

ASSEMBLY OF SEDOS

The 43 Assembly of Superiors General associated in Sedos was held on Monday, June 3, at 16:00 in the Generalate of the FSC.

Participants were divided into groups as follows:

AFRICA group A: Chairman: Br. Vincent Gottwald FSC.
Secretary: Sr. B. Flanagan SFB.

group B: Chairman: Fr. Buhlman OFM.CAP.
Secretary: Sr. A. Gates SA.

ISLAM Group: Chairman: Fr. Ary R.C. SJ.
Secretary: Fr. Neven PA.

LATIN AMERICA (and the PHILIPPINES) Group: Chairman: Sr. R. Mendiola ICM.
Secretary: Sr. C. Ouellette SCMM-M.

ORIENTAL RELIGIONS Group: Chairman: Sr. A. De Sa SCMM-M.
Secretary: Sr. G. Simmons MM.

WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED AREAS Group: Chairman: Sr. G. de Thelin RSCJ.
Secretary: Sr. M. Keenan RSHM.

In the Chair: Br. C.H. Buttimer, FSC.

Secretary: Fr. B. Tonna.

1. The President invited the Assembly to pray together for the Third World.
2. The minutes of the 42 Assembly were taken as read and approved (74/225-228).
3. The Assembly unanimously approved the recommendation of the Executive Committee to accept the St. Patrick's Missionary Society of Kiltegan, Eire, as Full members of Sedos. Fr. Meehan, its procurator in Rome, was welcomed and cheered.
4. The President introduced the topic for discussion and sharing: evangelization and the missionary sending institutes. In a historical perspective, he offered the Assembly some criteria, garnered from Ad Gentes, for its search for relevant insights to offer the 1974 Synod.

Br. C.H. Buttimer's Presidential Introduction:

Ten years ago, this month, the Sedos group was formed to respond to the changes which then loomed over the Church in the World. Seen from a historical perspective, this decade could help us assess the response of our Institutes in the Mission of Church to the World.

These ten years have been momentous in the history of the World. Recent developments in Portugal brought home to us, again, the end of an era of Western colonialism and the beginning of one of political, economic and cultural liberation of the peoples of Asia, Latin America and Africa. The decade has shown that the process cannot be stopped at the political frontiers. It has brought to our attention experiences, from all parts of the planet, of a "coming of age" of the grass roots, through conscientization, the search for values, the thrust to democratization, human resources development and supra-national structures.

Eleven years ago, this month, Pope John died and, with him, a heady period of fresh ideas and euphoric readiness for change. It has been a decade of ecclesiastical struggle to put these in practice, as we all sought to come to grip with the activation of Vatican II. Hope alternated with fear as we resisted to the implications of the call. We experienced the emergence of basic Christian communities, and the risks of moving out of an institutional Church into a Church community, the demand of pushing education to conscientization, the consequences of accepting other values besides Western ones, the pains of lay involvement, the expansion of Pastoral Institutes, the promises of the new, decentralized structures of the Bishops Conferences and Association of Major Superiores. The experience came loud and clear as we, in the Institutes, microcosms of the Church, prepared, had and followed up our renewal Chapters.

The abandonment, in this decade, of the old polarization of World and Church moved us into the realization that Mission was Church in the World. Recent missionary history has provided us with varied experiences of expulsion from states and institutions, drying up of recruitment, new motivation factors, new attitudes, new formation facilities, new operational structures. All these are in our minds. But it could help this Assembly to see them not only as an answer to recent history but as a response to the challenge of the Second Vatican Council.

As in many other areas Pope Pius XII was a precursor of the thinking that was to become systematized and developed in this Council concerning the Church and her role of missionary to the nations. As early as 1941 this great Pope challenged us to rethink our missionary role, a challenge he reiterated and developed in many successive discourses and radio addresses. John XXIII continued this challenge in his great encyclicals Mater et Magistra and Pacem in Terris, and the reigning pontiff Paul VI seven years ago gave the new missionary perspective sharper focus in Populorum Progressio, an encyclical that sought to point up the principles of the second Vatican Council. But it was the Council that had the deepest impact upon the renewal of the missionary role of the Church and the exercise of the missionary apostolate. Often expressed within the council and not infrequently stated in the conciliar documents, but ever present in the background of the conciliar reflections and discussions, is the fact that we are living in a rapidly changing world, a major revolution of our civilization, in which change and evolution the Church is caught up, in all aspects of her life. This required on the part of the Church-in-Council a re-newed self-understanding, an understanding which she formulated in Gaudium et Spes and Lumen Gentium, and then proceeded to make explicit for the various aspects of her life, for the missionary apostolate in Ad Gentes principally, but also in Nostra Aetate, Dignitatis Humanae, and sparsim, but to lesser degree, in several other documents. In the conciliar documents and in the ecclesiology that has taken shape since the Council, the Church understands herself in categories that are fundamentally scriptural but at the same time in touch with the living realities of contemporary life. The Church sees herself as a dynamic, ever-developing, organic Body of Christ, not as a static monolith, or as a primarily juridical structure, but as moving into the future while being in close touch with the present. The Church of the Council does not see change as something that is happening to her, but rather as an essential dimension of her existence, for she is a Body that lives, grows, develops, changes, evolves. And for this reason she is a suffering Church, for she is living with the pains of growth, with the suffering that is the price of progress. And we must expect to suffer the pains of growth, too, to pay the price of progress, if we are to understand in the spirit of the renewed Church our role in the missionary apostolate, which must be at once scripturally founded and open to the realities of the changing scene.

It is to the great credit of the religious missionary and mission sending congregations that they have responded admirably to the renewal and adaptations that the Council has encouraged, and that they have taken as the basic doctrines and

orientations of the General Chapters, the conciliar theology of *Gaudium et Spes* and *Lumen Gentium*, especially as these were focused for the missionary Church in *Ad Gentes*. I should like to suggest that our thinking about Evangelisation should be founded on a careful study of *Ad Gentes*. There are some who affirm that *Ad Gentes* was not meant to be a last word, but rather the beginning of a development in our missionary thought and practice, but it does seem that it is the place to begin, if we want to be in tune with the conciliar ecclesiology and missiology, and for all of us that is where our general chapters began their missionary adapted renewal.

Let me share with you some of the highlights of this document, according as I see them, to be points of reference in our search today into the spiritual insights and experience that have helped us to understand the missionary challenge of our times and to respond to it. First I would mention the stress of *Ad Gentes* on the importance of community in establishing and strengthening the young Churches, as a sign of God's presence, nourished by the Eucharist and the Word of God. But a community endowed with the riches of its own nation's culture, a community characterised by a lay apostolate that will permeate society with the whole spirit of the Gospel, a society that is not closed, not a ghetto, but capable of collaborating in a brotherly spirit with its separated brethren and capable of collaborating in social and technical projects as well as cultural and religious ones. To accomplish this it is important that from the beginning the vocations of service be cultivated, priests, deacons and catechists, and religious men and women who will play an indispensable role, (AG 15 and 16). A second point that appeals to me is the stress placed on education in the building up of the young Church. There should be an increase in the number of schools so that future catechists may be adequately trained and later be given refresher and deepening instruction; schools in which the students will be guided to make contact with the particular way of thinking and acting that are characteristic of their own people, in which they will learn the points of contact between the traditions and religion of their homeland and the Christian religion, as well as the special social, economic and cultural conditions of their people, (AG 17). A third important point, it seems to me, is the stress on fostering the religious life among the people from the first planting of the Church, but a stress no less important, that the new religious should be lead to give expression to the treasures of mysticism adorning the Church's religious tradition, in a manner harmonious with the nature and genius of each nation, in which the seeds of ascetic and contemplative traditions of Christian religious life were sometimes planted by God in ancient cultures, as a preparation for the future preaching of the Gospel. Efforts must be made to give the contemplative life birth among the people with genuine adaptations to local conditions, (AG 18). A fourth important point is the insistence on the laity as apostles. The Church has not been truly established, it says, and is not yet fully alive, nor is it a perfect sign of Christ among men, unless there is a laity worthy of the name working along with the hierarchy. For the Gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the talents, life, and work of any people without the active presence of laymen. Therefore from the very founding of the Church the greatest attention must be paid to raising up a mature Christian laity. (AG 21-22) A fifth stress is on the adequate training of the missionary, a subject that has importance for the missionary institutes, but perhaps is of greater moment for the institutes that are mission sending. It is interesting that the decree insists that the missionary be trained to take initiatives, to be persevering in difficulties, to be patient and strong in bearing solitude, fatigue, fruitless labor, to be adaptive to strange customs and changing circumstances. And there is much said about the missionary's doctrinal training, but with emphasis on both the universality of the Church and the diversity of nations. A general knowledge of peoples, cultures, religions is also urged, in order that the missionary may have esteem for

the patrimony, language and customs. And as many sisters and brothers as possible should be well instructed and prepared in the art of catechesis. And some few members of institutes should receive a thorough university training in sociology and anthropology so as to be at the service of the missionary apostolate. (AG 26-27) My final point is the stress Ad Gentes places upon collaboration and cooperation. As the new Church matures and more and more is able to take upon itself the responsibility for its destiny, the missionary should adopt the role of seconding the apostolic work of the local clergy and religious. The various institutes working in an area should find the means of coordinating their work, conferences of religious men and women should be organized to aid this work of coordination and collaboration, and to work in close touch with the episcopal conference. And in the Churches of older Christianity, there should be collaboration and coordination in training men and women for the mission, in arranging financing, in maintaining relations with public authorities and with international and supranational organizations. These are a few of the guiding principles of Ad Gentes, let us in our group studies explore how in our missionary experience in the different cultures in which we have worked, we have been able to implement them, what insights and experiences we have gained and which we can share with one another.

5. The secretaries of the 5 preparatory groups then highlighted their reports, (74/396-410).
- A.) --- SVD Group --- Sr. M. Motte, FMM, secretary.
- 1) The views of those in the field, those who are the recipients of a particular service, are especially significant in the development of new orientations.
 - 2) Motivation: Today the emphasis is on life rather than on work. Religious life then becomes a way of living a specific kind of life of which evangelization is a natural outcome. Part of the difficulty has been the role expectation for religious on the part of the people in general, the hierarchy, and sometimes the religious themselves.
 - 3) Renewal: Generally speaking in religious communities, the first Chapter which followed the Council concentrated on the renewal of structures, and the subsequent Chapter has concentrated (or will concentrate) on the life and spirit of the community. It is increasingly evident that religious communities have a prophetic role to play in evangelization: to foster reconciliation among men, to provide a counter-witness to consumer society, to give a visible witness of our contact with God; to let prayer life be seen.
 - 4) Mission-sending: The awareness of the call to share the Kingdom with others is essentially the same, but the terminology and effective realizations differ today, and ambiguity often results. We must stress that communication must be through the local culture: and this implies evolution in our ideas. There is a need to relate the universal church to the local church: i) the need to enrich one another culturally, e.g., theology, for different insights may be gained from varied cultural points of view, and ii) the need for contacts with persons from other cultures so that the local church will not close in on itself.
 - 5) There is a need to spell out the implications of the new conditions of mission.

B) --- FSC Group --- Sr. C. Oullette SCMM-M, secretary.

- 1) The attitude of receiving and not merely giving was identified as the one which most calls for a response on the part of the institutes. To achieve this, the following were seen as necessary:--i) adaptability and flexibility, --this implied preparation for the tension missionary life which is the on-going formation of the missionary. ii) Recognition and respect for cultures other than one's own, by not imposing outside values, but **integrating local values**, iii) separation of Gospel and culture, iv) the knowledge of post-Conciliar theology and v) the attitude of openness to the world.
- 2) The recognition of the value of other world religions was seen as vital. Religion is not an isolated aspect of life, but part of the culture--the necessity to understand and respect the other's approach to God: this requires an attitude of listening and learning.
- 3) The implications of the decrease of traditional vocations were investigated. We must be willing to hand over to the laity, to train laity for this, through new concepts of ministry (and this depends on the local church), and stimulate local vocations by renewed attention to the aspirations of the people in order to be more relevant to new intuitions of religious life; finally, the openness and readiness to accept new structures.
- 4) In the development of the independent local Church the most difficult period is that of the change over. More generosity on the part of missionaries is needed and a willingness to serve the local Church in a secondary role. Again, this requires adaptability and flexibility.
- 5) The "basic community" was where evangelisation starts. We can never be a witness unless we are in contact with others. Communication and mutual exposure must be seen.

C) --- SJ Group --- Fr. F. Kapusciak CM, secretary.

Il a été décidé de parler de la Mission Ad Gentes, entendue comme partie intégrante de la mission totale de l'Eglise et non comme instrument de l'Eglise.

- 1) La motivation de la mission, selon les constitutions, suivant le charisme propre de l'institut:
 Pour les Pères Blancs elle se polarise sur: i) les besoins ressentis par les jeunes Eglises; et sur les appels de ces mêmes Eglises, ii) la nécessité de répondre à ces besoins et à ces appels en communiquant les dons gratuitement reçus.

Pour les Jésuites, l'idéal est de faire connaître le nom de Dieu dans le monde entier.

Pour les Lazaristes, l'idéal du service des pauvres pour lesquels fut fondée notre Congrégation se laisse vivre d'une manière éminente dans les pays de mission.

- 2) On note que les Chapitres Généraux n'ont pas fourni de motifs capables d'entraider la jeunesse. Les jeunes se laissent facilement mobiliser pour l'aide au Tiers-Monde, pour le service des pauvres mais ils veulent y travailler en groupe non structuré et de manière temporaire; par contre, la jeunesse d'aujourd'hui fuit les organisations structurées, les missions solidaires, les engagements permanents.
- 3) La Motivation concrète peut-être consciente ou inconsciente. Elle varie beaucoup selon le milieu, elle n'est pas la même, par exemple: dans les pays de l'Est que dans les pays Occidentaux. --- l'idée du Salut total de libération; d'instaurer la fraternité entre tous les hommes; de donner et de recevoir en même temps; d'assurer la continuité d'une oeuvre entreprise et la solidarité en portant de l'aide aux missionnaires surchargés; de témoigner évangélique; la recherche d'une vie authentiquement vouée au service du prochain; l'obéissance au sens traditionnel.
- 4) La motivation n'attire pas la jeunesse, parce que: i) elle est étrangère à sa mentalité; ii) les structures des communautés religieuses paraissent empêcher l'épanouissement personnel; iii) la théologie est centrée sur les sacrements; iv) a fait valoir les éléments salvifiques des religions non-chrétiennes; v) difficile de s'engager définitivement; vi) les missionnaires manquent de crédibilité, --vu qu'ils devraient d'abord convertir leur propre pays; vii) la situation est instable au sein de l'Eglise.

D) --- RSCJ Group --- Fr. W. Buhlmann O.F.M. Cap., secretary.

The whole issue could be condensed in one question: "How does the 'traditionalist' look upon missionary problems and what are the views of the more 'advanced' missionaries in this regard?" It was more a question of emphasis and stress, than one of novelty.

- 1) Five such accents were highlighted: the specific role of the Missionary Institutes was to be international. As such they represented the universal Church within the young local Churches.
- 2) In previous Synods, what the Superior Generals had to say gave a more "global" vision of the Church than the view advanced by the more "local" minded Bishops. On the other hand, Missionary Institutes had in the main gone through the process of renewal and had overcome all kinds of tensions, insecurity and crisis. Therefore, they could share their experiences with the Bishops of the Synod.
- 3) It was becoming less "to do" than to live the Gospel. The missionaries were to give witness not as a task force, but as a life group; they were to evangelize, above all, by "being there as a community of believers in Christ." In this way witness became a "sign"; but never simply a signal or semaphore, rather a true invitation. Without a doubt, the most needed element in our behaviour pattern in making contact with the members of non-Christian religions was our spirituality!
- 4) By sending missionaries whenever and wherever the Bishops wanted them, the Institutes could be creating an alibi for them, so that they did not feel the need of finding suitable local solutions for local situations. To have "enough missionaries" was dangerous: it prevented the growth of the local Church. The missionaries should work with this goal in mind: to make themselves eventually superfluous. They should work with the realistic hypothesis that they might be expelled within 5 years.
- 5) What could be demanded of missionaries so that they could leave behind a vital Church? The answer: a spirit of total availability and disponibility with an eventual view of becoming expendable. This meant the final self-destruction of the missionaries for the local Church. Certainly this kind of spirituality would lead the missionaries, so to speak, into the mystical and dark night of the soul...!
- 6) Ecumenical efforts should be exerted both in the missionfields and in the home countries. This could be aptly done through a sharing of experiences and "know-how" by the more "advanced" Churches, with all the other Churches. Furthermore, increased co-operation for missionary information in the home countries should exist among all the Churches, by holding more meetings and Conferences together, by the better use of the mass-media and of the many publications of the Churches, and even through common fund-raising efforts.

By all the above methods, slowly we hope to overcome what has been justly termed "the scandal of separation" of the Churches.

E) SSPS Group — Fr. K. Houdijk CSSP, secretary.

- 1) Par rapport aux priorités de l'Évangélisation: l'Évangélisation des non-chrétiens n'est qu'une des priorités qui laisse d'espace à d'autres. Cette diversité des priorités peut dépendre du but spécifique des divers instituts, mais est souvent co-déterminée par la situation concrète. Chercher les priorités c'est plutôt la tâche et la responsabilité de l'Église locale, que de l'institut. Il conviendrait donc aux membres des instituts de vivre une grande disponibilité, une grande mobilité. La question qui se pose alors, c'est la question qui décide en dernière instance, où les services d'un institut sont nécessaires et exigés.
- 2) Un chapitre général doit avoir le caractère d'une synthèse assez globale et générale, qui ne reflète que très implicitement les efforts et les motivations de la base. Pour connaître la contribution d'un institut à l'Évangélisation et la motivation de ses membres, il faudrait aller plus loin que les chapitres généraux. Pour cela on proposait que les rapports de visite, les comptes rendus des réunions locales ou régionales et les pensées personnelles ou des petits groupes, peuvent être une source supplémentaire pour la contribution des instituts au Synode.
- 3) Il y a encore le danger, que cette Église locale considère ses priorités de manière trop limitée, c'est à dire, peu en relation avec les besoins de l'Église Universelle.
Alors notre groupe a essayé d'élargir un peu la perspective. Cet élargissement a été élaboré surtout en 2 directions: premièrement au niveau des instituts et deuxièmement à l'échelon de l'Église Universelle.
a) — L'Internationalité des Instituts fut considérée comme une possibilité favorable pour dépasser les limites d'une Église locale individuelle ou nationale.
Notre groupe a mentionné deux grands mouvements dont nos instituts disposent des renseignements et sur lesquels nos Supérieurs Généraux pourraient suggérer quelques orientations de base. La construction des communautés chrétiennes de base, la responsabilité des chrétiens même de contribuer à l'Évangélisation. En revenant au rôle des Supérieurs Généraux au Synode, on signalait, que ce rôle sera extrêmement délicat. Par rapport aux idées et planifications qui viennent de l'Occident, plusieurs Evêques d'Afrique et d'Amérique Latine, manifestent aussi leurs réserves envers les instituts missionnaires, qu'ils regardent comme une nuisance du dehors. Ils n'aiment pas du tout, que les Supérieurs d'ici nous nous permettent de dire ce qu'il faut faire.
b) — Le Synode même ou les dicastères romains devraient disposer des instruments pour sonder les besoins et les problèmes de sorte que les vrais besoins et les vraies priorités pourraient être formulées au centre de l'Église.
- 4) Cela vaut clairement pour les grandes lignes et orientations par exemple au niveau de l'indégénération, au niveau de la distribution du personnel et des finances. Pourrait-on proposer aux Supérieurs Généraux de stimuler au Synode une collaboration plus ouverte et plus efficace entre les dicastères et les Instituts.

7. AFRICA GROUP AChairman: Br. V. Gottwald FSC.Secretary: Sr. B. Flanagan SFB.

Present for Groups A and B: Fr. H. van Hoof SMA, Fr. J. Power SMA, Sr. D. McGonagle, SSND, Sr. A. Gates SA, Fr. G. Lautenschlager CMM, Fr. V. Francis IMC, Fr. G. Soldati IMC, Sr. F. Webster SCMM-M, Fr. M. Boelens CMM, Fr. W. Buhlmann OFM.CAP, Sr. Sr. R. Motte OMI, Sr. M.M. Gonçalves RSHM, Sr. R. Cicchitti ICM, Fr. J. Meehan SPS, Fr. J. Coughlan O.Carm, Fr. G. Schnepp SM.

Instead of taking the questions in the order listed, the group decided to examine the concrete situation of the church in Africa and to see what recommendations it could make to the Synod about the existing situation.

Community as evangelisation:

Since the Church is a community, we began by reflecting on the concept and image of the Church the expatriate missionaries brought to Africa. It was the image of the church we knew: the preconciliar church which was for the most part a highly organised, structured hierarchical church that presented an image of power and prestige. In the countries which were evangelised in the colonial period, the christian community was a self-oriented group, cut off from the rest of the people. The Bishops, priests and religious constituted a class apart and did not really integrate into the local culture. The local vocations which they trained also tended to be a class apart. The Church had large imposing buildings - churches, seminaries, schools, hospitals. Sometimes there was the danger of thinking that missionary work consisted in statistics and buildings - the number of people baptised and the size and grandeur of buildings. Some of the church schools, tended to form an elitist class, rather than build a Christian community.

It must be said, however, that this conception of the church has changed very considerably since Vatican II and that in areas evangelised recently the Church is far more conscious of the need to build community. A greater effort is made to incorporate and christianise the values of the local culture wherever possible e.g., young missionaries in the Northern Cameroons have a very different approach to initiation rites to that of the older missionaries in Lesotho and Zaïre.

The fact remains, however, that many of the older generation of local clergy, religious and lay people cling conservatively to the image of the Church as hierarchical and structured. Besides, they have inherited or will soon inherit the imposing institutions the missionaries have built up and the problem as to how they can maintain these institutions is a very real one. What can we do to help them to understand that the time has perhaps come when the Church should aim at community building rather than at institution building and that evangelisation does not necessarily depend on institutions.

We recommend that the Synod should urge the local Church everywhere to re-think its whole conception of evangelisation. The all important thing is transmitting the message of Christ and this does not always require that the church should own schools, hospitals etc. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of collaborating with the State or with other organisations in providing these services for development, and of promoting ecumenism wherever possible. More importance should be given to community building and less to statistics.

The Synod should also recommend that representatives of the Holy See (nuncios and apostolic delegates) should help to lessen the image of the powerful and wealthy church by the simplicity of their residences and their life style.

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The Synod should also recommend that representatives of the Holy See (nuncios and apostolic delegates) should help to lessen the image of the powerful and wealthy church by the simplicity of their residences and their life style.

LAITY: (Questions 2,3and 5).

Since the best means of promoting community is to make lay people feel that they have a responsibility in the church, that they are the Church, everything possible should be done to encourage lay participation in the life of the church, and to get rid of clericalism and paternalism whether among clergy, religious or catechists.. The decrease in the number of missionaries may be a providential means of bringing about more lay responsibility. The Synod should recommend that local Bishops, instead of constantly asking for more missionaries, should encourage and train lay people to assume their responsibility in the Christian community.

The importance of training local leaders cannot be over-emphasized and the Synod should request that monetary aid given by the Roman Congregations or other fund-giving organizations should be invested in the training of local personnel, not in buildings.

The Missionary Congregations should do everything possible to help local religious to find an African expression of the evangelical life. The Synod should recommend that local Bishops should respect the freedom of diocesan congregations. These should be encouraged to build community among themselves, with other Congregations and with the whole People of God. Unfortunately, they are too often completely dominated by the local Bishop.

What should Sedos do from now on until the Synod?

It should examine the possibility of forming an ad hoc committee to continue studying recommendations to be made for Evangelisation in Africa.

Sr. B. Flanagan SFB.

3. AFRICA GROUP B.

Chairman: Fr. W. Buhlmann OFM.Cap. Secretary: Sr. A. Gates SA.

Priority for Africa - Laity as backbone of the Evangelizing community and the necessity to educate the Laity for Evangelization.

Reasons for choosing the Laity as top priority:

- A) Lack of missionaries - big geographical areas to be covered.
- B) Emergency situations - in certain countries there is a danger that Missionaries will be put out e.g. Mozambique, Angola, Uganda, or that missionaries have already been expelled as in Sudan and Guinea. If the laity is well trained, they will be able to continue our work.
- C) There is a high percentage of Christians in many of the African countries, yet the influence of these Christians is felt less than in some other countries, i.e., Japan. Is this because the laity have not been given the possibility to take their full responsibility in the Church?
- D) African Clergy - danger that they imitate the image the white man (missionaries) has brought of riches, power, authority, a certain paternalism, often unconscious but nonetheless there.
- E) Tribal life lends itself to community building and should not this stimulate a strong, dynamic laity and why has it not?

What is the level of awareness among the Laity regarding their responsibility and why are they not more involved in Evangelization?

- Often the people themselves desire to do things but the African priests or missionaries feel themselves above them and reserve certain responsibilities for themselves instead of delegating these to the laity.
- Much depends on local Bishops, how much they allow and encourage the laity to share responsibility in Evangelizing.
- Sometimes the political situations in a country can be a help to stimulate the laity to take their responsibility i.e., Ujaama villages in Tanzania, Harambee schools in Kenya, Self-help projects in Zambia, etc.

How to help the laity become more involved:

- By deepening their Christian life through living experiences rather than simple doctrinization (question and answer method), applying what they learn to life situations so that their religion does not remain theoretical and passive but rather alive and dynamic.
- Encourage them to take initiative in religious matters.
- Do we stress sufficiently in schools and seminaries the responsibility of the laity to help themselves and their own people and not always depend on outsiders?
- Re-educate our own attitudes to work with the people accepting their values and their way of doing rather than imposing ours.
- Great willingness to suffice for themselves. They want to do their own things-- don't want outsiders to dominate them. In difficult situations often panic and turn to the missionaries for the answer. Do we know how to be patient--enlighten them, help them find the right solution or do we give the answer, letting our pride of efficiency dominate?
- Each missionary on the spot must be personally convinced of the necessity to form a living, dynamic laity if the Church is going to survive and grow.

- Missionaries at grass root levels must be aware of what is being done elsewhere in order to be stimulated and creative in finding new and better methods to form the laity.
- For big territories, divided among the people, help them to form local communities where most of the pastoral work is done by the laity themselves.

What has your Institute been doing about this topic since "Ad Gentes"?

- Educating missionaries to be collaborators in the full sense of the word--- not directors or domineering leaders.
- pointing out the necessity to form leaders--but these should be chosen as much as possible by the local communities themselves--these leaders have to be accepted by the local people if they are to have any effect on the community (very difficult in practice).
- help the Bishops to become aware of their duty to give the laity their full responsibility in evangelization--through Parish Councils, Diocesan Councils etc

What do the Institutes intend to do in the coming years?

- prepare the young missionaries with this formation of the laity as a top priority--even encouraging specialization for this task rather than specializing in other subjects
- give our priests, brothers and sisters the techniques and training needed to form leaders--such as sessions in group dynamics, interpersonal relations-- leadership qualities, etc.
- encourage and sustain the efforts of missionaries to find new methods of answering the needs of the laity--such as Pastoral Centers, Centers of Spiritual Renewal (like in the Diocese of Kumasi, Ghana) where the laity can have spiritual experience through Scripture sharing, participation in meaningful Liturgies, creative shared prayer, etc, which later on they can share in their own local groups and thus form living Christian Communities. Both men and women should be encouraged to participate.

Suggestions to Superiors General for the Synod:

- Help the Western Churches to recognize that they can and should learn from the Church in the developing countries.
- Help the Western Churches to avoid prolonging a situation from the Middle Ages where the Church ruled the State--no longer can one impose evangelization by law.
- For political and social problems the hierarchy should enlighten the people, encourage them to take their own responsibility but not impose their convictions. (i.e., school situation, marriage problems, etc)

Sr. A. Gates, SA.

8. ISLAM GROUP - 3.6.1974

Chairman: Fr. Ary, SJ

Secretary: Fr. Neven, PA

Present were: Sr. M.J. Dor, SA - PP. Agostoni, FSCJ - Ary Croellius, B. Tonna, Neven
Fr. Merrian FSC - A. Fernandez, Sedos.

Résumé des discussions du Groupe

"Le groupe souhaite que le Synode souligne que l'évangélisation ne passe pas uniquement par les oeuvres et les institutions traditionnelles mais que toute présence pourvu qu'elle soit signifiante du salut en Jésus-Christ est aussi une évangélisation."

A SEDOS, le groupe demande que les membres soient tenus en haleine jusqu'au Synode. Les Généralats qui voudraient faire des suggestions pourraient les faire via SEDOS.

1. Qu'entendons-nous par présence signifiante ? Nous avons distingué deux situations:

- a) Chrétiens et Musulmans vivent dans un même pays. C'est surtout un problème de catéchèse qui doit viser à sensibiliser les chrétiens à la présence de l'Islam. Ils ne doivent pas vivre en ghetto; c'est à la communauté chrétienne de révéler le Christ. Incidemment on a souligné le rôle important que peuvent jouer les arabes chrétiens.
- b) Milieu entièrement musulman. Que cherche-t-on ? Révéler le visage humain du Christ en tenant grand compte du milieu dans lequel on vit (grande attention à la culture). Le Chrétien qui vit au milieu de l'Islam doit veiller à ce que son comportement religieux ne heurte pas de front la sensibilité religieuse des musulmans; un effort doit être fait par le missionnaire pour pouvoir exprimer son expérience religieuse en des termes assimilables par un musulman. Une prédication évangélique (bonne nouvelle, annonce d'un bonheur) est possible (béatitudes, paraboles) sans entrer immédiatement dans la controverse. Il est important que le missionnaire chrétien soit perçu comme un homme de Dieu qui poursuit l'oeuvre de sa propre conversion en relation étroite avec le milieu dans lequel il vit.

2. Rôle de la communauté. Est-elle perçue comme signifiante? Il est généralement difficile de savoir quel genre de témoignage on donne. Le fait par exemple que des femmes vivent ensemble dans la bonne entente est étonnant. Les Frères des Ecoles Chrétiennes conduisent actuellement une enquête sur ce point du témoignage de leur communauté en milieu musulman. Si la communauté vit et travaille au même endroit, on pense qu'elle ne fait pas question; au contraire si elle vit en dehors du lieu de travail, elle pose une question qui peut être le point de départ d'un certain dialogue.

Une personne isolée peut-elle avoir un rayonnement en Islam? On a constaté que les insertions individuelles ont plus de peine à se faire accepter. Certains cas prouvent qu'on peut réussir.

3. Témoignage religieux. Dialogue religieux.

Le chrétien en Islam doit bien savoir qu'il est appelé à faire une expérience religieuse qu'il ne ferait pas autrement, en étant par exemple, dans un autre milieu. L'immersion en milieu musulman lui fera toucher du doigt toute l'importance pour sa foi de l'incarnation, de ses prolongements et de l'Eucharistie. Il découvrira qu'il y a des valeurs religieuses communes qu'il peut vivre en parfaite communion avec les musulmans: soumission à la volonté divine, relation avec un Dieu transcendant dans la prière. Les femmes, en général, au niveau des contacts simples et spontanés qu'elles ont avec la population peuvent aller loin dans ce genre de témoignage religieux. Les hommes au contraire buttent plus vite sur le plan institutionnel des deux religions.

On s'est posé la question du témoignage de foi qu'on peut donner dans le dialogue? Difficile à résoudre en théorie; ceux qui le vivent en pratique savent mieux ce qui se passe dans un tel dialogue.

4. Quelques points particuliers

- on a constaté que certains musulmans comptent un peu sur les chrétiens pour lutte contre toute négation de Dieu (matérialisme athée).
- on assiste à un certain réveil de l'Islam; il semble disposer de moyens importants pour favoriser son expansion.
- c'est une vue simpliste que de souhaiter un écroulement intérieur de l'Islam pour favoriser une ouverture au Christianisme. Certes une certaine sécularisation peut conduire à une décantation de la foi et à la régression de plusieurs préjugés. Ce n'est pas sur les ruines de l'Islam qu'on peut construire un authentique dialogue islamo-chrétien.

Fr. W. Nevan, PA.

10. LATIN AMERICA (and PHILIPPINES) GROUP.

Chairman: Sr. R. Mendiola ICM Secretary: Sr. C. Ouellette SCMM-M

Present were: Sr. M. H. de Toledo CSA, Sr. A. Deseyn ICM, Fr. K. Houdijk CSSP,
Fr. C. Rühling SVD, Fr. G. Mockenhaupt MSF, Fr. P. Arrupe SJ, Fr. J.P. Basterrechea,
FSC.

- A. The crucial question was: what were the Institutes doing to help the local communities formed by their members become communities of evangelization? It becomes more pertinent when we remember that these communities are often connected with wider communities of students, teachers and priests.
- B. The latter could evangelize more effectively if they found their place in communities of faith, by integrating more fully in the local groupings, by closer collaboration in pastoral work, by more involvement in the establishment of "comunidades de base".
- C. These were seen as points of encounter between the development and evangelization thrusts. The danger of their closing upon themselves should not be ignored,, but a certain introspection could be part of a new reality, as a base is built for wider groupings. The group recommended to Superiors General the "comunidad de base" as a promising approach to evangelization. Because its form depended on local situations and leadership, they should not be rigidly defined but should be accepted for what they were: a growing reality. The group also recommended that Sedos should study them further in terms of their contribution to evangelization, and keep in mind their characteristics of i) Bible Study, ii) eucharistic celebration, iii) openness to social problems, iv) awareness building, v) sense of growing responsibility and vi) mixed composition.
- D. A tension was noted between "how to be" and "what to do". It seemed that, prior to reaching out to others, we should establish our identity as Christians. In any case, evangelization could only happen if we integrate life, work and word.
- E. The local Church, on its part, could not "happen" before local people were freed of outside influences. The group, however, was divided about this, as some of its members insisted that local culture was often syncretic, absorbing indigenous and external elements (cults, values, etc).

Sr. C. Ouellette SCMM-M

Chairman: Sr. A. de Sa SCMM-M. Secretary: Sr. G. Simmons MM.

Present were: Br. M. Jacques FSC, Sr. B. Cocberg SCMM-T, Sr. M.M. Fernando SFB,
Fr. A. Lazzaroto PIME.

A. Community as Evangelism:

What has your Institute been doing since Ad Gentes and your last Chapter? Ad Gentes - Christian Community and collaboration. Awareness of what we haven't done! Common witness outside our Institutes? - Varies with the geographical location. Renewal of ourselves individually - multinational - multicultural within one religious community - as this community relates to the particular community in the mission,--difficulties in search for Community Identity in Christ.

Growth of Common Witness - other cultures, religions - Ecumenical dimension with other Christians - wider human community, yet still strengthening Community Bonds and Identity with Institute.

Inter-congregational Sharing - their common witness with other Christians and other world religions - Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, Shintoists, in concern for the great needs of the whole population!

B. Situation on the Ground:

Sri Lanka - 7.6% Buddhist, 12% Christians, 9% Catholics - Rivalry.

National Religion, Buddhist - Collaboration - Ecumenical dimension, - openness and mutual respect of Christians and Hinduism growing -- Studying and working together!

Indonesia - Local leadership - both lay and religious, stressed in past 10 years. Cooperation with other Christians and Muslims, etc; working with other diverse groups in pluralistic Society has strengthened community bonds of the Institutes - promoted deepening of their sense of mission and motivation to bring Christ's presence.

India - Study of "mission" from a historical perspective. Health and medical work, - excellent professionally and technologically, also in training Indian leadership. Ancient spiritual tradition and religious culture (as in India) demands a "Faith Community", and so the people expressed the fact that they did not see this witness---it was not integrated.

Korea: - Small percentage Christian! Christians (Protestants and Catholics) divided. This image of division and competition has blurred the image of Christ's presence in the community. If we are to be open and respect Great World religions in Asia, we must at the same time be open and respect our fellow Christians in the Asian Community! In Asia, Christian witness must give a sense of prayer, reality of the Spiritual - not just professionalism, social action.--how to combine our "recreation" of spirit with renewal of the face of the earth - problems of society. The importance of "being"-relationship to God and to the people is prized. Work and action is not of prime importance.--only if it is in harmonious relationship. There must be witness to concerns of social justice and human needs by religious and missionaries in Asia; there has been a credibility gap--we are not part of the community and their "real" needs! Our living, often our schools and hospitals have cared for the elite in our Institutions! Our aim of achieving efficiency, to be the "best" in our work, did not allow for time to be together - with the community. Image of Christianity given to Asians is often an individualistic approach, whereas the Asian, has already a sense of Family and a community of "identity". This is where we must learn and receive from the local cultural value, and then "Christ" as presence will grow from what is already there, not as a foreign import. In general, we are to be encouraged by the great progress in the past 10 years. There is growing collaboration and cooperation, common witness of Catholics and Protestants with the other great world Religions in Asia, witnessing to the value of prayer and community of Faith--along with concern for the needs of the world community.

14. WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED GROUP

Chairman: Sr. G. de Thélin, RSCJ.

Secretary: Sr. M. Keenan, RSHM

Present were: Sr. Mary Luke SSND; Sr. A.M. Ooschoot, SCMN-M; Sr. Simone Vandensteene, DM; Sr. M. Keenan, RSHM; Sr. Mary Motte, FTM; Sr. G. de Thélin, RSCJ; Fr. F. Kapusciak, CM.

1. Overview of the situation

- apparent failure of many of the efforts of evangelization
 - cf. Bishops' report USA
 - Situation in Italy
- growing indifferent to institutional Church
- loss of certain segments of society
 - workers
 - youth
- many signs of hope, however, which imply changes in attitude and structure

2. Importance of the concept of mission to the 6 continents

- continuing evangelization of the evangelizers
- permanency of task of evangelization in any given area as new needs, new situations arise
- possibility of escapism in considering only mission to the traditional mission areas
- narrowing down of the above areas requiring a rethinking of to whom we are sent especially among missionary congregations.

3. Focus of discussion: community as an evangelical force

- if the concept of community as an evangelizing force is not understood or believed in by all those who are working together in a given area, this can be an obstacle to evangelization: different approaches to work, internal conflicts in group etc.
- the concept of community as an evangelizing force carries over to the traditional apostolates e.g. the school is a viable means of evangelization when it is conceived as an expression of Christian community implying the active involvement of all concerned.
- in an urban, industrial society only the exceptional local parish can be considered as a community.
 - the parish is still often considered as a geographical structure while the surrounding society is organized otherwise
 - yet there are many spontaneous faith communities growing up many times independent of parish structure.
- today we all belong to a multiplicity of communities
 - how does this affect evangelization?
 - where do we locate that community which is the sustaining force and active impetus that permits us to see community as "being one and making one"?

- within the Western industrialized society, there is the problem of crossing cultures e.g. the many subcultures which exist such as workers culture, black culture etc.
 - these subcultures have their own values, their own language
 - there is often an indifference to the Church, a loss of credibility.
- often evangelizing efforts become simply the act of friendship, of kindness, the witness of the small, human act.
- community becomes the presence of a person who in turn belongs to another group of persons
- community as an evangelical force is of necessity open, simple, loving.

4. Concluding remarks

- it is evident that any approach to a study of evangelization within the western industrial countries would have to be strongly nuanced. Situations vary greatly from place to place.
- however there are vast areas of the western industrialized areas that have no interest in the Church.
- it might be said that these areas have all the problems of traditional missionary areas with the additional problem of indifference to an apparently irrelevant Church. The Good News has already been announced and is no longer heard with an open mind.
- how do we go to others in such a situation?
 - with our roles and tasks defined or in an attitude of seeking together?
 - in solidarity with those to whom we go? Yes, but
 - we are not like them often simply because of education
 - why are we going? As a Christian presence? Yes, but
 - how do we spell this out in our lives?

5. Remarks that might be brought to the attention of the Bishops in Synod

- that there be a growing awareness on their part of the concept of community with a concomitant sensitivity to its manifestations.
 - often the mind-set is more that of a diocese to be administered.
- that there be an awareness of what is happening in religious life and its positive consequences for evangelization
- that we take a long look at our motivations in our evangelical efforts and expressions.

Sr. M. Keenan RSHM.

COMMUNICATIONS

A meeting of the Social Communications group was held on June 11, 1974, at 4:00 pm at the Secretariat.

Present were: Sr. L. Sercu ICM, Sr. L. Stoke SSPS, Sr. R. Burrichter UISG,
Fr. S. Mac Carthy SMA, Fr. E. Cid CM, Fr. L. Skelly SMA.

In the Chair: Sr. Annemarie Oosschot SCMM-M.

Secretary: Fr. B. Tonna.

1. Sr. Oosschot invited those present to take another look at point 5, of the report of the last meeting (74/392), and to assign priorities to the suggestions listed there. Clarifications were asked about 5 j) + k) and Sr. Oosschot referred to the six crucial questions, (already distributed to the Sedos members) as a useful instrument for visiting Superiors General and Councillors.
2. The Group agreed that it could concentrate on 5g, after reformulating the suggestion in terms of "generating, analyzing, synthesizing and disseminating documentation on new trends in evangelization,"
3. The sources which could be exploited were identified as: a)- personal contacts with editors of the "family bulletins" of the member institutes; b)-interviews with Superiors General and Councillors; c)-the reports of visitations; d)-the ideas generated by the last Assembly of Sedos; e)-statements by local Bishops.
4. Among the trends, the group highlighted: a)- local adaptation of the liturgy; b)- relations with local Bishops; c)- new forms of apostolic ministries and their local activation; d)- the effective internationalization of the governments of our Institutes; e)- ecumenism and its impact on Mission.
5. The Group agreed that the aim of its work on this kind of documentation would be to disentangle the main lines of what is happening in the Mission today. These lines could be interpreted as signs of the Lord's plan for the Mission today. They could also help it identify what was fresh in mission news. These latter would, in turn, enrich the main lines with new insights.
6. The chief problem, however, would not be documentation but rather its use. The Group would concentrate on this. A possible use could be the preparation of an annual report on our collective missionary experience, with the relevant analysis of its main thrust and of its exploratory openings.
7. The next step was then specified as follows: a)- the Secretariat would prepare a list of the editors of the "family bulletins" and would classify it by sector, ministry, etc; b)- the Secretariat, would identify the main lines of our missionary thinking as it emerged from the last Assembly of Sedos, and would distinguish the "fresh" from the "permanent"; c)- each member of the Social Communications Group would be assigned a few editors (see a) above) and would invite each to react to b) above. He/she would repeat the exercise with his/her Superior General and/or Councillors; d)- The insight gathered through c) would be communicated by each to the Secretariat---and this would distribute it to the other members of the Group.
8. The Group agreed to meet again on Tuesday, September 17, 1974, at 4:00 pm at the Secretariat.
