

TEAM - MISSION

Special meeting to discuss the Bethlehem Mission Society's team-mission project.

A meeting of interested delegates from SEDOS Institutes met at the Secretariat on 24th Jan. 1974 at 4 pm.

Present were: Sr. G. de Thélin RSCJ, Fr. C. Rühling SVD, Fr. A. Lazarotto PIME, Sr. J. Burke SND-N, Sr. H. McCarron FMM, Fr. Wilcox and Miss A. Costello of the Movement for a Better World, Fr. E. Cid CM and Fr. B. Tonna.

Chairman: Fr. W. Goossens CICM

Secretary: Fr. L. Skelly SMA.

Fr. Goossens opened the discussion by explaining that the Bethlehem Fathers had been operating this system for about three years and wished to have from other interested parties (a) an evaluation of this method of working, and (b) some assessment of the criteria to be used in determining the areas into which to send such teams.

The meeting then studied the document sent by the Bethlehem Mission (see attached paper), and the chairman asked for comments.

Fr. J. Wilcox said that he thought this approach to evangelization fitted in very well with the teaching of Vatican II. His movement had about 2000 people engaged in team-projects and he urged the importance of thorough training. The fundamental theology of Christian Community-life must be stressed, with the life of the Holy Trinity as its inspiration. He wondered if the Bethlehem Fathers' decision to create teams was based on the correct motivation. We should undertake teamwork because it is the most effective method of evangelization. It would contribute much more than individuals working in isolation or even in loose cooperation. The team must live in community and thus set an example of true Christian living to those whom they wished to influence and help - oppressed and oppressors. He believed that team working was the movement of the future in every area of evangelization.

Fr. Goossens remarked that his congregation CICM was in the same situation as the Bethlehem Fathers as regards shortage of vocations. This made the involvement of lay apostles all the more necessary. Indeed the preparatory Commission for the CICM General Chapter was recommending the team-method as an expression of the basic Christian Community. The team should be

animators of the people among whom they lived.

Several of those present laid emphasis on the necessity of ensuring that the team was fulfilling the real needs of the people among whom it worked. Some warned of the danger of the team becoming merely a group of social workers with preaching of the Gospel taking a very secondary place. On the other hand it was also pointed out that as salvation is for the whole man the two facets of the Christian message cannot in practice be separated. Several examples were given by Frs Lazarotto, Cid and others of successful team efforts in the Game-rooms, Bolivia and elsewhere. In all of these cases the teams were built up as local needs were identified, and evangelical and social work went hand in hand.

There seemed to be a general consensus that such team groups were particularly valuable in that they gave lay people an opportunity to exercise a genuine missionary apostolate. It was not just a way of filling up gaps left by the growing shortage of clerical and Religious vocations. The laity had to take their rightful place in spreading the Gospel with all the social involvement that that implied. But only those who had a genuine vocation for such work should be encouraged to undertake it. Furthermore only those capable of working with others in a team should be recruited. Examples were given of teams which had split up on account of personality clashes e.g. in Ecuador.

Several speakers agreed with Sr. Mary Motte who urged that expatriate team workers should ensure that as soon as was humanly possible they were replaced by local people.

The Chairman then asked the meeting to sum up, and the following recommendations were arrived at:

1. The team-mission system should be encouraged.
2. The theological motivation underlying such a method of evangelization should be more deeply investigated and more clearly expressed. Experience seemed to show that this method was more effective than any other. Secondly it could not be denied that the laity had an essential role to play in evangelization ; they were not merely filling gaps created by the shortage of priestly and Religious vocations.
3. Paragraf 3.2 of the Bethlehem document should be stressed i.e. the notion that the needs to be satisfied by the team should be those required by the local situation and requested by the people themselves.
4. Those who joined such teams should be prepared to live in community, expressing in their way of life the true Christian values.

They must be prepared not only to give but also to receive and learn from the people among whom they bear witness.

5. The Team should begin with a basic core to which additional expert personnel should be

added as the real needs of the locality were identified. Indigenous volunteers should be recruited into the teams as soon as possible (see no. 4 par. 2 of Bethlehem document).

6. It was agreed that adequate training was of the utmost importance but the meeting did not have sufficient time to go into the matter adequately.

As regards action, it was decided to send the minutes of the meeting along with some documentation already in our possession to the Bethlehem Fathers. If their reply required it another meeting of the group could be called.

Should any member of the institute happen to be coming to Rome, we could arrange to meet with him - on condition that reasonable notice of such a visit was given.

L. Skelly S.M.A.

Addresses of people who can provide information on team-work projects.

1. Fr. J. Wilcox, Better World Movement, Rocca di Papa, Italy.
This movement has many members working in teams.
2. Archbishop J. Hayes, Cobourg Rd, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. Several priests from his diocese work in teams with some Sisters of Charity of St Vincent de Paul (and also with some laypeople), in Vittoria Nueva, Chiclayo, Peru.
3. Father Louis Caissie or Sister Agnes Burroughs who can be contacted through General Dalivery, Lower Sackville; Nova Scotia, Canada. Both worked in teams in Peru for a five year period.
4. Fr. Murray Abraham S.J., St Alphonsus School, Kurseong, Nepal, India. The Canadian Jesuits have some kind of team-system working in this general area with lay-workers.
5. Don Angelo Sartinon c/o PIME, Via Monte Rosa 81, 20149 Milano, Italy, has experience of teamwork in Ivory Coast.
6. Fr. Jose Jesus Mira, Carrera 6, No 35-37 - Bogota (phone 454812), Columbia will also be glad to share his experience in this field.

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TEAM - MISSION

1. Why Team - Mission?

Various reasons were decisive for the Bethlehem Mission Society's decision in 1969 to add mixed teams to its traditional one-man-one-parish form of missionary service.

1.1 Motives arising from the Situation

- Both geographically and economically the area entrusted to the Society for missionary work belongs to the Columbian marginal zone.
- The social cultural situation is characterized by widespread illiteracy, subsistence cultivation, the breakdown of traditions, spoliation of the soil or other resources, absence of any sense of community and social weakness.
- The religious and church position is equally marginal, characterized by individualist devotional forms, socially dependent sacramental life, restricted faith, the absence of Christian morality in the family or in public life and social irresponsibility plus a purely administrative pastoral activity etc.

1.2 Motives arising out of the Society's situation

- The members of the Society working in the area tended to be overage or aging.
- The young missionaries, as the result of their training, are better prepared for team rather than isolated individual work.
- By the nature of its own purpose the Society felt it has a responsibility to bring the newer types of church professions (unordained theologians and secular specialists) into effective missionary work.

1.3 Consequence

If this population, that of the area, is to be actually helped, it needs a more radical undertaking than merely a greater provision of priests. The undertaking must be concerned with the whole human being. That means that social and cultural development must be pushed forward according to the method of "Community Development" (see P. Freire). Evangelization must be realized by assisting the people to become aware of their Christian vocation. Both have been possible only through teams drawn from various professions. On this basis three teams have been placed in service since 1970.

2. General Concept of the Work

The purpose of these missionary teams is the integrated building up of the community and parish in the sense of "community development". The personal energies of the people in economic, social and Christian terms which have been buried are to be activated by these teams so that the people will undertake on their own initiative the building up of their community life and of a Christian community and parish.

2.1 Building up Community Life demands:

- Assistance to the population in achieving insight into and the capacity to give expression to their real needs (Creation of awareness).
- To arouse their self confidence and sense of responsibility in order to overcome hopelessness.
- To help them to achieve a structured participation in dealing with their common interests (Social cohesion).

2.1 Building up a Christian Community requires:

- Education for a personally responsible faith (Evangelization).
- To encourage ability to bear witness and to share hope.
- To develop a sense of community through awareness of the Christian call to commitment for others (Social commitment).

3. Realization

3.1 The teams - depending on the situation, they will consist of a priest, a nurse, an agricultural specialist or a social worker, a domestic science teacher. They will receive a years preparatory training, half in Europe and half in the country in which they will serve.

3.2 The purpose and the action program itself will be worked out with the population. Experience has indicated that only those undertakings continue which were initiated by the population itself.

4. Concluding Remarks

Experience to date permits no final judgment but does encourage us to feel that in this fashion lasting results can be expected. In the future, local professionals or technicians must be introduced into the teams. However, the preparation of such teams will require special solicitude.

NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES

1. HISTORY OF BLACK AFRICA (DIA, p. 11, 1974).

The first "History of Black Africa" written by an African has been published in French. The author is Mr. Joseph Ki-Zerbo of Upper Volta. This extensive and very complete 702-page work has been drawn up with great competence. The part devoted to the Christian missions is of particular interest. He shows how on many occasions the missionaries have played a political role in favour of the social emancipation of the people, on account of which they often entered into conflict with the colonial administration. By their education they indirectly but greatly contributed to the self-determination of the peoples of Black Africa. Mr. Ki-Zerbo is the first African who has passed the agregation examination in History at the Sorbonne. He is a member of various international commissions. (Ed. Hatior, Paris).

2. MARIANHILL sent us the special issue about their General Chapter 1973. The first part includes the three lectures given by Fr. B. Haering, CSSR to the capitulars; the second the reports presented to the General Chapter; the third three papers on pressing problems of the Society: vocations, personnel, brothers. The documents are in the language in which they were given (English or German).

THE SALVIFIC VALUE OF NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS

Asandas Balchand, S.J., *The Salvific Value of Non-Christian Religions According to Asian Christian Theologians Writing in Asian-Published Theological Journals, 1965-1970.* East Asian Pastoral Institute, Manila 1973, 81 p.

This reprint from "Teaching All Nations" 1973 No. 1 and 2 makes available to a wider public a survey and evaluation of recent research into one of the central questions of Mission theology today. The research is limited to articles published in seventeen journals and written by Christian theologians who live and work permanently or temporarily in Asia. The time covers the five crucial years from the promulgation of Vatican II's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*) to the end of December 1970. A short presentation of the Journals consulted, the selected list of articles, a summary after each chapter and an over-all summary at the end give even to the non-Asian reader some idea of the promising beginning of an Asian theology. Though the foreign-born writers still slightly outnumber the native-born, the native-born Asians rapidly come to the fore. Most notable is Sri Lanka (Ceylon) where the names of Balasuriya, Pieris and L.A. de Silva stand out for their enlightening contributions.

The main interest of this theological survey lies in the experience of the authors consulted who all live in direct contact with non-Christians. Fr. Balchand himself was born in the Philippines of Hindu parents and has long been interested in Asian religions. His bibliographical notes will stimulate further research not only in India, Ceylon and Japan where the most significant writing was done in 1965-1970, but also in other countries and continents. Thus it might be a rewarding task to study more closely the cross-fertilization between Asian and European theologians (cf. p. 65).

Before approaching the detailed analysis of recent doctrinal developments it might be useful to have a overall view at the wider historical perspectives with Aloysius Pieris, S.J. who describes the changing attitudes of the Church towards other religions over the last four hundred years (p.51). The Conquest theory (from the 16th century onwards) considers other religions as anti-Christian; to save the pagans it is necessary to bring them into the visible fold of the Church, because outside there is no salvation. The Adaptation theory (starting with the Italian Jesuits De Nobili, Ricci etc) considers other religions simply as non-Christians and defends the values of the East; Eastern religious motifs are not only good in themselves but also effective means of evangelization; yet it robs the Eastern cultures of their religious content and inserts Christianity in its place. The fulfilment theory, taught in Vatican II, considers other religions as pre-Christians, as preparation for the Gospel and a secret presence of God. It was advocated by the Belgian Jesuits in Calcutta a few decades ago, and in the West by such men as Daniélou and Guardini. The theory of non-Christian religions as anonymous Christianity, originally associated with Karl Rahner, has gained wide acceptance among theologians in Asia. Pieris uses it for his sacramental theory, (p.52) probably the most positive and appreciative evaluation of the salvific value of non-Christian religions. The Church as the Universal Sacrament of Salvation is the sign and instrument of the Kingdom (salvation being synonymous with the Kingdom and not with the Church). Conversion signifies a "conscious acceptance of the Kingdom and not necessarily the acceptance of the Church which is its sacramental form".

The role of the Church is to explicitate in her own life the anonymous Christianity that surrounds her and to promulgate those values among the very people who have accepted them on principle.

Careful analysis of the relevant material (ch.II-V) leads Fr Balchand to similar conclusions on the positive value of non-Christian religions (p.68-69):

1. There is a growing consensus of theologians admitting God's and Christ's salvific presence in non-Christian religions though it remains difficult to explain the mode of this presence.
2. Revelation, faith and grace are present in the non-Christian religions. The non-Christians, therefore, are saved through God's grace within their particular religions and not outside and in spite of their religions. The non-Christians manifest their faith in God and his decrees in and through their religions.
3. The non-Christian religions are therefore salvific. They are vehicles, channels, mediations, and instruments of salvation for their adherents.
4. The non-Christian religions are said to contain treasures of goodness and truth, rays of the Truth, seeds of the World, shadows of the true Reality, holy jewels and supernatural components.
5. In relation to Christianity the non-Christian religions are considered as pre-Christian. Their truths and goodness are a preparation for the reception of the fulness of truth and goodness in Christianity. Christ, the Church, and Christianity are the fulfilment of the non-Christian religions. This idea of fulfilment is the most commonly used description for the relationships between the non-Christian religions and Christianity. Some speak of mutual fulfilment, completion and conversion, with Christianity enlightening and benefiting from contact with the other religions.

A positive approach does not conceal the ambiguous character of non-Christian religions; they contain both truth and error, goodness and evil, holiness and sin. Religious growth and fulfilment necessarily demand conversion, involving discontinuity and opposition. But only isolated authors reject therefore the positive approach as erroneous and misleading. Men and women who had deeper contacts with non-Christians affirm most emphatically their faith in the presence of Christ in these religions; their overwhelming experience is positive. Thus Sister Sraddhananda, a German Benedictine nun, who with papal permission, actually joined a Hindu Gandhian ashram for three years speaks about her observations about the presence of Christ in her companions: "I found Christ in them. I was able to encounter Him in their hearts- even more than in many of my Christian brothers and sisters" (p.18).

GUIDELINES FOR THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EASTERN AFRICA IN THE 1980's

AMECEA STUDY CONFERENCE
NAIROBI, 16-21 DECEMBER, 1973

PREAMBLE:

We, the Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops, Leaders of the Catholic Church in the AMECEA Countries (Association of the member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa : Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia), gathered in plenary session at St. Thomas Aquinas Regional Seminary, Nairobi, wishing, in faith to discover the will of God for the Church in these Countries for the coming years, have set out to plan for the 1980's.

We believe that in planning for the life and work of the Church in the 1980's we must take the Holy Scriptures as our norm and guide, since in these scriptures we find in inspired written form, the genuine source of the Church's very being, a revelation of what she is meant to be and to achieve and God's own guidance for her development and work over the ages in the varying conditions of the world.

We are convinced that the God who speaks to us in the Scriptures is the same God who is continually speaking to his Church today through the signs of the times: the events, situations and conditions of man's life in our day. We take these signs of the time in our Countries as the challenge of God for his church in the coming years.

The Church, the People of God, is the Family of those "chosen in Christ before the world to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence"(Letter to the Ephesians 1,4). She is the Mystical Body of Christ who is her model and source of life, and who unites in himself all her members, all those who have been buried with him and have risen with him in baptism. In and through the Church Christ is present to the world as Teacher, Life-giver and Leader. Through the preaching of God's word the administration of Sacraments and the unifying, animating and directing leadership in the Church, Christ builds the Church, keeps her alive, makes her grow, and equips her for her task in the world.

The Church is not just a community of salvation to which the "elect" flock to find the assurance of their own salvation. She is also the bearer of a challenge and a mission to the world. In the Church God is at work bringing Salvation to the world. She is the agent of God's Plan of salvation. As Christ's Body she strives to answer fully the call of God to mankind to become the Family of God's children living by the tenets of love of God and love of mankind. She seems not only to answer this call for herself, but also to help the whole world to do the same. In the midst of the world she is called to become, in Christ's name, the light to chase away the darkness of ignorance in which the world is plunged. She is called to be the life to quicken mankind, and she comes as the way leading men to God. She is the salt of the earth (Matthew 5, 13) and the dynamic leaven for wholesome trans-

formation of the whole world. As the Agent of God's plan of Salvation she is to transform the world so that instead of the domination of sin and all its consequences, there may finally arrive the Kingdom of God, the reign of Christ, "a reign of truth, and life and holiness, grace, justice, love and peace". Striving for the Kingdom of God demands a commitment to the total development of man and of all creation. In our sincere efforts to achieve true human development we seek to respond to Christ, and through this response we hope for the fulfilment of the Kingdom and our own final and eternal life in union with God in his Kingdom of love and brotherhood.

In order to fulfil this mission, the Church must live and work in the world, not in the isolation of a ghetto, but in close collaboration with all men of good will, irrespective of race, colour, social condition, sex, or creed. She believes that all mankind is included in God's Salvation Plan, and feels called to unite with all men in the common realisation of God's Kingdom. She is, therefore, ready to cooperate with man of every persuasion: fellow christians, in spite of real differences that separate them, also men of other religious persuasions. She is also prepared to collaborate sincerely with the legitimate Governments in their efforts to bring about development and progress. This respect for all men and readiness to collaborate for the common good must continue to be a dominant factor in our planning.

We believe that the Church in our Countries, called to continue the Prophetic Mission of Christ must defend those authentic human values which have been the basis of the life of our peoples. The Church must stand up against all that would tend to degrade the human person or lead to injustice, violence, oppression, racialism, wars and evils of all sorts.

While the Church of Christ is universal, it is a communion of small local christian churches communities of christians rooted in their own society. From the Bible we learn that such local churches are born through apostolic and missionary preaching. But they are meant to grow so that with time they become firmly rooted in the life and culture of the people. Thus the Church, like Christ himself, becomes incarnated in the life of the people. She is led by local people, meets and answers local needs and problems, and finds within herself the resources needed for her life and mission.

We are convinced that in these Countries of Eastern Africa it is time for our Church to become really "local", that is: self-ministering, self-propagating and self-supporting. Our planning is aimed at building such local churches for the coming years.

We believe that in order to achieve this we have to insist on building Church life and work on basic Christian communities, in both rural and urban areas. Church life must be based on the communities in which everyday life and work takes place: those basic and manageable social groupings whose members can experience real inter-personal relationships and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working. We believe that Christian communities at this level will be best suited to develop real intense vitality and to become effective witnesses in their natural environment.

In such realistic communities it will be easier to develop a sense of community whereby the Church can exist as Christ's Body, consisting of "many parts" (clergy, religious, laity with many charisms, but making one Body in the one Spirit (1 Corinthian 12). We want to see collaboration and coordination in the life and work of all the different parts of the Christian community.

Again, as we look to the future, we realise that our plans for the Church in the coming years will only succeed in the measure to which the entire Christian community shares in the life and mission of Christ. It is through the whole Christian people that the Church is deeply present in all aspects of the life and activity of the world. We are convinced that it is only in our total involvement as living members of Christ that the Church will be the Salt, Leaven and Light of mankind in our Countries.

GUIDELINES FOR THE AMECEA PERSONNEL PLANNING FOR THE 1980's

The growing sense of awareness for communal responsibility all over the Church for the carrying out of Christ's command to evangelize the world has found a most fertile ground in the African traditional way of sharing and communal solidarity such as found in the extended family. We the AMECEA Bishops, gathered here in Nairobi in Plenary Assembly to plan for the Church in the 1980's are happy and proud to discover in the Church of AMECEA, the desire for the establishment of a self-supporting Church keeping in mind the obligation of the local Church towards the Universal Church.

We recommend that the Christian community at all levels be involved in the selection, training and maintenance of the Church and personnel.

To enable the available manpower to play fuller roles in the ministry of the Church we strongly recommend that present Church structures and attitudes be modified, e.g. by establishing basic Christian communities, by giving more responsibility to the Laity as local leaders, and by a better utilization and distribution of manpower.

In order to attain our objectives, we urge that all Church personnel, Bishops, Priests, Religious men and women, catechists and Lay Leaders should receive intensive training to fulfil effectively their respective roles in the ministries of the Church.

We resolve that in promoting vocations for Church personnel, special attention should be paid to the African Brotherhoods, who seem to have been neglected in some parts of the AMECEA countries.

In spite of shortages of personnel in respective dioceses the Bishops of AMECEA, imbued with a sense of collegiality of charity, should be prepared to share the available personnel when the good of the Church requires it.