

THE THEOLOGY OF THE MISSIONS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Brother Timothy McCarthy, FSC
 330 Riverside Drive, NY 10025
 12-10-73

The Church has always been missionary. It has gone forth at Christ's command to evangelize and baptize all nations. It has proclaimed to all men the gospel of Jesus and its belief that He is "the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of the new man."

Every Christian and institution in the Church shares in the mission-role of the Church. The Brothers, as members of Christ through baptism, are very much in evidence in missionary work. Our Institute has listened attentively to the challenge of the contemporary world and, at our 1967 General Chapter, described it as follows: "The world seethes because the poor and impoverished, the underprivileged and neglected, the unfranchised -- in a word, the Third World--cry out in their hunger, sufferings, ignorance, and suppression, against injustice." (The Missions, p.4) Many of our Brothers, imbued with St. La Salle's spirit of special dedication to the education of the poor, have accepted this challenge and are now engaged in missionary activities in many countries.

The theology of the missions has always changed to meet the needs of those being evangelized. In our day there has been an intensive study of missiology. A theme of contemporary missiology is that there were two major weaknesses in mission activity and theology before Vatican II. First, missionaries brought the Christ of their own culture to the peoples they were evangelizing without much adaptation to the new culture. Secondly, missionaries strove to convert all nations and all religions to Christianity based on the belief that Christianity was true and the non-Christian religions were false.

The developments within missiology since Vatican II have affected both of these approaches to the missionary enterprise. This paper will be limited to outlining the changes that have taken place within these two aspects of missionary theology and activity.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THEOLOGY

Before examining the specific developments in missiology, it is necessary to review the changes and developments in five key areas of theology that have influenced mission theology.

1. Theology of grace: Rather than say that the grace of Christ is found exclusively in the Church, it is said that the grace of Christ is present everywhere for all men.
2. Theology of revelation: Rather than say that revelation is a particular verbalized message, it is said that revelation is primarily the self-communication of God in the heart and conscience of man. Revelation is not the communication of new truths added to life, but is the clarification, through Israel and Jesus, of God's free and redemptive self-communication, operative in a hidden way in all history.

3. Theological anthropology; Rather than apply some physical and moral coercion in inducing men to accept the Church and baptism, there is a refined sense of man's personal freedom as he accepts God in Christ.
4. Theology of the world; Rather than viewing the world as a place of trial to be passed through as quickly as possible and/or as a hostile environment that should be shunned, it is said that human life in all its social and historical dimensions is meaningful. Instead of being detached from the world, the Church is its sacrament and servant.
5. Theology of the Church; Rather than say that salvation is found only in the Catholic Church, it is said that the other churches are true ecclesial realities, offering salvation and life with God.

CHRIST AND CULTURAL FURALISM

Evangelization is the activity whereby the Church proclaims the Gospel so that living faith is awakened in non-Christians and fostered in Christians.

There are two aspects of evangelisation that have been questioned recently. One concerns the methodology of evangelization. In the past there may have been a rather widespread disregard for the autonomy of each culture. When someone went from the West to the East, he often foisted the Western image of Christ and His Church upon the East. Before Vatican II, missionaries did not permeate an autonomous culture, which already existed with its own human values and traditions, so much as create their own type of society artificially.

Today there is a greater appreciation of the fact that the gospel can and must be adapted to all cultures. Not only can the foreign culture be enriched by the discovery that its true values and traditions can be referred to Christ as their source but the missionary's own relationship to Christ can be enhanced as he discovers Christ already present to the people and their culture. If, in the past, missionaries thought they had much to give and teach, they now acknowledge that they have much to receive and learn.

It should be noted that this change in approach to mission countries is simply a manifestation of a greater change taking place throughout the world as a result of a rise in nationalism and a development in conscientization. For example, the countries of the Third World have challenged the success of the Western nations for placing themselves at the center of the earth, for controlling the greater share of the earth's resources, and for understanding human history along an axis that passes through their own immediate past.

The other aspect of missionary activity that has been questioned is an evangelization that has been strictly spiritual and religious. It is argued by some that evangelisation cannot take place if the political, social, and economic structures that are inhuman and oppressive are not denounced and changed.

It is in Latin America especially that this political or liberation theology has developed.

Liberation theology does not seek to be another department of theology. It is a serious reflection on the perennial Christian themes, but from within the experience of participation in liberation struggles. The change here is that, whereas the theology of Vatican II concentrated on intrachurch reform, liberation theology is committed to the fundamental challenges of the liberation process within society.

At the present time, those influenced by liberation theology have some serious questions to answer. Many enterprising missionaries have involved themselves in the political, social, and economic spheres of the country. This involvement has brought some of them into revolutionary activities that required violence. They now question how revolutionary they should be. They want to know if they should restrict their activities to those which are strictly pastoral. It does seem—as with Jesus—that living the gospel faithfully is the most revolutionary stance one can take. Further—more, this way of interpreting the life of Jesus is in accord with the latest scripture scholarship which is trying to refute recent attempts to portray Jesus as the paradigm of a political revolutionary. The Gospel says His kingdom was not of this world.

It is not clear where liberation theology will finally rest. Nevertheless, what liberation theology has made clear is that those who teach and preach the gospel must be very conscious of "the sin of the world": there is a sinful situation of oppression, domination, and exploitation that must be denounced and overcome if the Christian gospel of brotherhood, justice, and peace would be established.

CHRIST AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

There are many religions. From the Church's point of view, it has been customary to group them as non-Catholic and non-Christian. The Church's dialogue with these two groups has had a different scope. The Church's dialogue with the other Christian churches is directed towards reunion and communion in Christ. The length of this paper does not allow space for a discussion of the specific developments within the ecumenical dialogue. It is sufficient to point out that the dialogue between the Church and the other Christians seems to be moving in the very same direction as the dialogue with the non-Christians, i.e., towards a theology of religious pluralism.

Since the relationship of the Church to the non-Christian religions is more complex and also more significant than the dialogue with the other Christian churches for an understanding of the theology of mission, it is this relationship which will be outlined here.

In recent times the Church has moved, it seems to me, through two questions to a third in its understanding of itself in relation to the non-Christian religions. In order to handle these changes graciously, I am labelling them as preconciliar, conciliar, and postconciliar.

Roman Catholic missiology has moved to a new plateau because deeper consideration has been given to some of the most basic concepts involved in the ministry of evangelization. It will be possible to understand the present missiology after examining the changes that have taken

place in our understanding of four interrelated areas:

1. salvation;
2. mediatorship of Christ;
3. conversion;
4. true and false religion.

1. SALVATION

All men have found themselves in a state of alienation from self, from others, and from God. Salvation consists in being delivered from alienation to integration, human community, and divine love and life. Christians declare that Jesus of Nazareth has brought salvation through his life, death, and resurrection. Jesus' salvific life is found in his Church.

The preconiliar understanding of salvation was that members of the Church has available to them all the means of salvation. Membership in the visible Church was the ordinary way to be saved. The duty and responsibility of the Church was to preach her message of salvation to all men so that they could be converted and saved. If non-Christians remained in their religion, they could be saved if they practiced their religion sincerely and honestly. However, their salvation did require the extraordinary intervention of God in their lives.

At Vatican II the Church acknowledged the salvific value of the non-Christian religions. It declared that God has been working through these religions and not in spite of them. The non-Christian religions were legitimate and had a proper place in God's salvific plan.

The conciliar view of salvation maintained that the non-Christian religions were the normal and ordinary way of salvation and that Christians, being so few in the two million years man had been on earth, had been given the extraordinary grace of knowing Christ. Christians should be a sign that all men are saved in Christ.

While the Vatican II documents never use the term "anonymous Christian", the conciliar teaching is that non-Christians, by accepting their humanity, their life, and the mystery that engulfs it, have actually accepted Christ.

The postconciliar understanding of salvation for non-Christians is much more radical than the conciliar view. For one thing, there is a certain uneasiness and even dissatisfaction with the theology of the "anonymous Christian". It seems that to read Christian ideas into non-Christian religions does not do justice to the distinctiveness of the other faiths. What we meet in each religion is a different faith and, therefore, different patterns of behavior; different standards and ideals of ultimacy, happiness, and salvation; and different claims to present the truth about God, man, and the universe.

The act of faith is the basic foundation of each religion. Each religion has its own identity and autonomy because of the specific epistemological nature of faith, i.e., because of the "absolute" certitude that faith confers upon the believer concerning the content of his faith. When the non-Christian makes an act of faith, he stands in a relationship to God, to the Absolute, which is in no way less immediate than that of the Christian.

The postconciliar theology of salvation states that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is only one way of salvation. The preconciliar understanding of salvation was ecclesiocentric: salvation in the Church alone. The conciliar understanding was Christocentric: salvation in Christ. The postconciliar understanding is theocentric: salvation in God who works in the heart of each man.

Theology has taken this theocentric position because it has seen that the Church is relative to the Kingdom of GOD, and the work of Jesus, the Son of God, is relative to the work of His Father. In other words, our theology of salvation has shifted its focal point from the specifically Roman Catholic to the total Christian community—and, now, to the entire human family. The reason for this shift is the rediscovery of the basic fact about Christ: He calls all men to be totally open to their humanity so as to receive the grace of His Father. Christ says all men are of infinite worth to the Father.

Some question this theology of religious pluralism, fearing that it is really indifferentism and a denial of the primacy of Christ. This is not so. Christians still evangelize knowing that every religion affects the quality of a person's personal and communal life. Non-Christians need to hear how Christian life is distinctive from other religions.

How is Christianity different from other religions? Christianity does not add new truths to man's knowledge of God, but it does create a transformation of consciousness whereby a person acquires a new awareness of all history, himself, others the world, and God. All history is lived from its eschatological dimension. Christians believe that their daily lives are filled with the glory of the risen Christ. He has transformed reality. He has brought about a new creation. The risen Christ is present transforming all space and time so that life, death, suffering, love, work, food, etc., are understood and lived in the light of his resurrection. Christian life consists in sharing Christ's transforming love. Christian life consists in living with and for Christ as one lives with and for others.

So, while this theology of religious pluralism does reject indifferentism, it does state that it is not necessary for non-Christians to join the Church to be saved. A theology of religious pluralism argues that God's mission to transform men and make them whole can be carried forward through any and all faiths—although it is far from complete in any one of them.

The conclusion from a theology of religious pluralism is that the aim of the missionary's

message is to free the non-Christians for a saving contact with the best of their own religious traditions. The missionary helps the non-Christians solve their own problems, humbly, genuinely, openly, with respect for their traditions and a willingness to learn about God from them.

2. THE MEDIATORSHIP OF CHRIST

The Church teaches that Jesus is "the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of the new man."

In the preconciliar Church, the missionary taught that Jesus founded the one true Church and this is where He is present, mediating the Father. There was a radical discontinuity between Christianity and the non-Christian religions.

At Vatican II there was a refocusing of the gospels. As a result of this refocusing it was seen that Jesus is the fulfilment of the non-Christian religions. The authentic seeds of the gospel are contained within the non-Christian religions. The Church is not discontinuous from the non-Christians religions, but the leaven which is interior to all of them. The relation of the Church to the other religions of the world is not one of competition, or an effort at substitution. It is one of sublimation. The mission of the Church is to take what is holy and true in the non-Christian religions and show its fulfilment in Christ.

In postconciliar theology the universal mediatorship of Christ is still maintained, while respecting the pluralism of religions. This is no simple task since a theology of religious pluralism accepts a diversity of mediators whose relationship to Christ is more equal than had been thought possible before in the history of Christianity. Postconciliar theology retains Christ's universal mediatorship by pointing to the fact that what God revealed in Jesus once for all is that the crucial decision regarding the divine is made by man in his relationship to the community of men. Jesus proclaimed the interconnection between love of God and love of man. He taught by word and action that love of God is illusory if it does not issue in love of man, and love of man is a refined self-love if it does not proceed from love of God.

The gospels say that in man's relationship to the human community he is open to the divine, is addressed by the divine, and can commit himself to it. When the missionary teaches the non-Christian to love all men, he is actually evangelizing him.

3. CONVERSION

Conversion consists in changing from one way of living to another.

In preconciliar missionary theology overt conversion from the non-Christian religion to Christianity was the goal. Missionaries went out in the name of Christ and his Church to baptize every individual and to make every nation Christian.

At Vatican II the Church adopted a policy of "mergerism". Since the non-Christian religions prepared the way for Christianity and since they possessed elements that could be fulfilled in Christ, the dream was for a gradual convergence of all religions into one.

This theology was hardly acceptable, especially to the non-Christians, because it meant a union by absorption. In postconciliar theology, there is greater respect for the autonomy of each religion. In view of the tenacious persistence and growth of the non-Christian religions, there is an increasing tendency to accept religious pluralism as part of the divine dispensation. The primary conversion that the missionary tries to effect is that the non-Christians should be converted within the framework of the religion they already profess. The initial task of the missionary is to help the non-Christian live this religion more integrally and honestly.

4. TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION

Religion pertains to man's relationship with God. Every religion declares that God has revealed himself through its sacred signs and symbols. Every religious group thinks that it has received the true revelation. Each religious group has little use for the other religions.

In preconciliar theology the Church professed to be the home of the one, true religion. It could point to "the marks of the Church" as the signs of its veracity. The non-Christian religions were considered to be natural, imperfect, and ultimately erroneous. The missionary attempted to prove the superiority of the Church over the non-Christian religions.

In conciliar theology, as the Church moved from an ecclesiocentric to a christocentric position, it acknowledged some truth in the non-Christian religions. This truth had its source in Christ who is the fulfilment of these religions. The missionary attempted to explain the developments required by the non-Christian religion as it evolved toward the Christian ideal.

In postconciliar theology the concept of true/false religion is approached, not from a study of the quality of ecclesiastical doctrines, but from the conviction that true religion humanizes and reconciles mankind and false religion dehumanizes and fragments the human community. This is a theocentric approach to religion. It begins with the fact that God incarnates himself in every human person, above every religious barrier.

Jesus taught a theocentric religion. He said that man does not relate himself to God in worship (a religious practice) and then, as a second step, seek the right relationship to his brother. What is revealed in Jesus is that in man's relationship to the human community, man is related to the Father. The Father is love and he who does not love his brother does not know God. The ultimate test in the struggle between true and false religion, then, is the reconciliation of men in community. Anything in Christianity that hinders human community is false religion.

This understanding of true and false religion does not demand that the members of the world religions become Christian. When the missionary helps peoples overcome whatever fosters egotism, hatred, and injustice, he is evangelizing.

SUMMARY

Our contemporary missiology takes a position between two extremes. On the one hand, a liberal but secular approach maintains that there is to be no Christian missionary activity because this is an age of pluralism. On the other hand, very zealous evangelicals maintain that there is to be missionary activity directed towards conversion to Christianity, because not only is Jesus the way, but also these non-Christian religions are not legitimate for salvation. The liberal position is faithless to the salvific character of the non-Christian religions.

Our contemporary missiology takes a position between these two extremes. It states that from one point of view, Christian evangelization has three dimensions: human, religious and Catholic Christian. The Church evangelizes both Christians and non-Christians on any (or all) of these levels, depending on the circumstances and the needs of the people.

The Church evangelizes on the human level by teaching Christ's call to all men to accept their humanity and to accept all men as their brothers. "The Church promotes the human by evangelizing, and the Church evangelizes by promoting the human."

The Church evangelizes on the religious level by teaching that any religion is true to the extent that it contributes to humanization and reconciliation (James 2: 27), and any religion is false to the extent that it contributes to superstition, injustice, and exploitation.

The Church evangelizes on the Catholic Christian level by teaching that people can know Jesus Christ through a living tradition that is guarded by a community of faith, and people can respond to Christ through this community of faith.

CONCLUSION

Christian Brothers given the grace to be missionaries are given enviable opportunities for themselves and others. They have the chance to enrich their own knowledge of and relation to the Risen Lord as they discover Him at His Father's work in a foreign culture. They have the chance to evangelize both their Christian and non-Christian students on many levels.

On the human level, the Brothers have the opportunity to deepen the humanization of society through education. To teach languages, art, science, history, philosophy, and religion is to help men develop as human beings. It should be remembered that the humanization of man is itself a dimension of salvation and not simply a tactical prelude to teaching the gospel.

On the religious level, the Brothers have the opportunity to witness by word and deed to Christ's call to universal brotherhood by their own community life and by the kind of community they create in their schools. True religion reconciles men; false religion divides men, creates injustices, and destroys community. The missionary Brother should teach both Christians and non-Christians the differences between true and false religion.

On the Catholic Christian level, the Brothers have the opportunity to treat of Jesus-Christ. They have to speak of Christ as He is present in the new culture. If the Brothers taught Christ so that He was simply a replica of the Christ they discovered in their own culture, their teaching would be a positive countersign: it would signify that Christianity, far from being a religion for all men, is essentially bound to the civilization of the West. The essence of the missionary's dialogue about Christ, then, should point to Christ as "the principle of eternal life, the meaning of history, and the model of the new man."

Selected Bibliography

Ad Gentes (The Vatican II decree on the Church's missionary activity)

The Evangelization of the Modern World (issued by the Bishops for the Synod in Rome in 1974)

The Missions (FSC 39th General Chapter in 1967)

Baum, Gregory, Faith and Doctrine (Newman, 1969); Man Becoming (Herder and Herder, 1970)

"The New Ecclesiology" Commonweal 91 (1969) 123-128; "The Jews, Faith and Ideology" The Ecumenist 10 (July, 1972) 71-76; "Mission and Power" The Ecumenist 11

(March, 1973) 44-46.

Berryman, Phillip E, "Latin American Liberation Theology" Theological Studies 34 (1973) 257-295.

Dulles, Avery, "Current Trends in Mission Theology" Theology Digest 20 (Spring, 1972) 26-34

Haughey, John C, "The Fog around Ecumenism" America 128 (1973) 280-282.

Hennessey, James, "The Two Vatican Councils: The Church Becomes Universal" Catholic Mind 69 (1971) 22-31.

Keane, Philip S, "A Theology of Social and Political Involvement for Religious" Review for Religious 32 (Nov 1973) 1338-1357.

Mac Eoin, Garry, "Maryknoll Adopts New Mission Concept" National Catholic Reporter (April 6, 1973) pp. 1; 20.

Maloney, D. "Rahner and the 'Anonymous Christian'" America 123 (1970) 348-50.

McBrien, Richard P, Church: the Continuing Quest (Newman, 1970); The Remaking of the Church (Harper and Row, 1973)

Moran, Gabriel, The Present Revelation (Herder, 1972); "Revelation Is In All Our Relationships" New Catholic World 216 (May 1973) 100-103.

Rahner, Karl, "Christian Humanism" Journal of Ecumenical Studies 4 (1967) 369-384.

Schreiner, P. "Roman Catholic Theology and Non-Christian Religions" Journal of Ecumenical Studies 6 (1969) 376-399.

Shorter, Aylward, Theology of Mission (Fides, 1972).

D E V E L O P M E N T

The W.G. Development met at the SEDOS Secretariat on the 2nd of January 1974 at 4 pm.

Present were: Fr. C. Ruhling SVD, Sr. M. J. Tresch ssnd, Sr J. Burke sndn, Br. V. Gottwald
Fr. P. Moody pa, Sr. M. Motte fmm and Fr. B. Tonna

Chairman: Sr. D. McGonagle ssnd.

Secretary: Fr. L. Skelly sma.

The meeting took as its topic the present situation in Brazil.

Bro. Gottwald read a paper on the educational situation in Brazil. Approximately 43% of the population (of 93 millions) are illiterate. The schools, both government and private, are filled with the children of the wealthy and influential. There are over 48,000 Religious (priests, brothers and sisters) and the majority are engaged in education. The following are the urgent needs which the Church must meet by concerted action:

- a) Catechesis in all types of schools, as Christian formation ceases in most cases with First Communion.
- b) Provision of youth clubs and associations to continue christian formation.
- c) Provision of homes for orphans and neglected children. The FSC has already made a beginning in this kind of work.
- d) Creation of centres for adult education. These should also provide home-science classes for girls and women.
- e) Cooperation with state agencies in programmes aimed at civic and religious education.

Coordinated action is needed and Brazilians are becoming more conscious of the enormous problems that face both Church and Government. Such action must, of course, be based on the principle of adaptation to the peculiar characteristics of the local church and society.

During the discussion which followed it was noted that the situation might get even worse as a result of Brazil's "economic miracle", which could well create even greater inequalities within society with the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer. Human rights themselves might well be threatened.

Sr. M. Motte then read a paper on a team-evangelization project in Sao Paolo, Brazil. As this is a topic in which many of the SEDOS Institutes are very interested it was decided to attach a copy of her paper to the minutes.

Fr. Tonna gave an outline of the steps being taken here in Rome to tackle the problems of poverty and deprivation. He himself would be attending several meetings of the Diocesan

Conference which was to be held in Rome from February 12th - 15th. He promised to keep the group informed of developments.

Fr. Moody stressed the fact that the only kind of politics we should be interested in are those which promote the gospel message. Other aspects of politics should be left to practitioners of that art. To this Fr. Tomna replied that one way of putting it might be that we should aim not at making all Christians politicians but at making politicians Christians ! turning to Sr. Motte's paper Br. Gottwald urged that every effort should be made to get all Generalates interested in such team-projects. Fr. Tomna pointed out that the task of the group was educational. The work of the Health Group and the Urban Mission study had done much to awaken a consciousness of the needs that existed in those areas and the steps that needed to be taken. The Development group should proceed along similar lines.

Sr. J. Burke gave a general survey of two critical situations in Brazil. The first concerned the Amazonia area. Homesteaders, who had been long settled in the area but lacked legal title to their land, are being dispossessed by large land companies, who have sold the land to new immigrants. Naturally this has caused great unrest. Ranching enterprises have brought in many poor people from the North-East; these are treated almost as slaves and are forced to live in sub-human conditions. When the bishop and his clergy protested they were accused of promoting Communism (see Ladoc, May 72, II/32A). Her second case concerned the diocese of Sao Felix where the bishop protested against the exploitation of the local people by foreign business interests. He was actually imprisoned for a time and his statement suppressed.

Fr. P. Moody treated of a project undertaken by a French missionary in the village of Santa Teresinha in Central Brazil. (See Sedos doc. D. External 574) He set up a community development scheme and a cooperative using funds obtained from abroad. Then in came big ranching companies who dispossessed and exploited the people. Cheap contract-labour was brought in and treated like slaves. Some managed to escape by means of an "underground railway" operated by sympathetic local Indians. When the missionary protested he was accused of being a Communist sympathizer.

Fr. Moody was critical of the methods employed by the missionary in this case on the ground that a) he was dependent on foreign money to finance his operation, and b) it is useless for an individual especially a foreigner - to try to solve on a local level what is really a national problem. To achieve lasting results a much more widely - based movement must be created. Here Fr. Tomna gave the example of the way in which the denominational hospitals in INDIA had got together to negotiate with the Government on a national level.

Sr. D. Mc Gonagle introduced a document concerning the Foundation for Community Creativity, Fase, as it is known in Brazil. It encourages and helps backward communities to develop their local resources and thus solve their own problems. It has spread to 250 villages

and provides the services of skilled technicians. Its aim is to give assistance to 1,500 Communities during this decade. Fr. Moody commented that such an organization could be very useful in coordinating at a national level local projects of various types. In the general discussion that followed it emerged that some missionaries on the spot felt that FASE was too un-Brazilian in its methods and rather paternalistic in its approach. Br. Gottwald warned against bigness in such organizations, including even Misereor. There was a tendency for them to ignore what they considered to be small local projects of a pioneering nature.

Sr. M.J. Tresch outlined a project being undertaken in the diocese of Las Palmas, Parana, Brazil. It involved a programme for training leaders in such fields as catechetics, agricultural development, adult education, community development and basic health care. Simple text books on all these matters were published by the central training centre. The scheme had the full support of the local clergy and the catechetics programme had been adopted as the official diocesan one. A point worth noting was that the project derived three-quarters of its financing from within Brazil itself. It also seems to be having a considerable influence on local government officials, who come in contact with it.

Brother Gottwald commented that the group was not really well informed concerning the activities of the various SEDOS institutes working in Brazil, and Fr Tonna promised to obtain the necessary material from the Documentation Section and attach it to the minutes. Fr. Tonna was also requested to give a brief sociological presentation of the factors which matter in analysing the rural urban Continuum at the next meeting.

L. Skelly SMA

Paper given by Sr. Mary Motte fmm at W.G. Development on 22.1.1974

Team Evangelization Project
Sao Paulo, Brazil

Introduction: The parish is situated in one of the most industrialized zones of Sao Paulo. The population is composed chiefly of workers, small business men, and minor clerks. The ethnic backgrounds of the people may be traced to Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Lithuanian, and Hungarian ancestry. Some of the inhabitants also are from the northesatern section of Brazil. In all they number around 15-20,000. They live modestly on meagressalaries.

In January, 1972 three Franciscan Missionaries of Mary were invited to the parish, which had been without a priest for eight months.

State of the parish / 1972:

- + A great majority of the people were baptized, but indifferent. However, they were not hostile; they all wanted to have their children baptized, they wished to be married in the Church, and to have Masses celebrated for the dead.
- + A minority group of Christian were rather traditional in their attitudes, and exhibited attachment to certain practices such as processions, promises to the saints, burning candles, etc.
- + There were many spiritists among the Catholics.
- + There were several interested in some of the more fundamentalist Christian cults.
- + There was a certain percentage of illiteracy, especially among those from norteseastern Brazil and among the adult women. Among those who were more than 40 years of age, there was a generalized lack of education.
- + There was a generalized lack of knowledge concerning religion due to the lack of evangelization among the adults and of catechetical instruction among the children.
- + The people were open, friendly, warm, accustomed to suffer and struggle. There was some addiction to drugs and alcohol, etc.
- + There was a dynamic youth group directed by two seminarians, who were eager to help.
- + There were some organizations in the parish, such as the St. Vincent de Paul Society and a social work center for poor families; the latter functioned in a rather paternalistic way.

+ The administration of the parish had been rather neglected and there was a financial deficit.

In the beginning nothing was changed immediately. The traditional approach was continued in order to reach the people.

Objectives of the project:

+ Evangelization, especially among the adults in view of forming small communities of true Christians. In order to attain this objective, we sought to live openly in our own community the aspects of such communities. Our living project was not the fruit of a beautiful theory, but an experience lived in face of obstacles that were not always easy to overcome.

All the means which we had at our disposal were utilised:

= literacy course for adults in the afternoons and evenings; there were approximately 120 students;

= mothers' clubs and such like activities in order to reach the families;

= courses for formation in basic catechetics;

= orientation in the Ipiranga section for the public school teachers in view of their role as Christian educators of young children;

= group dynamic sessions in a Christian perspective with the following objectives:

- to make the participants aware of their role in their milieu;
- to awaken them an awareness of problems in Christianity and in spirituality;
- to help them toward a better integration in their groups and community;
- to spur them toward organized action;

= preparation for baptism, first Communion, and marriage; (these courses were not too successful due to their short duration and the fact that they were not insisted upon)

= the formation of small groups for reflection and friendly exchanges which are the groundwork for future basic communities;

This undertaking was one of the most important. The first group formed in April, 1972 when one family invited a few relatives and friends to meet. The group asked spontaneously to read and study the gospel. There are several of these groups and it is in these small groups that the team exercises the Ministry of the World. All the groups without exception were formed spontaneously. The groups meet nearly every night between 8 and 10 pm. Group dynamics, songs, audio-visual aids lend their respective contributions, and the people, of whom several are only partially literate, or else completely illiterate, are open to the Word and speak easily of their impressions and experiences. The groups are composed of from 15-25 persons, men and women of all ages, but there are more women usually.

- = the formation of community leaders and ministers of the Word in order to increase the number of groups; six from the parish who were interested follow a course given in the Southern Episcopal Region of Sao Paulo especially for lay persons. The Ipiranga sector organizes teams of participants who are interested in the different parishes; the work is slow and must be done thoroughly;
- = the ministry of the word is exercised:
 - in evening celebrations especially on the days when there is no Mass -- reading and sharing of the Gospel are stressed;
 - Gospel reflection every day at 3 pm. followed by community prayer;
 - by exchanges and homilies according to circumstances;
- = catechesis of adolescents and children as well as of adults:
 - the youth meet every two weeks and spend one day each month in formation; a team of young people prepare these meetings under the direction of a religious;
 - the children are instructed by adult catechists (trained since the project began); it is planned to form teams of parents to eventually assume this work;
 - the youth group is directed by two seminarians.

Ministry of Cult:

If we are at ease for that which concerns the Ministries of the Word and of Charity, we feel our limitations when we approach liturgical action. We have thus far exercised the following liturgical ministry in the parish:

- presided at liturgical celebrations in the absence of the priest; distribution of the Eucharist to the faithful;
- brought the Eucharist to the sick, invalids, aged, dying, and assistance of the latter in their final moments;
- administered baptism to infants in the absence of the priest;
- presided at funerals when requested to do so by the families;
- presided at a marriage once (well received).

Evaluation to date:

Although it is difficult to assess the results at this still early stage, it is possible to glean a few promising signs of a more vital Church:

- our team - composed of a priest, seminarians, religious, and a lay person - is well integrated; each one has his/her own function. After experience, this approach seems to be a more effective and a more evangelical way to witness Christ and to bring the Gospel to men .

- the formation of several groups in which the laity have gradually penetrated the Word of God and have grown in faith and fraternal charity;
- a team of laity has assumed responsibility for the catechetical program for the children and youth;
- the perseverance of the first community leaders or ministers of the Word;
- the youth group, who after a session in group dynamics, followed a course given by a sociologist and are now taking the census in the neighborhood which will help in future and more realistic planning in the community;
- there are also some tangible and positive results from the different developmental activities, such as the literacy courses;
- there is a visible improvement in the administrative and financial situation of the parish; these services will be handed over to a team of specialized parishioners gradually.

--O--O--O--

SEMINARIES - COLLEGES

STATES	PIME	SVD	SSPS	CM	SJ	O.CARM	RSCJ	FSCJ	SX	FSC	MSC	OMI
BAHIA			1									
BRASILIA (D.F.)				1								
CEARA				1	2							
ESPIRITO SANTO		1	1		1			3				
PARANHAO								1				
MATO GROSSO					2							
MINAS GERAIS		8	3	1	3	1	2					
PARANA	1	3	1	2	1		1		3			
RIO DI JANEIRO		1		3	1			1				
RIO GRANDE DO SUL		1	2									
SANTA CATERINA		1			3			1	1			
SAO PAULO	4	2	2	1	2		1		1	3	1	1

OFM-CAP : 176 Parishes; 74 Schools; 10 Major Sem.; 24 Minor Sem.; 6 Novitiates; 6 Lay Brothers Sem.; 18 Hospitals; 8 Orphanages; 5 Leper Col.

NOTES for:

SVD: "Catalogus", 1972

MSC: "Album Societatis MSC, 1972"

FSCJ: "Missionari Comboniani" 1971.

PIME: "Annuario del PIME" 1973.

OFM-CAP: "Atlas geographicus OFMCAP. "1968 (1968: in Brazil 1250)

CM: "Catalogus provinciarum domorum ac personarum" 1972.

O. CARM: "Status ordinis B.M.V. de Monte Carmelo", 1970.

SSND: "Schematismus der Kongregation der Armen Schwestern v.U.L. Frau" 1971.

SX: "Stato del personale con prospetto alfabetico del personale", 1972.

RSCJ: "Catalogue de la Société du S. Coeur de Jésus" 1972-1973.

(RSCJ: 8 Homes in Brazil; nel Catalogo mancano le pagine riguardanti il Brasile).

SJ: "Annuario della Compagnia di Gesù" 1973-1974. and:

"Catalogus provinciarum necnon viceprovinciarum Brasiliae S.J." 1969.

The Statistics concern only 18 societies. Other Societies, are either not present in Brazil, or have not yet sent their Directories to SEDOS. We beg, therefore, all Sedos Members to send their Directories to the Secretariat, in order to bring our "Community Card File" up to date.

A. Gecchelin

BRAZIL

PARISHES

SCHOOLS

HOSPITALS

STATES

SVD PIME CIGN MSC O.CARM SJ FSCJ CM OSU PIME CM SSFS SSNDI SVD CISA FSCJ SVD SSFS SJ SSND

SEDOS 74/47

STATE	PIME	CIGN	MSC	O.CARM	SJ	FSCJ	CM	OSU	PIME	CM	SSFS	SSNDI	SVD	CISA	FSCJ	SVD	SSFS	SJ	SSND
AMAZONAS	1																		
BAHIA								2			1	1							1
BRASILIA	1		1								1								
CEARA					2	5					1								
ESP. SANTO	2						14												
GOIAS											1								
MARANHAO																			
MATO GROSSO	1							1											
MINAS GERAIS	3		7		6	3					4	4	1					1	3
PARA			1																
PARANA	9	33			2	7	16			1	2	3	1						1
PARAIBA																			
PERNAMBUCO												1							
PIAUI																			
RIO D. JANEIRO	7		4								2	1							2
R. GRANDE D. S.	3		2								4	1	6						1
SANTA CATER.	2		6								2	4	2						1
SAO PAULO	7	17	13	1		5	3	1	2	1	2	1	7	1	1	1	2		2

BRAZIL

PARISHES

SCHOOLS

HOSPITALS

STATES

AMAZONAS

PIME C1CM O.CARM SX CM OSU PIME CM SSPS SSNDI SVD CRSA FSCJ SVD SSPS SJ SSND

BAHIA

BRASILIA

CEARA

ESP. SANTO

GOIAS

MARANHAO

MATO GROSSO

MINAS GERAIS

PARA

PARANA

PARAIBA

PERNAMBUCO

PIAUI

RIO D. JANEIRO

R. GRANDE D. S.

SANTA CATER.

SAO PAULO

STATES	PIME	C1CM	O.CARM	SX	CM	OSU	PIME	CM	SSPS	SSNDI	SVD	CRSA	FSCJ	FSC	SVD	SSPS	SJ	SSND	
AMAZONAS	1																		
BAHIA																			
BRASILIA	1																		
CEARA																			
ESP. SANTO	2																		
GOIAS																			
MARANHAO																			
MATO GROSSO	1																		
MINAS GERAIS	3																		
PARA		1																	
PARANA	9:33																		
PARAIBA																			
PERNAMBUCO																			
PIAUI																			
RIO D. JANEIRO	7																		
R. GRANDE D. S.	3																		
SANTA CATER.	2																		
SAO PAULO	7:17																		

SEDS 74/47

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES

Christian Brothers Council Members on tours of visitation:

Brother Bernard Merian - Somalia, Reunion, Madagascar

Brother Michael Jacques - Pakistan, India, Ceylon, Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore,
Hong Kong

Brother Richard Allen - South Africa, Mauritius

Brother Pablo Basterrechea - Papua-New Guinea, Australia, Viet Nam, Philippines

Brother Rafael Martinez - Mexico, Central America, Antilles, Venezuela, Colombia,
Ecuador

Brother Francisco Alberto - Brazil, Bolivia, Peru, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile

Brother Patrice Marey - Turkey

Brother Fernando Izaguirre - Nigeria, Cameroun, Dahomey, Togo

A renewal session of four months, centered on two themes: religious consecration and Catechetical apostolate, began on January 3rd at the Rome generalate. Fifty-five Brothers from various parts of the world are following the session, animated by a team of four Brothers, specialists in the two areas of study. The group welcomes contacts with other groups of women or men religious engaged in a similar program.

DIARY FOR JANUARY 1974

3. 1. 1974 Mr. A. Gecchelin takes up duty as Documentation Study Secretary.
- Fr. L. Skelly SMA takes up duty as Assistant to the Executive Secretary and secretary to the English-speaking groups.
8. 1. 1974 Fr. B. Tonna, Executive Secretary, returns to duty after attending his father's obsequies.
- Executive Committee meeting at 4 pm.
- Visit to Secretariat by Sr. Godelive Prove, new Superior General of SCMM-II.
9. 1. 1974 Fr. Tonna visited Generalate of PIME and had supper with Mgr Pirovano.
11. 1. 1974 Staff meeting concerning the Documentation Service.
- Visit by Sisters taking ARC course.
14. 1. 1974 Telegram of sympathy sent to O.M.I. on the death of Fr. L. Deschatelets one of the founders of SEDOS.
- Fr. Tonna visited S.C.M.M.-M. Generalate. Last supper for Sisters J. Gates and A.H. de Vreede.
16. 1. 1974 Fr. Tonna lunched with Marianist Council prior to their departure on tour of the missions.
- Sr. Regina Burrichter of U.I.S.G. paid visit to Secretariat.
17. 1. 1974 Fr. Tonna said Mass at SSND Generalate and dined with the Sisters.
18. 1. 1974 Visit from Group Tutti who are involved in work for the Third World and who were recommended to us by the Italian Foreign Office.
- Fr. Ibba visited us to brief Mr. Gecchelin on the operation of the Formation Facilities File.
- Fr. Aguilò SJ came to discuss an ecumenical edition of the Catholic Media Directory.
- Visit by another group of Sisters from ARC.

20. 1. 1974 Fr. Tonna had supper with Fr. Houtart and discussed the Feres contribution to the Synod debate on Evangelization.
21. 1. 1974 Visit by a Nigerian priest, Fr. B. Maduiké, seeking material in Documentation Section for his thesis.
22. 1. 1974 Visit by Mr. C. Todd, Hampshire College, Mass., U.S.A. who is investigating Catholic missionary agencies.
Meeting of W.G. Development 4 pm.
23. 1. 1974 Visit to Secretariat of Sr. Gilmary Simmons regarding cooperation with C.M.C.
24. 1. 1974 Special meeting to consider Bethlehem Fathers' Team Mission Project at 4 pm.
Fr. Tonna visited M.H.M. Procure.
25. 1. 1974 Fr. Tonna attends meeting with O.CARM Council.
Further visit by ARC Sisters.
30. 1. 1974 Visit to Fr. Systemans, Secretary of U.S.C.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AGENDA

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on February 11, at 16.00 at the SEDOS Secretariat with the following agenda:

1. The Assembly of Generals of February 25, 1974.
2. The O. CARM Project
3. Report of the Executive Secretary on the CWME meeting in Basel.
4. Other matters.

Sincerely,

B. Tonna