



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Tuesday, May 8, at 16.00 at the Sedos Secretariat with the following agenda:

1. Agenda of the Assembly of June 5, 1973
  - Election of new Treasurer
  - Urban Mission Study
2. Follow up of the brainstorming session (document annexed).
3. Part time work at the Secretariat.
4. Other matters.

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin TONNA  
Executive Secretary

SALVATION MISSION EVANGELIZATION

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1. A brainstorming session was held on April 9, 1973 at 16.00 at the SJ Generalate to orient further the special doctrinal committee set up by USG - Commission VI to study the concepts of Salvation, Mission and Evangelization. Members of Comm. VI and of SEDOS were invited and simultaneous translation into English and French was provided.

Present were:

Fr. Ch. RÜHLING, svd - Fr. A. Bundervoet, msc - Fr. O'Sullivan, cssp - Bro. H. Boyle, cfx  
 Fr. Van Haegenborgh, cicm - Fr. Scavaglieri, ofm-cap - Fr. J. Westhoff, msc -  
 Fr. P. Blaine, ofm - Fr. G. Motter, imc - Fr. L. Piacere, sx - Mgr. Gazza, sx -  
 Sr. C. Oliver, rscj - Sr. M.T. Arbide, fmm - Sr. A. Dufault, fmm - Sr. D. Alvorns, fmm  
 Fr. Doury, rsv - Fr. G. Linssen, cicm - Fr. Ary Roest Crolius, sj - Fr. Houdijk, cssp -  
 Fr. Kaufmann, wf - Fr. G. Asdonk, srm - Fr. G. Coyne, sds - Fr. E. Verdieu, cssp -  
 Sr. S. Demey, icm - Sr. A.M. de Vreede, scmm - Sr. A. Martini, pmn - Sr. Lourdes, fmm -  
 Sr. Castejon, rsc (Translator) - Sr. Jeannette, sa (Translator).

In the Chair: Fr. W. Goossens, cicm.

From SEDOS : Fr. B. Tonna and Miss A. Fernandez.

2. Fr. Goossens illustrated the objectives of the Committee: a) to prepare the thinking of Missionaries for the 1974 Synod b) to follow up the insight of the WCC - Bangkok Conference c) to draw missionary conclusions. He then introduced the members of the Committee present: Fr. Linssen, Fr. Bundervoet, Fr. Kaufmann.
3. Fr. Linssen stated that the basic question hinges on the concept of Salvation. Evangelization and mission become concepts relevant to contemporary reality and to the personal motivation of our Christians only in relation to Salvation. More specifically, he went on to ask :

- How can we make mission (evangelisation) more meaningful for those engaged in it and for young people?
- Or, in other words, how can we make it more motivating?
- How can we give it a purpose that is relevant to today's realities?

Mission (in whatever sense) seems to have become less meaningful. ...

- Was it not too much church-centered? i.e. too much aimed at the growth (plantation) of the Church (especially the institutional church) and not sufficiently aimed at the salvation of man, at man's immediate, real needs ?

- Was our theological approach not too deductive (God-Christ-Church-man), at present the accent is more on the realities as we perceive them, i.e. on man reaching out for help and for answers which, we hope, he will ultimately receive from Christ.
- Is there no contradiction between missionary institutes claiming to be exclusively missionary (in the sense of being exclusively dedicated to preach the gospel to non-christians), while in fact they are working in christian parishes?
- Is our mission work (in the more traditional sense) not too exclusively occupied with working among the so-called pagans, while so many more people are also in need of Christ's salvation?
- Has our mission work not been too western, thus receiving a connotation of a kind of "spiritual colonialism"?

What is to be done?

- Return to the basic issues: see the mission of the Church (carried out in whatever form) as God's answer (in and through Jesus-Christ) to man's various needs; the history of salvation, all through man's history, manifested in the Old Testament and in Jesus Christ.
- Here we find an inductive element: man around us (and we ourselves included) in all his different situations of sin, evil, suffering, oppression, death; man with his uncertainties, man searching for answers, consolation, help, enlightenment; man in need of salvation.
- On the other hand we have Christ: God's incarnate love for the world, for every man in whatever situation. Christ is the answer. Christ is man's salvation. Christ as we know him in the Gospel, Christ as he is with us in our communities of faith and love. Christ with his Spirit, his word and sacraments.

Our basic idea therefore seems to be "salvation", because it relates to God who first revealed himself as "the Saviour", who sent Christ to save the world, who continues his plan of salvation through the Church, the sacrament of salvation.

Besides, it relates to man with his many needs.

It saves him from sin (reconciliation, redemption), suffering, oppression, poverty, death...

It saves him for : liberation, a better life (humanization, divinisation), to a hopeful existence toward of transcendental vision, restoration of God's image, in all dimensions of his existence.

4. Fr. Bundervoet referred to the recent meeting of the Urban + Industrial Group of the WCC in Rome and to its concerns to link theology with action. The passage of Luke 4, 18-20 (The Spirit of the Lord is upon me..) was taken literally. Oppression was all over us and it was creating poverty: Christians, like their Lord, were called to be among, with, the poor. Consequently Christians had to help them obtain power, to "empower" them - by making them aware of their potential. Socio-political action could -and should - be conducted by Christians in the name of their Lord, in terms of the magnificent of Zacchaeus: today salvation was experienced in this house.

In other words, our understanding of the mission has to go beyond the usual patterns of preaching the Good News geographically. It has to take note of the cultural milieux of living societies and, in particular, of the process of moving from slavery to freedom, from oppression to liberation.

This implies a new way of understanding the political consequences of Mission: the Church renews itself by ~~rethinking~~ the mission in terms of joining God's own liberation of men.

Fr. Bundervoet went on to remark that, of course, this did not exhaust the whole concept of mission. It did, however, put the stress on a **nevralgic** point : the efficacy of Salvation in the contemporary situation. There was obviously more in the Gospel than struggle for freedom. It was also a Way. Leading to Salvation. And the heart of Salvation was Love. In this sense we were called to be very creative in pulling down the walls which divided men. Evangelization seeks to teach, to be the leaven in the dough. The question was not how to "bury" our missionaries but how to make our way into the future. The Committee would go into the roots of WCC thinking (Moltmann etc.) in order to build bridges with our RCC theology of mission.

5. Fr. Kaufmann explained how the Committee had divided its work. Fr. Linssen would take care of the Theology of Salvation, Fr. Bundervoet of the Protestant and Catholic theologians, he himself (Kaufmann) of the Magisterium. Fr. Van den Weijden would concentrate on the contemporary scene - where sin -(or oppression) - was often found side by side with the search for truly human values. Bro. Basterrechea would go into the psychological analysis of the modern mind.
6. Fr. Goossens then invited those present to react. Comments are here organized under the four heads of a) theological concepts b) methodology of the study c) the contemporary socio-cultural situation and d) practical implications.

## 7. Suggestions

### a) CONCEPTS

The concepts of Salvation - Mission- Evangelization should not be reduced to one dimension. The concept of the Church (and its "plantatio") offers a crucial dimension

in their study. The implications can be very practical: there are still people who think of the Church in pre-Vatican terms.

Another important dimension is that of sin (conflict, oppression, the Cross). It will help avoid irresponsible, utopian conclusions. In this effort, importance should be given to the statements of Medellin and to the links between the concepts already studied in Latin America and elsewhere. A new theology was in the making. Mission is not just a question of making the weak strong. This would mean their integration in the Western model of world societies. It could be the proclamation of God's presence in the world today. The links between the three concepts are there and care should be taken not to introduce polarizations.

A point of particular importance would be the notion of the mandate to go on Mission. Where does it emanate from? What is it?

b) METHOD

As regards the method of the study, it is important to check how this "theology" performs in the local situations. In this respect it is essential to take off from "lived experiences". There is the question of liberating ourselves from our prejudices and of liberating others from unjust structures. This can, has, been done through faith in the Lord and this experience should be taken very seriously by theologians.

We should not put too much stress on the "transmission" of the Message. Evangelization is much more than a technique (or, worse, a "brainstorming" form of coercion).

The study group could usefully keep in mind a recurring question: liberation for what? In other words, where do we have to reach, ultimately, with the Mission. Perhaps we have to free men so that the love of God is activated and, consequently, Christ can live among, with, in men! This would imply that ultimately Christ would be present in Christian Communities. This could be the thrust of our institution: to help our missionaries live with the people, form Christian Communities with them. And thus discover Christ together with, in, them.

c) SITUATION

The study should also take care of the socio-cultural conditioning of the three concepts:

A message is perceived in different ways, depending in the condition of the receiver. Eventually ~~the~~ process involves a conditioning of the message itself. A study of attitudes could help the study commission to get to the core of the concepts under focus.

The sender of the Message must be aware of his own perception (and consequent conditioning) of the Message. It seems that we are still caught in a one way street: Westerners evangelize the rest. A more correct approach could be to think in terms of the participation of Westerners in Africa, etc. in the evangelization effort of the Africans etc.

This would help Westerners realize that they, too, need to be continually saved. And Africans, etc. that the Gospel Message does not necessarily bring in its wake Western domination. Mission is not the carrier of a specific model of Salvation experience but of Salvation itself.

In this context, the process of secularization and its impact on religion should also be taken into account.

d) IMPLICATIONS

On the more practical side, the study could usefully go into:

- the role of Sisters; in the past this was seen as part of the pre-evangelization effort (schools, hospitals, etc.) Sisters may be aware of their place in God's design of salvation. But does the Church see it ?
- the function of our Institutes and institutions in the world today (including the Western World). Are there better ways of serving the people in working for their Salvation ? It is good to note that spontaneous forms of Christian Community Living are developing parallel rather than counter to the institutional Church.
- the function of the concept of Mission in renewing the Church; Mission can make it a giver as well as a receiver of Salvation - through transcultural communication.

B. TONNA

II.4.73

SALUT - EVANGELISATION - MISSION  
(USG - Comm. VI - SEDOS - Réunion du 9.4.1973)

I. INTRODUCTION (par les membres de sous-commission de la Comm. VI)

1. Fr. Linssen, cism

A. Quelques difficultés de la mission aujourd'hui

- a) La question essentielle : comment rendre mission et évangélisation significatives aujourd'hui?  
Quelle est la motivation de la mission qui a un sens pour les missionnaires d'aujourd'hui?
- b) La Mission n'a-t-elle pas perdu un peu son sens en étant trop centrée sur l'établissement de l'Eglise comme institution et pas assez directement sur les besoins réels des hommes ?
- c) Notre théologie est trop déductive. Il faudrait commencer avec les besoins réels des hommes et non pas avec des principes généraux.
- d) Les instituts exclusivement missionnaires sont souvent absorbés par un travail de paroisse et perdent ainsi l'élan missionnaire vers ceux qui sont encore "loin".
- e) La mission a un caractère trop occidental.

B. Que faire ?

- a) Situer la mission dans l'histoire du salut. Les hommes autour de nous, avec leurs misères, pauvreté, oppression... ont besoin du salut, ils cherchent le salut et des réponses aux questions qui les angoissent.
- b) Le Christ, le Verbe incarné, est le salut.
- c) La théologie de la mission (de l'évangélisation) devrait donc se concentrer sur la réalité du salut:
  - Dieu qui sauve
  - l'homme qui a besoin d'être sauvé.

2. P. Bundervoet, msc

Ce serait vous induire en erreur de vous promettre de notre part les résultats d'une étude faite sur le thème de "SALUT - EVANGELISATION - MISSION". En effet, nous sommes au premier début de cette étude.



On s'est réuni tout juste deux fois pour délimiter un peu la tâche de chacun. Il se peut qu'il y ait des avantages à cela, sous ce point de vue que nous sommes enclins à vous inviter à prendre part à cet effort d'étude, qui prépare de loin le Synode de l'année prochaine. C'est le Père Kaufmann qui vous parlera plutôt de cette division du travail, au sein de notre commission, ce qui vous renseignera sur les terrains dont nous voulons faire la reconnaissance. Le Père Linssen et moi avons eu récemment une expérience, que nous ne pouvons pas mettre de côté, sans plus. La plus part d'entre nous ont entendu le rapport du P. Linssen sur la réunion de Bangkok, où la Commission pour la Mission et l'Évangélisation mondiale du Conseil Mondial des Églises a traité le thème: "SALVATION TODAY" - "SALUT AUJOURD'HUI".

Une partie de cette Commission pour la Mission et l'Évangélisation, notamment le groupe de la "Mission Urbaine et Industrielle" s'est réuni à Rome du 23 au 28 mars. J'y ai assisté en qualité d'observateur de l'Église Catholique. Je ne crois pas que notre étude doit commencer et terminer avec ce que font les Protestants, mais je crois que nous devons avoir le cœur ouvert devant leur contribution.

Quelles sont les lignes majeures que j'ai pu découvrir chez le groupe de Mission Urbaine et Industrielle ?

Je dirais tout de suite: une grande peur de s'arrêter à de belles théories fonctionnelles les théories de l'Évangile. Quand ils parlent de théologie, ils ajoutent : théologie en action ou théologie et action.

Pour eux le point de départ évangélique sur lequel toute leur théologie et action est construite est le texte avec lequel le Seigneur lui-même a commencé sa vie publique et a tracé son programme: Luc, 4, 18 à 20 et qui est une citation d'Isaïe 61, 1 et 2: "L'Esprit du Seigneur est sur Moi, parce qu'il m'a consacré par l'onction. Il m'a envoyé porter la bonne nouvelle aux pauvres, annoncer aux captifs la délivrance et aux aveugles le retour à la vue, rendre la liberté aux opprimés, proclamer une année de grâce du Seigneur".

Chaque phrase est prise très littéralement. Les captifs sont surtout ceux qui sont rendus impuissants par l'oppression.

Ce programme du Seigneur est notre programme, disent-ils. Veillez surtout à ce que les structures ne vous empêchent pas d'être tout près des pauvres, d'être parmi eux, d'être comme un d'eux.

Le même programme reçoit une lumière supplémentaire du Magnificat: Sa miséricorde s'étend d'âge en âge sur ceux qui le craignent". Le Magnificat ne traite donc pas du passé, mais sur ce qui doit s'accomplir d'âge en âge. Dieu a voulu que l'homme continue sa création. Dieu veut aussi que l'homme continue son oeuvre de salut.

"Il a dispersé les hommes au coeur superbe. Il a renversé les puissants de leurs trône et élevé les humbles" L'unique voie pour réaliser le Magnificat qui nous dit: "Il a rassasié de biens les affamés et renvoyé les riches les mains vides" c'est en donnant du pouvoir à ceux qui n'en ont pas. Comment ? En les rendant conscients de leur situation et de leurs possibilités.

En les unissant pour les rendre forts: on est donc en pleine action sociale et politique. Tout cela au nom du Seigneur Jésus.

Sous le titre: "Notre manière de comprendre la Mission" je lis dans le rapport final de la session de Rome: "La Mission est comprise non pas seulement comme allant d'un pays à un autre pour porter la Bonne Nouvelle, pas seulement donc en termes géographiques. Actuellement la mission engage l'Eglise à pénétrer dans les différents milieux de la société. Elle nous engage dans un procès dans lequel nous prenons plus clairement conscience dans notre propre génération du mouvement de l'humanité du vieil esclavage vers des libertés nouvelles.

Le renouveau d' Eglise dépendra de la nouvelle manière de comprendre les conséquences politiques de la mission. 3La mission est notre participation à l'action de Dieu pour la Libération des hommes". Nous croyons que l'Eglise se renouvelle par la participation à cette session en solidarité avec les opprimés",

Nous ne croyons pas que toute la richesse des notions SALUT - MISSION - EVANGELISATION est épuisée dans les quelques directives que nous venons d'entendre de la part des protestants. Mais quelques soient les profondeurs que nous y découvrons durant nos études, une fois arrivés à la méthodologie, à la méthode d'action à adopter, je pense que nous devons les avoir devant nos yeux avec leur efficacité évangélique, avec leur volonté d'être réellement du côté des opprimés, pour les rendre conscients et leur procurer du pouvoir.

Je crois en effet qu'on n'a pas épuisé l'Evangile quand on a parlé de lutter. Il faudra surtout parler de chemins à découvrir et à construire entre les hommes. Je crois que nous avons un besoin énorme de créativité et d'inventivité qui a dans la direction de démollir les murs entre les hommes. Je crois que l'évangélisation comprend une partie d'enseignement, et une partie d'action du levain dans la pâte.

Mais je vous assure quand on voit ces Asiatiques, ces Africains, ces Sud-Américains à l'oeuvre, obsédés comme ils le sont par deux grands amours: celui de Jésus et celui des pauvres de leurs pays, je vous assure que malgré soi on va penser à la situation missionnaire aujourd'hui, à la situation de nos propres Instituts et on se trouve devant ce dilemme:

A côté de ceux-là nous sommes:

- ou bien : de grands entrepreneurs de funérailles d'une des plus magnifiques entreprises de tous les siècles, les funérailles de l'ère missionnaire.

- ou bien ; nous trouverons en nous les forces créatives pour faire face à la situation moderne en scrutant résolument l'avenir et en cherchant les voies de cet avenir. La futurologie devient une science. Il se peut qu'elle devienne pour nous une obligation.

Dans l'étude du rôle du missionnaire étranger nous avons cherché à connaître à fond la situation. Maintenant il nous faudra faire un pas en avant. La langue que parlent les Protestants est comprise des jeunes d'aujourd'hui. Cet évangile, ils le comprennent. N'ayons pas peur de l'examiner sur sa propre valeur.

### 3. P. Kaufmann, pb

#### Programme provisoire de la sous-commission

1. Le Père Linssen traitera des tendances théologiques sous-jacentes à Bangkok (éléments communs et idées convergentes; contrastes et divergences) pour introduire son sujet particulier : la théologie biblique du salut.
2. Le Père Bundervoet étudiera les théologies modernes du salut (Moltmann et autres non-catholiques ; développements intéressants dans la théologie catholique du salut).
3. Le Père Kaufmann étudiera "Ad Gentes", "Gaudium et Spes" et les déclarations plus récentes du magistère pour voir quelles ont été les ouvertures principales de Vatican II ou les lacunes qu'on a constatées après coup. Quels sont les points forts et les points faibles du Concile, quels sont les points qui demandent une attention particulière aujourd'hui. Paul VI (Oss. Rom. 25.3.73 p. 1; éd. hebdo. fr. 6.4.1973 p. 1) a expliqué au Conseil du Secrétariat Général du Synode des Evêques que le Synode 1974 devra confronter les documents conciliaires avec la réalité d'aujourd'hui pour étudier l'évangélisation du monde contemporain. Sur quels points SEDOS voudrait-il attirer l'attention du Synode?
4. On demandera au Père Van der Weijden d'analyser la situation du monde d'aujourd'hui :
  - quelques situations caractéristiques du mal et du péché (individuel et collectif) ; où et comment les hommes d'aujourd'hui sentent-ils le plus intensément l'oppression et l'esclavage du mal ?
  - les aspirations actuelles vers la paix et l'unité, vers le salut et la libération ; comment les religions non-chrétiennes et les idéologies modernes (e.gr. le marxisme) voient-elles cette situation ? Quelle voie de salut indiquent-elles aux hommes ?
5. Le Père Basterrechea sera invité à faire une analyse psychologique de la situation actuelle (aspirations des jeunes, surtout).

II. ECHANGES ET QUESTIONS

Mgr. Gazza : Il ne faut négliger aucun aspect de la Mission (Dieu le Christ-l'Eglise-le Monde). Mais le point névralgique semble être l'Eglise. Si la Mission est définie comme "implantation de l'Eglise", de quelle Eglise s'agit-il ? Quelle est la conception de l'Eglise sous-jacente à la Mission ? Veut-on exporter et implanter un type d'Eglise préconciliaire ?

P. (Mariste) : Les documents de Medellin sont une contribution catholique importante à la théologie de la Mission (libération, salut). Les idées de Bangkok sont présentes en grande partie dans ces documents qui ont une grande valeur non seulement pour l'Amérique Latine, mais aussi pour les autres continents.

P. Scavaglieri : L'accueil du message est conditionné par la situation culturelle et le milieu social. Nous ne pouvons changer le message du salut mais il faudra changer sa présentation socio-culturelle. Il faut étudier les différentes attitudes devant le message évangélique d'après la culture et le milieu social pour voir ce que l'évangélisation doit être dans les différents milieux socio-culturels. Comment faire pour que le message soit compris ?

P. Asdonk :

a) Il ne faut pas trop séparer ou même opposer mission-évangélisation-salut qui ne sont que des aspects d'une même réalité. Si nous faisons trop de distinctions nous arrivons à des impasses (e.gr. le développement comme évangélisation, c'est à dire comme préparation à la prédication pour convertir)

b) En réfléchissant sur l'Évangélisation d'aujourd'hui il faudra aussi se demander d'où vient le grand succès des religions traditionnelles en Amérique Latine et des groupements chrétiens à forme traditionnelle africaine "independent churches" et des mouvements modernes de Jésus comme expressions moderne de la Foi ?

P. Blaine : En insistant trop sur les techniques d'évangélisation, n'en faisons-nous pas un instrument de contrainte, un lavage de cerveaux ? Comprendons-nous les signes des temps de notre société technologique ? Qu'est-ce que la Mission peut apporter à la communication interculturelle, à la paix du monde ?

P. Verdieu : Celui qui parle de la mission devrait toujours se "situer" pour ne pas présenter comme absolue une position toute relative (cf. SEDOS Doc. 73.242 n. 4.) Si l'on ne présente comme objet de la mission que l'Afrique, l'Asie, l'Amérique latine on donne l'impression de rester dans la perspective colonialiste selon laquelle l'Europe "chrétienne" faisait la mission aux continents non-chrétiens et les missionnaires viennent des pays sauvés et libérés pour sauver et libérer les autres. Le conditionnement politique et culturel du message fait qu'avec le message nous apportons aussi une domination.

Le missionnaire doit d'abord se rendre compte de la réalité dans son propre pays et du besoin d'évangélisation qui y existe aussi bien qu'ailleurs ; il est lui-même d'abord un homme sauvé et qui a toujours besoin d'être sauvé pour pouvoir annoncer le message du salut.

Sr. A.M. de Vreede :

- a) Quel est le rôle des religieuses dans l'évangélisation ? Dans l'ancienne conception de la mission les écoles et les hôpitaux étaient considérés seulement comme de la pré-évangélisation... En définissant la mission par rapport au salut on voit mieux le rôle direct et essentiel de ces activités pour le salut total des hommes.
- b) Quel est le rôle des institutions catholiques comme telles ? Dans le cadre d'une théologie du salut nous devons réexaminer de quelle manière nous contribuons davantage au salut des hommes (par nos institutions propres ou par d'autres méthodes?)

Sr. Demey : Le but de l'évangélisation est la libération :

- libérer les hommes pour que l'amour de Dieu puisse être vécu et réalisé;
- aider à former des communautés chrétiennes ou plutôt former avec les gens des communautés chrétiennes pour vivre cet amour de Dieu qui se réalise dans les communautés de foi.

Sr. Alma Dufault : Notre visée fondamentale est de découvrir avec les gens le Christ. Notre mission va à ceux qui sont pauvres ou vers ceux qui sont loin du Christ. Mais par la force des choses il faut souvent continuer des oeuvres traditionnelles.

P. Houdijk : Pour une théologie de la libération, il faudra :

- a) suivre la situation concrète sur place et rester en contact avec le mouvement de libération sur place. Le programme d'étude de la Comm. VI doit être réalisé en liaison avec la base.
- b) se rendre compte que malgré notre effort de démolir les murs (obstacles) il restera toujours d'autres murs. Une théologie de la libération qui n'attire pas l'attention sur ces obstacles créait des illusions et risque d'être une utopie dangereuse.
- c) développer une théologie du conflit et de la souffrance. La situation comportera toujours des conflits et il faut se préparer à la souffrance. Le salut, dans ce monde, ne sera jamais parfait.

Sr. M.T. Arbide : Il faudrait développer la théologie de l'envoi. Faut-il sortir d'Europe pour être missionnaire ? ou sortir de soi-même pour aller aux autres ? Les religieuses d'Asie, etc. sont aussi bonnes missionnaires que les autres même si elles travaillent dans leur propre pays.

P. Van Aegenborgh : Le Christ est devenu homme pour qu'avec lui nous devenions hommes. Pour cela, il faut vaincre beaucoup d'obstacles :

- obstacles intérieurs (égoïsme, complexes de supériorité ou d'infériorité)
- obstacles extérieurs (structures d'oppression etc)

Partir, pour le missionnaire, c'est sortir de soi-même pour se réaliser dans le Christ.

P. Scavaglieri : Pour la théologie du salut il faudra tenir compte de la sécularisation. Quel rôle et quelle place la religion aura-t-elle dans le monde de l'avenir ? Quel type de religion pourra avoir une place dans le monde de l'avenir ? Comment le Christianisme pourra-t-il jouer un rôle dans l'avenir ? Quel est le rapport entre sécularisation et évangélisation ? ( La sécularisation peut "libérer non seulement du sacré" mais aussi libérer le sacré).

(L. Kaufmann, pb)

REPORT OF THE URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION DESK,  
WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES, GENEVA, TO THE CWME  
ADVISORY GROUP ON URBAN INDUSTRIAL MISSION

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The following are extracts from an authoritative survey of the urban mission, presented on March 23, 1973 to the ad hoc Advisory Group of the WCC by its director, Rev. H. Daniel. It is a precious contribution on our dossier on the urban mission and should be read with the report on the same meeting prepared by Fr. Bundervoet. We are very grateful to Rev. H. Daniel for the permission to circulate it.

Introduction

In last year's report, we attempted to give a historical record of the last seven year's work of the Urban Industrial Mission Desk (UIM) and I would like, at this time, to look at where we are at present in our work and where we ought to be moving.

Where are we locally, nationally and internationally?

Within the UIM network, we have always stressed the importance of starting with the concrete reality within local situations among people in urban industrial society. In one way or another, we are in touch with about 500 local projects in about 60 countries. The types of approach have varied. Among the approaches, we can list the following:

- A "pastoral" concern especially for Christians in new industrial situations. This includes the gathering together of Christians for worship, Bible study, lay training and witness.
- A "service" concern for those in need irrespective of religious affiliation. This includes the feeding of the hungry, job skills training of the unemployed, hostels for those without homes and a variety of other such services depending on need.
- An "educational" concern for the promotion of healthy industrial relations. This includes work with management and trade union groups, workers education programmes and other educational needs within factories and industry.
- A "political" concern for the changing of structures causing the present situation of exploitation. This includes the publication of workers' newspapers and study and action on problems of international exploitation and the work of conscientisation and work with political parties.
- An "enabling" concern for the weak, the powerless and the voiceless. This includes the organising of communities and peoples for the attainment of their needs and the solving of their problems by themselves.

This "grass roots" involvement and commitment can be justified both from a moral point of view and also from an analytical point of view. Morally we are justified as the Church in most places has greater resources than those with whom we work in our UIM projects and we have attempted to share these resources with those in need. Analytically we are justified as the Church has committed these resources to realise the objectives of removing the chains that bind workers and unemployed in urban industrial situations.

Yet, what has happened so far in all our programmes is that we have responded to action taken by the oppressors who have the power by virtue of their stranglehold on existing capital and the process of surplus extraction. Can most of our work, therefore, be described as "local actions" taken to alleviate the victims of oppression?

This is necessary but is it enough?

It is necessary, therefore, to proceed from the local to the national and thereafter to the international. Such a progression can only be made from a political perspective which, in turn, means the adoption of an "ideology" and the working out of strategic actions to defeat the enemy. The root causes of oppression have to be analysed and strategies have to be worked out as to how these causes can be overcome. These questions must be taken up by local groups if they are to avoid actions which, in the long run, will be counter-productive.

It is no longer possible to talk of rich and poor, metropolis and periphery, urban and rural, oppressed and oppressor without recognising that one has caused the other. Under the existing structures, it is futile to talk of "three worlds" since it would mean accepting the arena of conflict as defined by oppressor. At the cost of indulging in an ancient truism, one must say that there is still only one world: that development and under-development are two sides of the same coin: that the birthright of the oppressed to live in freedom, if only from material needs, will not be dominated by the oppressor. The recognition and the need on the part of oppressed groups in local situations to take the initiative in their own hands has been recognised in our actions or organising local communities and local peoples. We propose that it is no longer sufficient to work solely in local situations for then, we would still be responding as victims.

The time has come for local groups to take the initiative and this cannot be done either from Geneva or by local groups independently. It will be necessary for these local groups to find political allies at the national level with other groups in similar situations and only then, to proceed to look for solidarity on an international basis. Such action, if taken, will be political and, when taken, must be analysed amidst the gravity of its real nature since it will involve a challenge to the power of the state. It will, therefore, have to be within the control and direction of the representatives of the oppressed groups who are capable and prepared to make this challenge with the intention of taking over the machine of the State for the benefit of the majority of the people. This objective is a serious one. It cannot be undertaken lightly. To put the problem short of this objective will be, at least in third world situations, to say less than the whole truth.



The techniques, ideology, timing and the objectives must all be matters for the local groups to decide. They will all differ according to which situation one is tackling. In the under-developed world, we must recognise that the axis of domination by imperialism is shifting from the agro-extractive to the urban-industrial. The large multi-national corporations and their collaborators are now pushing ahead with their massive plans to set up enclaves in the under-developed world. To produce cheap goods for distribution in the world market, more and more "urban situations" will develop as a result. These enclaves of urban situations controlled by multi-national corporations in various parts of the world will result almost inevitably in the rural exodus and all the problems that arise from such a transfer of people. We are all too familiar with the problems of the "elite" industrial working class having extracted its demands from management and then neglecting the rights of those on the periphery. Do we still go on working to ameliorate conditions in these areas or in addition do we work for a change in structures? Can the people we are working with ever achieve their demands outside a socialist society? We are now wringing our hands over Calcutta but some years ago, we did the same in relation to Shanghai. What brought about the difference? Is there a lesson for all of us?

The post-colonial era in many of our countries, has produced a host of new factors. All over the under-developed world, we have seen the emergence of "new elite". The old feudal landlords are being replaced by the new capitalists and the technocrats.

This new class is very dependent on the world capitalist system for its survival. They will collaborate in setting up new factories. The immediate enemy is now the local bourgeoisie. Its indigenous character does not make it more palatable. Indeed, it can often be tougher. The urban working class and the rural peasantry will still be exploited. Our work must go on and we must enable the process of the majority acquiring power over their lives. This will come about by political action alone. Can we escape taking part in it? The people will choose sides and they will ask us which side we are on. We must reply.

The introduction of capitalist farming in the countryside will repeat the same problem in the rural areas as we now see them in the urban centres. The green revolution, they say, is becoming red. The fact that in the green revolution, the farmer needs imports like irrigation, fertiliser, new seeds, capital, etc., makes the revolution possible only for the rich farmers. Small farmers in many places have lost their lands and are now wage earners. Here exploitation is even greater. It is true that there is greater production but what about the distribution of this increased produce? A few rich farmers are becoming richer and the number of landless peasants is increasing. What then do we do? Do we only respond to the immediate needs of the victims? Do we only transfer technical knowledge to privileged farmers or do we organise peasants to eradicate the causes of exploitation? In our rural programmes, we must, of course, ensure the full participation of the poor farmers and the landless peasant. If we do not work towards this goal, we shall only drive him to the slavery of the town and augment his miseries.

What UIM projects can do is only to enable the oppressed, whether it be in the urban areas or in the rural areas, in the metropolis or periphery, to build structures which, at first, will cushion the appalling effects of the productive machine and then proceed to take action as the group itself deems necessary. Whether this can be done outside a political formation is a question the groups must decide for themselves. Our task is to point out the lessons of our experiences.

The danger we must avoid is that of becoming a mediator on behalf of the oppressive status quo. If we must mediate, it must be on behalf of the oppressed, whatever the risks entailed.

From all this, it seems clear that we must have strategies -- local, national and international. We must think and plan with our partners -- the oppressed -- before we act. We must consolidate and assess what we have done so far and weigh them against the objectives. It must be a continuous process when we deepen reflection based on our actions so far.

Exchange of information on a world-wide basis among the 500 groups will be useful but we cannot encourage mere adoption of models. We have often said there are no "export models" but that models speak to models. We must encourage strategies which are based on local conditions. We should, at all costs, avoid the danger of using our resources to impose copying of examples, for this would be a new "imperialism".

Our role is a small one but an important one. It is important to think, act, further reflect and deepen action. The saying, "without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" has helped some countries in their process of liberation. We must, therefore, study the role and nature of the forces of oppression so that we act in ways by which we can overcome them. We need to contact other groups nationally and internationally which are involved in such processes and learn from them and perhaps teach them.

#### Where are we Theologically and where are we in relation to the life of the churches?

So often we have thought of "theology" as something learnt in theological seminaries and through the preaching and teaching ministry of our particular local denominational church. We are often concerned about the "text" of theology. Unfortunately, there is no one interpretation of the "Biblical text" in theological circles. There are many interpretative texts depending on many factors and these texts are repeated, taught, handed down and passed on with great conviction about the "words" of the text. If what has been said in the previous section has any validity in relation to the situations within which our UIM projects find themselves, then this is the "context" within which we hear again the "texts" of theology as both judging and redeeming the "contexts" of our daily life and actions.

Yet, there is no common understanding of the "context" in which we are living. There are varieties of explanations of the predicaments of our contexts and yet, we have said that local action must be aimed at changing the structures of our society that causes poverty and under-development and not merely attempt at ameliorating the effects of poverty and under-development. The text, therefore, cannot be mere words but living text which has the root causes of our ills and provides the basis, the motivation

In mission, so often people not only hear the texts we preach and read the texts we print but see the kind of life the local church leads in the context of the local situation. So often, the life of the local church and the lives of local Christians represent either an other-worldliness or an involvement basically supporting the status quo and seeking acceptance from the oppressor and not the oppressed.

The call, therefore, to local churches and local Christians is to one of repentance. As the Report of Section II on "Salvation and Social Justice" says:

"Many Christians who for Christ's sake are involved in economic and political struggles and against injustice and oppression, ask themselves and the churches what it means to be a Christian today and a true church. Without the salvation of the churches from their captivity in the interests of dominating classes, races and nations, there can be no saving church. Without liberation of the churches and Christians from their complicity with structural injustice and violence, there can be no liberating church for mankind. Every church, all Christians face the question of whether they serve Christ and His saving work alone or at the same time, also the powers of inhumanity. 'No man can serve two masters, God and Mammon' (Matt. 6:24). We must confess the misuse of the name of Christ by the accommodation of the churches to oppressive powers, by our self-interested apathy, lovelessness and fear. We are seeking the true community of Christ which works and suffers for his kingdom. We seek the charismatic church which activates energies for salvation (1 Cor: 12). We seek the church which initiates actions of liberation and supports the work of other liberating groups without calculating self-interest. We seek a church which is the catalyst of God's saving work in the world, a church which is not merely the refuge of the saved but a community serving the world in the love of Christ'.

There has been so much discussion within the church between the advocates of individual salvation and social salvation. This internal debate of the churches so often seems fruitless and leaves many of us cold. Again the report quoted above from Bangkok, trying to see this complete, says:-

"Within the comprehensive notion of salvation, we see the saving work in four social dimensions:-

1. Salvation works in the struggle for economic justice against the exploitation of people by people.
2. Salvation works in the struggle for human dignity against political oppression by their fellow men.
3. Salvation works in the struggle for solidarity against the alienation of person from person.
4. Salvation works in the struggle of hope against despair in personal life.

In the process of salvation, we must relate these four dimensions to each other. There is no economic justice without political freedom, no political freedom without economic justice. There is no social justice without solidarity, no solidarity without hope, no hope without justice, dignity and solidarity.

But there are historical priorities according to which salvation is anticipated in one dimension first, be it the personal, the political or the economic dimension. These points of entry differ from situation to situation in which we work and suffer. We should know that such anticipations are not the whole of salvation and must keep in mind the other dimensions while we work. Forgetting this denies the wholeness of salvation. Nobody can do in any particular situation, everything at the same time. There are various gifts and tasks but there is one spirit and one goal. In this sense, it can be said, for example, that salvation is the peace of the people in Vietnam, independence in Angola, justice and reconciliation in Northern Ireland and release from the captivity of power in the North Atlantic community or personal conversion in the release of a submerged society into hope or of new life styles amidst corporate self-interest and lovelessness."

There has also been discussion of the means of the saving work. The church has been ambivalent on the question of violence, showing, so often, no one uniform principle but acting only on the basis of their self-interests. We fail to understand the context of life, where there is so much structural violence, repression and oppressing of peoples. Again, the Bangkok report quoted above, says:-

"Speaking of salvation realistically, we cannot avoid the question of proper means. The means are different in the four dimensions referred to. We will produce no economic justice without participation in, and use of, economic power. We will win no political freedom without participation and discriminating use of, political power. We cannot overcome cultural alienation without the use of cultural influence. In this framework, we discussed the physical use of liberating violence against oppressive violence. The christian tradition is ambiguous on this question because it provides no justification of violence and no rejection of political power. Jesus' commandment to love one's enemy pre-supposes enmity. One should not become the enemy of one's enemy but should liberate him from his enmity. (Matt. 5:43-48). This commandment warns against the brutality of violence and reckless disregard of life. But in the cases of institutionalised violence, structural injustice and legalised immorality, love also involves the right of resistance and the duty 'to repress tyranny' (Scottish Confession) with responsible choice among the possibilities we have. One then may become guilty for love's sake but can trust in the forgiveness of guilt. Realistic work for salvation proceeds through confrontation but depends, everywhere and always, on reconciliation with God".

For many people, Bangkok came alive because we did not discuss merely texts but seriously attempted to see particular contexts and from this, to do both our theological reflection and to work our particular strategies. For example, Section II on "Salvation and Social Justice" in which I had staff responsibility - the sub-sections and action reports were as follows:-

"Section A: In a world of violent revolutionary change:

Action Reports on: Northern Ireland

Angola

Discussion on: Vietnam

Section B: In situations of economic exploitation:

Action Reports on: U.S.A. economic exploitation and political oppression in Latin America  
X - Y Action in Holland - an action group working to arouse awareness, to exert political pressure and to introduce a self-tax movement.

Section C: In relation to national planning:

Action Reports on: Singapore - urban planning  
Dahomey - role of Church in education  
Kenya, Tanzania and New Guinea - medical care.

Section D: In relation to local struggles:

Action Reports on: Sicily - establishment of agricultural commune to stem tide of migration  
Manila - project among Tondo squatters  
 Discussion on: Ascension Statement of Indians in Latin America."

This methodology of reflection from the local situations made Bangkok an event, a celebration, a conference worth having and provided a vision that demanded commitment and hard work for continuing involvement for the future but the theological understanding of our mission will remain plural - partly because of our ignoring of or because of our different understanding of, our "contexts" and also of the "texts".

The theological task, therefore, will not be easy but it has to be done. The involvement and understanding of local churches will not be easy but, yet again, has to be sought, even though we shall find, in the process, that we are divided and on opposite sides of the fence within the Christian fellowship and may find those of other faiths and ideologies possibly on the same side as some of us.

The church in its concern for unity and conciliarity, should never fall for easy compromises for what we are dealing with here is God Himself - made known to us in Jesus Christ - and the co-working with Him in His mission and purpose for the world.

Have not our experiences so far led us what Section II says in relation to the Mission of God?

" In the power of the Spirit Christ is sent from God, the Father, into this divided world 'to preach the Gospel to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty the oppressed ... and to proclaim the year of God's favour'" (Luke 4:18). Through Christ men and women are liberated and empowered with all their energies and possibilities to participate in His Messianic work.

Through His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead hope of salvation becomes realistic and reality hopeful. In Him the Kingdom of God and of free people is at hand. Faith in Christ releases in man creative freedom for the salvation of the world. He who separates himself from the mission of God separates himself from salvation.

The salvation which Christ brought, and in which we participate, offers a comprehensive wholeness in this divided life. We understand salvation as newness of life - the unfolding of true humanity in the fulness of God (Col. 2:9). It is salvation of the soul and the body, of the individual and society, mankind and 'the groaning creation' (Rom. 8:19). As evil works both in personal life and in exploitative social structures which humiliate humankind, so God's justice manifests itself both in the justification of the sinner and in social and political justice. As guilt is both individual and corporate so God's liberating power changes both soul and body, person and society, humankind and creation. Therefore we see the struggles for economic justice, political freedom and cultural renewal as elements in the total liberation of the world through the mission of God. This liberation is finally fulfilled when "death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:55). This comprehensive notion of salvation demands of the whole people of God a matching comprehensive approach to their participation in salvation.

#### Where are we structurally in our UIM work?

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the official founding of the W.C.C. It is the 12th year of the integration of the I.M.C. and the establishment of the C.W.M.E. within which we have been located since the inception of the UIM Desk eight years ago. We have within UIM seriously attempted not to impose patterns - but to take seriously the many grass roots involvements - and to structurally see that national, regional and world UIM structures play an enabling and supportive role to what happens locally. This commitment has not always been understood by the churches at all levels. Yet I believe that our basic approach has been right and has paid us in seeing concrete involvements and possibly provided us one of the only few directlines to the poor, the powerless and the voiceless, in the life of the W.C.C. This is a precious heritage that the churches cannot ignore and should never try to co-opt for their own purposes.

Various sub-units of the W.C.C. are beginning to take more seriously regional structures to discuss particular strategies within regions. This principle we have followed. Our UIM regional structures then become one of many regional structures - and can face the problems of interpretation and co-option of other regional structures. The tasks of interpretation and freedom of action remain a continuing problem at all levels of church life, till the churches see we are not just doing "our thing" - but are engaged in the very mission of God to which He has called us all. This understanding will mean a new appraisal of the use of church resources - of personnel and money - for the salvation and liberation of men everywhere.

Some of the richer churches have the extras for UIM work - but in all countries this new understanding of mission must lead to a new deployment of church resources for this essential task - not only in urban areas but also in rural areas. But while this process of interpretation and understanding takes place - we are grateful to the churches in North America, Australia and New Zealand for help they have given to make these insights "incarnational" in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Pacific and the Caribbean.

The world monetary crisis is on us - and what this means with regard to the dependence of some countries more than on others is yet to be seen. But ultimately its not the finances that one receives, but we hope the commitment to Jesus Christ and His mission - the lives consecrated and dedicated to His invitation to struggle with men - the vision and the promise He "told of His Kingdom both now and at the end of time - that will lead us to go forward in hope.

Conclusion.

It was encouraging that at the time of the CWME Assembly in Bangkok following the Conference on Salvation Today, Committee E stated:

"We commend the Urban-Industrial Mission and the Rural Agricultural Mission for the priority they have placed on community organization for self-determination of the powerless and the repressed. The common emphasis underlines the inter-relatedness of these two programmes. We therefore strongly urge that adequate provision be made for additional staff for the joint enterprise, so that this effort may succeed".

We have always appraised our past involvements for our future strategies. We have not done it alone but in co-operation with people like you. We believe that our meeting here will give us this further opportunity to seek new visions, new allies and new strategies; for whatever the changes, God's work will go on till Jesus Christ is openly acknowledged and obeyed as being truly the Head of the Church and the Head of the Cosmos (Col. 1:15-20).

H.F.J. DANIEL

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES

1. "SALESIANUM" - Centro di spiritualità e cultura - The new Salesian Spiritual and cultural Center can offer suitable accomodation for:
  - (a) Liturgical encounters in the spacious church for 160 persons; also concelebrations: all facilities available in loco;
  - (b) Assemblies in the aula magna: 300 seats with simultaneous translation in 5 languages, electronic voting apparatus, film projectors, etc.
  - (c) Study groups: several rooms for 30-40 people and a larger one for 200;
  - (d) Dining-room (sound-proof);
  - (e) 130 single rooms with all services, telephone, etc.
  - (f) Bus service from: Largo S. Giovanni de' Fiorentini (near Ponte Vittorio Emanuele II).

✍ Address: SALESIANUM, Via della Pisana 1111, 00163 ROMA (Telephone: 64.70.434).
2. FMM - In July Sr. Alma Dufault will visit houses in Australia and New Guinea, the first visit ever of a Superior General in those countries.

Sr. Bernardette Savey, Sr. Justina Fanego, Sr. Maura O'Connor, councillors, left on a visit to Northern France in April.
3. GENERAL SECRETARIES - A general meeting for all General Secretaries in Rome is proposed for May 29 at 15 hours at the S.J. Curia, Borgo S.Spirito, 5.

The meeting will be by language groups. For details apply to:  
Fr. Louis Laurendeau, S.J. Phone: 65.09.33.
4. S.C.M.M.-T.

Visits - Sr. Thérèse Mary Barnett left Rome on April 29th on a visit to Kenya and Rhodesia. She will be absent until the end of May.

  - Sr. Bernadette Coebergh will be absent during the second half of May for a visit to The Netherlands. She will return in the first week of June.
  - Sr. Josée Clijsters, the mission procurator, left Rome on April 19th on a visit to Rhodesia. She will be absent until the end of May.