fathers then took care of the Church and of the Christians coming every Sunday, but the other buildings from the students were empty.

But the Church itself, here with the two towers, was well-known in the whole area and there were plans of people who wanted to preserve, to keep the Church the way it was, though it was getting old and quite often it had to be repaired. The roof had to be renewed, inside it needed to be refurbished so we had to spent a lot of money to keep the building, keep the Church, and all the other buildings were old and empty.

So we were thinking about, what about demolishing the whole and start something new.

And I still remember that there was between our property and the street there was a high wall and we had our garden there, our vegetable garden and fruit garden, there were several cherry trees and we

were many young people here, I think most of the time we were about more than hundred people staying here. So we had our own garden and vegetable garden. And then you had all the buildings we used and then you had the buildings used by the General Government (of CICM), and they had a beautiful garden and this is now build in their garden.

Well, in fact the whole place here, you had, half of it was buildings and half of it was The Garden.

But now we have still, of course, we have still a part garden is still left.

H. W.: *Yes, but it is sold to Fortis Bank?*

Jos Bastiaensen: Yeah, well, that's right, it's sold. We can still use it, now at this moment.

But well, the problem is of course money. Look, we do not have any works in Belgium, we are just depending on what people give. And, which is not enough to, let's say to live, well, let's say maybe we could, but for buildings, for construction et cetera it is not enough. So how to make money? And it's not only this place, all over Belgium we have now, I think, about ten houses to take care of our older confrères and to keep all those things and to have enough money, so we can make a living, it's ... You need a lot of money anyhow. Of course it's not only in our Congregation, it's all over the world, whatever you do, you need money and the best way of course is, let's say, to sell property, the best way, well, let's say you get a big amount.

H. W.: *Yes, but I mean, the average Belgian would think the opposite ...*

Jos Bastiaensen: Well, the last thing they do in fact, is to sell property, that's true. To keep it is the best thing, if you can, if you can.

But most of the work I think is still being done here in this house here in Scheut. Because even now we are more than half of the members of the Congregation are from Belgian origin.

H. W.: *Ah, still more than half of the members.*

Jos Bastiaensen: More than half, yes I think sixty percent. I think we have still about, I can check it, the number, but I think we still have about something like six hundred Belgians in the Congregation, but of course they are all old people and fortunately we have young people from Congo, from the Philippines, from Indonesia who are taking over our work. We are happy for it.

I think it's a trend all over the world: let's say the poorer the country, also let's say, in times of war, everybody will go to church, or say, in the times of the exams all the students will go to church. Then they need God. To help them in their studies, in their exams and in war they need God because he is saving them. But, let's say in times of Peace and in times when you have everything, you have your own car, you have your own house, you don't need God anymore. And God is so good as to be ... he is always with us. But when I am poor or when I'm old, when I'm sick, then I feel him closed to me, because I need him. But the other days he will be there but I don't feel that he is there and I don't need him.

Well, the difficulties of being a priest ... what I found, after coming back to Belgium, and, I'm doing quite some work in the churches ... well people coming to church for the Sunday Celebrations are going down in numbers and are mostly older people. So what I felt is that the joy of being a priest and the joy of being useful and needed by the people is less than the joy I had in Japan, for example. So here what you feel is, rather let's say, the future being, I would say, rather dark.

The overall picture I would say, it's not that I am being pessimistic the thing is, I think it's reality. And that we, little by little are growing towards a need to another kind of church, maybe away from the buildings we have now ... I think something is changing.

And you also have to maybe talk about the Vatican Council and the changes it brought about, the Vatican Council from 62 to 65, which was a whole different road the Church decided to walk on, to take, a different road, and, some people are very happy with it, some people are not. Some people they could not follow anymore so they ended

up with just, just not going to church anymore. I think there is still some ... it could be developed, all those reasons, I think so.

(Congo)

Henrik Wolff: *How much do you send every month?*

Jos Bastiaensen: I must ask the one who is in charge, but we are sending whole cars and tractors and things like that and hundred computers and ... several containers a month are send. By ship, by cargo are send to Congo. Everyday he gets some orders, because, I think we are maybe not the only one, but I think one of the main shipping, no, one of the sending - it's not a company, but that's the word that we are using - for, I think almost all the missionaries in Congo. There many Sisters, there are many Brothers, there are many ... not only our Scheut Congregation of course, many other ones too. They order for their group over there, they order things and it's ordered here.

And the Brother is buying it: he orders from a company, so they bring it over to here and he is putting everything in containers and is sending it to Congo.

Sometime ago there was a whole machine to cut trees, big machine, it was a whole container full with that machine and we had a big tractor send to Congo, things like that to, or a car.

Henrik Wolff: *That's another film...*

Jos Bastiaensen: It's all of course to help the Mission work over there.

**Catholic University of Leuven
Ferdinand Verbiest Institute**

Father Jeroom Heyndrickx: I am a missionary of Scheut, Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Our missionaries have worked in China since 1865, in the North of China, in Kan-Tzu, Nin-Tsia up to Cheng-Hai and Sen-Tjang, altogether about 680 missionaries from Belgium, Holland, went there, Catholic missionaries, to establish the Catholic Church in China.

What did they do - they started schools, primary schools, later secondary schools in that region, they started the first secondary school for girls. They started the first normal school for training teachers for primary schools, that was in Enho-Tsien, they started small dispensaries, until they started in Xie-Huan, in the twenties, Xie-Huan, that's in the North, the present city of Hoch-hot, they started a hospital.

These were all people from the Flanders, from Holland. They were farmers at home. They came in that region - nobody went to Inner Mongolia, even if you go now to the North-West of China that's the most underdeveloped region in China. They bought huge pieces of land and they started an irrigation system, using the water of the yellow stream, the yellow river, building canals, bigger ones to smaller ones, smaller ones ... not just a few kilometers, ten kilometers, but hundreds of kilometers of canals they made, build in the whole region, irrigating that field and then dividing it in plots of land which then they gave out to farmers. It was missionary work and development work that went hand in hand so closely.

(Voice) From Chinese Newspapers: Kon-Jen-Ji-Pau, 12th December 1936. The main reason for the prosperity of the villages is the strong organization of the Catholics. In each parish a priest devotes himself to the well-being of its inhabitants. Whatever difficulties or misfortunes they encounter, their daily work goes on without hesitation or discouragement. Soon the missionaries lend the very poor Christians a small sum of money or a horse or a cow, or on their behalf they pay a visit to the civil or military authorities or they help the villages to defend themselves against the gangs of villains. Naturally the poor farmers look for shelter beneath the good priests, who

do everything possible to help them to get out of their insecurity and misery. Without doubt the missionaries oblige their adepts to follow the rules of their religion. The Catholics should supervise their practice, but they conform freely, on their own accord.

Jeroom Heyndrickx: That history stopped abruptly when Mao-Tse Tung and the Communists took over, as of 1948,49.

As of 48 the missionaries started leaving China, there were about 230, 240 of our missionaries at that time in the North of China. They left China and then later some were expelled. Some of them were in prison. Some of them have been 3 years in prison. And have been tortured.

And then, as of 1955 there were no Catholic missionaries anymore in China and for about close to 30 years we had no news about China. until the eighties.

During the Cultural Revolution China destroyed its own culture and destroyed everything related to religion - a lot of archives. and the Church in China, the Catholic Church, was also completely destroyed.

And China has fundamentally been shocked over a period of 30, 40 years. And that shock of the Cultural Revolution is not over. The Cultural revolution is over, but the pain of it is still lingering on in people.

China then, after the Cultural Revolution, after Mao Tse-Tung had died, Deng Xiao-Ping came to power, China opened up: for cooperation with foreign countries, in the field of culture, cultural exchange, scientific exchange, cooperation, and especially business.

And since that time, until now, in the whole of China there have been 4- to 5000 Catholic Churches that have been re-opened.

Lu Yan: Compared with our situation in China: Although the churches in China are new and not as many as here, the church is always filled with people. It is always full, full, full. Especially on the vacations. And the ages of the participants are really various. Many young people, many children. Really, you could feel the dynamism

when you are in a church in China. So - of course I also experienced some dynamism in the church here in Belgium, for example when we went for the World Youth Day, together with the youth in Belgium, I really felt the living Church in the West. Otherwise, in ordinary times, the church is very quiet ...

Jeroom Heyndrickx: Now life is good, for many people in China, not for all of them. There are still many many poor people in China, backward, you see. But life is much better. Better than it has ever been perhaps. But now people are asking questions. They are living more and more also in a society of consumerism, especially in the cities. You know, they have everything they need. They are well-dressed. They have a lot of food. People become staff and thick, you can see that, you see the people on the street. People live well. It's a materialistic life, they say, well yes, they lose a lot of their cultural values and traditions. Just that's what is happening. There is such a fundamental change in Chinese Culture and in the whole way of living, so that whatever they learn traditionally, from Kon-Fu-Tse, Mon-Tse, Swan-Tse, all those philosophers and even from Taoism, well, they let it go. But more and more they feel there is something lacking in their lives - where are they going? - they are losing themselves. And that's why they have many questions. And it's from that experience, from those questions in their mind that they come and see what has Christian Faith to tell them. And so that's why we could say - I think it is not exaggerated to say - that never in the history of China has there been such an interest in Christian faith as there is today. Even while the government is still rather controlling. The government is much more open, that is true, it's an openness which is still very much controlled: the government would not be in favor of more people becoming religious. The government is a little bit afraid of religion, of Falun-Kung, and what will happen to Christian Faith suppose so many millions of Chinese become Christians: are they not going to turn against the government, that's what the government is worried about, you see. But, nevertheless, there are many people who are truly interested in Christian Faith. Now from our sides, as missionaries today, we go to China, not with the intention to ..., well, the final intention is that the Christian Church grows.

China has changed completely. And China is also searching, you know, for a new direction. Communist China, well, maybe a thing of

the past in a certain way: it has become socialist China and it has become more capitalistic than any other country in a certain way. And it is searching for a new way, also in regard to the place of religion in China. Then we wondered, is this not a new time, also for the missionaries? And so we came here to Louvain and proposed to Louvain to establish this Verbiest Institute, with the purpose to establish a new relationship with China.

I travel to China and then, well, I am teaching in Chinese Seminaries. And so, they are establishing a Church. Which they want to be autonomous. Well, how autonomous can a Country Church be, can it be enough autonomous and yet not independent, that's the discussion we are having with China, we are in the middle of it, China is trying to understand this, the situation, and we are trying to understand China. One of the - in the twenty-five years I've been going from Taiwan to Mainland China, if I understood anything new it's that we don't understand China very well and they don't understand us.

H. W.: *Do we understand ourselves?*

Well we, whether we understand ourselves, that's another question, that's part of it, that's part of the whole thing: how well do we understand ourselves as Europeans and as Christians, as Catholics in Europe. This is a whole challenge. There is a new Europe; the Europe of the 19th Century that caused all these problems is of course a different Europe now. There have been two World Wars in the meantime and ever since we are looking for our balance in a certain way and we are fully in it.

We have an old tradition and this tradition is the traditional *Christendom*, so to speak, and what we live is the end of that traditional *Christendom*. Not the end of Christianity, not the end of Christian Faith, but the end of one way of being Christian, that has existed since *Charlemagne*, until now. And the Church has grown and has been very powerful and people belonged to the Church and felt safe in the Church, by living that traditional Christian life. But life has changed so much, the world has changed so much, that this is now past. Science has progressed and we are in a total new situation, which never existed before. And so; the young people don't come. We are not

going to convince them by just arguing. That's the whole meaning of the new evangelization, which almost has to start from Zero, almost. At least from Zero, well, I mean, people have to go back, well, make their own decision about Faith. And when they say "No", ok, if it is no then it is no. And the result may very well be that from 80 percent or 90 percent Christians in Belgium we go back to I do not know how few. But from there we have to build up. And hopefully that people make up their own decision again to say: "I believe". Will they or will they not, that's an open question, we do not know. And we cannot convince - we can by all means not force them. The gospel is in front of us, also in this new world and we have to start completely from Zero.

Lu Yan: It seems priests here, they do everything themselves, they cook, they wash clothes themselves. Now in China, it's very common, it's very common. For example in our parish, the parish priest he never, never cooks himself, never washes his own clothes, so everything is done by the lay volunteers, you know, in the church, so, some kind of spoilt Priest, of course they are so busy. One priest is in charge of several parishes, that's also why they couldn't have time to do it themselves, but maybe also another kind of mentality, you see.

Jeroom Heyndrickx: Our message is, our duty is that we go out and preach love and practice love, give testimony to love. Well, love means that everybody is respected for what he is and justice flows out of this. You have to be just to people if you really want to love them and, so this too: that's why the Church is involved in the struggle for justice. Wherever they go, they will stand up for justice, or the church has to. If the Church doesn't stand up for justice then it falls short of it's duty. So that's why, wherever the Church is it should stand for justice, take the option for the poor, stand at the side of the poor or those who are treated unjustly. Justice is part of the Christian message. And it's a question for the Church to be courageous enough, prophetic enough to speak up for justice and yet find the correct language to do that. And that's the delicate part, for example for the Church in China. The Church in China must do the same thing. But it's obvious that the government in China will be very sensitive to this, if anyone speaks up in disagreement with the government. So it will be a question for the Church in China to find the right language.

And especially the Chinese, when they see us, they speak with us, in their mind they consider Europe, Belgium, France, Germany, Holland as Christian Europe. Deeply Christian. Deeply inspired by the Gospel. While we in Europe, we know, that Christian Faith has gone down in the last 50 years tremendously. So much so, that in Europe we speak since Pope John Paul II, we speak about re-evangelisation in Europe. And this is absolutely true. Europe needs to be re-evangelized.

And what is being done today is to revive small initiatives where charity becomes obvious. For example the palliative care for the people in the hospitals. You know, personalise the care for people, so much that charity becomes stronger than the institution itself. Never mind the institutions. One could almost say never mind the Catholic schools and hospitals in a certain way, as long as the message comes through. So, when we speak about re-evangelisation then that means that we have to go back to what is the center of our Faith and this is: make Christ alive, the love of Christ alive through the interpersonal relations of the Christians with other people, and make them feel, that the Gospel is something alive and that it's not just a big institution, a school or a university or whatever it is that will prove Christ to be truly the Saviour. So, in some way you could say that Church had become too strong, too powerful and it has to become poor again. You see: well, it is becoming poor again. The Church is losing all it's power and authority and many people would say: it's a good thing. It's not a good thing, but I can understand when they say it's a good thing.

You know, the Church really, to be true in Church does not need all those structures. And when you now apply this to China, well, I would say, that's what I preach in my courses too, tell the students, you know, it is not so important that you put up a big hospital or a big school or whatever. But the main thing is that you are present, and even, in some way better without all those structures. You see.

Well, it is a lesson of Christianity, it is an historical lesson that after one thousand years of conventional Christian Faith we are now losing out of this and we are forced by history to start all over again.

And in Faith: when you look at what is happening in the Church: What I consider positive is for example that this big powerful display of power, so to speak, and of authority is disappearing, the time when our Bishops were great princes, even when we were young, they were no more princes, but they were great Bishops, at this time, 30, 40, 50 years later, well, the Bishop is among his Priests, and most of the time, when they are together, you would not see, where is the Bishop and where is the Priest. You see. This is also true, to a great extent, even for the Pope. I have known, 30 years ago, the Pope was still carried by people, sitting on the *Sedia Gestatoria*. Now no more, the Pope walks in, and he is much closer to the people, at least Pope John Paul, talking to people, closer to people.

And someone might say, well it's not so much anymore ..., the Church is losing its glory of the past. Well, a good thing that it loses this glory and that the Pope comes even still a little closer than it is now, even.

So: the Church coming closer to people, caring, and the more the Church cares for people and makes clear that concern in love for people, the more it becomes Church. It may lose a lot of its glory and its power, but that is OK. There was a time when the Popes were great princes and they were running a country, this is the time of the Middle Ages and from a Christian point of view that was not the best time of the Church. The Church was actually not truly fully the Church of Jesus Christ.

And certainly not the time when the Popes, you know, gave the authority to kings to go and bring out Christian Faith and they went to fight, the mission from Portugal and Spain to South America, they went to the East and even using military power to spread Christian Faith. When we think about it now we are ashamed that this happened. And even this has happened also in China, you see.

And as far as to apply this to China now: China has a deep misunderstanding of Christian Faith because of what happened in the 19th Century. There was a time when Great Britain, France, Germany, were the colonial powers and the Church used them, took advantage of them, in order to enter China and to have some privileges in China. That was a mistake, historically speaking. And China

today remembers. And so they are suspicious about us. They are afraid of us. Even now they say when I go into China, to Inner Mongolia, they say: this is infiltration, because, they see in me a man who is probably tied up with some political power: he comes with some intentions. These are all misunderstandings that have grown from history, from the time when the Church was mighty, powerful.

Photogallery at Scheut

Father Lasber Livinus Sinaga: I'm very glad and I am also very proud to see all those pictures now because I see how the history of CICM of all my *confrères*. From this pictures I have an impression what has moved them behind to go to the mission. What was the spirit at the beginning, what moves them going for mission.

H. W.: *And what do you think is this spirit, how would you describe it?*

Lasber Sinaga: The spirit I can say: eagerness, eagerness and also willingness inside their heart and also their mind. So what Inspiration moved them: I can say it's a power, who drive them to go to the mission. As we see the pictures from the beginning, I observed the pictures from the beginning. The first generation, it's very strong. According to me they are drive by the Christ.

H. W.: *Yes, maybe we go back in a minute, let's just maybe go to the end because I like to ask you something for the pictures ... When I saw this the first time I was overwhelmed how many there are.*

Lasber Sinaga: I think 3000 plus. That is also very interesting, they just put all the pictures of persons, *confrères*, whoever entered the congregation, even they are already send out or they left the congregation, the pictures still remain here. It's an honour also for them I think, because they contribute also somehow to the Scheut or CICM Mission. and some, maybe they left the congregation, maybe got married, but the pictures are still here because they have been serving CICM for many years. That is also another impression I have in mind about this pictures.

H. W.: *So here are the first ...*

Lasber Sinaga: It's the latest Generation. This one is already mixed up of Africans and also Asians and also Latin Americans. Here are already Philipinos, some Africans ... He is now still alive, he is still working in the mission, for example, this person Woestyn Lodi, he is my professor in the Philippines, but still active now, also he is supposed to be retired.

H. W.: *And here are more and more?*

Lasber Sinaga: We call it Brownies. the colour, the skin is darker, no. This is our present General, newly elected. It's a change, a total change, I think.

You see the presence of the Cruzifix and also they wear Chinese robes or dress, it means that they are very inspired to go to the mission and also to meet the new culture and they try themselves also as a symbol of adjustment, adaptation to be one with people, so they dress like Chinese, even they maybe did not go yet to the mission. And also they are moved by the spirit of Jesus, who called them to be a missionary. And they make it clear that it is Jesus who send them to the mission.

For example, in our culture, back in Sumatra, we find it also very difficult to allow a son to join a priesthood or become a brother, because the importance of men in the family is crucial. If you don't have a generation of sons or a daughter, meaning to say your life is finished.

About Christian values, about the life of Jesus, about the Bible, the teaching of Christ, that is the difference now to the first evangelization of the Church even before Vatican II, they tried to christianize to teach the gospel values in a direct way. For example ... I don't know how to explain it, when they reach in the mission for example they will say they don't know Christianity, they will say they are pagans, but actually they are not pagans, I mean they don't believe in Christ, but actually they have their own believe and also good values.

Here, I come from this place. It is in North Sumatra ... We are in three place, in Jakarta, in Ujung Pandang, in Celebes, they call it Sulawesi, and we are working also in New Guinea until 2 years ago, our contract is finished, so ...

I was working in the Philippines for 12 years, mostly in Mindanao, with Muslim people, so that is interreligious or inter-live dialogue . That is in Alang (?). Our Missions for Indonesia, I think we have 6 countries, One will be the Phillipines, second will be in Japan and then in - we don't have China, but we have in America, so we have in Brazil and also in Dominican Republic and then we have in Europe, France. Where is that? I think somewhere there? Ah here, we have here and also in the States, United States also, our mission for Indonesia. We don't spread so much ...

H. W.: *So you tell me about the new movement that mixes ...*

Lasber Sinaga: ... that mixes religion, also movie, technology ... in order to satisfy the needs of people.

H. W.: *And how do they do this? Mix movies and reality?*

Lasber Sinaga: Ye, they mix movies with reality, dreams, everything. They try also to mix with religious issue, sometimes also in the movie you see they quote from the Bible, but actually there is no connection. And people like it because they ... it's a kind of, you live in another world and maybe that world you can enter later or something like that. It makes a kind of excitement to experience that scene. So that is also a challenge for us: how to think rationally, it's also a challenge in this era, because there are many movements also. You see, before, the ancient had acupuncture, reflexologie, now it's different, it's by laying of hands also, it's, they try to attract people in the new matter, in the new way of doing things. People are now more creative, I do not know for what, I do not know, but that is life.

H. W.: *And you told me about your project, your painting project?*

Lasber Sinaga: People, they like to honour their ancestors, their parents, especially in this kind of crematorium and especially the ash of their ancestors, they put it in a special place . But I have a dream, it is not an ambition actually, but it is because I like arts, I like painting also, so I like to combine. To put some of the remains, or maybe small bones or small ash of the dead person and combine it in a painting. To put an ash in the painting, maybe not to incorporate it in order to make distinction, to know that the remain is there. And then I'll try, I'll ask the family or the relatives or the close friend in what way I can throw. Maybe they will tell about the story of the person and about what things he likes, for example he likes about a chair or about a car, so I will paint a car there. Later on, people can also see it, they can appreciate it, that is about the live of our beloved ones, the remain is there, and then it becomes ordinary, they can see it everyday on the wall, or something like that, I don't know yet.

H. W.: *So the past becomes a part of their lives?*

Lasber Sinaga: Ye, and the painting also reminds them of the live of the person, so they will honor it, and maybe they also can put a candle there to be burned, at least integrate it. As I said, it is like Star Wars also or Harry Potter, it's combination of everything.

H. W.: It is very popular, in Indonesia for instance, Star Wars, Harry Potter?

Lasber Sinaga: Harry Potter, yes, yes. I think it is still now in show. And people, they buy everything, because there is also dolls, or maybe I do not know how to describe it, miniatures from the movie, and they sell it at the market and they like to buy it.

H. W.: *And why do you think is this?*

Lasber Sinaga: They like the movie, they like the story, and maybe also their imagination is expand because of that movie, so they like also to imitate, even the small children they try to act, like one of the people in that movie.

H. W.: *Would you think, that what has been religion before now goes a bit in the movies?*

Lasber Sinaga: I do not know, now it's mixed up everything, I can say it is also like confusion for people.

A film by **Henrik Wolff**

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