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This week:page

1. SALVATION AND EVANGELISATION IN THE BIBLICAL CONTEXT by Fr. G. Linssen cism 631
This is the third working paper prepared for Commission VI-USG on Evangelisation Today.
2. LISTS OF PERIODICALS RECEIVED DURING SEPTEMBER 1973, compiled by Sr. Agnetta. 641
3. ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS - Report of the 40th General Assembly - October 9, 1973 644
4. LA PLACE ET L'ATTITUDE DE LA SOEUR MISSIONNAIRE EN AFRIQUE CENTRALE ACTUELLE 646

We published in French the paper which Fr. V. Mertens sj read at the Belgian Missionary Institutes Committee in Brussels on 1st June 1973 (Bull. n. 25, pp. 518-531). We now give a summary in French of the paper read at the same time by Sr. Frieda Avonts, sa on the role of missionary sisters in Africa Today.

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ANNOUNCEMENT: AGRIMISSIO office in Palazzo S. Calisto has been transferred from Scala 5 to Scala 2.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. Leonzio Bano, fscj.

SALVATION AND EVANGELISATION IN BIBLICAL CONTEXT

In this study we try to understand what according to Scripture salvation and evangelisation mean. A better insight into this meaning might bring us to some practical conclusions. Our first attention goes to the concept of salvation in the Bible, in order to be better prepared to study the idea of evangelisation. Because the proclamation of the gospel is aimed at bringing salvation to mankind.

I. SALVATION.

The Hebrew word "yesa" (and its cognate forms) means "help, rescue, salvation", etc. Its Greck (Septuagint) translation "soteria", "soterion", etc. means "deliverance, preservation, salvation". In a military context the Hebrew word (and its translation) may have the added meaning of "victory". A victorious leader is a "mosia", a "savior"; cf. Jgs 3, 9.15; 4 Kgs 13,5; Is. 19,20) and a victory in battle is called a "salvation" Jgs 15,18; 1 Sm 11, 13; Ps. 20, 5.6; 1 Mc 5,62).

God is the great "rescuer", or "savior" in the Bible. He "saved" (liberated) Israel from Egypt (Ex. 14,30; 15,2; Dt 32,15; Ps 106,21; Acts 7,25). He often intervened in the history of Israel to deliver it from its enemies (Jgs 6,36; 1 Sm 11,13; 19,5; 2 Sam 23, 10.12). In the same way He intervened in favor of individuals who called on His aid.

So much did Jahweh show himself as the "one who saves Israel" (1 Sam 14, 14,39), that gradually there grew a strong hope among the Israelites that God would always be their savior. "In Jahweh, our God, alone is the salvation of Israel" (Jer 3,23). For Jeremiah Jahweh is not merely his own personal savior (15,20), or only the one who delivers from the long drought which was then causing famine in Juda (8,20), or the one who would avert the invasion which was then threatening (on condition that the people would repent), as we read in 4,14. But He would also establish the messianic kingdom, in which, under the rule of the new David, right and justice would reign. Thus Jahweh's constant interventions in favor of his people were a guarantee of God's help in the future and a prophetic foreshadowing of God's final salvific reign over Israel and the whole of mankind. Especially in Deutero-Isaia the idea of the future universal kingdom of God is more clearly expressed. God's relationship with man will no more be based on a law that is written on tablets of stone, but on God's law that will be as a light coming forth from God's justice (Is 51,4; cf. Jer 31,33). It will be a universal kingdom (Is 45,22; 49,6; 51,5).

That this hope of salvation was very much alive among the Israelites appears best from the Psalms. To give a few examples, cf. Ps 14,7; 65,5; 7,2; 22,21 ff; 91,14 ff; 91,16; 50,23; 51,14; 62; 71,5 ff.

Only against this OT background of expected salvation can we understand the New Testament. The New Testament is full of the conviction that Jesus of Nazareth is the fulfilment of the OT hope of salvation. We see this clearly expressed in the words with which Simeon greets the infant Jesus (Lk 2,29-32; cf. Is 40,5; 52,10).

The title of "savior" is given, not only to God (Lk 1,47; 1 Tim 1,1; 2,3; 4,10; Ti 1,3; Jude 3), but even more often to Jesus (v.g. Lk 2,11; Jn 4,42; Acts 5,31; 13,23; Eph. 5,23; Phil. 3,20; 2 Tim 1,10; Ti 2,13; 2 Pt 1,1.11; 1 Jn 4,14).

Indeed, Jesus was the savior expected by the Israelites. "He proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come, he said, 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News" (Mk 1, 14-15).

He was a man commended by God by the miracles and the portents and signs that God worked through him, when he was among us. He was killed but God raised him to life. Now raised to the heights of God's right hand, he has received from the Father the Holy Spirit, who was promised. God made him both Lord and Christ (cf. Acts 2, 22-36). It was about this man Jesus, his life, death and resurrection, and about his teaching that the apostles spoke and testified. In Jesus alone, they said, salvation is possible. "For all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which we can be saved" (Acts 4,12). Thus they spoke. Thus began the evangelisation of the world. What exactly is this evangelisation?

II. EVANGELISATION.

Our starting point will be Paul's discourse to the elders of Ephesus (Acts 20, 17-35). Whatever the historical value of the discourse itself we may safely assume that in these words Paul's ideas are adequately described. "Modern research tends to find their (the discourses of the Acts) historical value in their faithful preservation of the themes of early Christians preaching rather than in their accurate agreement with the circumstances in which the author has situated them" (Cerfaux, the Acts of the Apostles, in: A. Robert and A. Feuillet, Introduction to the New Testament, New York, 1965, p. 349).

1. Evangelisation is a service

"I have served the Lord" (Acts 20, 19). As a minister of the gospel St. Paul considers himself first of all "a servant (doulos) of the Lord". As a servant of God and Jesus Christ he is similar to the "cbed" of the Old Testament, called by God for a special service (men like Moses, Josue, Abraham, Isaac, David and the Prophets). Thus he feels obliged to preach the gospel in its entirety, whether it would please men or not. "So now whom am I planning to please - man or God? Would you say it is man's approval I am looking for? If I still wanted that, I should not be what I am - a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1,10). Cf. 1 Thess. 2, 3-7.

To express the idea of servant the word "diakonos" is more frequently used. Paul's apostolate among the pagans is a "diakonia" (Rom. 11, 13) ; his apostolic work is a "diakonia of the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3, 6-9), to be carried out faithfully (2 Cor. 6, 3; 1 Cor. 4, 1). It is a "diakonia of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5, 18). Like Paul, a "diakonos" of the gospel (Eph. 3, 7), all the apostles are "diakonoi" of Christ.

The word "diakonos"(and "diakonia") expresses particularly the idea of a personal service toward another or some group. Its root meaning, to serve at table, hence, to provide for a man's support, is still perceptibly present. It is noticeable in Acts 6, 2 and 6, 4 (to serve at table and to be at the service of the word). "Diakonia" has gradually developed a typically Christian meaning: charitable assistance, service of the community and of all those who are in need. Every form of service for the benefit of the Christian community and of our fellowmen in general is a kind of "diakonia". Some of these forms are mentioned in 1 Cor. 12, 5 and Rom. 12, 7. Even the more spiritual functions are a kind of "diakonia" as we learn from Eph. 4, 11-12. Thus the preaching of the gospel is a "diakonia". God's word has to be "served out" and it has to be done faithfully (1 Cor. 4, 1-2), because a man's reconciliation with God depends on it (2 Cor. 5, 19). As God's stewards the apostles are directly responsible to God and Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 4, 1-2; 6, 4; 1 Cor. 4, 1).

While Paul sees himself in the first place as God's servant (in the relationship of a servant to his master), he also considers himself at the service of his fellowmen to whom he has to dispense God's word. "I have not hesitated to do anything that would be helpful to you" (Acts 20, 20).

2.1. Evangelisation consists in preaching, proclamation, instruction and witnessing.

"I have preached to you, and instructed you" (Acts 20, v. 21).

This was Paul's main activity ; to preach the gospel and to give additional instructions. In fact, this was the main work of all the apostles or missionaries. We find different words to express this activity.

Most frequently used is the word "aggelein" and related forms: "anaggellicin", "euaggellein", "euaggelion", etc. It has been adopted from the Septuagint, where it was used as a translation of the Hebrew word "basar". It was particularly used to express the idea of announcing a joyful message (cf. 1 Kings 31,9; 2 Kings 4,10; 18, 20, 26 ff; Ps. 67, 12). In Deutero-Isaiah it gained an additional typically Messianic meaning : the messenger there came to announce the liberation from exile and the forthcoming foundation of the Messianic Kingdom (Is. 40, 9 : "Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion", etc.; Is. 52, 7: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of one who brings good news".). We also meet this messenger of joy and peace in Is. 41,27; 61, 1; Nah. 2, 1; Ps. 95,2-3. This idea of a messenger with a joyful and peaceful message remained alive among the Palestinian Jews (cf. Strack-Billerbeck, Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud and Midrash, München, 1922, III, p. 4-11). The influence of Isaiah on the meaning of the word "to evangelize" is clearly discernable in the New Testament. In Mt. 11, 5 and Luke 7, 22 we see Jesus as the messenger with a joyful message ("the good news is proclaimed to the poor"). The word "euaggelion" sometimes even functions as a "nomen actionis", indicating the action of proclaiming the good news. So v.g. in 2 Cor. 2, 12 : "When I went up to Troas for the Gospel", meaning: when I went up to Troas for the sake of preaching there the good News. The same

in 2 Cor. 8, 18; Phil. 4, 3; 1 Cor. 9, 14; 9, 18.

"Kerusssein" (to proclaim) has been adopted from the profane Greek; it kept its original meaning of proclaiming some news. In Lk. 12, 3 it even has its original meaning : to proclaim in a loud voice (cf. Rom/ 10, 14). In general we may say that "kerusssein" (and "kerugma") expresses specifically the idea of proclaiming something new, a special event (cf. Mt. 3, 1; 4, 17; Mk. 5, 20; 7, 37; Lk. 4, 18). Such a special event, something unheard of before was what St. Paul proclaimed : the Christ-event, all about Christ the Savior, who died and rose from the dead (cf. 1 Cor. 1, 23; 15, 12; 2 Cor. 1, 19; 4, 5; 11, 4; Gal. 2, 2; 1 Thess. 2,9).

"Marturein" (to witness) was less used by St. Paul. This is a little strange, as, especially in the Acts, Luke likes to present the apostles as witnesses, who by their preaching testify to what they themselves have heard and seen about Jesus Christ (cf. Lk. 24, 47-48; Acts 1, 8.22-26; 5, 32). As witnesses they guarantee the veracity of what they say and their personal conviction moves others to follow their example. Their witnessing to the resurrection was particularly meaningful to the Jews (Acts 13, 31). With Paul the word usually has its more general meaning : to assert something with a strong conviction (cf. Gal. 4, 15; 5, 3; Rom. 10, 2; 2 Cor. 8, 3; Col. 4, 13).

The apostle is also an "oikonomos misterion theou", a steward entrusted with the mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4, 1). As appears from the context (1 Cor. 2, 7-13) Paul has been initiated in God's plan of salvation, to play in it an important role by revealing God's mysteries, i.e. by preaching the good news about Jesus Christ. This would later on more extensively be explained in the epistles to the Ephesians (cf. Eph. 3; 1-13) and the Colossians (cf. Col. 1, 24-29).

"Didaskein" (to instruct) rather indicates further instruction, ethic, apologetic, or theological. It is supplementary to the first proclamation of the gospel, a kind of exhortation for the Christians to change their behavior (cf. Rom. 12,1-2).

2.2. Proclaiming the gospel with boldness.

We read in the Acts that the Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, proclaimed the word of God boldly ("meta parrhesias"). This expression (sometimes with the verb "parrhesiazestai") is quite frequently used in the Acts and in the Epistles (v.g. Acts 2,29; 4,13. 29-31; 9, 27-28; 13; 13, 46; 14, 3; 18, 26; 19, 8; Phil. 1, 20; Eph. 3, 12; 6, 19 ff.; 2 Cor. 3, 12; 1 Th 2, 2; Phlm 8).

In general it means a free, bold and candid speaking. It is the opposite of secretness. The apostles spoke openly and without fear before Jews and pagans, notwithstanding the fact that these two groups showed themselves very critical toward the gospel, even hostile and negative. The courage of the apostles was based on their strong conviction that the Lord was with them ("the Lord supported all they

said about his gift of grace, allowing signs and wonders to be performed by them", Acts 14,3; cf. Acts 4, 29-30). The Holy Spirit was at their side. "They are all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to proclaim the word of God boldly" (Acts 4, 31; cf. Acts 4, 8).

This "boldness in the Spirit" is to be considered a charisma. It helps those who are fully engaged in the evangelisation to proclaim the gospel with a strong personal conviction, with a bold originality and without fear of any human power.

3. The purpose of evangelisation

"Urging both Jews and Greeks to turn to God and to believe in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20, 21). "I have gone about proclaiming the kingdom" (Acts 20, 25).

3.1. Metanoia

Paul urged people strongly to a "metanoia" toward God, to change their lives in such a way that they would turn to God. Thus to bring about such a "metanoia" was one of the purposes of the preaching. We know how the Baptist's call for "metanoia" had been taken over by Jesus. He had come to call sinners to conversion (Lk.5,32). The apostles too were sent to preach conversion (Mk. 6, 12). This mission was renewed after Jesus' resurrection. "So you see how it is written that the Christ would suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that, in his name, repentance (metanoia) for the forgiveness of sins would be preached to all the nations" (Lk. 24, 47). In Acts 26, 18 Paul's mission is described in these words: "I am sending you to open their eyes, so that they may turn from darkness to light; from the dominion of Satan to God, and receive, through faith in me, forgiveness of their sins and a share in the inheritance of the sanctified". Conversion is a change from one situation or attitude (darkness and sinfulness) to another (to light, forgiveness of sins and membership of a new community). This change of life must be based on faith in Jesus Christ.

3.2. The kingdom

The kingdom is the key element in the evangelisation. Jesus made it his main topic, when he went around announcing the good news of the kingdom. "He went around the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people" (Mt. 4, 23). The miracles were a sign that the kingdom had already arrived. On the other hand, however, it has not yet reached its final stage. It is still growing. This idea is expressed by such parables as that of the seed, the mustard seed, the leaven, etc.). The kingdom gradually grows to a universal, worldwide dimension. At the eschatological meal guests will be present from every part of the world (Lk. 21, 17 ff.).

To understand evangelisation we should know what Jesus exactly meant, when he spoke about God's kingdom, what its conditions are and its ideals. Within the limited scope of this article we can only point out the most essential elements.

3.2.1. A new relationship with God and fellow-men

"Once you were not a people at all and now you are the People of God; once you were outside the mercy and now you have been given mercy" (1 Pt. 2, 10). "You have been obedient to the truth and purified your souls until you can love like brothers; let your love for each other be real and from the heart. Your new birth was not from any mortal seed but from the everlasting word of the living and eternal God" (1 Pt. 1, 22-23). "What we have seen and heard we are telling you, so that you too may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (John 1, 3).

3.2.2. Liberation

"When Christ freed us, he meant us to remain free; brothers, you were called to liberty" (Gal. 5, 1.13). "You will learn the truth and the truth will make you free; ... so if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8, 31.36). It is a liberation from tyranny, that of sin, as described in Rom. 1-3. "The results of one man's sin (sin entered the world through one man) were outweighed by the results of God's abundant gift to mankind, the one man, Jesus Christ" (Rom. 6, 15-16). "We must realize that our former selves have been crucified with Christ to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin" (Rom. 6,6). Indeed, "God rescued us from the domain of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1, 13-14). It is also a liberation from death. "Death came through one man. Just as all men die in Adam, so all men will be brought to life in Christ" (1 Cor. 15, 21-22). Finally, there is a liberation from the Law. Since we have died mystically with Christ, we are redeemed from the Law (in as far as the Old Testament institutions or moral commandments were wrongly considered as independent means of salvation). "Now we are rid of the Law, freed by death from our imprisonment, free to serve in the new spiritual way and not the old way of the written law" (Rom. 7, 6). "The law of the spirit of life has set us free from the life of sin and death" (Rom. 8, 1). And, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom" (2 Cor. 3, 17). The coming of God's kingdom in Jesus Christ intensifies God's salvific action. "You see, God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race" (Titus, 2, 11). Jesus showed himself a savior, not only by curing the sick (cf. Lk. 7, 18-22), or by preaching the message of eternal life (Lohn 1, 68), but especially by his death and resurrection. "Jesus was put to death for our sins and raised to life to justify us" (Rom. 4, 25). As the head of the Church Jesus saves the whole body (cf. Eph. 5, 23). He came down to us "not to condemn the world, but to save the world" (John 12, 47).

3.2.3. Eschatological character

Only at the end of times will the kingdom reach its full development. But it has started with the coming of Christ. It is a reality, part of man's history, as Christ himself is. The first generation of Christians had to learn that what they saw was the coming of the kingdom in the sense of its gradual establishment on earth, not in the sense of its eschatological glory. They had to learn to pray: your kingdom come. The kingdom is present and still to come, with a continuous tension between both. "We must be content to hope that we shall be saved - our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were - but, as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet - it is something we must wait for in patience" (Rom. 8, 24-25). Meanwhile, the kingdom is very near to us (Lk. 10, 9); it is among us (Lk. 17, 21). Wherever people are together in Christ's name, there He is with them (cf. Mt. 18, 20). And where Christ is, there is the kingdom of God.

3.2.4. Ideals of the kingdom

The sermon on the mount shows us the high ideals of the kingdom and its revolutionary character. The people best prepared to become members are the poor, the gentle, the miserable and the downtrodden. It is a matter of sincerity and a right attitude. "If your justice goes no deeper than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never get into the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 5, 20). It is not sufficient to comply with the law; one has to go farther. "You have learnt how it was said to your ancestors : you must not kill. But I say to you : anyone who is angry with his brother will answer for it before the court, etc." (Mt. 5, 21). One should not even look at a woman with a lustful desire; not divorce his wife, except for the case of fornication. A true member of the kingdom should not swear. A simple "yes" or "no" should be sufficient; because members of the kingdom are supposed to be truthful. There should be no revenge. "I say to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well" (Mt. 5, 41). As for love, it is not sufficient to love your neighbor. "I say to you : love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt. 5, 43-44). The general rule of conduct is: "you must be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5, 48). In worship also the accent will have to be on the interior attitude. "The hour will come - in fact it is here already - when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth" (John 4, 23).

To promote this interior attitude the preaching of the apostles emphasized the love for God and neighbor. "The only purpose of the preaching (literally : of giving instructions) is that there should be love coming out of a pure heart, a clear conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Tim. 1, 5). What is required from those who want to be real members of this kingdom is shown in the following text of St. Paul, although he does not use here the word kingdom. "Do not let your love be pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring efforts and with great earnestness of spirit. If you hope, this

will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care. Bless those who persecute you; never curse them, bless them. Rejoice with those who rejoice and be sad with those in sorrow. Treat everyone with equal kindness; never be condescending but make real friends with the poor. Do not allow yourself to become self-satisfied. Never repay evil with evil but let everyone see that you are interested only in the highest ideals. Do all you can to live at peace with everyone. Never try to revenge. Resist evil and conquer it with good" (Rom. 13, 9-21). Those who want to enter the kingdom of heaven will have to become like little children (Mt. 18, 1-4). Christ wants us to be his very own people with no other ambition except to do good (cf. Tit. 2, 11-15).

4. Community-building

"The word of his grace has power to build you up" (Acts 20, 32).

Faith in Christ and his gospel leads to conversion. Those who turn to God and Jesus Christ will form a community of brothers and sisters. From the first moment after the resurrection of Jesus we see his followers united in a group. "These remained faithful to the teaching of the apostles, to the brotherhood, to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers" (Acts 3, 42).

New communities were set up in Samaria, Damascus, Antioch and so on. Paul describes himself in 1 Cor. 3, 3-17 as an architect who "laid the foundations on which someone else is doing the building". The real foundation is Jesus Christ (v. 11) as he has been proclaimed by Paul - Jesus, who died on the cross and in whom alone there is salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 2, 1-2. 7-8). In Rom. 15, 20-21 Paul takes pride in the fact that he only preached the gospel where no one else before him had done so. He wanted to be a real "church-founder".

The construction of the work had to continue. That was the task of men like Apollos, who took over from the founders, careful to continue on the foundations already laid. Their work might be of different quality. "On this foundation you can build in gold, silver and jewels (in an excellent way), or in wood, grass and stone" (in a more or less satisfactory way); 1 Cor. 3, 12. Thus the growth of the local community (or local church) much depends on the responsible persons, on their leadership, instructions and stimulating activity. But also on the measure of their faithfulness to the original preaching, to the gospel of Christ. The foundation should remain untouched.

Those in charge should be careful to keep to the right doctrine. "Be on your guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers (episkopos), to feed the Church of God which he bought with

his own blood. I know quite well that when I have gone fierce wolves will invade you and will have no mercy on the flock. Even from your own ranks there will be men coming forward with a travesty of the truth on their lips to induce the disciples to follow them. So be on your guard" (Acts 20, 28-31). It is typical how often, especially in the pastoral letters the responsible leaders are warned against false doctrines (cf. 1 Tim. 1, 3-7; 4, 1-7; 6, 2-10; 6, 20-21; 2 Tim. 2, 14-26; Tit. 1, 10-16).

In the second place, those responsible in a community and the preachers of the gospel in general should avoid even the appearance of greed. "I have never asked anyone for money or clothes; you know for yourselves that the work I did earned enough to meet my needs and those of my companions. I did this to show you that this is how we must exert ourselves to support the weak, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, who himself said, "there is more happiness in giving than in receiving" (Acts 20, 33-35). In 1 Cor. 9 Paul explains why he did not like to accept any kind of retribution, although he admitted that there was a right to do so. He did not like to "go around offering the word of God for sale, as many other people do; in Christ, we speak as men of sincerity, as envoys of God and in God's presence (2 Cor. 2, 17). Paul renounced his right of subsistence." In fact we have never exercised this right. On the contrary we have put up with anything rather than obstruct the Good News of Christ in any way" (1 Cor. 9, 12). He disliked laziness. "We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we ever have our meals at anyone's table without paying for them; no, we worked night and day, slaving and straining, so as not to be a burden on any of you. This was not because we had no right to be, but in order to make ourselves an example for you to follow" (2 Thess. 3, 7-9). In Corinth he lodged with Aquila and Priscilla, who were tentmakers, "and they worked together" (Acts. 18, 1-3).

5. Faith

"Urging ... to believe in our Lord Jesus" (Acts 20, 21).

To believe in Jesus-Christ means to believe in what he, the Prophet sent by God, had to tell us, to believe in his message. It also means to believe in Him as the one who through his death and resurrection saved us from sin, law and death and transferred us to the state of children of God. In fact, Jesus is the main object of the preaching. Paul's preaching about Jesus - which was not different from that of the other apostles (cf. Gal. 2, 2.6-10; 1 Cor. 15, 11) - can be summarized as follows. The prophecies have been fulfilled. The new era has set in with the coming of Christ. He was born of the family of David. He died for our salvation, as had been foretold by the Scriptures. He was buried, but he has risen from the dead, as foretold by the Scriptures. He is now seated at the right hand of the Father as Son of God and as the Lord of the living and the dead. He will come back to be our judge and final savior. The resurrection was at the center of the preaching and it was in Jesus' life. The preaching was first of all a Pascal message (cf. Acts 2, 23 ff; 3, 13-15, Rom. 1, 1-4 etc.).

One has to believe in the gospel of which Jesus Christ is the main object. The word of the gospel is to be received with faith. It is a "word of faith" (Rom. 10, 8); it is "God's power saving all who have faith" (Rom. 1, 16). The preaching of this word, therefore, is an indispensable link in God's plan of salvation. This is most clearly expressed in Rom. 10, 9-15. "They will not hear of Christ - through whom alone they can be saved - unless they get a preacher" (Rom. 10, 14).

6. Concluding Remarks

The essential elements of evangelisation may be reduced to two that are mentioned in Acts 28, 30-31, where we find a description of Paul's apostolic activity in Rome: "He welcomed all who came to visit him, proclaiming the kingdom of God and teaching the truth about the Lord Jesus Christ".

First, faith in Jesus Christ. "If your lips confess that Jesus is Lord and if you believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, then you will be saved". (Rom. 10, 9).

Second, the kingdom. This includes a change of mind and heart (metanoia) that leads men to the way of life described in the gospel in which God is loved as our common Father and our fellow-men as our brothers.

In this connection we may ask ourselves; in how far is the Church to be identified with the kingdom of God? Christ announced the kingdom as already present among us, but still growing to its final stage of glory. He also founded a Church (cf. Mt. 10), which started growing after his resurrection (Acts). We have to see the Church as the visible aspect of God's kingdom on earth. It is the community of those who are called to live together the ideals of the kingdom, to make Christ's dream a reality. "The Church is at the service of the reign of God: it results from the fact that, thanks to the action of Jesus, the eschatological Reign is already an actual reality; besides, following Jesus, it must itself contribute to actualizing the Reign. But it is clear that it is not a definitive reality, willed for itself; it has supraterritorial finality, for it is oriented toward the consummation of the reign of God" (A. Feuillet, in: Introduction to the New Testament, p. 782). The foundation of churches and communities is a first realization of God's kingdom on earth, tending toward its final realization in glory.

LISTS OF PERIODICALS RECEIVED DURING SEPTEMBER compiled by Sister Agnetta, SSpS.

I. External Periodicals

<u>Issue:</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
No. 4	ADRIS NEWSLETTER
Nos. 1715-1718	Agenzia Internazionale FIDES Informazioni
Vol. 2, No. 2	Al-Basheer
9/73/4	AMECEA Documentation Service
No. 27-28	Boletín de la CER
No. 37	Bulletin du Centre de Documentation OICE
June	Catholic Media Council Information Bulletin
Vol. 2, No. 4	CEM Mondialità
No. 15	Contact
Nos. 447-491	Documentation and Information For and About Africa
No. 1638	La Documentation Catholique
No. 62	ICVA News
No. 10-11	IDOC Bulletin
No. 3 and 4	IFCO News
Bol. 8, No. 4	Impact (P.I.)
No. 26	Informissi
9/1973	Informatiedienst
No. 5	Information Letter (LWF Marxism and China Study)
Nos 436-438	Informations Catholiques Internationales
No. 2	INTERKONKON
No. 40	LADOC
No. 4	Letters from Asia
July-August	Literacy Today
No. 81	Mani Tese
September	MARC Newsletter
No. 95-96	Mensaje Iberoamericano
No. 244	Messages du Secours Catholique
No. 4/1973	Migration News
No. 28	Mission Intercom
No. 6	New Internationalist
Vol. 2, No. 9	Newsletter (Kenya Catholic Secretariat)
Vol. 4, No. 7	Newsletter (WOCCU)
September	News Notes (AFPRO)
Nos. 68 and 69	Nostro Impegno
June-July	ODI (Overseas Development Institute)
Vol. 6, No. 1	One Spirit
No. 3/1973	Pastoral Service (Rhodesia)
No. 3/1973	Orientamenti Pastoralì
Supplement 1	Pastoral Service (Rhodesia)

External Periodicals (Cont.)

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Title of Periodical</u>
No. 64 July 1973	Peuples du Monde Prospective
No. 38	Prudentes
No. 553	Revista de Misiones
Nos. 35-37	Ruhr Bild
Nos. 35-37	Ruhr Wort
No. 46	Scienza, Tecnica e Organizzazione
Nos. 6948-6951	The Tablet
No. 24	This Month
No. 114	Vinculum
Vol. 5, No. 3	World Reporter

II. Internal Periodicals

Nos. 194 and 195	AIMIS (FSCJ et al.)
Nos. 7-8	Arnoldus Nota (SVD)
Vol. 54, No. 1-2	Bulletin (fsc) also in French
Nos. 45 and 46	Communications (SM) also in French
No. 7	Fede e Civilit� (SX)
No. 118	In Caritate (ICM) also in French and Flemish
No. 6	Post Chapter Information Service (FMM)
August-September	Missioni OMI
September	Monde et Mission (CICM)
September	Migrizia (FSCJ)
September	Piccolo Missionario (FSCJ)
No. 64	SMM Intercontinent (SCM-M)
V/5	SSPS Information Service

III. New Periodicals

Schede di Previsione Sociale (Italy) IRADES
Le Soleil (Senegal)
IAMS News Letter (Norway)
Formation FSC)

IV. Selected Articles

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Title of Article</u> (number of pages in brackets)
2. CICM	<u>A New Missionary Era in the Church</u> , by A. Shorter. In EUNTES, Vol. 6, No. 5, 1973 (9)
2. CICM	<u>Urban Apostolate and the Missions</u> , by D. Sullivan . In EUNTES, Vol. 6, No. 5, 1973 (14)

Selected Articles

2. FSC The Call to Renewal, by Br. Michel Sauvage, FSC. In Bulletin FSC, Vol. 54, No. 1-2, 1973 (15) also in French
2. FSCJ 3500 Km attraverso il Sudan Meridionale, by Ferruccio Rovelli. In Nigrizia, July-August (Part I) and September (Part II), 1973. (Part I: 5 p.; Part II: 5 p.)
2. MEP Cambodge 1972. Bilan d'une année difficile, by François Ponchaud. In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 64, 1973. (6)
2. MEP Le Cambodge trois ans après, by Léon Trivière, MEP, In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 65, 1973. (4)
2. MEP L'Indonésie de Suharto, by Léon Trivière, MEP. In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 64, 1973. (4)
2. MEP Stratégie à l'échelle d'un continent: Contrôle des naissances en Asie, by Jean Vérinaud. In ECHOS DE LA RUE DU BAC, No. 66, 1973. (6)
2. OMI Elevato incontro ecumenico fra la chiesa e il buddismo, by V. Dalla Libera and M. Zago, OMI, In MISSIONI OMI, August-September 1973. (36)
- 5.A.-B The Gospel and the mission task of the Church, By Roland E. Miller. In AL-BASHEER, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1972. (25)
5. IL Notes on the Church in China, by E.H. Johnson. Some observations made during a visit in China in 1973. Document 4.1.2.10 in INFORMATION LETTER, No. 5, 1973, of the LWF Marxism and CHINA Study. (8)
5. IL The Catholic Church and the People's Republic of China, By B. Willeke, OSF. Document 4.1.2.09 in INFORMATION LETTER, No. 5, 1973, of the LWF Marxism and China Study. (15)
5. POS Towards Understanding the problems of Youth, by Rwoma Desideri. In PASTORAL ORIENTATION SERVICE, No. 3, 1973. (7)
5. POS Building Christian Communities: We are Called to be One, by B. Joinet. In PASTORAL ORIENTATION SERVICE, No. 3, 1973. (6)
5. POS We cannot but speak..., by Staf Moons. In PASTORAL ORIENTATION SERVICE; No. 3, 1973. (9)
5. PS A Day of Thanksgiving in Brunapeg, by A. Heier. In PASTORAL SERVICE (Rhodesia), 1973/3. Under LITURGY section. (8)
5. PS Reinstatement of a deceased person. In Supplement n. 1 of the PASTORAL SERVICE (Rhodesia), June 1973. (18)
5. BN BACKGROUND NOTES from the U.S. Department of State have been received of the following countries:
 Italy (7)
 New Zealand (6)
 Trinidad and Tobago (4)
 Upper Volta (4)

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS

The 40th. Assembly of Superiors General associated in SEDOS met on Tuesday, October 9, 1973 at 16.00 at the Generalate of the Religious of the Sacred Heart, Via Nomentana, 118.

The following Fathers, Brothers and Sisters were present:

C.I.C.M.	Fr. Goossens Willy	O.F.M.CAP.	Fr. Denis P.
C.I.C.M.	Fr. Maertens Joris	O.CARM.	Fr. Mesters G.
C.I.C.M.	Fr. Linsen G.	O.S.U.	Sr. Mietzelfeld Judith
C.M.	Fr. Richardson	O.S.U.	Sr. Van Dun Marie José
C.M.	Fr. Kapusciak Florian	P.A.	Fr. Van Asten Theo
C.M.M.	Fr. Schick Ignatius	R.S.C.J.	Sr. de Thélin Geneviève
C.M.M.	Fr. Eoelens Martin	R.S.C.M.	Sr. Keenan Marjorie
C.M.M.	Fr. Lautenschlager Georg	S.C.M.M.M	Sr. Gates Jane
C.R.S.A.	Sr. Sagot Paule	S.C.M.M.M	Sr. de Vreede A.M.
C.S.S.P.	Fr. Houdijk K.	S.C.M.M.T	Sr. Barnett T.M.
D.M.	Sr. Webb Linda	S.B.	Sr. Dor Marie José
F.M.M.	Sr. Arbide M.T.	S.B.	Sr. Jeannette (Translator)
F.M.M.	Sr. O'Connor Maura	S.F.B.	Sr. Dumont Jacqueline
F.S.C.	Bro. Bastonrochea Pablo	S.M.	Bro. Schnepf Gerald
F.S.C.	Bro. ottwald Vincent	S.M.	Fr. Urquia J.R.
F.S.C.J.	Fr. Agostoni T.	S.M.	Fr. Le Mire Noël
F.S.M.	Sr. Rombouts Claire	S.M.A	Fr. Hardy
I.M.C.	Fr. Motter Guido	S.N.D.N.	Sr. Bland Joan
I.M.C.	Fr. Viotto T.	S.S.N.D.	Sr. McGonagle Danita
M.E.P.	Fr. Cassas G.	S.S.N.D.	Sr. Baldwin M.L.
M.M.	Sr. Simmons Gilmory	S.S.P.S.	Sr. Pionkowski Agnetta
M.S.F.	Fr. Brack Raymond	S.V.D.	Fr. Musinsky
M.S.F.	Fr. Posters		

In the Chair: Sr. Ernestine ...

From SEDOS Secretariate: Fr. Leonzio Bano fscj - Mlle Antoinette Fernandez.

The meeting began with a psalm.

The Chairman conveyed to the assembled company Fr. B. Tonna's gratitude for the good wishes and assurance of prayers for his recovery.

Fr. Th. Van Asten welcomed the newly elected Curia of the Mariannahill Fathers.

1. The minutes of the last General Assembly of 5.6.73 were then duly accepted.
2. The second item of the day's agenda was the election of the lady-member of the executive Committee to replace Sr. Danita McGonagle SSND who as Treasurer of SEDOS is ex-officio member of the executive committee. Three candidates were proposed to the assembly:

Sr. Claire Rombouts, I.C.M.
Sr. Alma Connelly, S.H.C.J.
Sr. Marjorie Keenan, R.S.C.M.

Of the 28th possible votes, Sr. Claire Rombouts obtained 15 votes and was declared duly elected.

- 3.. Rev. Fr. Maertens C.I.C.M. gave to the Assembly a report of the PRO MUNDI VITA Colloquium held at Louvain in September. The topic of study was "The new forms of Ministry". 120 people attended this 5 days seminar; the group was widely representative - both internationally and ecumenically.

New ministries were considered especially in the context of the needs of the Christian communities today and what these needs will be in the near future. Fr Maertens 'exposé' was followed by a lively exchange of views, questions and answers.

4. After the usual interval, Sr. Marie José Dor, S.B. reported on the Missiology Week held at Namur at the end of August. The topic studied this year was "The Role of the Woman Religious in the Missions".

Both these reports will be published shortly in the SEDOS Bulletin.

Recorder: Bro. Vincent Gottwald FSC

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LA PLACE ET L'ATTITUDE DE LA SOEUR MISSIONNAIRE DANS L'AFRIQUE CENTRALE ACTUELLE

Conférence donnée à l'Assemblée générale du C.M.I. (Comité des Instituts missionnaires) - Bruxelles, 1 juin 1973, par Sr Frieda AVONTS - Soeur missionnaire de Notre Dame d'Afrique

Traduction abrégée du texte original néerlandais.

. MISSION AUJOURD'HUI ... FIN OU NOUVEAU COMMENCEMENT ?

Le monde missionnaire vit dans l'insécurité ... il est secoué.
Informations, événements, tout, en un mot, semble écartelé.
Le missionnaire cherche son identité, son visage de demain.

Les Instituts missionnaires posent des questions: A-t-on définitivement tourné la page "mission"? Si oui, qu'en est-il alors du Christ et de son appel, de son Message du salut pour tous les hommes? Si non: y a-t-il évolution dans la manière de vivre la mission? ... et de quelle mission s'agit-il?

Quelle est donc notre PLACE, maintenant? S'agit-il de spécialisation, de priorités... et lesquelles?

Faut-il encore évangéliser? Où? Comment?

La Mission, d'accord... Et nous alors, ici (Europe)?

Etant donné la crise de vocations, que faire au point de vue formation, animation missionnaire?

. POURQUOI POSONS-NOUS CES QUESTIONS EN CE MOMENT?

. REGARD RETROSPECTIF:

La mission, en tant qu'"entreprise apostolique" a préparé la création de nouvelles Eglises LOCALES. De là naquit pour le missionnaire une période décisive. Il le pressentait, désirait même ce que nous vivons aujourd'hui, sans trop pourtant prévoir les choses au concret. Des mouvements d'indépendance en Afrique mettaient bientôt un point final au système colonial à ses privilèges.

Dans beaucoup de pays d'Afrique, les missionnaires travaillaient dans un complexe "Eglise Etat", au dedans duquel se situaient la plupart des activités des soeurs missionnaires: catéchèse, éducation, soins médicaux, travail social. L'Eglise prit sur elle le côté "civilisation"; l'Etat, en bien des cas se reposa sur la disponibilité de l'Eglise.

Entre-temps, l'Eglise, en tant qu'Institution, a voulu se défaire de certains privilèges de son aspect de puissance.

On attend d'elle qu'elle soit "le levain dans la pâte". Au sein de l'Eglise universelle, la jeune Eglise locale a pris sa place et réclame participation et co-responsabilité.

A son tour, le nouvel Etat exerce son droit et prend peu à peu les tâches civilisatrices à sa charge.

Dans cette image modifiée de "EGLISE-ETAT" où les deux parties découvrent simultanément leur propre visage, la missionnaire cherche un autre chemin, une place nouvelle. Nationalisation, sécularisation, africanisation... ne facilitent pas sa situation. Méthodes, formes, structures du passé, tout s'écroule, ne rend plus service. Les efforts pour coopérer avec l'élite locale, avec le clergé autochtone demandent une grande capacité d'adaptation.

Simultanément, le conflit des mentalités, des générations, éclate dans nos Instituts, nos communautés religieuses: différentes manières de concevoir apostolat, envoi, mission, formation, collaboration avec les laïques, etc....

NOTRE CHOIX va-t-il vers la PASTORALE D'ENSEMBLE ou devons-nous la préférence au DEVELOPEMENT INTEGRAL?

En Afrique, situations et difficultés créent: incompréhensions, insécurité, désordre, découragement, défaitisme, Cela nous dépasse...

Dans certains Instituts, cet état de choses a provoqué un exode, dû aux personnes, à la direction, parfois à la contestation. D'autres continuent leur travail, s'adaptent, cherchent, essaient, en toute sérénité: ILS SAVENT EN QUI ILS ONT CRU.

Les JEUNES des Instituts missionnaires observent, interrogent: "Croyez-vous encore en l'avenir de la mission? Pour elles, c'est une question VITALE, face à un engagement à vie.

... De là est venu notre malaise actuel. Mais le problème se situe encore plus profondément.

• "AUJOURD'HUI" N'EST - IL PAS NE ... HIER ?

Nous voulons retourner à l'essentiel, à l'Evangile, à l'authentique. Osons-nous nous y engager avec un regard prophétique, avec les yeux et le coeur du Seigneur?

Faire la mission sans FOI est tout bonnement naïf, impensable.

Nous cherchons aujourd'hui une AUTRE, une NOUVELLE expression d'une même réalité: La Mission est "envoi du Christ", mystère du Salut - et, en Lui, envoi des Apôtres, ses disciples. Cela aussi c'est jeter sur le passé un regard réaliste, informatif... discernement indispensable pour interpréter la MISSION "AUJOURD'HUI", face aux situations concrètes.

• CES SITUATIONS CONCRETES,

A) nous les trouvons aussi dans les "diaries" du Grand Missionnaire, le Christ, et de ses disciples:

- Les textes évangéliques, les Lettres de St Paul, les Actes des Apôtres... qui

restent très actuels.

Les premiers envoyés n'étaient pas des experts techniques, mais LEUR VIE PARLAIT.
Les Apôtres savaient que dans leurs faiblesses, dans toutes leurs difficultés,
ils pouvaient compter sur Celui qui était leur force.

- B) Mission en évolution; y mettre donc les accents découlant des signes du temps;
mais l'essentiel ne varie pas: ÊTRE TEMOINS DU CHRIST.

LA PERIODE MISSIONNAIRE - 19e et 20e siècles - est caractérisée par: planter, fonder l'Eglise.

Il s'agit surtout de conquérir, de convertir ... de parler, d'agir.

AUJOURD'HUI, le temps de la MOISSON est venu: "l'un sème, l'autre moissonne ..."

La VIE prend la place de la parole.

La vie missionnaire est avant tout une MANIFESTATION DU CHRIST: c'est lui qui transforme, qui convertit, qui Il veut et quand Il veut.

L'accent redécouvert est donc: TEMOIGNER par La Vie, par l'Être qu'IL EST, qu'IL VIT; et puis ... PARTAGER CETTE VIE AVEC TOUS.

Ce retour à l'essentiel situe le missionnaire comme un étranger dans son habituel prophétisme d'action. Etranger se veut-il aussi dans une jeune Eglise qui découvre à l'heure actuelle sa dimension universelle, missionnaire.

La responsabilité missionnaire, aujourd'hui, se joue dans la communion des Eglises Locales dans la solidarité, l'unité en même salut, à travers la pluriformité de son expression.

La religieuse missionnaire qui, comme femme, se sent liée aux bouleversements socio-culturels est, pour ainsi dire, arrachée à son cadre habituel par les remous intérieurs et extérieurs de l'Eglise.

Une transformation s'opère ... "facing out, facing in". La missionnaire constate graduellement, parfois d'une manière imprévue, qu'elle est appelée à des fonctions; là où précédemment tout semblait fermé pour elle.

Il s'agit davantage, pour les Instituts missionnaires, d'accepter les situations offertes. Ils expérimentent la relativité de leur planification: les réalisations s'expriment d'une façon tout autre que dans le passé.

Les fonctions actuelles de la religieuse missionnaire, ses "activités" dans lesquelles l'ont placée les circonstances, pourraient être présentées comme suit:

-TRAVAIL PASTORAL ET CARITATIF: responsabilité de paroisses, travail paroissial: catéchèse

promotion de la femme, aide aux veuves et abandonnés, animation de la prière, en union avec des catéchistes ou autres laïques;

- PASTORALE D'ENSEMBLE: secrétaire paroissiale, mouvements de jeunesse, aide et collaboration aux Congrégations de Soeurs africaines, service dans les séminaires comme professeurs ou en d'autres tâches;

- DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL: dans les projets de développement communautaire, des projets gouvernementaux;

MASS-MEDIA: radio, télévision, presse ...

NOUVEAUX ACCENTS ou ... DEPLACEMENT D'ACCENTS?

Comment nous l'expérimentons: d'institutionnelle, notre mission est devenue intégration, soit individuelle, soit communautaire;

- d'organisatrices que nous étions, nous sommes devenues coopératrices, gratuitement, offrant un service d'amis;

- des gens au sommet ... des travailleurs à la base;

- du "moi" et "toi", vers le "nous": projets collectifs;

- de "mon" Eglise ... vers TOUTES les Eglises (oecuménisme universel);

- d'Eglise - possession, pouvoir, vers Eglise - partage -service - solidarité;

- des "privilèges", vers devenir pauvres, "être pauvres".

Mais ... dans cette EXPERIENCE, quelle marge entre le "VOIR" et le "REONDRE A L'INVITATION"; quelle matière pour une CONVERSION PERSONNELLE !

NOUS CHERCHONS ... NOUS DESIRONS ... NOUS VIVONS UN TEMPS NOUVEAU

De nouvelles formes de vie religieuse ? ...

Nous désirons être plus authentiques: levain dans la pâte, retour aux vraies valeurs; davantage dans le milieu de vie, plus près des gens dans de petites communautés.

Les SITUATIONS CHANGEANTES LOCALES donnent à la soeur missionnaire bien des possibilités dans ce sens; non pas comme création personnelle, mais comme "un autre te ceindra et te mènera où tu ne veux pas".

CONDITIONS EXIGEES: - être à l'écoute de l'Evangile, disponibilité, souplesse, savoir vivre dans le changeant, dans l'insécurité, De l'amour, beaucoup d'amour et d'oubli de soi.

QUELQUES EXEMPLES: des situations nouvelles posent la religieuse devant un choix; ACCEPTER ... alors une nouvelle fonction vous attend là où l'Eglise ou l'Etat vous appelle, et pas nécessairement où votre Congrégation est représentée. Ceci suscite de nouvelles petites communautés. Ou REFUSER? ... un tel missionnaire pourra difficilement se situer dans l'ensemble, surtout à l'avenir.

• NOTRE ATTITUDE DANS LA SITUATION ACTUELLE

De ce qui a été dit jusqu'ici, quelques points peuvent être mis à l'avant-plan. Sommaire-ment nous pourrions dire: l'attitude de la religieuse missionnaire et la place qu'elle occupe vont de pair. C'est pourquoi il lui faut répondre à la nouvelle vision "Eglise-Société" dans la situation actuelle de la mission en Afrique. Sans quoi, nous vivons hors du temps, nous devenons "marginiaux", ce qui peut mener à un contre-témoignage et devenir un obstacle à la venue du Seigneur parmi nous.

Nous devons garder les "jardins ouverts", ou souvent les ouvrir, vivre avec les gens. Ainsi nous éviterons à de jeunes Nations, à de jeunes Eglises les formes conventuelles que les siècles ont accumulées en Occident et qui, à l'heure actuelle, éclatent brusquement.

Là aussi l'attitude de la soeur missionnaire a un rôle décisif à jouer; elle doit se montrer solidaire, être vraiment "pont".

Nous disons, nous répétons souvent: être missionnaire au SERVICE DE L'EGLISE LOCALE. Au fond, que comprend cette assertion? Théorie et pratique! RENDRE SERVICE EST UNE CHOSE DELICATE. Etre disponible vaut mieux. Rendre service peut revêtir un masque de puissance, surtout si nous nous savons au service de l'Eglise UNIVERSELLE, si nous voulons faire "pont" entre les Eglises. Service peut aussi signifier créer et entretenir une dépendance. Certaines formes de dons, de service peuvent freiner, si nous n'éduquons pas, si nous ne visons pas la libération totale de l'homme.

Le service vide d'amour, sans enjeu évangélique, fait de notre disponibilité une forme de despotisme, d'oppression, de domination.

Le service doit être synonyme de SOLIDARITE. Il doit affermir l'homme, lui donner foi en ses propres valeurs.

Le service au sens de solidarité est la seule conception chrétienne: être solidaire dans et par le salut reçu au Baptême auquel tous nous sommes appelés. Alors, notre don devient simplement l'expression de ce que nous-mêmes avons reçu gratuitement. "Vous avez reçu gratuitement, donnez gratuitement" (Mat. 10,8). Cela, c'est vraiment: PARTAGER EN FRERES.

Mgr GANTIN dit: "Tout le problème d'avenir de la mission se trouve dans l'authenticité d'être du missionnaire; il trouve sa réponse dans ceux qui ont la FOI... et qui la passent à d'autres, comme le semeur de l'Evangile qui sort, sème et prépare la moisson..."

Ainsi la mission continue. Elle ne fait pas beaucoup de bruit. La vraie mission continuera annoncer Jésus-Christ ... et préparer d'autres hommes qui puissent, à travers les temps, Lui donner la possibilité de vivre.

"Nous sommes des étrangers dans la Maison du Père", dit le Père B. JOINET. "Pourtant, nous avons la même carte d'identité", dit Mgr DAYEN.

C'est un fait que, souvent, le missionnaire se sent et se sait un étranger, soit dans le pays où il travaille, soit au retour dans son pays natal. Quelle doit alors être notre attitude en tant qu'"étranger"?

Le Père JOINET dit: ... Je ne puis être étranger dans mon pays de mission que si j'ai assumé d'abord la culture de mon propre pays ... alors je puis me considérer comme différent, comme un autre avec les autres.

En pratique, pour construire une communauté de vie, je dois admettre:
-oser me considérer et m'accepter comme étranger;
-servir les autres comme ils désirent être servis;
-admettre que j'ai quelque chose, que j'ai beaucoup à recevoir.

Tout ceci suppose une grande réceptivité, vouloir être pauvre dans le sens biblique du mot. Le Père JOINET parle de "roue de rechange"..., quoique tous ne puissent vivre dans cette situation.

C'est la spiritualité des Béatitudes ... du grain de blé tombé en terre ... que nous retrouvons dans les travailleurs silencieux, persévérant malgré tout.

• QUELQUES QUESTIONS PRATIQUES:

1) SE RETIRER OU RESTER?

Certaines situations rendent notre présence parfois impossible, soit temporairement, soit pour de bon.

En règle générale: éviter les départs en groupe; grande compréhension pour les "cas" personnels.

Il y a surtout la MANIÈRE DE QUITTER; être renvoyé et se retirer afin que d'autres puissent prendre la responsabilité; dans ce but: éviter de fortes concentrations de missionnaires; appliquer plutôt une politique de déplacement méthodique.

RESTER OU S'EN ALLER; est souvent une question d'ÊTRE ... de QUALITE plutôt que de QUANTITE.

Les critères de vocation, la formation de candidates, l'organisation dans l'Institut, jouent ici un grand rôle.

Seules peuvent être envoyées en mission; les personnes qui ont quelque chose à offrir, dont l'Eglise et la société ont besoin, au point de vue professionnel et sur le plan de la FOI ("l'homme ne vit pas seulement de pain").

2) Si nous restons, QUELLES SONT ALORS LES PRIORITES?

Nous devons avant tout entrer dans les projets nouveaux et déjà existants de pastorale d'ensemble ou de développement intégral.

Des EXPERTS, des SPECIALISTES ???

Voici ce que dit à ce sujet une Supérieure Générale de Congrégation missionnaire:

"C'est notre MANIERE D'ETRE qui nous rend capables et aptes à servir dans la SOLIDARITE tant dans les tâches simples, quotidiennes, que dans celles qui demandent une spécialisation".

. CONCLUSION:

Nous ne sommes pas au bout de la mission, mais bien au bout d'une certaine PERIODE DE CETTE MISSION. Ce qui signifie également que nous nous trouvons au DEBUT d'une ERE NOUVELLE, plus difficile et plus décisive de la mission UNIVERSELLE.

Aujourd'hui, la société, la communauté universelle place l'Eglise devant un défi. Sa mission sera moins romantique ... moins "héroïque" mais exigeant un ENGAGEMENT PLUS PROFOND que dans le passé.

L'image de l'avenir est encore floue. Ce qui est certain; elle devra être une ascension vers le Seigneur, une montée vers les hommes, sinon ce sera un échec. Nous savons que nous portons notre contribution humaine dans des "vases fragiles", afin qu'il paraisse clairement que la grande force vient de Dieu et non de nous (St Paul).

L'optimisme, malgré tout, ne peut trouver appui et force que dans une plus grande confiance en Dieu, et non dans plus d'information ni d'intellectualisme.

Sr Frieda AVONTS, S.B.

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