

African Synod sharpens fight against Cairo '94

by Lydia Cherry and Anita Gallagher

In the middle of the first ever all-African Synod held in Rome from April 10 through May 8, the secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Msgr. Diarmuid Martin, delivered an impromptu call for the bishops to mobilize Africa against the U.N.-sponsored International Conference on Population and Development. "What is happening in the preparations for the Cairo meeting is something which concerns the future of humanity," Martin said. "It concerns institutions such as marriage and the family . . . the sacred character of human life. . . . It involves the future stability of our societies."

Martin called upon the African Church to fight the conference by actively intervening with the relevant authorities of their countries, and to increase dialogue about this in Africa with the leaders of the other great religions and other Christian communities. Almost simultaneously, John Paul II during a visit to Roman parishes on April 17, sent up a cry of alarm about Cairo: "I am returning to the Vatican to fight a project conceived by the United Nations which wants to destroy the family. I say simply, 'No, no! Reflect, be converted.'"

Opposing the U.N. Cairo agenda was one of three interrelated themes discussed at this African Synod, called by Pope John Paul II "to emphasize the entire church's interest and commitment to this continent," and to offer "a propitious occasion for people to reach a new awareness of the duty of solidarity urgently needed by Africa." The other two themes were that of the African debt, "which crushes the greater part of the peoples of the continent and which renders futile every effort at economic recovery," and the need to heal the Muslim-Christian conflict, which is being continually inflamed by outside forces.

Martin's impassioned intervention into the program of the synod, otherwise mapped out months in advance, and the

coupling of defense of the family with the issues of debt and ecumenical dialogue, forged the African Synod into a potentially sharp instrument against oligarchist plans for a "Final Solution" to be imposed on Africa through the United Nations, its related monetary institutions, and its policing capacities. Indeed, as *EIR* has proven, the British-led plan for depopulating and looting Africa relies on three interlocking tactics: 1) all-out cultural warfare against the family, in which sterilization, contraception, and abortion are exported as "foreign aid"; 2) savage debt collection and "free trade" swindles to siphon off raw materials while stifling economic development; and 3) the fomenting of fratricidal wars based on religious and ethnic differences.

The breadth of the analysis being applied by leading Roman Catholic figures at present appears to reflect the impact of *EIR*, the Schiller Institute, the Ibero-American Solidarity Movement, and other institutions associated with Lyndon LaRouche and his wife Helga Zepp-LaRouche, which have been mobilizing politically at all levels, from the grassroots to figures of influence, to shut down the Cairo '94 meeting. For example, when the Latin American Bishops Conference (CELAM) denounced "contraceptive imperialism" (see *EIR*, May 20, p. 32) in a letter to the secretary general of the Cairo conference, they denounced the "'false premises' that the earth is 'overpopulated,' its resources 'limited,' and its 'carrying capacity' overloaded," and then echoed arguments which LaRouche has developed in his books such as *There Are No Limits to Growth* (1982) and *The Science of Christian Economy* (1992): "These notions or premises are, in effect, all relative. On the one hand, they refer to man's ability to resolve his subsistence problems, and on the other to his genius for transforming the Earth's elements into wealth. The wind, oil, titanium, sand, sun, and other elements were

transformed into resources thanks to man's intervention," the CELAM letter said.

Monsignor Martin's intervention

Monsignor Martin had been called upon to give a progress report to the African bishops, upon returning to Rome from New York where he had led the Holy See's delegation to the third and final preparatory committee meeting for Cairo '94. "The New York meeting made it abundantly clear that the Cairo conference will be a conference about life-styles, rather than about numbers or about development as more traditionally understood. What is at stake is a philosophical vision, linked especially to views of some northern European countries and the United States, based on an exaggerated individualism which colors every aspect of the text and leaves the way open to broadly libertarian interpretations of the proposals," he charged.

A second intervention on Cairo '94 was made by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who said: "The positions of governments should reflect what the country thinks. . . . The Catholic Church should make its own stand known; otherwise one risks having small groups, with a determined ideological orientation and at times led by foreign organizations, impose as a national position their point of view."

Theme number two was a clear call "for at least a substantial, if not a total, remission of the [African] debt . . . which crushes the greater part of the peoples of the continent and which renders futile every effort at economic recovery." Debt was central in the debates on the economy. There were calls for a genuine African way of development that pays tribute to the inherited social structures of that continent, and does not follow the technocratic dictates of the "northern" countries. In the Final Message, the synod "also simultaneously calls for the formation of a more just international economic order, in order that our nations may eventually be able to take their place as worthy partners."

'Join in the service of life'

The third theme was the urgent need for dialogue, particularly between Islam and Christianity but also for the church "to engage in dialogue which cuts across and breaks down barriers dividing communities and nations," as it was put in a major speech by Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum of Dakar, Senegal. The cardinal added: "Who does not see that in the Africa of today this apostolate of unity is of paramount importance?"

The Vatican is known to be greatly concerned about efforts by certain powers to pit Islam against Christianity. Pope John Paul II, in opening the synod, took the occasion to send a special greeting to the Muslims of Africa. "The Church of Rome greets all the disciples of Islam who live on the African continent, particularly in the North. She wishes them to receive the blessings of the almighty and merciful God."

Cardinal Thiandoum, speaking during the first full day

of deliberations April 11, had made no bones about the fact that the Christian-Muslim dialogue was not always easy. He observed that in preliminary synod documents Islam is described as "an important but difficult partner in dialogue." Yet this dialogue, particularly in Africa, is extremely necessary: "Most of the time, difficulties with Islam have their source in influences from beyond Africa and from outside Islam as a religion," he added.

This same notion was broached by Bishop Giovanni Martinelli, the Apostolic Vicar of Tripoli, who said that the image of Muslim Libya "which the mass media offer does not correspond to reality." Reflecting particularly on the role of religious sisters who have been in Libya for over 70 years, Martinelli concluded: "Proclamation of the Good News also involves us, as a church, in proclaiming the values present in the Muslim Libyan people, contrary to what many people think."

The Final Message of the African Synod includes an appeal to "our Muslim brethren, who freely claim to faith in Abraham, that we wish to collaborate with them everywhere on the continent in working for the peace and justice which alone can give glory to God." The final document adds that "God does not want to be an idol in whose name one person would kill other people. . . . He wills that we join together in the service of life.

"The living God, Creator of heaven and earth and the Lord of history . . . wants us to join hands in working for human progress and development at all levels, to work for the common good, while at the same time assuring reciprocal respect of the religious liberty of individual persons and that of communities."

Economic justice

Pope John Paul II, who has made 10 pastoral trips to Africa and Madagascar, visiting at least 39 countries, opened the synod on April 10. In his greetings, he noted that, of the bishops, "the great majority are now the sons of the African peoples, chosen from among those peoples and appointed on their behalf." The pontiff cited the importance of the synod examining the application of "the principles of Catholic social doctrine to Africa's needs." He was referring to the 100 years of social teaching, beginning in 1891 with *Rerum Novarum*, in which Pope Leo XIII established that true Christianity involves working to ensure that economic development is guaranteed as a "right" to all human beings, especially the poor.

John Paul II stressed the responsibility of Europe and the United States for ameliorating a situation for which they have been causal factors. "If Africa has been so harmed by others throughout the course of history, we must ask ourselves the question: What needs to be done to change this state of affairs?" the pope said. Weeks earlier, he had brought up the "restitution incumbent on the richer nations" for what has happened to Africa. So many of these richer nations, "espe-

cially in the colonial age, derived considerable benefit from this continent and were responsible for serious injustices,” he noted. Pope John Paul has already announced he will go to Africa to promulgate the results of the synod.

Descent into chaos

Amid the hope of what was described by Cardinal Thian-doum as the current transition period for the African Catholic Church from “a mission church to a church with a mission,” the cold reality came clearly to the fore that, in particular, black Africa is descending into chaos. Archbishop Giovanni Cheli, president of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, noted that 25 years ago there were 700,000 refugees in Africa, while today there are 7 million. Internally displaced persons in Africa today are estimated to be 16 million, in contrast to 1980 when there were 4 million. The archbishop asked if the time had not come for the church in Africa “to play an even stronger role in the work of preventing the migratory flow of so many people, by assisting in the development of better conditions that will lesson and ultimately remove the causes that force people to leave their homes and homeland.”

Archbishop Jean Zoa, speaking in the name of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, quoted Luke 10:30-31: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and he fell among robbers, who stripped him and beat him, and departed, leaving him half dead.” The archbishop then asked, as he pleaded that the synod truly listen to Africa: “Is not this how our continent is—an abode of hundreds of thousands of human lives; men and women, young people and children left by the wayside, sick, injured, disabled and marginalized!”

Cardinal Jozef Tomko, Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, addressing the gathering April 14, noted that “the net worth of the whole of Africa is slightly higher than that of Belgium!” Though reiterating that “the mission that Christ entrusted to the church is not a mission of the political, economic or social order,” nevertheless, “how could one proclaim Christ on that immense continent while forgetting that it is one of the world’s poorest regions?” He insisted it could not be done.

Danger of globalist religion

Bishop Jean-Baptiste Ama, from the West African country of Cameroon, warned of growing dangers of anti-Christian doctrines and globalism and noted the impact of these on this West African country. It is clear that the world overall is being flooded with esoteric sects, he began. “But Africa seems more exposed, because of its lack of backing. In fact, in Cameroon, the country’s intelligentsia, of whom the majority were educated in Catholic or Protestant schools, is so frequently a victim of anti-Christian doctrines that a number of them, if not almost all, belong to the Rosicrucians or the Freemasons.” In discussing other sects influencing Camer-

oon, the bishop cited the “religion invented by an American woman, Alice Anne Bailey, born in 1880 in the United States and who is considered to have had a remarkable influence in American circles with regard to religious independence.” Bishop Ama then leveled a strong attack against globalism: “Initially, the first name of globalism was ‘Lucifer Trust Association’ a name that in itself indicated its aim. But in order not to excessively shock public opinion, the name ‘Lucifer’ was abbreviated to ‘Lucis,’ which led to the name ‘Lucis Trust Association.’ ” (As *EIR* has reported, the Lucis Trust has its headquarters at the United Nations in New York!) He said that in Cameroon, this religion of globalism is already represented by three of the initiated, known as the Shambala, one of whom is in Yaounde, another in Kribi, and a third in the vicinity of Ebolowa.

In his opening message, Pope John Paul emphasized the importance of Africa’s holding out against western mind-control. He reflected on the fact that African culture has included “giving such great importance to the veneration of their ancestors. They believe instinctively that the dead continue to live and remain in communion with them. . . . The peoples of Africa respect the life which is conceived and born. They rejoice in this life. They reject the idea that it can be destroyed, even when the so-called ‘progressive civilizations’ would like to lead them in this direction. And practices hostile to life are imposed on them by means of economic systems which serve the selfishness of the rich.”

In the Final Message, the synod, “in union with the Holy Father and universal church,” appealed to the 53 African nations which will be present at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo: “Do not allow the African family to be ridiculed on its own soil; do not allow the International Year of the Family to become the year of the destruction of the family.” It also includes condemnation of the “enslavement of man to money, the new god, through which pressure is put on the poor nations to force them to choose options in Cairo which are contrary to life and morality.”

According to the Final Message, the synod “occupied itself extensively with the grave cultural, socioeconomic and political problems of the continent, during these critical and crucial years full of uncertainty and chaos, of convulsion and upheaval.” It notes that “the Savior has bestowed on us those two great gifts of the kingdom of God which He is in person—justice and peace. The synod demands greater justice between North and South. There should be an end to presenting us in a ridiculous and insignificant light on the world scene after having been brought about and maintained a structural inequality and while upholding unjust terms of trade! The unjust price system brings in its wake an accumulation of the external debt which humiliates our nations and gives them a regrettable sense of inferiority and indigence. In the name of our people, we reject this sense of culpability which is imposed on us.”