The Family in the 'Peripheral World'

Enrique Dussel

What is called Western culture (European-North American) is often identified with what is 'universally' Christian as such. So the *European* family is identified with what is seen as being the *Christian* family. The 'usual' theological treatment of the subject begins with a study of the family in the Old and New Testaments, goes on to analyse it in Roman and mediaeval culture, and ends with an examination of it in modern Europe.[1] In this way, judgments are passed on contemporary change in late capitalist societies. N o account is taken of the fact that this viewpoint - historically and systematically -is *exclusively* European and is valid today for some twelve per cent of the world's population.[2]

      So this article has to deal with the question of the family as it affects the major part of humanity. The question is so closely linked to daily life that it is not surprising that the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa, which ended in Rome on 8 May 1994, made marriage and the family one of the central issues in its debates, and that it was the one that aroused the strongest feelings. Mgr Monsengwo, speaking of the 'unity and indissolubility of marriage', indicated that this was not opposed to the question of polygamy (one form of matrimonial 'unity') or divorce (which can come about as an exception in some cases of separation, contradicting a rigorist and universal view of indissolubility). This led to a request for a Pontifical Commission to study the '*African* Catholic code of marriage'. Subjects requiring study would be the 'joint or extended' family, gradual marriage, the difference between marriage *ratum* and *consummatum,* the levirate law, rituals enriched by local customs, and so on.[3] As can be seen, these are not questions 'normally' analysed in theological treatises on the family.

I. The problem of the ´Christian' family: revelation and institutionalization

The 'nuclear family', understood as consisting exclusively of mother/father and daughters/sons,[4] has become generalized in the 'central' countries of the World System[5] since the end of the Second World War,[6] and is tending to predominate in the conurbations of the 'periphery', owing in both cases mainly to the wage structure (earned generally by the father, also often by the mother, which enables the nuclear family to enjoy economic autonomy), to the mobility required by capitalist business, and to pensions and social security (which now allow autonomy to the 'third age').[7] The extended family provided the means of biological survival, of security and psychological, cultural and religious apprenticeship, and, furthermore, of economic inheritance, which means that it was indispensable until a few decades ago- and that we have still not appreciated the values we have lost with its disappearance.

In the same way, the stable (I do not say 'indissoluble') pair bond (I do not say 'married couple') of '*one* woman/*one* man' (monoandric, monogamous) , although empirically present in all countries of the world -since the evolutionary hypothesis became unsustainable some time ago-,[8] is very far from being institutionally exclusive and indissoluble. There is an immense, very complex and highly differentiated variety of family relationships that can be established between men/women, their mothers/fathers (grandmothers/grandfathers), their sisters/brothers (aunts/uncles), their direct daughters/sons and those of their sisters/brothers and of their aunts/uncles (cousins in varying degrees) ; if one goes farther and takes great-grandparents (fourth generation) and great-great-grandparents (fifth generation) into account, family or clan (totemic or not) relationships can be built up extending to several hundred or even thousand persons.[9] All these members of the extended family have established functions within it and well defined types of 'belonging' (rights and duties) 'sacredly' carried out (since social customs are generally identified with religious symbols, myths and rites, surrounding the veneration and memory of the totem or 'ancestors'). Eboussi Boulanga has described all this beautifully and profoundly from an ontological and religious standpoint in his magnificent book *La crise du Muntu*:

> What the origin preserves in itself is real [sacred]. What the *origin* preserves in itself as provenance under the form of hierarchy or genealogy is real [sacred] .What the *origin* preserves in itself as

destination under the form of reintegration is real [sacred].[10]... The succession of generations, the place of individuals [in the family] , are determined and evaluated by the greater or lesser distance that separates them from the origin or from the one who actualizes this by representing it ...Authenticity is given only by this permanent authorization of the origin, by this actuality of the originatingpower.[11]

The extended family is the very nucleus of real existence, of the religious symbolizing of existence, of the rhythm of life, of nature, of dance. This is why we cannot simplify the question of the family and speak only of the modern family and the traditional family.[12]

But -and this is my main point- there is far more reason not to confuse the said modern family with the 'Christian' family as such.[13] In the first place, there is no *perfect* 'Christian' family that has been revealed in 'this' specific manner. What we have are *revealed ethical criteria and principles*[14] which 'work' *within* 'any' possible culture, making its existing structures (whatever they may be, including polyandry or polygamy; etc.) progress toward a situation in which interpersonal ethical relationships (of whatever type) among *all family members* (in their possible and multiple horizontal *relationships* of brother/sisterhood, pairing [love, fidelity, etc .] , or vertical relationships of maternity, paternity, son/ daughterhood, grandparents to grandchildren, etc.) are superseded, or grow, or mature. In the New Testament, Jesus *did not reveal a specific socio-historical type of family structure*, since, for example, he did not put forward an indissolubility without exceptions, but admitted that in the past a wife could be put away by her husband.[15] Therefore, to say in an abstract or non space/time-situated fashion that simultaneous polygamy is 'contrary to Christian law'[16] is profoundly ambiguous (and in a way false). It was not so in the Old Testament, and St Augustine allowed polygamy for the purposes of procreation.[17] Once the European-mediaeval family structure, that of Christendom (which is not Christianity),[18] was *identified* with the 'Christian' family as such, any other historical type of family structure was judged to be contrary to the structure of the revealed *Christian* family. But, once again, as the 'rule' by which the Christian morality of a Christian family institution in Latin America, Africa or Asia was measured was not *revealed criteria and principles* but the actual historical structure of the European-modern family already established in the fifteenth century , the negative judgment made of family organization in the Peripheral World was nothing other than the effect of a deforming and anti-Christian Eurocentrism, offensive

to the dignity of other cultures and objectively dominating -which is still more or less the criterion in force today.

II. The European-missionary expansion and sexual violence of Christians in America

The experience of the Renaissance was carried on in Spain as the beginning of the modern age, that is, as the start, in 1492, of the expansion and installation of the first 'World System'.[19] The theme of the family was a constituent of the process of conquest and colonization; which went hand-in-hand with that of evangelization,[20] being, unfortunately, part of the process of not recognizing the otherness of others.[21]

It is all too well known that the indigenous American populations were the first to suffer the de-structurizing impact on the continent's age-old family, whose cultural validity was rigidly accepted by each nation.[22] The arrival of the white outsiders brought about a 'relaxation' of previous native customs and produced chaos in the indigenous family structure. Spanish and Portuguese men (warriors at first and then colonizers) killed native men in the military violence of the conquest and 'went to bed' with ('lived with', they said in the sixteenth century) Indian women: 'La Malinche' (Cortes' mistress) became the symbol of the mother- concubine of mixed race.[23] Mestizos are themselves sons/daughters without a father, or without a 'normal' family- most children do not have a legally (let alone ecclesially) constituted family in Latin America: in Panama seventy per cent of children are born out of wedlock.[24] As an institution effectively started with the conquest and colonization, the family situation obtaining in Latin America shows the following variant~ : I. the monogamous family, presented as the Christian 'ideal'; 2. marriage by social consent, not legally celebrated; 3. the family in which the husband in effect practises bigamy (with a second wife 'from the people', a 'Margarita' from the slums, who then becomes the prostitute 'Margo' in the tango of the same name) , which *machismo* makes even white wives tolerate; 4. the mother with children by different fathers (the commonest form), or the father without a family who seeks relations with women outside any form of marriage. The church always required the Indians, colonial society, rural or urban, to observe strict, 'ideal' monogamy, but it never clearly appreciated the real customs of violence brought in by the process of conquest itself (and later consecrated by evangelization) : the way the indigenous population was organized (by the system of urban or rural 'reductions'), the imposition of Hispanic machismo on the dominated

(conquered) indigenous family, the inculcation of habits of erotic oppression (product of military, economic or political hegemony),[25] the fragility of poor women faced with the power of money, the conditions of poverty that made it impossible for men 'of the people' to build a 'normal' family, and so on. That is, the church never faced up to reality so that it might adopt pastoral measures to deal with an objectively observed situation. It always hid the reality behind the ideal family -which did not exist. The present situation is horrifying in every sense of the word.

The situation of the African-American population of Latin America and the Caribbean has its own peculiar characteristics,[26] since it suffered an even greater destructuration at the hands of the white Christian elites than the Indians. Slaves were frequently forbidden to set up families or contract marriage, or even enter into stable relationships. White men claimed unlimited .rights' to sexual use of black women. This was actually part of 'business', since it produced new slaves -mere merchandise within the fetishism of slavery accepted in Europe. In the name of this 'Christian civilization', real \atrocities have been committed against the family of dominated peoples- a fact too often forgotten. The present situation in the Caribbean is the product of a history of slavery .Today, in general, families are being turned upside-down by the impact of transnational capitalism, urban life and the culture of the mass media.[27] Most black families live in conditions associated with peripheral societies, in which extreme poverty forces a large proportion of the people into marginality -women into concubinage, single motherhood or prostitution, the next generation into being 'street kids', shot as 'rats' by the Brazilian police -the fruit of five hundred years of the modern age.

III. The case of Africa: a failure of understanding through missionary rigorism[28]

Sub-Saharan Africa is where the confrontation between the Christian-missionary world and Bantu civilization is experienced most acutely. It is equally the place where new principles of applying Christian revealed criteria could still be applied in a slow and respectful transformation of family structures that are inter-subjectively valid for a non-European culture, making it possible to work on them from *within* a practice of love of neighbour (the .face-to-face' responsibility for the Other as other, in all members of the extended family) .

We need to start from the ancient doctrine (of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas) of not condemning *a priori* a family institution for not being

European-modern. We need to make a *positive* evaluation of traditional marriage and the extended family (analysing their values of psychological security, economic protection, solidarity, education, etc.) , including polygamy (which can be justified in particular cases), African rites and ceremonies, consort compensation, trial marriages, betrothal, child education, broader relationships, and so on. But, at the same time, we need to make plain and put into practice the criteria that should transform these institutions from within. This means that we have to define a pastoral approach that respects and responds to African culture.

In Africa, since the Portuguese presence that required the first Bantu king of the colony of Angola to abandon polygamy -choosing one of his wives -missionary failure of understanding (repeated since the nineteenth-century influx of French, English and Italian missionaries) has up to the present produced a situation in which it has been impossible to repeat the creative approach Christians took to Roman Mediterranean , culture during the first centuries o(Christianity .

IV. The case of Asia: adaptation by the Christian minorities[29]

In Asia, unlike Latin America or Africa, Christian missionary influence has been minimal, but, on the other hand, the impact of transnational capitalism and urban civilization has brought about deep changes in the daily lives of most Asian families. They have involved the nuclear family becoming more and more common in the numerous large cities of Asia - though not in traditional rural areas.

As an exception to this rule, the world of Islam has provided a confrontational frontier with Christianity, from North Africa to the Philippines, for 1400 years.[30] Partly owing to it fundamentalist tendencies, it has resisted the influence of accelerated modernization.

Asia presents a very varied picture.[31] In India,[32] I am told, in 1960 seventy-five per cent of women were opposed to the 'joint family', although in practice the same proportion of familes practised its customs (embracing up to five generations) in the villages in rural areas, where most of the population of India live.[33] Patriarchalism is highly accentuated, buttressed by the caste system. Women are often seriously oppressed. Now the development of capitalism in India, the increasing move to the cities and the mass culture of radio, television and cinema are imposing the nuclear family as elsewhere. But Christians are having little or no effect on this development.[34]

In China, the extended family acquired its traditional structure, deeply

influenced by Confucianism, in the Tang Dynasty (61~07 CE).[35] In 1907 the Empire organized a commission to study the family. In 1931 a new Family Code was promulgated in the Republic. But it was the Communist Revolution that produced a deep change in family organization.[36] It was not missionary Christianity but the revolution that imposed the nuclear family in the cities.[37] In the rural areas, however, where most the the population still live, extended family structures still survive, in weakened form, but still following traditional patterns.

Many other cases could be studied, but space does not permit.[38]

V. Is it too late to learn something from the many types of family existing in the Peripheral World?

We hear a lot of talk about the tropical forests and their genetic potential-vegetable, animal and even human. Is it not also the case that the European-North American, modern, secularized, even supposedly Christian, nuclear family has, by and large, completely lost the symbolic', religious sense of 'belonging' to a wider family community to envelop it, assure it and give it meaning? Even though the modern nuclear family has gained many positive values, particularly its sense of individual self-understanding in the areas of guilt-free loving sexual relationships, of freedom of choice in its actions, of personal responsibility for its social commitment, can we, in the final analysis, be so sure that what we have lost in the extended family is less valuable than what has been gained? Or , above all, that many of the positive values that have been lost cannot be recovered through applying a new class of criteria? For example, could not the 'base Christian community' also be a present-day urban (and rural) attempt vitally and specifically to recover the values lost with the extended family- without repeating its mistakes? And, furthermore, if it is this, is it not at the same time the creation of a sort of 'nuclear church'? Would not the pastoral vision of the parish as a 'community', based on nuclear families, have a lot to gain from appropriating the spiritual riches of family structures that still survive in the Peripheral World, not regarding them as museum pieces, but understanding that they represent actual ways in which family experience is lived by the *greater part of humankind?*

Since an *ideal* 'Christian' family does not empirically exist (nor could it exist in a perfect realization), what we need to set about bringing into being is an actual family that is *better* than what we have at present, that *will institutionalize* structures rebuilt on the counter-pretence demands of the gospel- as Soeren Kierkegaard analogously and correctly demonstrated, in

arguing that the Hegelian claim that the Lutheran 'state' was a 'Christian' state showed only that it was a Christendom, and that its identification with a culture produced the negation of Christianity .The same applies to the 'Christian family'. Evangelizing the existing family structure (of Europe, the United States or the Peripheral World) means starting from 'valid' marriage,[39] from the customs of the family as it exists,[40] from the betrothal, the marriage ceremonies, the upbringing of children, the type of relationship in practice, so as to produce a 'step forward' from within. That is to say, we must not negate customs, but *remodel* them internally; also, it has to be the Christian subjects themselves (fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, grandmothers, etc.) who are charged with creating the new institutions necessary for *Latin American, African or Asian families today* (in their urban, rural and other embodiments) to mature progressively on the basis of the ethical requirements of the gospel.

Translated by Paul Burns

Notes

1. E.g. the article on 'Family' in *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie Chrétienne et Liturgie* V, Paris 1922, 1082-107.
2. Taking the population of Western Europe and the United States in relation to the present world population of 5,000,000.
3. See 'Sínodo Africano', *Misión sin fronteras* 157, Lima 1994,22.
4-. I am leaving aside, as not directly related to my subject, the question of homosexual couples (which function as second generation) and their possible relationship of upbringing with an adopted first generation, which would constitute a very specific form of nuclear family never observed in the past, but also requiring analysis.
5. See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modem World-System*, vols. I-III, New York 1974--89.
6. Between the two world wars, grandparents often lived with the nuclear family, even in Europe and the United States.
7. Nevertheless, the vast majority of the world's population are still not insured for any sort of pension in old age, and more than half are without any regular wage, So the means to establish an autonomous nuclear family still do not exist for them, and there seems to be no chance of this being the case in the near future -since the situation is tending to worsen *systematically* through the growing impoverishment of the Peripheral World. In 1960 the richest 20% of humanity enjoyed an income thirty times greater than the poorest 20%; by 1990 this was sixty times more, amounting to 82% of the world's products. See UN Development Programme, *Report on Human Development*, New York 1992.
8. See 'Familie,' *LTK,* IV, 1960, 8-21.

9. Among Hawaians, .father' means both biological father and paternal and maternal uncles; .woman' (adult) includes wife and sisters-in-law; and so on with all possible relationships. One of the first norms established in families was exogamy (or exoandry in other cases) together with the incest tabu. Endogamy is exceptional. Polygamy. though, is very widespread in the most diverse cultures, under many forms, and is tied to economic and political power structures -co-existing with the monogamy/ monoandry of most of the population. Polyandry is exceptional, practised under different forms (depending on rights of the first-born, the elevated status of women in some cases, shortage of women for various reasons) : see H. Price Peter, A Study of *Polyandry*, The Hague 1963. Al1 this is often ultimately determined by institutionaliza-tion of a patriarchal type (the most extensive), either patrilineal or even matrilineal, or matriarchal, either way: see e.g. G. S. Ghurye, *Family and Kin in Indo-European Culture,* London-Bombay 1955; 'Famille', *La Grande Encyclopédie* XVI, Paris n.d. ; Harold Christiansen (ed.), *Handbook of Marriage and the Family*, Chicago 1964; CarIe Zimmerman, *Family and Civilization* , New York 1974; Robina Quale, *A History of Marriage Systems,* NewYork 1988.

10. Présence Africaine, Paris 1977, 50.

11. Ibid., 51.

12. .Traditional' includes the mediaeval or early modern European family, as wel1 as the numerous types of family organization of Latin America. Africa and Asia, al1 of which clearly implies considerable confusion.

13. The designation 'Christian family' (used in the same way as 'Christian' culture, the 'Christian' state, 'Christian' philosophy, etc.) gives rise to a major misunderstand-ing. HoW can a family, a state, a culture or a philosophy be 'Christian'? What relationship is there between the constitutive 'Christian' revelation (in the Old and New Testaments and in the reinterpretation of tradition by the Christian community) as such and the social *institutions* which Christians have built up in the course of history, such as the family, the state, schools, etc.? See my *Ethics and Community*, Maryknol1, NY and Tunbridge Wel1s 1988, 21.

4. If one were to elaborate one basic criterion capable of maturing any given historical family institution .from within', I should choose that of recognition of the other in 'face-to-face' (Hebrew *pnim-el-pnim*) encounter. Those who recognize in the Other another ethical subject who is the empirical presence of the Absolute, cannot turn him/her into a means. So men cannot turn women into mere economic means (as often happens in polygamy, for example), and, through living the Christian commandment of gratuitous love of the other (*agape*) from within existing structures, polygamy would gradual1y lose its .cultural validity' -a traditional validity or acceptability that could not be chal1enged earlier for lack of a higher critical ethical principle or criterion. 'Evangelization' of existing family structures (from African polygamy to the egoist nuclear family of European late capitalism). in respect for and recognition of the other (of wife/mother: the widow; of daughter/son: the orphan; of grandmother/grand-father: the old as poor -as in the texts of *The Law of Hammurabi* or Isaiah), wil1 be carried out through moving beyond existing relationships to a Christian praxis realized in community. No one historical structure (including the 'Christian' family put forward in Roman encyclicals) is an absolute ideal, nor can it replace Christian striving to move beyond al1 the limitations of a particular existing situation *from within*, working from a revealed critical ethic that *can never be fixed as an institution in history*, but that always has the capacity for moving beyond, for liberating.

15. Which means that separation is possible for reasons other than those given to justify it in the Catholic Code of Canon Law (which is clearly not .revealed.). For example. the article 'Marriage' in DTC IX, 1926. 2044-335. traces a history of the institution (without reference to Africa. Asia or Latin America), in which it states that the *Code of Hummurab*, law 145. stipulated that a husband could take a concubine if his wife had not given him a son, although in this case the concubine would not have the rank of a wife. This tradition was fulfilled by Abraham (Gen. 30.3). Polygamy is an accepted institution in the Old Testament (Deut. 21.15-17; Judg. 8.30; II Kings 2.2); Solomon had hundreds of wives, with still no pronouncement against polygamy. With Paul. especially the famous text about women obeying their husbands (Eph. 5.22-23. which still fails to criticize the male-dominated institution of Greco-Roman culture). one should take care not to confuse such statements with 'revealed' truths: that is. this statement is not a revealed criterion or principle of Christian ethics; to call it such would be a most unfortunate confusion. This is why Jesus permits a woman to be put away for adultery or bad conduct (Matt. 5.31-32; 19.1-9). and the same was allowed in the early church (*DTC.* here 2059). though remarriage was not. Paul indicates that a woman cannot put away her husband. which is unbalanced. Paul also gives his personal opinion that a marriage contracted before becoming a Christian is not indissoluble (I Cor. 7.12-15). The church gradually institutionalized the marriage of Mediterranean culture. The Council of Aries in 341 repeated that men who put their wives aside for adultery cannot remarry ; a consecrated virgin cannot validly marry ; marriage between a Christian and a pagan is not allowed. etc. The Nestorian council of Mar Aba in 544 condemned bigamy and polyandry (though still not polygamy). set limits of consanguinity. etc. (*DTC*, 2116). It can be said that Latin European marriage began in the eleventh century in the West (though not in the whole of Christendom: *DTC.* 2135ff.). The process culminated with the restoration of Roman law under the seal of Christendom in the Gregorian reform. But this form should never be confused with *'Christian' marriage*, which is continually being made 'from wíthin' existing structures.

16. *DTC*, 2062.

17. .When polygamy was a common custom, it was no crime (*contra mores*); it ranks as a crime now because it is no longer customary .We must distinguish between offences against nature, offences against common custom. offences against positive law. (Contra *Faustum Manich*., xxii. 47). If there are indigenous Latin American, Asian and African family customs accepted since antiquity and still in existence, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas (for whom polygamy was justified when its purpose was procreation) would agree that the above quotation is rigorist. and false in its supposedly universal actual application.

18. See Pablo Richard, *Death of Christendoms, Birth of the Church*, Maryknoll, NY 1987; also my 'The Expansion of Christendom, its Crisis and the Present Moment'. *Concilium* 144,1981,44-50.

19. See the treatment of the subject in my *Toward the Myth of Modernity. The Eclipse of the Other*; NewYork 1995.

20. See E. Dussel (ed.), *The Church in LatinAmerica 1492-1992*. Tunbridge Wells and Maryknoll. NY. esp. 43-52.

21. See my article 'Modern Christianity in the Face of the 'Other": from the ..Rude" Indian to the ..Noble Savage"', *Concilium* 130,1979, 49-59.

22. For example. among the Incas the triple commandment *Ama Llulla, Ama Kella, Ama Sua* ('Thou shalt not lie, Thou shalt not be idle, Thou shalt not steal') ruled the

whole of life and was strictly and universally observed. The 'Thou shalt not lie', meaning not be hypocritical, included married fidelity, condemnation of adultery, etc. The Inca-Quechua people were never again to have such a rigorous or well-observed ethic as they had *before the conquest and so-called evangelization*. The process of colonization was ethically destructive.

23. Octavio Paz narrates the tragedy of the .son of nobody', left alone (rejected by his violent Spanish father Hernán Cortés and refusing his mother, Malinche, the Jndian woman who was given to the *conquistador*, for betraying her country) , in *Laberintos de la Soledad*, Mexico City I950. See my *Liberación de la mujer y erotica latinoamer- icana*, Bogotá I990. On the religious life of the family in the colonial period in Latin America see my .La vida cotidiana de la cristiandad', in *Historia General de la Iglesia en América Latina, III*, Salamanca I983, 56I-607; on Brazil, see Eduardo Hoornaert, 'A Familia', in *Historia da Igreja noBrasil I/I*, Petrópolis I977, 370ff. ; also Hans-J. Prien, 'Colonización y misión', in *La Historia del Cristianismo en América Latina*, Salamanca I985, 75-88.

24. See *Pro Mundi Vita* 38, I97I, 25.

25. The first president of Argentina, Justo J. Urquiza, boasted in I850 that he had more than fifty children by various women -and much the same went for all political leaders of the period.

26. See. e.g., *Sex, Love and Marriage in the Caribbean*, Geneva I964: in Jamaica 76% of children are 'illegitimate' (p. I5) ; also Raymond Smith, *The Negro Family in British Guiana,* New York and London I956; Judith Blake, *Family Structure in Jamaica,* NewYork I96I.

27. See, *inter alia*, Jorge Maldonado, 'Evangelicalism and the Family in Latin America', International Review of Mission 82, I993, I89-202; John Burdick, 'Gossip and Secrecy: Women's Articulation of Domestic Conflict', *Sociological Analysis* 51, I99O, I53-7o; Luis Lenero, 'Crísis del modelo nuclear-conyugal en los países latinoamericanos', *Pro Mundi Vita* 21, I980, I-48; 'La familia y pastoral en América Latina', *Pro Mundi Vita Dossier 1*, I976, 65-94.

28. This subject is dealt with in another article in this issue, so I have kept my observations short. But see Mercy A. Oduyoye in *One in Christ* 25, I989, 238-54; John Pobee (ed.), *Religion, Morality and Population Dynamics*, Ghana I974; Luc Hertsens, .F amily and Marriage among Christians in Sub- Saharan Aftica ' , Pro Mundi Vita, Africa Dossier2, I970, I--{}2. The I980 Synod was important: see Brian Hearne, 'Synod of Bishops I980', *AFER 23,* I981, I-I28; Kweshi Bimwenyi, 'L'Afrique au Synode: probleme de la famille', *Bulletin de Théologie Africaine* 4, I982, 55-73; Benezeri Kisembo, *African Christian Marriage*, London I977; also Arthur Phillips (ed.), *Survey of African Marriage and Family Life*, Dublin I964; *All-Africa Seminar on the Christian Home and Family Life*, London I953; John Robinson, *The Family Apostolate and Africa*, Geneva I963; Cuthbert Omari, 'The Emerging Family Structures in Tanzania and the Work of the Church', *Africa Theological Journal* I9, I990, 2I-37.

29. See David and Vera Mace, *Marriage: East and West,* New York I960; Jacob S. Quiambao, *The Asian Family in a Changing Society*, Quezon City I965; Rjah Manikam (ed.), *The Christian Family in Changing East Asia*, Manila I955; etc.

3°. See Jacqueline Trincaz, 'Christianisme, Islam et transformations sociales', *Archives de Sciences Sociales de Religions* 23, I978, 85-109;M. Haddad, 'The Double Role of Churches among Christian Arabs in Jordan', Muslim World 82, I992, 67, 89.

Dorothy Blitsten, *The World of the Family*, New York 1963, bibliography 281-91, deals with the subject of the Muslim family (19°-229) ; cf. Irfan Orga, *Portrait of a Turkish Family*, New York 1950. Muslim families, descendants of the desert nomads, have a strong clan 'belonging', formerly needed for economic survival. Deeply rooted in the Qur'an and Islamic law, which has historically regulated actual family structure (which is not the case with the New Testament), they are structured as .corporate families', true clans or tribes, cemented by .contracts' or .alliances' (agreed by the elders). When one part of these is broken, grave conflicts can arise. Families are patriarchal, with children absolutely subject; there is strict division of work, of space in the house, of privileges, etc. Celibacy is condemned and polygamy encouraged (up to four wives). Families are compassionate to widows and orphans and welcoming to strangers. In Turkey and Egypt polygamy and concubinage have been outlawed. In general, women suffer heavy oppression, serve their husbands sexually and do the housework.

31. See, e.g. Maung Maung, *Law and Custom in Burma and the Burmese Family*. The Hague 1963; *Sex, Marriage and the Family in the Pacific*, Geneva 1969; Emma Porio, *TheFilipinoFamily*, Manila 1978; etc.

32. See George Kurian, *The Indian Family in Transition*, The Hague 1961 ; K. M. Kapadia, *Marriage and the Family in India*, Bombay 1958; Marie Mascarenhas, 'Die Christen und das Familienleben in modernen Indien', in E.. Schambeck (ed.), *Apostolat und Familie*, Berlin 1980, 529-37; Manisha Roy, 'The Oedipus Complex and the Bengali Family in India', in T. Williams (ed.), *Psychological Anthropology,* The Hague 1975, 123-34; George Kurian, 'The Family in India', *Studies in the Social Sciences* 12, 1974: the whole issue is devoted to the subject.

33. R. P. Müller, .La famille indienne dans les bouleversements spirituels et sociaux d'aujourdhui', in *Familles anciennes, familles nouvelles*, 193.

34. See Jan Bosco, 'Tradition et christianisme dans la vie familiale au Punjab', in ibid.,173ff.

35. See D. Blitsten, 'Corporate Family in Confucian China', in The World of the Family; 82-113: '[the clan is] made up of a series of partially autonomous extended families guided by executive and administrative councils of elders' (83), comprising thousands of members, who can be dispersed in relatively distant parts. The basic functional unity extends over three generations, but the clan extends to five generations and even to co1Iateral ramifications with a sixth. It should not be forgotten that the family cult of 'ancestors' is the central rite in the whole of Chinese culture. In practice the old traditions are observed completely only by the upper classes. The poor cannot maintain such extended relationships (through lack of money, mobility, etc.).

36. See Aline Kan, 'Marriage and the Family in China, 1949-1969'. *IDOC -Internazionale* 34, 1971, 71-96.

37. The missionary vision of the great Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci, who began his work in China in 1601 , was to see that the family was central to Chinese religion, and he rightly judged that ancestor worship was not contrary to the gospel. But Rome condemned this creative missionary project out of deep 'Eurocentrism'. I have examined this question in .La quere1Ia de los ritos', *HGIAL*, I/I, 350ff.

38. Such as, for example, the situation of the family in the ex-USSR, now Russia (see, e.g., Rudolph Schlesinger, *The Family in the USSR*, London 1949), because for a few short years the institution of the family was supposedly abolished (but had to be reconstituted in 1930 because of the resulting chaos) ; or in Israel (see e.g. Melfor E.

Spiro, *Venture in Utopia*, Cambridge, Mass. 1956; id., *Children of the Kibbutz,* Cambridge, Mass. 1958) where varied experiments in family organization were carried out in the Kibbutzim, from fully communal living (which was soon abandoned), to Jewish religious and believing communities, in which life seemed to be carried on as in veritable monasteries of farming families.

39. 'Valid' comes from 'validity', which means what is generally accepted by common consent, sanctioned by custom and, though it can be falsified, is held by all to be .true'. The intersubjective and cultural 'validity' of an institution is the starting point for an .evangelization. of the family, rather than a mere *outside* critique from an ideal impossible in other cultures (an ideal that is no more than the European family projected as the .Christian' family).

40. There are examples of this stance: 'One of the Moravian missionaries defended the polyandry of the Tibetans, not as an institution worthy of being approved of *in theory or tolerated among Christians* [!] , but as being good for pagans living in such a barren country', 'Familie., *LGE* 16, 1148. What happens is that every 'theory' changes over time through the maturing of the ethical-cultural understanding of Christians who themselves formulated the theory, but find that when they actually 'encounter' a strange people, they cannot *ipso facto* demand that they accept another stage of development which is incomprehensible within the terms of their culture.