

72/30

Rome, 6th October, 1972

To all Superiors General
 To all their delegates for Sedos
 To all members of the Sedos Group

This week:

1. ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS

REPORT OF THE 36th MEETING pp 617/618

THE SEDOS DOCUMENTATION SERVICE: Executive Secretary's report 619/620

BRIEF REPORTS ON:

(a) "PRO MUNDI VITA" COLLOQUE, Belgium, September 1972 621/624

(b) THE THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF "S.E.C.A.M." - KAMPALA 1972 625

(c) THE NAMUR MISSION WEEK ON "MISSION IN A TIME OF REVOLUTION" 626/628

(d) THE DRIEBERGEN "I.A.M.S." REPORT ON: "MISSION IN THE CONTEXT
 OF RELIGIONS AND SECULARIZATION" 629

2. NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES 630

3. DIARY 631

4. COMING EVENTS:

October 10th - M.L.C. Eng. Gp. 2 - 4 pm - SJ Curia

October 23rd - Int. Coms. Gp. - 4 pm - SEDOS

October 25th - DWG - 4 pm - SEDOS

o o o o o o o o o

N.B.: As announced at the General Assembly, Fr. Tonna is at present in Hong Kong where he will attend a meeting and lecture on the missionary uses of sociology. He will be absent from Rome until early in December.

Comme le Président de Sedos l'a déjà annoncé pendant l'Assemblée Générale, le P. Tonna est maintenant à Hong Kong où il participera à une réunion et donnera des cours sur l'emploi de la Sociologie pour le Missionnaire. Il retournera à Rome au début Décembre.

Sincerely yours,
 P. Leonzio BANO, fscj

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS

A meeting of the 36th Assembly of Generals was held on Tuesday 26th September 1972, at 4p.m. at the Society of the Divine Word Missionaries, via dei Verbiti.

The following Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were present:

Fr. Agostoni fscj	Sr. Marie José Dor sa	Fr. D. O'Sullivan cssp
Fr. Ary sj	Sr. Eugenia sops	Sr. Paul Marie crsa
Sr. Th. Barnett scmm-t	Sr. Brigid Flanagan sfb	Fr. G. Peeters msf
Sr. Theodora Bless osu	Sr. Arlene Gates sa	Sr. F. Pemberton sfb
Fr. J. Bouchaud cssp	Bro. V. Gottwald fsc	Fr. J. Peters cicm
Fr. W. Buhlman ofm-cap	Sr. Henriette Hoone ssnd	Fr. R. Sainz cm
Fr. A. Bundervoet msc	Fr. G. Lautenschlager cmm	Fr. Ch. Ruhling svd
Fr. Colombo pime	Fr. A. Lazzarotto pime	Sr. G. de Thelin rscj
Sr. Alma Cornely shcj	Fr. Th. Maguire cssp	Sr. M.J. Tresch ssnd
Fr. S. Coughlan o-carm	Sr. Danita McGonagle ssnd	
Sr. Suzanne Demeij icm	Sr. Annemarie Ooschot scmm-m	

In the Chair: Fr. Th. Van Asten, pa, Sedos President

Secretary: Fr. B. Tonna

Invited speaker: Sr. Hélène de l'Annonciation, fs

The president welcomed the Assembly and introduced three new delegates.

1. The minutes of the 35th Assembly of Generals (Sedos 72/451 ff.) were taken as read and approved.
2. Progress Report on the Study of the Roles of the Overseas Missionaries in the Local Church.

The President of Sedos reported on his meeting September 19th with the Chairmen of the study groups. After reviewing the progress made on the subject and the various questions which had been raised, it was agreed that it would be wise to investigate deeper into the roots of the present missionary malaise. If we get the facts clear, -- and we could do so by sharing our experiences -- then we could discover that some aspects of the problem do not depend on us. This could prove an 'indirect encouragement' and even a medicine for the present malaise of our people in the field.

The following points in brief were agreed upon as guidelines for discussion at the next few meetings of the study groups:

- 1) It could be useful to identify the roots of the malaise
 - a) Social facts:
 - political factors in most missionary countries; being a foreigner in a nationalistic country; the dwindling of vocations; who will continue after us?; the crisis of identity as missionaries, as religious, as priests.....
 - b) Theological roots:
 - the shift from sacramentalization; the development/evangelization debate; the idea of being a missionary at home.....
 - c) Church strategy:
 - ineffective leadership within (local and universal, and within institutes); uncertainty about the missionary role; the knowledge that missionaries only reach a tiny minority.....

2) Our response?

- a) Missionaries would do well to accept the fact that there is a malaise, and to make a diagnosis of it.
- b) What else could be done to eradicate these roots?
- c) If something can be done, what should be our task as leaders of missionary institutes vis à vis our missionaries? What should be our task if nothing can be done about it? Our response to the recruitment problem?

3) Possible approaches

- a) A prudent promotion of the attitudes identified by the study.
- b) To view the mission more from the point of view of FAITH. The malaise of missionaries is one aspect of the cross of normal Christian life.

The Assembly agreed to continue with the study - perhaps beyond the end of 1972 - along the lines proposed by the meeting of the Chairmen.

3. The Sedos Documentation Services

Fr. Tonna presented the Sedos Doc. Service (see following pages). The staff members of the Secretariate were then personally introduced, after which the Assembly broke into small groups, each guided by a Staff member, and inspected the documentation service facilities of the secretariate.

After coffee, the President invited the floor to comment on the secretariate. It was agreed that the system did work, and that the Generalates could usefully make fuller use of it.

(voir le texte français dans les pages suivantes en ce qui concerne le fonctionnement du Service de Documentation de SEDOS)

1. The Sedos Documentation System works like a book with three indexes:
 - the index by subject is the key to the actual contents of the book,
 - the index by country tells you to which place these contents refer and
 - the index by institute shows the sources of the contents.

When you consult the index you have to decide:

- a) which combination of the 50 odd descriptors best describes your request,
- b) which country or countries you are interested in and
- c) from which institute the information required would probably be available.

2. What is in this book depends on which items of information we at the secretariate care to select. This is basically our weakness - for, despite our good intentions, our criteria of selection may not correspond to those of the generalates. Over the last six years we developed them as follows. We began by a) taking in all aspects of the modern Mission and then focused down to b) the life of the member institutes. We are now concentrating on c) the experiences and ideas of the missionary countries of the member institutes (Sedos 72/573)

In actual fact, however, our sources for c) above are restricted to the information we get through the family bulletin of the institutes, and most of the information stored and indexed in about 6,500 cards comes from sources external to the institutes.

Everything is now set to begin on a parallel index for the documents available outside the secretariate at the member generalates. This will be possible thanks to the project of Sedos Information Cooperative (Sedos 72/573).

3. Who reads this book? For various reasons very few: either because few know what is in it or because most think that they have all the information required at the generalate. Here is the crux of the whole matter.
SEDOS has - a book which could usefully be consulted before major decisions of your council and - a staff ready to do this consultation for you.
The answer could be a simple system of linking the items of your council agendas which require research to the Sedos service.
As we grapple with these direct or indirect requests we will perfect our criteria for selection and avoid the obvious danger of lacking a specialized documentation service expressly geared to meet your specific needs, and of becoming an academic hunting ground. (There is no danger that, by becoming too 'focused' we should become less useful. If we really have something nobody else has, we will be more welcome in cooperative ventures with other specialised doc. services like ADRIS and the ICUA project.)

4. This system of indexing can be computerized overnight. We have just finished work on the thesaurus mentioned on 72/576. The highlights of the D.S. right now are: Chapters - Plans of developing countries (microfiches) - Community card file - Formation facilities file - Directories - Communication data - Capsule information about countries.

The current challenge was sharply brought home to me a couple of weeks ago. A member institute, in preparing for its chapter, foresaw that there would be a move towards decentralization. This would necessarily involve a first class centralized documentation system. Opinion was divided between those in favour of setting up this system at the generalate - and those promoting the idea of strengthening the Sedos Documentation Service, particularly in view of the dwindling staffs at the generalates.

Revised KEY WORDS List

Agency	Laity
Agriculture	Language
Aid	Liturgy
Apostolate	
	Mission
Bible	
Bishops	Pastoral Work
Brothers	Personnel
	Planning
Catechists	Policy
Chapters	Politics
Christianity	Population
Church	Priests
Communications	Programmes
Community	Projects
Cooperation	
Cooperatives	Racism
Culture	Religions
	Renewal
Development	
	Secularization
Economics	Seminars
Ecumenism	Sisters
Education	Spirituality
Evangelization	
	Theology
Formation	
Funds	Urbanization
Government	Vocations
Health	Women
	World
Institute	
Islam	Youth
Justice	

5. Brief reports on:

(a) PRO MUNDI VITA COLLOQUE - Sept. 11th.-15th '72

A few weeks ago, I happened to be visiting our Sisters in Belgium and by a rare stroke of fortune, I had the opportunity of participating in the Pro Mundi Vita Colloque held at Heverlee, Louvain from Sept. 11th - 15th. I was, I think, about the only non-expert and the only person who was there in a private capacity, as practically all the participants were either representing some outstanding speciality, some group or Centre. The thought farthest from my mind was that I might have to draw up a report on this meeting. On returning to Rome I was pleased to see that on the agenda for this General Assembly, Sedos had included a Report on the Colloque. I was looking forward to hearing somebody else's impressions of this Pro Mundi Vita Meeting. I was however reckoning without Fr. Tonna's excellent system of communication and powers of persuasion and it is thanks to him that I have been roped in for this job.

Having said that I want to add that I am happy to share my impressions for what they are worth, with you. It must be borne in mind, however, that my opinions are entirely personal and likely to be rather subjective, so I would not like what I say to be taken as the only view on the Colloque. Other people may have had an entirely different impression.

The occasion of this Colloque was the 10th Anniversary of Pro Mundi Vita. As you all probably know Pro Mundi Vita, as its name implies, was really founded to help the Third World especially Latin America. Its purpose was to present Church leaders with an accurate picture of the situation in developing countries so that they might encourage Priests and religious to go to these needy areas, and so that Church resources in money and personnel may be diverted to the poorer countries. Pro Mundi Vita has always maintained its character as an Information Centre and still has as its primary purpose to provide the ten million people in positions of leadership within the Church (whether they are members of hierarchies, Superiors of Religious Congregations, Heads of Centres of Formation, research etc.), with objective scientific information which could aid them in their decision-making. Its information, which is based on accurate sociological research, is reliable and apart from the bias which may be shown in the very choice of subjects studied, Pro Mundi Vita never tries to influence opinion by unduly interpreting the facts presented.

For this tenth Anniversary Colloque, the subject chosen was "Bridging the Communications Gap in an age of Pluralism." A challenge for Church Leadership."

There were 54 participants drawn from all the continents, but the two underprivileged sections of the human race, local people from the developing countries and women - were definitely in the minority. The group was essentially Western and male, and was composed largely of sociologists, communications experts and journalists. There were a few representatives of other Christian Churches and our establishment was present in the person of three members of the Hierarchy and one Mother General of a Religious Congregation. There were naturally various shades of opinion represented, but I think I could correctly say the majority were left of Centre.

It would be impossible to summarise in such a short space of time the intensive work of the 4 days, which moreover, had been preceded by months of preparatory reading and study. It is equally impossible to give you even the conclusions of the group, since no consensus of any kind was reached either within the workshops or in the General Assemblies. Besides, reaching a consensus could hardly be the aim of a group discussing pluralism. The final statements drawn up by the 4 workshops (two - English, two - French) were as diverse as possible, ranging from French intellectualism and idealism in their purest and most disembodied form, to Anglo-Saxon pragmatism and realism, expressed in a most down to earth manner. And these statements were accepted only with reservations even within the groups that composed them.

I shall therefore, just try to give you briefly some of the main points that emerged from our discussions.

The first was:

The magnitude of the problem of polarisation within the Church. Indeed, one could say that the whole Colloque centred on this question of Polarisation: its existence, the way in which it expresses itself, its causes, its effects; how to live this situation in a Christian way and how get about lessening the conflict.

Given the factor of human freedom and the diversity of human nature and culture, plurality is a normal and inevitable human phenomenon which nobody can contest. It is a fact. Because plurality is basically human, a certain degree of polarisation is normal in any human society, and indeed has existed right through history and has often been a means of advance and growth. Polarisation is bound to occur to a greater degree and with corresponding tension in a time of very rapid change and the emergence of new options. Since Vatican II within the Church there is an ever growing search for individual, social and cultural identity, focussing on the need for both freedom and security. This search brings individuals and groups into conflict with institutional authority. The very fact of searching implies pluralism while institutional authority is traditionally monolithic. Hence the conflict that arises so often between the local group (existential Church) and the Institutional Church. This conflict is more acute because of the very nature of authority within the Church. Several members of the Colloque were inclined to think that most of the conflict arises from lack of dialogue and authoritarian attitudes and actions on the part of authority.

Numerous examples taken especially from the Anglo-Saxon world were given to support this view.

In the Latin American Church it is interesting to note that polarisation takes place not so much about the internal problems of the Church, but rather about socio-political divergences of opinion: political involvement or non-involvement in the struggle for Justice.

Other members of the Colloque, however, thought that the matter was even deeper than this conflict because of authoritarianism, because sometimes individuals and groups seemed to be taking options which could not even be reconciled with their claim to be part of the Catholic Church. An example was given of a certain small town in N. Europe which had one Church that was meant to be used by both protestants and catholics as a place of worship.

After some time, however, the protestant minister protested strongly against the Catholic priest using this Church, because, he maintained, the Catholic priest openly admitted that he regarded the Eucharist only as a matter of folklore.

This naturally raised the whole question:

- What are the limits of pluralism in matters of faith?
- Are there not some fundamentals which remain absolute if one wants to be a member of the Church?
- Who decides these limits of pluralism?
- Who decides the identity of the ecclesial group?

It is on these fundamental questions perhaps that communication breaks down completely and that both sides have really to modify their positions if they wish to continue to live in unity and love.

One group of the Colloque considered that those who favour pluralism, need some sense of responsibility and restraint, and must be prepared to accept that there are some absolutes, some fundamental truths which cannot be optional, that there is a teaching authority in the Church which must be recognised, but that on the other hand those in authority must in practical ways manifest their acceptance of pluralism and encourage research and open dialogue on all disputed points.

The more radical group expressed its opinion on these questions by saying that within the Church there must be pluralism about the limits of pluralism, and pluralism about the criteria by which membership of the Church may be judged. Perhaps if that were pushed to its logical conclusion we might end up by saying that there are no absolutes that everybody may believe exactly what he likes, do exactly what he likes provided he loves others, respects their liberty and accept them as they are. This would surely lead to protestantism - pure and simple. I think it was at this point that a Chinese Bishop became alarmed that he might even end up by having 3 or 4 Gods, instead of one...!

Polarisation would be really disastrous if it - engendered conflicts which disrupted love and unity and impaired the mission of the Church, "sign and Sacrament of unity," for the world and so the Colloque addressed its attention to the question:

How can this situation be avoided?

How can conflict be lived in a Christian way?

Ideally, communication should help to overcome excessive polarisation and to develop a healthy pluralism. It is true that in this post-industrial age, we have a glut of information, more information than we can really cope with or digest. Yet, in spite of, and even sometimes because of a vast increase in circulation of information and in institutionalised organs of dialogue, there are frequent misunderstandings and breakdowns in real communication - failures to try to see the other's point of view, to understand what is really going on behind the multitude of individual facts and to agree about the Church's basic priorities and the character of ecclesial authority.

This brought up the whole point of communication within the Church. Since communication (which includes speaking and listening) is essentially a two-way, person to person relationship, the person of the communicator, his attitudes, his degree of Christ-like love is really of primary importance. In other words the person and the image of the communicator are capital. So also is his knowledge of the recipient. The feedback coming from the latter is also of great importance in an on-going communication. It was felt that much of the polarisation in the Church could be avoided if these conditions essential for good communication were respected. Concretely, to what extent are those in authority aware of the needs and the local environment before communicating a message?

- What image does authority present in its person to person or written communications?
- What importance is given to feedback in the readjustment of policy?
- What attitude is taken up in presence of unfavourable "feedback" disagreement?

Do we allow for open discussion as a means of helping in the advance of truth or are we always on the defensive?

Is the reaction of authority to impose a rigid law without any dialogue and is open, free discussion invited and encouraged?

I think everybody was in agreement on the necessity of improving communications at all levels and in all directions.

Various other means were also suggested to lessen polarisation, an all round conversion of heart was considered among the most important. We should all try to accept one another as persons and approach one another in a spirit of love and understanding even when we hold conflicting views. Those in authority should refrain from crushing out groups born of pluralism and intervene only when basic Christian unity is at stake. We should all return to the Gospel and re-examine our commitment and responsibilities. To the extent that our message is based on Christ, that He is at the centre of the dialogue within the Church, with the other Churches and with the world, we can be sure that polarisation will not get out of hand.

This conversion of heart, combined with the providing of objective information on all sides, the reshaping of structures of Church administration and on going training programmes for Church leaders, will, hopefully, one day result in a group of leaders who will see their main role as presidents and mediators, creating conditions of dialogue and co-operation in which various members of the Church, individuals and groups can make their contributions. While maintaining the basic values of the Christian vision and appreciating the things about which men can differ, it is to be hoped that leaders can create an atmosphere of friendship and acceptance despite sharp differences of outlook.

I would say this was the solution towards which Pro Mundi Vita was hoping to contribute by its Colloque on "Bridging the Communications Gap."

(b) THE THIRD PLENARY SESSION OF S.E.C.A.M., KAMPALA

Fr. T. Agostoni, with Fr. Arrupe and Bro. Charles Henry represented the Union of Superiors General at the third Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Malagasy in Kampala, August 13-18, 1972. He reported to the General Assembly of Sedos, which had devoted its June session to the subject before the Symposium: the proposals of the African laity to their Bishops - developed in Accra and forwarded by the Consilium de Laicis (Sedos 72/556 ff).

Fr. Agostoni expressed his admiration at the calibre of the personalities of the 45 Bishops who took part in the meeting. He was confident that such a group of able leaders could have taken major decisions on Church policy - if the Symposium had been geared for this. As things turned out, however, what it actually produced was a series of conferences and group discussions on topics other than the conclusions and recommendations of the African laity. In fact, the outcome was that these were never discussed nor even read in a plenary session; they finally got through only because they were presented as an annex to the conclusions of one of the groups. Again, when the Symposium came round to considering the African "hot spots" - Burundi, Mozambique, Rhodesia, the Sudan, Uganda - the session developed into a briefing session rather than into a discussion. No documentation had been circulated and, consequently, no stands could be taken.

Fr. Agostoni's impression was that, at that level, organizers should not expect Bishops to start from scratch to consider a problem, but rather study proposals for its solution prepared at some other level, well before the actual meeting of the Symposium. The origin of this difficulty seemed to be the lack of clarity as regards the functions of the Symposium itself. Some of its members were still reluctant to be in any way tied down by its conclusions. As a matter of fact, the proposal of a "watchdog committee" for African developments failed to get through. In these circumstances, the best that it could offer was an occasion for Bishops to come together and exchange views. In this sense, the experience of the 3rd Symposium was very positive, and the way was wide open for the next obvious step: to come together to exchange viewpoints in view of a common, pan-African, approach to the pastoral needs of this great continent.

c) The Namur 42nd Missiology Week on 'MISSION IN A TIME OF REVOLUTIONS'

- Namur, August 23-31, 1972

Sr. Hélène offered two points for reflection before reporting on the session:

- The Missiology Week could serve as a launching pad for Sedos Members to be sent out into the revolutionary age with the best of the heart of the Church.
- Sedos Mission members should study the topic of this week much further. They have living documentation services in the persons of Bro. Gottwald, fsc, and Sr. Joan Burke, snc-n, both present at the Missiology Week.

Speakers

These were fourteen: 4 Belgians, 1 English, 2 Canadians, 5 French, 1 Brazilian and 1 Portuguese.

Participants

There were fewer participants this year - 88 of whom 37 were women - compared to the 147 of last year. This fact can be partly accounted for by the need for a renewed approach to the methodology of the Week. The participants expressed their wish to see the Non-Western countries represented - Africa, Asia, etc.

Topics

These included a wide-range vision focused on Revolutions, the World, the City and the Church: -Gospel and Revolution

- Culture and Revolution
- Guidelines of Church Teaching on Revolutions and Violence
- Role of Church Leaders in Revolutions
- the Way of Non-Violence

There were talks and discussions on such issues as: the Japanese Revolution

- French West Africa
- Moslem Africa
- Angola, Mozambique
- Latin America

Methodology

- There were two, three and four exposés per day with afternoon group discussions and a daily plenary session with reports from the various groups.
- This was considered the weak point as we did not have sufficient time for thorough discussions and practical conclusions.
- A recommendation was therefore made to revise the methodology e.g. one exposé a day with ample time for discussion both with the speaker and in groups, with a plenary session with daily conclusions.

Some highlights on the Content of the Week

The following views are personal and far from comprehensive.

- i) My impression of the week was that for once, to my knowledge, Church members faced squarely, or at least attempted to do so, the Social Revolutions, in their signs and their impact.

cont'd

N.B. Fr. Masson, sj, executive secretary of the Missiology Week, publishes the Missiology Week book yearly comprising all the conferences, interventions and resolutions.

- ii) We met a deep challenge in the person of a 'charismatic or prophetic man', Mr. Jean Goss-Mayr*, the Apostle of Christ's love for Man, this Love revealed as the most powerful incentive to invent means and ways of helping the poor, the oppressed, the underprivileged, of bringing about more justice and peace to more and more men on earth. I discovered in this man, a simple, direct, inspired, truly living Christian. I also thought of him for the Sedos December Workshop (Health) on "How can we bring about Change?", because the final purpose we all seek is one and the same: the dignity and welfare of total man in developing countries.
- iii) For the first time also, we have come down to a living, practical conclusion: a proposal to the Holy See, relative to a situation of injustice in Mozambique and Angola. Fr. Masson, sj, and myself, have been mandated by the Missiology Week to have an encounter with the due Authority in the Vatican. (The content of the proposal is not to be published before its official presentation to the Vatican).
- iv) We have chosen as theme for next year, a topic focusing on the Role of Women - Missions - Church - World. The exact wording is to be determined as core of the theme within the next few months.
- v) We have lived a very rich, spiritual experience of Ecumenism with the ten Protestant members present at the Missiology Week. Twice a day we shared the same prayers: Lauds or some form of Morning Service, and the Eucharistic Liturgy.
While ideas on ecumenism are debated lengthily, life expresses spontaneously the solution of the debate. Some kind of general consensus prevailed among us so that we tacitly agreed to recognize the other Churches; beyond ideas that separate, love was there to unite.
- vi) On the one hand, I attend an O.U.M. meeting in Rome - we speak about ideas; it is necessary; on the other hand, I attend the Missiology Week - we live ideas, in truth, very simply.

Some thoughts gleaned among others

- The World Bank has published statistics revealing that Violent Revolutions have convulsed only one wealthy country whereas these Violent Revolutions occur --
 - 48% in average revenue countries
 - 69% in poverty stricken areas
 - 87% in the poorest of all countries
- Among other purposes of Violent Revolutions are found --
 - political independence to be achieved
 - socio-economical balance to be implemented
 - fight against any vestige of colonization
 - nationalizing key industries
 - confiscating lands belonging to the wealthy
- All Revolutions have one element in common: radical if not drastic change, a sudden break-down of a situation; the break-down is always violent.
- cont'd

* Mr. Jean Goss-Mayr is International Secretary of the I.F.O.R (International Fellowship of Reconciliation)

- Most revolutions are preceded or accompanied by a cultural revolution as in China, by a religious revolution as in Tibet, but they all carry in their wake some form of political, socio-economical, religious, cultural revolution.
- Revolution seems to be inevitably accompanied by violence, not necessarily so, but mostly so.
- The purpose of a revolution is always to create a better situation, to change injustice, poverty, oppression into justice, prosperity and peace.
- A spiritual revolution should take place in the Missionaries whose purpose is Love and Service.
- The Missiology Week wished to find out those attitudes which we should take on - facing revolutions.

From Mr. Jean Goss-Mayr - A Few Thoughts

(He is all in favour of the Martin Luther King approach)

- Be a witness through information
- Be a witness in and through the government
- Government is what you allow it to be
- We are responsible for our leaders
- To dialogue with leaders, we must believe in the Man in the leader
- Our cowardice calls for tyrants; we make them, we support them
- We are unconscious collaborators and partners by our very silence
- Truth -- speak the truth even if you must die on the Cross out of love for men, as Christ died.

Sr. Hélène de l'Annonciation
Daughters of Wisdom

THE I.A.M.S. CONFERENCE ON 'MISSION in the context of RELIGIONS and SECULARISATION'

- Driebergen, August 1972

POST IMPRESSIONS (one month later) - B. Torma

1. - We are in the same boat - Protestants and RC's - as regards the Mission today: the problem is really the new context in which we have to operate - a context at best indifferent to religious values.
2. - The conference paused on one such characteristic: Secularisation - which translates this indifference into political (new states), economic (socialist/capitalist) and social (welfare) structures.
3. - Sociological analysis helps us to be lucid - This is what the conference did - but hardly offers solutions: most of the factors identified are beyond our reach:- politics, economics and social trends.
4. - Theological analysis can console us by reminding us of the 'biblical remnant', of the supreme Lordship and freedom of Our Lord.
5. - But both are long-term. We also need a short-term view. We should call on sociology and theology to provide it - by reading for us the signs of the next stage.
6. - Guidelines for action
 - a) Their documentation: letters of missionaries dead long ago. Why not those of today? I sought to 'plug' the Sedos Documentation Service into the circuit. But there is a long way to go as some participants are convinced that the best we can do is to pull out even if they simultaneously assure you that much more good than harm is being done in specific cases. I do not think they know what they are doing. We should tell them.
 - b) One clear, short-term proposal which emerged was: do your best to make your men (and women) aware of their conditioning as overseas operators - by home culture and by the local culture. Conditioning through impersonal forces (beyond them - yours truly cannot help being a Maltese!).
 - c) A consoling note from Africa:
Somebody from Berlin said Westerners have to be converted. Otherwise they will continue to pollute the Gospel. Africans beware!
The African reply was: Despite your pollution, we did see through to your ideals, to your Message. We will try to live it - perhaps better than you did.

There was a plea for theologians to take Marxist and other criticism more seriously.
 - d) There was little about the major Religions in the discussion except that they are as troubled as we are.
 - e) Little mention of Latin America.

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES
=====

1. The Atonement Friars of the Centro Pro Unione invite you to participate in a "conversation" with a Buddhist and a Hindu in order to deepen your appreciation of these two living faiths.

The principal participants in the Conversation will be:

Dr. G.P. MALALSEKERA of Colombo, Ceylon, director
of publication for the Encyclopedia on Buddhism

and

Dr. K. SIVARAMAN, Associate Professor, Dept. of
Religion Mc Master University, Hamilton, Ont. Canada

The Conversation will take place on Monday, October 9th at 5 pm at the Centro Pro Unione, Via S. Maria dell'Anima, 30 (Piazza Navona).

All who are interested are invited to attend.

2. Cardinal ZOUNGRANA's appeal to Missionary Institutes.

In his opening address to the SECAM Assembly at Kampala, Uganda, last August, the Cardinal voiced this appeal to missionary-sending institutes (French text):

"Je veux parler d'abord des Instituts Missionnaires et dire combien nous leur serions reconnaissants de ne point se laisser aller à l'erreur déprimante de certains missionnaires qui pensent qu'ils doivent s'en aller pour que l'Eglise en Afrique soit africaine. Illusion! Ils doivent rester en changeant simplement de mentalité dans l'esprit de service de l'Eglise en Afrique."

3. With reference to "BULLETIN No. 28, 22nd Sept. 1972: ENCORE SUR LES COMMUNAUTES DE BASE", Fr. D. O'Sullivan, CSSp informs that he has additional literature on the subject, which he is willing to share with anyone contacting him (via Clivo di Cinna, 195 - 00136 Roma).

SECRETARIATE DIARY

=====

AUGUST 1972

- 16 The secretariate reopens after a summer break.
- 19-22 Fr. Tonna, on behalf of Sedos, attends the I.A.M.S. (Missiology) Conference at Driebergen, Holland, as reported in Bulletin 25.

SEPTEMBER

- 5 Fr. Eilers, svd, from the Catholic Media Council, calls at the secretariate.
- 7 Executive secretary visits the Generalate of the Consolata Fathers.
 - Meeting on Burundi at the White Fathers.
- 11 Members of Sedos Executive Committee meeting.
- 12 Fr. Tonna attends the Naples Seminar on Urban Social Work.
- 13 2nd meeting on Burundi.
- 15 First copies of "America Latina Comunicaciòn" arrive at the secretariate from the Nigrizia publishers.
- 18 Visit from the Procurator General of the Scalabriniani Fathers.
 - Sedos Internal Communications Group meets at SEDOS.
- 19 Visit from Mr. Fang and Mr. Lung. The former is the Director of the Industrial Mission Committee of the Christian Council of Hong Kong.
 - Meeting of the four Chairmen of the MLC study with the President of Sedos.
- 20 Fr. Tonna meets Fr. Buhlmann to discuss their project: an evaluation of the Mission.
- 26 36th Assembly of Generals at the SVD Generalate with a visit to Sedos.
- 28 Prince Rachewiltz and Prof. Ilardi have a meeting with Fr. Tonna and Fr. Ibba at Sedos to discuss the Keimer Project.
 - Meeting of Sedos Development Work Group at the SSND.
