

73/5

Rome, 9th February, 1973

To all Superiors General
 To all their Delegates for SEDOS
 To all Members of the SEDOS Group

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COMING EVENTS:

VERY IMPORTANT

HEALTH TASK FORCE - Sister Gilmory Simmons, M.D. of the Maryknoll Sister, who is the only Catholic member of the Ecumenical Medical Liaison Office in Geneva, sponsored by CIDSE/SEDOS as Staff Consultant of the Christian Medical Commission (CMC) of the WCC at Geneva since June 1971, who had field experience in Korea and Bolivia (investigating medical programmes of the churches in that area), is passing through Rome next week. We are calling a meeting with her on:

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13th at 4.00 pm at the SEDOS Secretariat.

Sr. Annemarie de Vreede will chair the meeting.

ALL INTERESTED ARE CORDIALLY INVITED.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - February 19th - 4.00 pm - SEDOS Secretariat
 SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS - " 19th - 4.00 pm - OMI Generalate, via Aurelia 290
 DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP - " 21st - 4.00 pm - SEDOS Secretariat

Sincerely yours,
 Fr. Leonzio BANO, fscj

H O N G K O N G
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a) The People

1. It did not take me long to meet the people in Hong Kong. The plane skimmed over rows and rows of high rise apartment buildings just before it touched down. In the packed buses - double decker and light vans - I found myself overwhelmed by the seething humanity: one even fell asleep on my shoulders! In the streets the cars nudged at me, the hawkers implored me, the pedestrians cut across - fast and single minded.
2. The only problem was that people were invariably busy - too busy for a quiet chat. That is, unless they thought it could be useful. Once it was raining and I had picked the wrong bus. As soon as I descended, a young man greeted me by name and I told him I was lost. He helped me but not before covering me with his umbrella and asking a lot of very specific questions about points I had raised in some previous meeting.
3. This is Hong Kong: a people responding magnificently to a challenge. The challenge: 4 m people on 400 square miles - by normal standards uninhabitable because the land is hilly and waterless. And even unmanageable because most of these people were refugees - with no foothold at all in the place. The only major resources were their own resources - which they combined with the strategic harbour and the pragmatic British system in order to become one of the success stories of Asia. The political system ensured a free port area which set the scene for a practically pure system of capitalism. It also ensured a crucial ingredient: stability. This could be done because Hong Kong reports to London - and not to the local people. Economically Hong Kong prospered. Its trade and its manufacturing industries provide employment for the population. It imports from, exports to the whole world (including mainland China which, until recently, could derive up to 50% of its foreign earnings through Hong Kong). The economy is now moving into advanced technology in order to offset the threat of the arrival on the world market of cheaper products from Taiwan, Korea and Singapore.
4. Today, fourteen years after the great peaceful invasion by Chinese refugees, Hong Kong is a bustling city, an expression of China, an experiment in capitalism. The struggle for survival has been fought and brilliantly won. But following close on the commercial and industrial revolution which it implied is the social revolution, a phenomenon which might dominate the lives of the younger generations.
5. The signs are there: people in their early twenties have not shared the trauma of the refugee period with their elder brothers. For them the problem is not to survive but to live a full life. The city promises it, mainland China proclaims it, capitalism takes it for granted. Like a good city Hong Kong is compact, has excellent communication systems - plus the advantage of a single, dominant language - the Cantonese branch of Chinese. All this goes to promote intense interaction. Like good Chinese, the Hong Kong people are practical - accepting the current situation without giving up their identity with the great China.

Meanwhile, they make the best possible use of the opportunities offered by the capitalist system (-I heard of housemaids following the stock market!). And yet the full life does not come. Because the social reality of Hong Kong is still characterized by a very thin middle class. The great majority are workers, hawkers or absorbed by the hotel and tourist services. And they know that the people who pull the strings constitute the tiny higher class of ex Shanghai businessmen, British civil servants and representatives of the multinational corporations. It is small consolation to then that below them are the small minorities of the Hukkas and the boat people.

6. The social revolution will probably be conditioned by family loyalty. This is still a reality - in spite of the constant erosion of the urbanization process. The elders still retain considerable influence and a man can pass on his savings to a relative in need without the least hesitation. Solidarity and sharing, is very evident among relatives. And it contrasts with the sharp individualism and "give and take" tactics of life beyond the family borders.
7. Meanwhile considerable headway has been made to face up to the social challenge. The network of schools, hospitals, and social services has been growing steadily. The education system relies heavily on the private sector - which it often subsidizes. It is still struggling with the shortage of places - especially in the higher secondary levels. Pupils know that in each class, as one goes up the ladder, a certain percentage has to be eliminated and this often becomes a veritable rat race. The pupils, backed by their families, usually respond with a fierce eagerness to learn and to make it. I can never forget the library of Caritas: I could drop a needle and hear it fall - in the midst of a packed hall of young men and women with their eyes glued to their books! Or the waves of boys and girls going in and out of the Raimondi College - which, like all others, operates on two shifts per day. The health services have undergone a steady expansion and the private sector has, again, a lot to say. The social services are often under attack but allowance must be made to the magnitude of the task. About ten years ago you could see whole acres of squatters from the Peak: now you see housing estates. Late in 1972, for example, the Government announced a 10 year plan to solve the housing problem.
8. Ominous signals however, are coming from the law and order sector. Crime is rising - the current rate is practically a murder a week. Drugs are also in evidence.
9. In the religious field, Hong Kong again presents a familiar urban phenomenon - pluralism - or a "free for all". There has been a notable revival of Buddhism and Taoism, in the wake of the Buddhist refugees. Animism is still active - especially in the villages of the New Territories. There is also a Jewish community about 10,000 Muslims and 8,000 Hindus. The various Christian groups have been active - and often heavily involved in social and educational work - a pattern which seems to have inspired the other major religions. The Catholic Cathedral has been replaced, as a Sign, by its crown of high rise Caritas buildings!!

10. Over and above these various sub systems, what seems to distinguish Hong Kong is its anomalous position as a "colonial" capitalistic appendix to "free" communist China. Things almost came to a head in the late sixties, when the Communists were rioting in the streets. But then it became evident that China wanted Hong-Kong to remain as it is - at least for the time being. Hong Kong, it has been said, is living on borrowed time. What really struck me was the urge to survive generated by this unnatural climate. People saw in me a threat to the minimum of security they have somehow achieved. I was a stranger and could have new ideas which might upset the delicate equilibrium. And yet, paradoxically, they were bombarding me with questions, pleading for new ideas: they knew that in a changing world, they can only continue to survive by continuing to change. And, like good businessmen, they were ready to risk!

The Church

11. The environment was certainly hostile to the 4 m people as they struggled to survive and to move on. The case seemed to have been different for the Church: the crisis period of the early fifties was favourable to it as it grasped the occasion to expand and to consolidate.
12. The responses of the people and those of the Church to the same, current problems seem to be also different in the early seventies. The people move on to accept the challenge of the never ceasing changes with determination and decision. The Church, right now, tends to give the impression that it . . . shows signs of disarray as it struggles with the harsh realities of advanced urbanization, Chinese culture and capitalism. This is a good omen because it suggests a search for a better response to the current situation.
13. The Church, in fact, seems to be concluding a period of consolidation. The meteoric expansion of the 50's left the Church with a membership of around a third of a million, bringing the RC - non RC ratio to I to II. The growth was connected with the response given by the Church to the great refugee challenge and to the social problems it brought in its wake (housing, schools, employment, hospitals relief etc). In fact the Church is still providing services which go far beyond its membership: there are 3 non RC's to every RC in the Catholic school population. More significantly it is connected with the refuge it provided to the refugees: "If I become a member of this Church, I automatically gain a firm foothold in Hong Kong". Because the Church is part of Hong Kong.

Consolidation proceeded at a very fast pace. The Church made full use of the freedom, support ensured by Govt. to strengthen its structures. Other Churches contributed generously - in terms of personnel, funds and know how. Today Hong Kong is one of the best structured and most healthy Churches in Asia. It is relatively well supplied with Priests, Religious and active Laity. This pastoral personnel is well supported by efficient institutions - the seminary, on going formation facilities, retreat houses. The general faithful are serviced by a very active liturgical equipe. by prolific secretariats, by the schools, by various lay movements and, of course by a full blown parish network.

The passage from this consolidation stage to the creative phase will be delicate. I was repeatedly asked the question: why do we seem to have reached a ceiling in conversion work? by old hands as well as by the younger Catholics. There is a general, vague, awareness that something, some place, has to change. But as soon as I began to be more specific I invariably was bound to find a wall. This is understandable: here are people who have achieved the minimum of security necessary to lead a normal life against all odds. The slightest change, especially if suggested by an overseas guest, could be a threat to this minimum. Extreme prudence was evident and justified. And yet on several occasions I could also perceive the quest breaking through. Older Pastors and Missionaries were worried that the younger RC's kept coming up with all sorts of embarrassing questions about the very basis of their faith: "What shall we do?"

Again, this is also understandable: the under 20's are in a situation different from that of their parents who had come over from China, as total strangers - with practically no kin, no address, no foothold in HK and who unconsciously clutched at the welcoming hand of the RC's. The younger generation cannot see the Church in this light: they already have a foothold in HK because they were born there!

Which means they demand a new missionary and pastoral approach: they will belong to the Church freely - for its own sake.

14. It is normal that in a period of groping for the right answers, there emerges a diversity of views on the basic question "which approach is called for by God's plan for Hong Kong?" It is therefore imperative to catch all these views and to try to fuse them in the true Catholic spirit: unity in diversity. In this context the Bishop's declared short term priority of establishing a working system of collegiality merits the whole hearted support of all - inside and outside Hong Kong. Only such a structure can ensure absolute obedience to God's Plan of Salvation for the Hong Kong community. Because only such a structure can bring together for discernment purposes and in charity the various insights into God's will as they are perceived by individuals and groups.

The structure will reach its highest expression in the Senate of Priests. But to be fully effective, it has to rely on a number of technical services like a good documentation and information office and a pastoral planning department. Such services would furnish the upper consultative bodies with the basic data they will need as they push on with their search for God's Plan.

c) Dialogue

15. The details of this Plan may not be known yet. Indeed, they will be revealed day by day, in the measure of the seriousness of our search for them. But the main direction is already known: God wants us to open up - to Him (as He is revealed in Christ), to our brothers and sisters - within and outside the Church. This opening up will not be merely intentional. It is destined to be existential, producing a maximum exposure to the Lord and to the Other in view of a maximum sharing. This is dialogue.

16. What struck me in Hong Kong was the idea that this stance of dialogue could be what, basically and often unconsciously, most thinking Catholics are searching. It is not merely a question of person to person dialogue. I had several occasions when I saw this in action. It is also a question of structures: establishing deliberate lines of communication with the people who man the basic institutions of the city, the Chinese community, the capitalist fort. The view that most of these are beyond recovery and should only be contested and denounced is really too simplistic and could go against the spirit of the *Gaudium et Spes*, taking us back to the Church and world rather than Church in world stance. Which would in no way silence us into acceptance of capitalist violence and oppression. It is simply a question of remaining open to the next "sign".
17. In HK several lines of communications with the culture already exist. I had a "business - lunch" with people manning strategic places who responded to the Gospel call for something within - and beyond - the things they were already doing. It was my impression, however, that committed Catholics were too shy to push the communication to the sphere of dialogue. This is understandable: dialogue exposes them to the Other and thus renders them vulnerable. But it is a risk which can be taken if we place our security where it belongs: faith in the presence of the same Lord in me and in the Other.
18. It seemed to me that education to such missionary dialogue could become the major pastoral concern of all Church personnel. For example, the Catholic schools could start training each Catholic pupil to dialogue with the 3 non Catholics around him. This could be more productive than the current debate about the validity of our educational services. Especially if the system is adjusted to allow more involvement, in this particular field, to the Priests and Religious in the schools. The model would take a different form in the health and social services, where the counterpart in the dialogue would be an adult.
19. If a concerted pastoral effort is made by all the Church institutions in this direction, it is very probable that it would mean a major step forward in the direction of Catholicity. Because the ground would have been laid for the germination of a diffused attitude of openness towards non Catholics. An openness which would eventually embrace the Catholics - and thus heal any existing divisions by making them unreal. In other words it would transform the Catholic group or groups into a Church. Herein lies the border between sociology and theology. Sociologically a group is a better group if its internal cohesion shows a certain closure to non members. Theologically, a Church becomes a sect if it betrays signs of this closure. The faith makes a religious group "explode" by activating the presence of Christ who sends His disciples on mission.

d) Evangelization

20. What is the state of this Mission in Hong Kong? In terms of evangelization it can be surveyed from the point of view of the local culture and from that of the person to person relationships of the ordinary Christian. The first approach invites the question: are the city structures evangelized? Is the Chinese culture aware of the Gospel proposal? Can capitalism be evangelized? The answers cannot be found in merely conceptual debate and thinking. They have to be rooted in our living - as people and with people immersed in this culture and in its major expressions. A "living" which would make all the more imperative the second approach.
21. If dialogue is an attitude, evangelization is its major expression. Or, to put it simply, its highest achievement. I was struck by the way in which the particular Hong Kong blend of urban life - Chinese culture - capitalist practice - goes straight to the "achievement mind". And Chinese Catholics may have a crucial role to play in teaching the rest of us how to be "achievement minded" or simply practical by showing us how, in fact, they can, first, transform our ecclesiological concept into an attitude of dialogue (Church = openness) and then how to push this attitude to its logical conclusion - evangelization (Church = openness = Mission). In other words I think the Hong Kong Catholics could produce a stimulating model of how to change a group into a Church (dialogue) and, consequently, how to transform a Church into a Mission (evangelization).
22. The scene seems to be set for this exciting venture. Around the world missionary minded Catholics are saying that Hong Kong will have a major part to play in the Christian future of the Chinese people. They are aware that the epoch of the foreign missionary is ended and that it will be Chinese who will make the Gospel proposal to the Chinese. Hong Kong Catholics are more practical: we will think of that when the present situation changes. To me, it seems that the best way of preparing themselves for the future is by deliberately going on mission now to the 4 million Chinese around them in Hong Kong. This is certainly a more realistic proposal (ratio 1 RC to 11 non RC's) than that of evangelizing 800 million! In the meantime it could be the present test of the future Mission. Without this test, it is probable that the fate of an absorbed Hong Kong will be that of a closed up, irrelevant minority. Because Hong Kong Catholics would not have had the experience of evangelization and would naturally adopt the defensive stance.
23. **Seen** from this angle, the present prospects - both at the cultural and personal level - do not seem to be rosy. From the point of view of the local Chinese population, the impact of the Church and its Message seems - to say the least - ambivalent. On the one hand it is generally acknowledged that the Church runs first class schools, excellent hospitals, extensive welfare services. On the other hand it is often (perhaps consequently) classed with the wealthy (and powerful) with the Government (and status quo) with the past (and therefore with the West). All the time we must remember that from outside, the Church is not as important as it looks from inside. Though it is fairly visible, it is only one of so many "cults" which, altogether, occupy a rather marginal place in busy, HK society.

When distinguished at all from these "religions", the Catholic Church is often perceived as the "group of God" - (in contradistinction to the "group of Christ" who constitute the Protestants!)

If we have to apply the principle that Mission starts with the emergence of the Church as a Sacramentum Mundi to those around it, we have to conclude that as a Sign, the Catholic Church is not very visible. When it is visible, it hardly gives the right signal. Because it is not perceived as the "company of those who love one another (because of their belief in Christ)" but rather as a handy supplier of services and as a potentially dangerous holder of power.

24. Still we must remember that God's own plan for the evangelization of the Chinese community of HK is already there. We should rely on it rather than on our past experiences. Remembering that, as it is revealed in our present experiences, it will prove to go beyond and to soar above our vision to the promised future. These experiences are there, their "signals" ready to be picked, both in the familiar parochial and diocesan structures and the new experiments (worker priests, small communities, pastoral centres, catechesis, retreats, liturgical groups, and so on).
25. The first, urgent, step then becomes one of carefully picking them up, filtering them, putting them together, in a collegial quest for new models of obedience to Christ's mandate to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation" (Mk 15.15).

Fr. B. TONNA

FORMATION PERMANENTE

Le Service pour la Formation Permanente, Rue du Bac, 128
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nous envoie quelques exemplaires du programme et du bulletin d'inscription pour l'année 1973. Ces imprimés sont à votre disposition au Secrétariat de SEDOS.

Ces cours sont au nombre de six. Puisqu'ils sont destinés surtout aux Missionnaires en congé, ils auront lieu pendant la période de Juin à Septembre.

Voici les informations essentielles sur ces six cours :

1. Chartres, 21 - 30 Juin 1973
LE PROJET MISSIONNAIRE: EVANGELISER
Quel est l'objectif de la Mission en référence à l'Evangile et à la parole vécu dans l'Eglise ?
2. Bièvres 1, 8-14 Juillet 1973
VIE DE GROUPE ET COMMUNICATION
Les Missionnaires responsables ou membres de groupes s'interrogent sur les possibilités de communication dans les relations humaines suite à une prise de conscience des phénomènes de la vie de groupes.
3. Bièvres 11, 15-21 Juillet 1973
SE REFERER A L'EVANGILE
L'activité concrète du Missionnaire (catéchèse, liturgie, homélie, etc...) référée à la Parole de Dieu. Les communautés de croyants interrogent l'Ecriture.
4. Lyon, 1, 19-25 Août 1973
CATECHISER, C'EST FAIRE QUOI ?
Quels sont les problèmes de la transmission du Message dans une autre culture? Qu'est-ce qu'évangéliser? Les Missionnaires analysent leurs propres expériences.
5. Lyon II, 26 Août - 1er Septembre 1973
FOI ET COMPORTEMENT
Le Missionnaire et le milieu ethnique dans lequel il oeuvre. Réflexion sur le rôle de l'Evangile au sein des différents comportements culturels.
6. Toulouse, 9- 15 Septembre 1973
LE DEPART EN MISSION A-T-IL ENCORE UN SENS?
Les Missionnaires se sentent souvent contestés en mission et chez eux. Quels sont les buts de la présence d'un chrétien, au nom de sa foi, dans une culture étrangère

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES

I. PA PLAN OF VISITS FOR 1973 -

- Fr. Chaput will visit the British Province in May.
- Fr. Grosskortenhuis, the Dutch Province in February, the Canadian and American Provinces in August, September and October, the Mali region in December.
- Fr. Neven will visit Zambia Region in January-February, and East and West Volta Regions in July.
- Fr. Perrier will visit the Belgian Province in the first quarter.

II. CORSO DI AGGIORNAMENTO PER MISSIONARI - Pontificio Ateneo ANTONIANUM -

25 settembre - 15 ottobre 1973. Il corso intensivo è destinato a religiosi e religiose che attendono all'apostolato missionario, con lezioni al mattino e lavori di gruppo al pomeriggio, e comprenderà l'aggiornamento biblico-patristico, teologico-dogmatico, morale, ascetico, liturgico-pastorale, sociale, ecc.

Prenotazioni entro il mese di giugno a: P. Roberto Zavalloni, ofm, "Antoniano", via Merulana, 124, 00185 Roma, Tel. 770.551.

III. MHM will hold their annual assembly at Mill Hill (not Kisumu as previously announced) from 19th to 30th March, 1973.

Visits: Superior General: Basankusu, April 10th to May 5th.
Fr. B. Sullivan: Rome, 1-20 February.

LISTS OF DOCUMENTS RECEIVED DURING JANUARY

compiled by Sister Agnetta, SSpS

I. Internal

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Institute</u>	<u>Title of Document</u> (Number of pages in brackets)
1.210	SSND	A Mission Morning - Encounter with B. Tonna of SEDOS. (1)
1.211	SEDOS	Informazioni sull'Egitto. (3)
1.212	MM(Srs.)	Press Release: Statement of Maryknoll Sisters in Africa. (1)
1.213	SCMM-M	SEDOS Workshop on Change in Health Care. (3)
1.214	Ibid.	The Missionary Apostolate in East and Southeast Asia, by Horacio de la Costa, SJ. (13)
1.215	Ibid.	Our Apostolate in Africa and Madagascar Today, by P. Arrupe, SJ. (8)
1.216	SEDOS	Chile. (1)
1.217	Ibid.	Venezuela. (1)
1.218	Ibid.	Ricerca di Documentazione sullo Zaire e sul Ciad
1.219	SA	Community "Evaluations". (28)
1.220	OMI	Community. (27)

II. External

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title of Document</u> (Number of pages in brackets)
4.735	<u>Sette Giorni</u> , Rome	Il Sinodo dei Vescovi: una Chiesa che cerca.
4.736	Ibid.	Il Sinodo dei Vescovi: il peso della storia.
4.737	Pontifical Commission for Social Communications	Deuxième Rencontre Commission Pontificale - Representants des Instituts Religieux (Palazzo San Carlo, mardi 21 Novembre '72). (3)
4.738	Inter Documentation Co. Switzerland	Libya: Documents on Economic Development 1960-1971. (18)
4.739	Ibid.	English Legal Manuscripts on Microfiche. (3)
4.740	Ibid.	The Gazetteers of India. (2)
4.741	Ibid.	Statistics. (7)
4.742	Ibid.	Economics. (8)

Lists of Documents Received during January (page 2)

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title of Document (Number of pages in brackets)</u>
4.743	Inter Documentation Co., Switzerland	Education. (5)
4.744	Ibid.	Law. (2)
4.745	Ibid.	Political Science. (6)
4.746	Bureau des Oeuvres Medicales, CEZ, Zaire	Report of Activities in 1972. (4)
4.747	CISRS, India	Witness to Christ by C.T. Venugopal. (35)
4.748	Ibid.	Ramalinga Swamy by T. Dayanandan Francis. (39)
4.749	National Pastoral Centre, Accra, Ghana	The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. (7)
4.750	International Finance Corporation (IFC)	Private Foreign Investment in the '70s. (10)
4.751	International Educational Development Inc., N.Y.	Proceedings of an International Seminar on Population. Oct. 30-Nov.1, 1972. (38)
4.752	Multimedia International	The Church and Communication Research. (20)
4.753	IDOC	The Future of the Missionary Enterprise. (40)
4.754	Zambia Association of Sisterhoods.	For Christ in Zambia. (34)
4.755	INTERCARITAS	IXe Assemblée Générale de Caritas Internationalis, Rome, 8-12 Mai, 1972. And Rapport de l'Administrateur sur les activités de Caritas Internationalis 1969-1972. (42)
4.756	Antiquariaat ATLAS, Holland	Catalogue 3: Geography, ethnology, Missiology. (80)
4.757	LWF	Forum I: Reactions. (56)
4.758	Ibid.	A Basic Bibliography on the Christian-Marxist Dialog. (3)
4.759	Ibid.	Christians for Socialism in Santiago. (4)