Ministry and the Inner City

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A Prologue

It was late summer or, perhaps better, early autumn. I remember there were flowers growing. In those days the station master grew flowers to brighten up the Junction platform. I have been on the same Junction since; there are no flowers now. There is, however, a great deal of graffiti. But when I set out on my journey to 'become a priest' the walls were clean.

It is vital, nevertheless, to point out that the absence of graffiti should not be understood, or interpreted, as an indication that there was nothing to protest against or nobody to hate or love. In fact I think there were vague efforts, even frightened attempts, to inform the world in pencil about life's hopes and problems. And, of course, the more adventurous had attacked various wooden surfaces with pen-knives. The comparative cleanliness should be attributed more to the absence of aerosol sprays and felt pens than to the lack of desire, in various sectors of the public, to address their fellow citizens about their bitterness or enchantment with life. In fact there was a lot to be bitter about in that late summer or early autumn. We had, more or less, just come to the end of one of our periods of global killing. The time had come to number such periods. The one just finished would be known historically as World War II. And it had come to an end with an event, or an act, which had not totally sunk into our world consciousness—we had dropped an Atomic bomb on Japan. The world would never be the same again.

I was, to adopt that unique linguistic articulation, 'going away' to be a religious and a priest. Mr and Mrs O'Brien, on the same platform, suggested to my parents that 'they should be very proud'. Indeed Mr Reubens, who had been informed about millions of his brothers and sisters dying by gas, the bullet, the rope or starvation, also joined in this wish of the O'Briens on the Junction platform.

There was something, so to speak, stabilising for them all in my 'going away'. For though I was entering on a distinctive journey in a religious institutional and structural way, I was also affirming a certain cultural position. And if I say this position would be of a separatist, even elitist, nature, I do not intend to denigrate either that journey or my position in life today, for which I think God. I merely wish to say that 'being set apart' was perceived as of the essence of what I was and what I was to be. And whilst understood by and welcomed in the name of God

516

and Faith, my being set apart to be a priest possessed a securing power, for Catholics at least. The old world was 'going on' in my 'going away'. We were all, so we believed, touching the hem of the unchangeables of life.

I would, one day, come back and 'belong' to the people. But culturally I would be asked, even trained, to live a cultural paradox: To be separate but to be part of human existence. Careless use of such phrases as, 'not being of this world', would be harnessed to validate the paradox. Although the O'Briens and Mr Reubens had all been called by God, I was being called in a different kind of way. I would have very distinctive functions to fulfil growing out of a very distinctive style of life. I was on my way to being a man of power. There's a loaded statement, if there ever was one! But it's part of the meditation. And if not the meditation, it is certainly part of my meditation. I was being bestowed with power.

Power

Francis of Assisi possessed and exercised power. Adolf Hitler possessed and exercised power. The origins of their power may have differed and their uses of power may not bear comparison, not to mention the consequences of both their possession and exercise of power. At the same time, they both historically possessed and exercised a power which they had taken up or taken from somewhere or someone. And there is a further complication. Some people wanted them to have power. And they gave them this power not in some abstract manner. They gave them power over human destiny. There is nothing blindingly original in such facts. Power, and therefore powerlessness, may exist according to different modes and degrees. But power and powerlessness are facts and experiences of life. Bertrand Russell once wrote:

> Power over human beings may be classified by the manner of influencing individuals or by the type of organisation involved.
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> An individual may be influenced:
> (a) By direct power over his body, e.g. when he is imprisoned or killed;
> (b) By rewards and punishments as inducements, e.g., in giving or witholding employment;
> (c) By influence on opinion, i.e., propaganda in its broadest sense.
>
> Under this last head, I would include the opportunity for creating desired habits in others, e.g. military drill, the only difference being that in such cases action follows without any such mental intermediary as could be called opinion.
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> These forms of power are most nakedly and simply

517

displayed in our dealings with animals, where disguises and pretences are not necessary. When a pig with a rope round its middle is hoisted squealing into a ship, it is subject to direct physical power over its body. On the other hand, when the proverbial donkey follows the proverbial carrot, we induce him to act as we wish by persuading him that it is in his own interest to do so. Intermediate between these two cases is that of the performing animals, in whom habits have been formed by rewards and punishments; also in a different way, that of the sheep induced to embark on a ship, when the leader has to be dragged across the gangway by force, and the rest then follow willingly.... The case of the pig illustrates military and police power. The donkey with the carrot typifies propaganda. Performing animals show the power of education.[1]

Some may feel the distinctions are too harsh, even cynically harsh. And I am certainly not going to suggest that my 'power as priest and religious', and therefore in ministry, falls into the categories without some qualifications, qualifications of a very profound nature. But I am going to suggest that the political, social, economic and cultural world of late twentieth century man and woman, in its institutionally organised projection, possesses an intermingling existential reality which produces such a possession and exercise of power and a consequential powerlessness. The organisation of contemporary society may be seen as four pyramids. At the top of the first pyramid are those who have the money power, that 'small number of individuals, companies and countries who are dominant in the economic sphere'.[2] Another is the political pyramid, representing the few who possess and exercise political power. A third pyramid, though a very subtle one, has at its top those who can create the power of social relationships and marginalise millions of people. And a fourth pyramid, I would suggest, is crowned by those individuals and institutions who have 'idea power'. Between the pyramids there is an ever developing and prospering cross-fertilisation.

It has been suggested that the pyramidal model belongs to the world at large and can be reproduced in every country or nation. There is an elite power point at the top of the pyramid. In terms of human beings the power point is created either by inheritance or by the fact that human beings have brought themselves into it. And there is a large middle section. 'These people are not very wealthy or powerful themselves; but the work they do maintains the power of those at the top of the pyramids. The organisations which they staff have a double purpose. On the one hand they are (normally) there to meet a real need of the community—e.g. health services, security, information, food, etc. But they also have a second purpose, which is less obvious: to promote the
518

interests of those who control the "machine" and ensure they do not lose power'.[3]

The ecclesiastical world is part of this pyramidal organisation of society. The ecclesiastical world has agreed to be part of such an organised world. This is an historic fact. Such reflections cannot be overlooked in any analysis of ministry, be it priesthood or otherwise, in what is today called 'The Inner City'. This is crucially important when the Inner City becomes an item on the agenda of unfinished government business. Inner City is a piece of linguistic connoting today, in our so-called first world, the base of the pyramid. Let us pause for a moment to look at it.

The Inner City

I could not do better, at this point, than quote the words of the Government White Paper of June 1977.

Many of the inner areas surrounding the centres of our cities suffer, in a marked way and to an unacceptable extent, from economic decline, physical decay and adverse social conditions. The Inner Area Studies of parts of Liverpool, Birmingham and Lambeth—major studies over four years—and the West Central Scotland Study in relation to Glasgow, have underlined the erosion of the inner area economy and the shortage of private investment which might assist the processes of regeneration. They have demonstrated the prevalence of poverty, poor environment and bad housing conditions, and they have analysed the response of the Government. They have also illustrated the differences which exist between the cities they studied—Lambeth suffering still from high population density and congestion; Glasgow and Liverpool now experiencing a lack of demand which is manifest in large areas of vacant land; Birmingham's situation somewhere between, facing a serious industrial setback and still subject to strong housing pressures.

Inner area problems are a feature of many of our older towns but they are at their most serious in the major cities. In smaller cities and older industrial areas there are substantial areas of decay, bad housing, poor employment and social problems. Deprivation exists too in some pre- and post-war council estates, sometimes on the edge of the big cities. There is undoubtedly a need to tackle the problems of urban deprivation wherever they occur. But there must be a particular emphasis on the inner areas of some big cities because of the scale and intensity of their problem and the rapidity of run-down in population and employment.[4]

519

That paper is ten years old. It is with deliberation I quote it. And I ask you to remember that since then we have all witnessed, and some of us have been part of, rioting summers. But, deeper still, whilst the linguistic 'Inner City' may have specific physical and geographical significance, I would suggest to you that we live in a society marked by the evil of 'innercityism'. Leaving aside the actual geographical and physical connotation of the term, 'Inner City', one cannot afford to overlook that vast wasteland of the human spirit known under the term 'estates' and even 'New Town'.

This phenomenon confronts us not simply with a mere social or urban problem; we face a moral cancer eating at the body politic, economic, social and cultic. In Christian terms, we face an institutional sinfulness of unbelievable proportions. It is a sinfulness not only destructive of the oppressed but radically destructive of the oppressor, be that oppression unconscious or conscious, implicit or explicit. Harrison has put it well, 'It, (i.e. the Inner City or in my terms 'innercityism') is the bombardment chamber where the particles generated and accelerated by the cyclotron of a whole society are smashed into each other. It is therefore a good place to learn about the destructive forces inherent in that society.'[5] This is what I meant when I said to the Commission which eventually produced the report *Faith in the City,* 'Don't ask what the Church can do for the inner city; ask rather what the inner city can do for the Church'. [6] This is, I believe, the key to priesthood specifically and ministry in general in the midst of 'innercityism'. There is a sense in which 'innercityism', in its existentially crucified predicament, is ministering to the Church. Any Christian ministry needs to assimilate this 'urban liturgy of the word'. It needs so to live and to act not only that it may minister in return to the Inner City, but also that it may bring us all back to a meaningful contemplation of the authentic suffering of Jesus and a sober understanding of his global resurrection. Let's look at this.

The Collapse of the Pyramids
In the April of 1963, twenty four years ago, John XXIII presented his encyclical to the world, *Pacem in Terris.* The text[7] has come to be known, not without much dispute, as the expression of a theology known as the 'Signs of the Times'. Whatever the points of dispute, I do believe I can say with safety that the text highlights an opposition against all forms of discrimination and specifically discrimination in the areas of class, sex and race.[8]

Reflecting on its relevance to the problems of the Inner City, I would want to say that movement out of the base of the pyramid, the simmering unease of the base, is to be identified precisely with class and race. (I leave aside the question of sex in this reflection, though it has
520

vast implications for my topic.)[9] To put this another way and to highlight my major thought, the 'Signs of the Times' are such, not because the human race has had a conversion of heart or life, or indeed because the Pope's desires are in the process of fulfilment, but because the certitudes which upheld the pyramids are collapsing. Indeed, some may think they have collapsed. The poor, the woman and the black community will simply no longer remain in a position where a white pyramidal, largely middle class, world put them. Within each named sector and between each named sector there may be disagreement. The fact of the matter is that society finds itself caught in a stream, perhaps a storm, of the transfer of power over destiny. There are, tragically to the point of violence, too many hastily erecting pseudo-philosophical, not to mention theological, scaffoldings to keep the pyramids up. It is for this reason that we are all being sucked into a vortex of mutual oppression and violence. In our so-called First World the Inner City, or innercityism, is both the reality and symbol of a demand for power over destiny. The powerless of this world are calling in the debt. This can be put in very concrete terms, terms which have become a major area of theological dispute. Liberation Theology is not only asking for salvation understood in terms of the liberation of the powerless; it is demanding the liberation of theology itself. This is not only a profound theological question, it is a profound question of contemporary spirituality, asceticism and both personal and institutional conversion. Nobody can, or will, truly minister in the Inner City unless this is grasped. No matter how inarticulate such a movement for liberation may be, a new energising of life must come from the 'powerlessness of the poor'. That is what must be set free.

The Foundations of Ministering

The longer I live and minister in the Inner City, the more I wonder if there should be anybody 'professionally' concerned with God. Let me add immediately, I do not deny the reality of (not to say the radical and crucial necessity for) the pursuit of theology. And let me say further, for it is vitally important, the priest or the minister in the Inner City may be committed and dedicated at a very profound level, to a struggle to authentically 'exist with and suffer with and act with' the powerless of the Inner City. The question is much more subtle. It is not concerned with what the priest or minister may wish or reach for or indeed achieve; it is concerned with the perception possessed by those who suffer within the parameters of innercityism. At this stage in history it is vital that ministry searches with them for a new mode of church. The priest and the minister must, in a sense, dismantle their image of priestly professionalism. This demands that, above all things, they produce in the Habermas sense a liberating conversation. In Christian terms such a

521

conversation must take the powerless into the centre of God's understanding and commitment to the powerless and into a new understanding of where the Church is, in the act of ministering, in the struggle of the powerless.

Professionalism, especially in the sense that it is highly institutionalised, has a great unspoken dedication to its own self-protection. It possesses and lives by some hidden secret, mystical almost in its existence and action, which demands a great and mysterious ritual knowledge to grasp. Professionalism above all things projects a power of mediatorship which casts those who call upon it into a permanent condition of silence. The self-protective concept is vital to understand what I mean or imply. I have neither the time nor the space to develop this line of thought. Let me put it this way, relying on some words of Mary Douglas, 'Persistent shortsightedness, selectivity, and tolerated contradiction are usually not so much signs of perceptual weakness as signs of strong intention to protect certain values and their accompanying institutional forms'.[10] In terms of ministry, and very specifically of priesthood, all kinds of discussion, participation and power-sharing will be accepted and tolerated, but only up to a point of modified and controllable risk to those who send out the invitation to this event of power-sharing. In a word, the argument finishes at the borders of potential radical change. In parenthesis, I might add, this approach has disturbing effects upon what could be a development of a 'Theology of the Laity'.

I say all this to make one crucial point, crucial for the powerlessness of the Inner City and crucial for the ministering Church to understand its role. Put simply it is this: The powerless of our inner cities have had enough of professional toleration and professional mediatorship.

The 1970s especially will go down in history as an era renowned for Community Work and Community Development in our Inner Cities. I am deeply grateful for that decade. The dedication and the commitment, indeed the love of so many community workers cannot be praised enough. It was my first real sighting of the signs of the Kingdom of God at work in lives not even knowledgeable about, never mind committed to, that Kingdom. Schemes launched meant the involvement and the development of so many local people. It was good to be alive. So much was achieved. But, all too often, the professional, bureaucratic and financial god forced the Community Workers into a role of mediatorship on behalf of the people. Thus whilst many attempted to bring the people themselves into the possession and exercise of power over their destiny, only too often they were bureaucratically and politically so opposed and marginalised that the people ultimately (especially when the Community Workers departed) were left as powerless at the dawn of the 80s as they were at the dawn of the 70s. Let all those who would make noises about

522

the rehabilitation, alleviation or prevention of innercityism take note. Either the powerless of our Inner Cities are given authentic power over their destiny, by way of honest consultation and participation in decision-making or we face new rioting summers. The powerless of our Inner Cities wish to take to themselves the very name of God, 'I am who am'. And that name means a creative possession and exercise of power over destiny. The ministering Church must participate in the release of this energy at the base. To do this it must not move, or allow itself to be manoeuvered, into a wandering up and down the pyramid saying comfortable things, engaging itself in universally applauded acts, accommodated to each section of the pyramid, words and acts which say everything and nothing about the Kingdom of God.

A predominant stress upon mediatorship has put the powerless of this world into the position of a subtle form of victimisation. The victimisation I speak of is that which constantly makes of them a 'topic of conversation' within a more powerful circle. If I may adapt Heidegger's thought, they become a victim of 'the They'. 'The They', remarks Heidegger in his *Being and Time*, 'prescribes one's state of mind, and determines what and how one "sees".' To put this in very concrete terms, one only has to listen to the way the poor of this world, and especially the Black of our society, are spoken about, even in clerical circles, to gain an awareness of how the perception and the language of 'the They' has seeped into the consciousness of so many. The poor become, in such conversations, the cause of their own problem. This we know to be an historical absurdity. The poor have never been a problem, it is the rich who are the problem. Or again, the Black presence within society is the cause of society's problems. As far as our Black brothers and sisters are concerned, in reality they are a problem because we are a problem to ourselves in our racism.

It would seem to me, and over the years I have attempted to reflect more and more upon this question, it is not a question about ministry and priesthood searching, in the first instant, for new ministering and apostolic models. It is the question of how, out of an 'existence with, a suffering with and an action with' the powerless of our Inner Cities, a change takes place in both our being and perception.[11] And though it is true to say that change must take place in Church terms face to face with existential analysis and action on the spot (that is, within the ambient of the experience of innercityism), it is supremely important that the powerless should also see, and be encouraged by, changes taking place in a ministering Church *beyond* the ambient of Inner City experience. In other words, they should certainly see a Church which never offers any privileged ministry to the privileged in society on the grounds that they are privileged. As Christians I believe the poor should perceive us not only uttering the axioms of equality and justice but 'be seen to be doing'

523

equality and justice.

I believe that this will demand a *kenosis* in ourselves which will create the context for the powerless to be our liberators. To put this another way, we should be seen as a people admitting in word and deed the collapse of certain inherited certitudes. In such a paradigm though we cannot be identified with the poor of this world, we can be identified with their struggle. Their struggle for liberation has within it the seeds for authentic liberation of us all.

Consequential Reflexions

I have attempted to do no more than open up the question. Let me draw out of what I have said some thoughts which, implicitly or explicitly, I see expressed or suggested.

When cities burn and the sirens of police cars and ambulances blare through the night, silhouetted against the bursting flashes of petrol bombs, I believe the ultimate cause of the anger rests in a bewildered people's desire to utter the name of God: 'I am who I am'. Their infinite yearning has been buried beneath and oppressed by the broken promises, the racism and the stigmatisation of an institutional and ideological 'They' who pursue their selfish ends. And though I cannot condone the violence, I understand it. For they already have suffered violence. As a priest and minister of God's word I must strive to affirm them, assert them and be at their side. I must do this by attempting to interpret that suffering with them in the light of their God-given and creative yearning for the infinite. I have come to perceive differently the act of physical violence. If I may adopt a term of Habermas, I have come to see the physical act of violence as a 'communicative action' born out of a social powerlessness. If I am to be asked what is the essential ingredient of an Inner City ministry, I would be forced to reply that it is to be located in an understanding, a sharing and a communication of the content and the mode of speech. The minister in the Inner City must grasp this; there will be no place for the minister in the Inner City if he or she refuses to face up to this. The minister must be ready, to use a phrase of Wittgenstein from another context, to mount a 'rebellion against language', one cannot help those who minister in the Inner City if they do not tear themselves away from certain thought patterns which produce distinctively ecclesiastical forms of language. To come to the point, the Inner City is asking profound questions for those with ears to hear about the meaning and use and communication of the Word of God. Each word is important. But none is more important than the word 'communication'. I have, for example, suggested in other contexts that the pulpit should be perceived as *one* format of communication.

Secondly, I am always fascinated by the fact that so much discussion about the priesthood turns upon the priest as celebrant of the Eucharist.
524

And, indeed, though we discuss at great length our future and hope of Christian unity, we seem theologically, consciously or unconsciously, to dethrone the understanding and contemplation of God's Word from a place of great eminence. For a ministry in the Inner City not only will there be a necessity to go deep into the meaning of God's liberative and creative Word, there will also be a profound demand to reinterpret the mode of its 'being preached' and communicated. Has it always to go on as it is at the moment—and I really do mean 'go on'. It is high time we found other means to go about the process and act both of teaching in itself and of communication. They seem to be caught in the grasp of the act of preaching determined by past modes. I do believe that the Word of God spoken and shared, like the Word made flesh, must be shared with powerless humanity. The Church must become an inspirer of, and when possible the contextual creator of, a conversation which is liberative. The Word of God, though flowing from the sources of loving revelation, must rise also from the human words spoken, becoming where possible an explicit enrichment of those human words. As the Word made flesh itself, the ministering word must find its origins in the tears, anxieties and life processes of 'being human'. The Mystery of Gethsemane, in which the Word made Flesh was gripped in distress and anxiety, to a point of sweat turned to blood, faced with the decision of making a personal holocaust, is a summons to those who would utter and interpret the Word of God. It is a summons demanding that their word, too, must rise from lives gripped in distress and anxiety, faced with the development of God's Kingdom.

I do believe that this re-understanding of the Word of God is vital when it comes to a Ministry amidst the powerless. Power must be given over words in the name of the Word. The institutional ministering Church, I feel, too often took the wrong lesson out of Community Work and Community Development. For the essence of that concept and experience in the Inner City was, and is, the embracing of all into an equal dialogue about destiny. Above all things the dialogue was the means towards a move from a model of charity to one of justice. This shared dialogue meant, when realised fully, for a Community Worker or Activist, the shedding of a false professionalism. It is power and the definition of power which are the focal points.

Thirdly, I believe that the Inner City, not to say the global divide which poverty has brought into our world, presents the grounds for what I see as a 'New Apologetic'. The day of a 'Social Teaching or Reflection' presented as a peripheral aspect, almost, of the Church's life must now see a final sunset. In this context I am inclined to agree with Péguy: 'Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics. — The interest, the question, the essential is that in each order, in each system, mysticism be not devoured by the politics to which it gave birth. — Politics laugh at

525

mysticism, but it is still mysticism which feeds these same politics'.[12] What will that mysticism be? I believe that the minister and the priest must find a union with God through a union with the powerless. And the road to that union will be marked by a dark night of the sense and the spirit, caused and motivated by a profound melancholy which finds it unbearable that some brothers and sisters are pushed into the margins of creation. They are so disposed of, not simply because of the heartlessness of their fellow human beings, but because the God of the Exodus and the Cross has been highjacked as one of the spurious absolutes maintaining the pyramids of power. Thus the hope of the Resurrection has been 'spiritualised' to such an extent that the power of its grace no longer transforms or redefines the power of this world. The political, the social, the economic and the cultural must begin to define anew all our theologies. In this way shall we find a 'New Apologetic' for the Christian community. The Inner City may share with society at large anxieties about the failure of a world to believe in God. After all, it is part of a wider society. But I would suggest that a more radical problem for innercityism is the manipulation of God.[13] I ask you to consider, in this context, those oft-quoted words of Bonhoeffer, 'It is an experience of incomparable value to have learned to see the great events of the history of the world from beneath: from the viewpoint of the useless, the suspect, the abused, the powerless, the oppressed, the despised—in a word, from the viewpoint of those who suffer.' This is the perception which must be at the heart of Inner City ministering.

But there is much more to it than an enclosed and encircled perception unique to those who are part of that experience. I say this to make a theological, perhaps philosophical, point. It is not that such a perception, belonging to those engaged in and committed to the Inner City, is *their* unique or, to use that overworked word, specialised ground for *their* theology and *their* spirituality. It is much deeper than that. This perception creates a ground, a starting point if you will, which offers a praxis reaching into the heart of theology itself in the twilight years of the twentieth century. One of the scandals of our age, part of the price of industrial and technological failure is our common experience of living in a world marked by incredible 'contrast experiences': wealth and poverty, affluence and deprivation, abundance and hunger, a world of mansions and a world of binbag roofed sheds. But worse still, it would seem to me, is the fact that the failure has also produced a political, economic, social and cultural perception which seeks to validate the failure. Creation, in all its awe-inspiring power, has been put at risk. Whilst the Inner City, or what I have called in this paper innercityism, makes its own distinctive demands on Church, theology and ministry, it must be seen in this wider context. Theology, above all things, must begin to seriously emerge from such a context. It must emerge not only to give grounds for specialised forms of ministry, but for ministry in itself. Out of such a theologising, I believe, a
526

'New Apologetics' must be born.[14]

An essential aspect of an Inner City priesthood and ministry will be to pursue such a theology. Ministry must pursue such a theology not on the part of the powerless but with the powerless. And such a ministry must do this in a union with the powerless in search of a new understanding of mediatorship. In this search, though they will honour the unique mediatorship of Jesus as supreme, they must be conscious that Jesus' mediatorship was rooted in his identification with the powerless of his world. Remaining a faithful Jew, he finally came to an institutional confrontation with the power blocks of his times. Whatever the disputes about the vision of Jesus, there can be no dispute about this confrontation as an event. Golgotha, I believe, was as much a question as an answer. If the death of Jesus says anything to our world, I believe it is that God is not what we say God is.[15] A ministering Church in this context will find itself at odds with many of its own members, who insist upon fitting God into the power pyramids in which they have invested their future.

Finally: none of this can take place without a radically new system for the education and training in priesthood and ministry. But that is a major topic beyond the brief of this paper. In my own personal view, however, it is one of the most crucial messages of the Inner City.

Epilogue

There is one reflection left. And, like my beginnings, it is of a personal nature.

I often take a walk around the refurbished dockside of Liverpool. And I enjoy such walks. But I walk in a mood of frightening paradox. Perhaps better, I walk in bewilderment. To bewilder means 'to lose in pathless places'.[16] The failure of capitalistic dreams has become a place of recreation and leisure. I gaze at the flow of the Mersey and I know, 'Between 1748 and 1784 an average of sixty vessels per year cleared Liverpool for Africa for slaves. Assuming an average investment per voyage of £4,400—the average of the Davenport voyages—Liverpool anually invested £264,000 in the slave trade from 1748—1784.... Up to 1807 between 40 and 100 slave ships visited Africa annually.'[17] On such wealth was the economic power of Liverpool built. As I make my way home and pass my Liverpool-born black brothers and sisters, dwellers in the Inner City, I know how long their journey has been, how many Junctions there have been, in their struggle to say 'I am'.

Today the cultural and spiritual demand for security in priesthood must accept the paradox of security which is radically insecure. It must accept the everythingness and nothingness of God. As far as I am concerned, priesthood and ministry can never be again as it was when I left to 'become a priest'. There have been too many other Junctions —philosophical, theological and the rest. But the most important has been the Junction of the Inner City.

1   Russell, B.: *Power* (London: Unwin New Paperbacks 1938 reissued 1983) pp. 25—26.
2   Dorr, D.: *Spirituality and Justice* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan 1984) pp. 55—56.
3   Ibid;
4   *Policy for the Inner Cities:* June 1977 (London: HMSO) nn. 5 & 6, p. 2)
5   Harrison, P.: *Inside the Inner City* (Penguin Books 1983) p. 25.)
6   *Faith in the City:* The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on Urban Priority Areas. (London: Church House Publishing 1985) p. 76.
7   *Pacem in Terris* (London: CTS) especially nn. 40—45.
8   There is, I believe, justification to reduce the 'Signs' to such terms. It is true that the Pope in n. 86 refers specifically to racial descrimination, (discrimen ratione stirpis). I have used the term race conscious of our own English Inner City situation. For more than any other factor it is the Inner City which has 'existentially' led us to an examination of conscience in this regard.
9   On a negative side, the woman of the Inner City has so often suffered and continues to suffer from very distinctive oppression. Many health studies of the Woman in the Inner City have shown this. But on the positive side, especially in recent days, one identifies a great deal of organisation for change in the Inner City amongst women. Sr Mary McAleese in as yet unpublished research has demonstrated both these factors via the actual verbal witness of women in the Inner City.
10 Douglas, M.: *Risk Acceptability According to the Social Sciences,* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul. 1986) p. 3.
11 I would have liked to analyse in a much more extended way the necessity for physically existing with the powerless for effective ministry. In my own book *Passion for the Inner City* (London : Sheed & Ward 1983), I made it clear that I did not believe effective ministry could take place unless there was a break from acceptable ecclesiastical structures. And I draw here a distinction between 'being' and 'perception'. (cf. Gertrude Himmelfarb's historical study, *The Idea of Poverty*). Each generation does perceive the poor differently. The problem is we seem to live in a world which believes we can achieve the betterment of the poor without really demanding any change of life style in the rich or less poor.
12 Charles Péguy: *Basic Verities* (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul 1943) p. 109.
13 This has been a major theme for what is now classified as Liberation Theology. It should be obvious that I am influenced by their work. But I do believe the theological task for Europe is a very distinctive one face to face with our social, economic and political background. I more and more find myself concerned, however, with the philosophical ideas, thought patterns and language used in our theological pursuit. If there is to be a distinctive Liberation Theology European style there will be a radical need to examine our philosophical roots.
14 I have in recent days been struck by certain aspects of the debate about Modernism at the beginning of this century when put aside the contemporary debate about Liberation Theology. I have been led to this by reading once again the work of Blondel. This is the reason for my use of the term, 'New Apologetics).
15 As one ministering and reflecting in the Inner City I have found myself spiritually and theologically supported by a rediscovery of the debate focusing upon the Historical Jesus.
16 Austin Smith, CP: 'Dark Night of Sense and Spirit', *The Modern Churchman* vol. xxviii, no. 2, pp. 7—10.
17 R. Anstey & P. Hale, ed.: *Liverpool, the African Slave Trade and Abolition*. (Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire.) Occasional series Vol. 2 1976, pp.7, 65f.

528