

EVANGELIZATION TODAYREPORT ON THE 1974 SYNOD - N° 2

1. Half way through the second week (out of four) the exchange of experiences on evangelization in plenary session has been concluded. We have summarized (1) for you all the 108 contributions, as well as the official synthesis (74/640 and 74/658). The latter produced ten topics (74/659) which are being discussed in the 12 language groups (3 English, 3 French, 3 Spanish-Portuguese, 1 Italian, 1 German, 1 Latin). The second (and final) part will focus on the theological dimensions of evangelization and was opened in the plenary of Tuesday, October 8, 1974.

THE EMERGING THRUSTS

2. What has emerged out of the first part ?
 - a) a wide ranging panorama of the state of the Church today. The stance is Church centred. The World comes in only as a nuisance - hindering the work of the Church (and indirectly providing an alibi for obvious failures). All the issues of Church life of the past months (and years) were put on the table (see 74/640-657).
 - b) this reflects the mind of the Bishops but does not do justice to the theme of evangelization. This is, by its very nature, relationship to the World - it is something done for the World. Unless the World comes more into the picture, the Synod will not get to the heart of Evangelization.
 - c) There are indications that this could be done. Paul VI invited the Bishops to start with the Trinity. In fact the relationship of the Trinity to the World precedes that "of the Church to the World". For the Church came into being only to activate this; "God so loved the World that He sent His Son" relationship. Timid voices have followed this up - even if from other angles. Mgr WEBER of Austria did pose the crucial question: what does the World mean to the Church? Do we accept it as the field God wants us to cultivate? (74/652) The World must not be considered as a nuisance. Many Bishops of Asia and Africa, in pleading for more openness to the values of local cultures, moved in the same direction.
 - d) Still the signals from the Church-centred camp are stronger. They are right in insisting on interior life, the local church, small communities, non practising Catholics. These are necessary even if not sufficient conditions for evangelization. But everybody agrees about this. So why not move on to what seems the essence of evangelization that it "goes out" of the Church to the World.

(I) Our sources: Oss. Rom. (considered the best press coverage) and individual texts of Bishops' interventions.

If there is an unexpressed thrust in the first week's work it is the urgent need to re-address the balance between these three terms by stressing this "going out" and by checking our attitude to this world. This ~~can-must-~~ happen in the theological debate.

An inside look at "the works"

3. Why did this "unbalance" happen? After reading between the lines of the 108 interventions and analyzing the first reports of the 12 language groups, one could point a finger to the working documents. It would not be an accusing finger. The document, as we noted, was positive. But it has definitely conditioned the work of the Synod during this first week. Why were so many Bishops speaking of the Liturgy towards the conclusion of their speeches? Simply because they were following the guideline of the first document which put the Liturgy last. They now have a second document - the synthesis of the plenaries presented by Card. Cordeiro and the list of the topics (74/658). Again, they are being conditioned by them in such a way as to de-focus their approach to evangelization. The Church is still the point of departure, even though the synthesis says otherwise (see below 74/658-59).

This is serious. But again, there are signs of hope and they should be encouraged. Mgr ZOA, last week, told us that the work of the Synod will be done by its Bishops, not by its documents. This is precisely the point, and it was made in English Group A. Though a 3/4 majority is required to discuss other topics than the ten proposed (74/659) this Group decided, by unanimous vote, to discuss first evangelization - and to give it top priority by discussing it first. It was a beautiful case where documents are used as means and do not become ends. Other groups unfortunately, just followed them blindly even going to the point of discussing the topics in the order presented (74/659)

Convergences and divergences

4. The term "primary evangelization" has now crept into the official documents. After hesitation, in the Aula, on the terminology (active, first, pre-evangelization), primary evangelization is now used to indicate that pattern which "goes out" to the person or group who does not, as yet, know Christ. This is what we, in SEDOS, mean when we speak about evangelization. The Synod could help us adjust our thinking. In fact it revealed pluralism here; henceforth we should talk about "evangelizations" rather than of "evangelization" when, as is our habit, we focus on the concrete and the practical.
5. On the other hand, we seem to be out of tune with the Synod when we observe its reluctance to make primary evangelization its primary objective. Why was it not introduced among the ten topics? Why did the calls of the Africa and Asia Bishops to assign priority to, and take seriously, what is of vital importance to two thirds of mankind not find a rightful place in the synthesis?

This is not a question of speaking up for the missionary camp. It is one of speaking up for the World God loves. And which is not represented in the Synod. We know it is a Bishop's Synod, but I was once told there were two kinds of Bishops depending on how they answer the question: "how big is your diocese?":

- a) those who give the statistics of the whole population,
- b) those who give only those of the Catholics.

Is the 1974 Synod overwhelmingly a Synod of the b) category? Is it not a Synod for Evangelization ?

The Holy Father himself came back to the essentials on Sunday, October 6:

"The great majority of mankind is still waiting, today, for the Gospel message. One could almost say that evangelization has only just started. It is a dramatic situation. In many regions, once permeated by Christianity, the Christian spirit is in decline: which could be due to the inadequacy and infidelity of some of the "sons of the Kingdom". In other regions it is obstructed ... in others again we do not have enough modern missionaries."

8th October 1974

APPENDIX ASUMMARIES OF INTERVENTIONSASIA (continued)CEYLON

Card. Cooray deplored the confusion generated by the opinions of some theologians and prelates, and, in some cases, of Bishops. The authentic deposit of Faith has to be preserved. He pointed out that the Gospel would not be welcome if evangelization takes the form of the social apostolate; such a move would raise jealousies and the suspicion of masked proselytism. It works when we evangelize the poor by our words and deeds. Religious must feel fully at home in this.

INDIA

Mgr Fernandes stated that it was the duty of the Church to offer the world a new vision of its Mission in the new era of evangelization which is already on us. He submitted recent experiences of evangelization on the international level: Mother Theresa, World Fraternity Solidarity, World Conf. of Religious for Peace, Council of Youth at Taizé, etc.

Mgr P. D'Souza said that Indian Bishops had invited youth to bring to the Christian community their thirst for truth, honesty, justice and to face the risks of a new style of life. Responsibility should be passed on to youth.

He also noted that many refuse baptism because they think (like Gandhi) that it meant less a change of life than a change of society (to which one belonged). Should we insist on baptism or wait until they demand it - perhaps in a generation or two? In any case, more attention should be given to people who had not lost the faith but who live outside the normal life of the Church.

Mgr Thangalathil reminded the Synod that, though they had not been very active in evangelization, the oriental churches could contribute to it, in India, through their intense spiritual, liturgical and ascetical life style, so acceptable to the India peoples.

INDONESIA

Card. Darmojuwono spoke of the urgency of a reflection on the identity of the local Church. Very often the universal and the local church are identified with the Western Church. Evangelization as external witness to the Word, should start from the practical local conditions of time and place. Without becoming a "transplant" of the overseas Church, it could become an "inplant" of the Word of God, incarnating in a specific socio-cultural context. Then it becomes dialogue. This healthy pluralism is not an obstacle to unity. One often asked whether the "centre of Rome" can understand, evaluate and decide on the practical pastoral problems (liturgical translations etc.) of other Churches in other cultures.

The contribution of overseas missionaries was precious and necessary. But they should strive to insert themselves into the local community. Material means should not upset the local situations - which must become independent of foreign aid.

LAOS

Mgr Urkia observed how dialogue with Buddhists had led a number of Christians to intensify their contemplative life. He thought evangelisation and conversion are the causes of the liberation of the person and a means for human development. It "happened" through proclamation, social service (and the witness it provides). The cross forms part of the life of the evangelizers; over 20 have lost their lives in recent years.

Catechists (including Sisters) are now officially entrusted with evangelization and many aspects of pastoral care.

MALAYSIA - SINGAPORE

Mgr Chung Wan Ting stated that the current top priority is the transformation of the Parish into an evangelizing community. In Malaysia, primary evangelization among Muslims was prohibited by law. The role of Catechist is another priority. It is not considered as an auxiliary, substitute role but as a fully fledged ministry.

PHILIPPINES

Card. Rosales noted that youth is now so numerous and shows such openness that we must find some way to make contact with their "culture". Other priorities are the laity and the family.

THAILAND

Mgr Kitbunchu observed that the people of his Buddhist country admire the educational and welfare activities of Catholics and that the proclamation of the Gospel "happens" during such activities (and in the liturgy, catechesis and the lay apostolate). The obstacles originate from a certain agnosticism (encouraged by some Buddhist principles), progress, urbanization, and current confusion in theology. Priority is now assigned to the training of Catholics for life and dialogue: Buddhism is particularly sensitive to "living" (rather than to philosophical "thinking").

VIETNAM (NORTH)

Mgr. Trinh Van Can referred to the shortage of Priests in his country but also to the attachment to the faith of the million Catholics. These open up their annual events (Adoration of the Eucharist, Month of May, Christmas Night) to non Christians. Prayer is part and parcel of their life.

LATIN AMERICA

Bishop Pironio of CELAM made the following points:

We must have a sense of the presence of Christ who prods us to change and to communion, to conversion and to brotherhood.

2. The Church becomes poorer, more missionary and paschal, freer from human power and more bound on liberation of man.
3. Its Evangelization stance is marked by contemplation, poverty (as sign) and hope.
4. Essential for this work is closer attention to the specifics of our situation:
 - a) popular religiosity
 - b) liberation
 - c) youth
 - d) basic communities
 - e) new ministries

ARGENTINA

Card Primatesta listed the priorities of evangelization : non practising Catholics, Catholics, Catholics involved in deviant rites; Evangelization should cover mass demonstrations and human progress. We must bolster the Religious Life.

BRAZIL

Card. Arns, of Sao Paulo, talked about the critical role of Catholic Universities and the difficulties of combining it with the other role of preparing students for their profession. The latter have to realize the magnitude of the current crisis of mankind. Special courses initiated for this purpose had proved very popular with students.

Another encouraging evangelization experience was the formation of a community of 50 "evangelizers" (clergy, laity) who went out to "proclaim" the Lord to other groups.

Mgr Lorscheider urged Bishops to be closer to the people. The promotion of Pastoral Councils could help them to do this.

CHILE

Mgr Valdes Subercauseaux observed that the priority in his country is to convert the mentality of Christians, so that they commit themselves to change unjust social structures. Youth are sensitive to this but they usually do not see its transcendental (i.e. evangelical) dimensions. Sin is one of these dimensions. Popular religiosity and intellectuals also merit our attention.

COLOMBIA

Mgr. Buitrago pointed to the responsibilities of Bishops and Priests for the present state of evangelization. Sometimes they seem totally taken up by office work. The evangelization ministry seems to have been primarily entrusted to them. A way out could be an effort to extend their ranks by seriously re-instating the Diaconate. Another way out is the small ecclesial community, which has proved very fruitful in Colombia.

COSTA RICA

Mgr. Arrieta made a plea for more sensitivity, on the part of Bishops, for their people. This could open up new ways for evangelization.

BRAZIL

Card. Brandao Vilela also spoke on popular religiosity, stepped up by internal migrations, industrialization and urbanization. Valid support for renewal was being provided by small communities, new ministries and the liturgy (especially Baptism and Matrimony). Priorities should be assigned to the poor, the drug addicts, the emarginated.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Mons. Rojas shared the experience of the institution of a new ministry - the Assembly President. Lay persons minister by convening the Assembly, presenting the Word, distributing Communion in Church and among the sick and in general by promoting the interests of the community.

Another experience is that of schools for catechesis, based on research in the local culture.

Another positive experience is the meeting of families, twice a month.

The trust is towards a deeper understanding of our situation as God's children and of our responsibilities for development.

ECUADOR

Mgr. Echeverria Ruiz presented the experience of linking the centenary of the consecration of Ecuador with doctrinal updating and with a new initiative for poor heart cases. Doctrine is now oriented along the lines of salvation history and this, in itself, is a form of evangelization.

EL SALVADOR

Mgr. Rivera Damas shared his positive experience of small groups in bridging the gap between faith and life. The "cursillos de cristianidad" were also proving useful. Another positive point consists in the new forms of the lectorate and acolyte ("celebrants of the Word"). A negative stream had been introduced by groups of the extreme right who oppose Church policy on social justice.

MEXICO

Mgr Castro Ruiz referred to Mexican popular religiosity and its openings for evangelization. Renewal was taking various forms and was involving the laity. Liberation movements risked reducing everything to the temporal level and to an acceptance of violence.

PANAMA

Mgr Tortolo remarked that the family merits top priority. It is the first field of evangelization. We have to find, within the family, the sources of its renewal.

PERU

Mgr. Dunand Flores referred to the priority given to the 6 m ~~indios~~ who express their religiosity in mixed, popular forms. The aim is to lead them to combat sin in them and its effects in the structures around them. Unfortunately modern society promotes the sin of elitism. After freeing as from sin, the Gospel makes us children of God. The experience of Peru was that people could be led to think of this as the real aim - and of the Sacraments and external devotions as the means.

URUGUAY

Mgr. Rubio Garcia reported on the priority given by this Church to catechesis, to the renewal of sacramental practice, to closer contacts with the real problems of contemporary man. He noted that a better name for small basic communities would be "reflection groups".

VENEZUELA

Mgr. Roa Perez was not very happy with the limited experiences, in his country, of charismatic groups and of the comunidades de base. Church leaders have been stressing social doctrine and social communications. Serious obstacles to evangelization are emerging from the decaying state of the family.

A F R I C A

GENERAL

According to Bishop Sangu of Mbeya:

1. During the next twenty years, the colonial spirit will disappear and it will be Africans who will evangelize Africans. Hence the need for a firm anchorage in the Bible, in the Magisterium, in living Faith.
2. Our priorities should be:
 - a) lay participation
 - b) liberation for human development
 - c) liberation from sin for God
 - d) dialogue in a situation of pluralism (ecumenism etc.)
 - e) the search for Christian identity.

ALGERIA

According to Card. Duval, evangelization is an act of love - first towards God, then towards our neighbours. As such it is gratuitous, and respects the freedom of the other. It moves us to justice to the poor, to receive from others, in dialogue.

ANGOLA

Mgr Dias Nogueira observed that the situation in his country would drastically change with independence. But overseas missionaries would still be required.

BURUNDI

Mgr Ruhuna observed that his peoples had accepted Christianity, despite the difficulties of the rigidity of the catechetical and liturgical forms. Right now, urbanization is channelling youth into cities. Recent events had forced Christians to ask deeper questions about their identity. Missionaries are needed because they are the bridges between the younger Christian populations and the other Churches.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mgr Maanicus observed that a number of juridical concepts become a hindrance to evangelization in Africa where many faithful live marginal Church lives because of problems with the Sacraments especially Matrimony. The only criterion of Church law should be the service of man and of his progress towards Christ in a given culture. Bishop's Conferences could be given more leeway to settle what is good for their peoples.

CHAD

Mons. Dupont observed that overseas missionaries are the ministers of pre-evangelization. Slowly our small natural communities become evangelical communities, thanks to the Gospel need. To do this they need "moderators". In Chad the ministry of moderator had been instituted. It is a pity that one could not entrust such moderators with the faculty of consecrating and absolving. Why do they have to call a "stranger" to absolve when they have reconciled two brothers. It could be that, side by side with our pre-evangelization ministry there is place for another one.

CONGO BRAZZAVILLE

Card. Biayenda referred to problems encountered (in his culture) with the Sacrament of Matrimony. The priorities are: for laity to assume responsibilities in the Church, to link faith with life, to move with their Priests. Overseas missionaries could show more sensitivity to the local culture.

EASTERN AFRICA (AMECEA)

Mgr. Kalilombe spoke of the urgent need for direct-evangelization (which concerns two thirds of humanity). He distinguished between direct and indirect evangelization. Both have to go together and the Synod should not let the second dominate over the first. (Direct evangelization was also referred to as pre-evangelization in the text of the *Osservatore Romano*)

CABON

Mgr. Anguillé observed that God had also spoken to the ancestors of the Africans to help them arrive at their traditions. These should not be wiped out by Christianity which still seems an "imported" product. Current Western theological thought does not help African mind. More attention is required to be given to the mass media, which are bringing in Western doc

GHANA

Mgr Dery noted that the Church in Africa should be to others an instrument of salvation in the full sense of the word. This would be particularly crucial vis-à-vis Ghana's youth. Experience has been positive when biblical, liturgical, retreat and prayer groups have been set up as long as we remember that the best evangelizers of youth is youth. And that this calls for patience.

IVORY COAST

Mgr. Yago stated that while the pastors of the young churches are unanimous in their decision to take over the destinies of their communities, they are no less convinced of the need for help - in money and men. Without missionary collaboration the Church would be deprived of an essential trait. One hoped that the question of the young Churches could be the topic of an extraordinary Synod. What we need are more evangelists, a Christianity firmly rooted in the local culture, the faculty to ordain certain catechists and animators. Meanwhile Islam is proselytizing.

KENYA

Card. Otunga stated that missionaries had contributed to the human development of his country. At this point of history we must not confuse our desire for self-reliance with our need for external aid. The latter should not, impose on us - (as it did with some birth control programmes) unfair conditions. He noted that the working document did not give the unevangelized two thirds of mankind the weight it merited. He also thanked the silent Church for its witness to Africa.

KENYA

Mgr Gatimu stressed the contribution of Religious Life to evangelization and made a plea for its further promotion and for its integration in the life and work of the local Church.

LESOTHO

Mgr. MOrapeli noted that migrations (towards the mines of S. Africa) had uprooted many of his Catholics. Women Religious should be introduced ^{to} evangelization. Sects could become a serious problem but this could be overcome if the communitarian dimension of evangelization is respected and the solidarity of Christian with African culture is intensified.

MADAGASCAR

Mgr Rahotondrarahatra shared the recent experience of a redefinition of the evangelization work of the Church in terms of the recent political upheavals. Catechists now occupy a key role in this work, liturgy is fully autochthonous, the living, present Person of Christ is highlighted. Difficulties emerge from superficial renewal, adoption of foreign models, and indifference.

MALI

Mgr. Perousse de Montclos thought that, without giving up evangelization, we could approach those who belong to another Faith (Islam) in a kind of dialogue which stresses what we have in common as men and what these, in good faith, believe. Perhaps one should not go further. There is ample scope for this, because people accept us as men of God, even though we belong to another faith. Another evangelization experience in Mali is the "apostolate of human relations", so dear to the hearts of the local people. But care should be taken to open up these relations to those outside the local circles.

RHODESIA

Mgr. Lamont reported that present Government policy there is obstructing religious freedom and thus hindering evangelization. Fortunately the oppressed are aware of the motives of such policy. The proclamation of Catholic social thought, the Bible and Liturgical campaigns have helped evangelization. It is crucial, for this, that the Church continues to fight for the abolition of racial discrimination.

RUANDA

Mgr Gahamany remarked that the Priests' role in evangelization could not be substituted for. They were the animators of the laity and of their movements - e.g. the intrepid Legion of Mary and catechists.

We should also take note of the fidelity of many Priests - in the wake of the havoc of racial "pseudo-theologies".

SENEGAL

Mgr. Thiandoum declared that evangelization is the duty of all the baptized and cannot happen without pastoral planning at all levels. In its turn, this should lead the local Church to militate in favour of human development, of authenticity, of "negritude", of a better understanding of the meaning of life and, above all, to become, itself, the permanent Paschal Mystery.

SUDAN

Mgr Dud stated that the evangelization experience here is hard: there is little space for Christian witness in the schools, hospitals and other institutions. Internal migrations scatter the ongoing communities of Christians. The Church is short of basic instruments like Bible translations, media material and catechisms. And yet the Sudanese are open to the Christian values of intimacy with God and solidarity with men. The novelty of the Gospel would be the encounter with our Transcendent God. The priorities are: liturgy and laity.

S. AFRICA

Mgr. Fitzgerald described the positive experiences of small communities in rural areas, of new ministries (and training facilities) in urban areas. Conscientization could lead us to the social changes a Christian desires.

TANZANIA

Mgr Mwoleka affirmed that the key to evangelization here was the presentation of the Gospel not so much as a body of truths but as a system of life. The crucial point is harmony between Faith and daily Life. Youth often rejects us because it does not see this harmony in our institutions. The way out seems to be :

- a) small, open, communities
- b) conscientiousness in one's profession
- c) solidarity in activating national development plans.

TOGO

Mgr. Bakpessi Matawo rejected all forms of cultural domination which still linger in Christianity. It was time the Church promoted authentic African values. Overseas missionaries were welcome - but they must not let the pastoral policies and experiences of their home country prevail in their work here. Missionaries should be in communion of action and interaction with the Africa Churches, as these, on their part, strive to help other churches.

UGANDA

Mgr. Nsubuga reported on the collapse of the traditional family, and the confusion created by the meeting of Christianity with traditionalist religions.

Gospel preaching remains necessary, even though one must preserve what is valid in traditional religion. But the mission of the Church does not consist in making good Muslims out of Muslims.

Children should continue to be admitted to Baptism. Above all, in the search for "localization", one should not lose the value of universality. The priorities are: conversion, small communities, religious life and educational institutions.

ZAIRE

Card. Malula stressed that, African Christians in future, will be mainly responsible for "localizing" the African Church and making it witness to Christ. In the process, one would like to clarify relationships between faith and politics, salvation and liberation, Church and State, Church and world.

UPPER VOLTA AND NIGER

Mgr Bayala reminded the Synod that, in a 99% Muslim situation like NIGER evangelization "happened" through witness to, and solidarity with, the local people. In a situation with a majority of traditionalist religions (Upper Volta) primary evangelization is engaged in. The obstacles are there but things will improve if more Priests and Catechists are found. We need missionaries. But missionaries have to be humble. We need money - for evangelization and not just for development. This aid is not an obstacle to "localization" but an opening to "communion".

Meanwhile our priorities and Catechists (4 years training) formation of laity, promotion of women, recruitment of priests.

NIGERIA

Mgr. F. Job noted that the mass media could surmount barriers of age and culture. The Synod should define the place of Catechists in evangelization. The positive side of the Nigerian personality should be respected in our efforts at adaptation. Ecumenism is rather difficult because of the presence of so many groups which call themselves Christians.

ZAIRE

Mgr Tshibango proposed as a priority the synthesis between the Gospel and the African personality. The novelty of Christianity, for Africans, does not consist in the concept of the one God but of Christ, the form under which the one God wants to be known to man. Would the situation of African traditionalist religions correspond to that of the Jews before the coming of Christ ?

ZAMBIA

Mgr Mazombwe spoke of the key role of Catechists who, each in his own culture, is the first bearer of evangelization and the "planter", of the Church (with the Priests). The role is indispensable. And so is adequate training for it.

N. AMERICA, AUSTRALASIA AND OCEANIA

GENERAL

Mgr Bernardin stated that the Church was the point of departure of evangelization insofar as it a) was a community of faith, fraternity and prayer (confusion existed as regards the transmission of faith)

- b) equipped with structures of corresponsibility, new styles of authority
- c) accepted the fact that Priests, and new lay ministries were both crucial
- d) accepted the fact that liberation was a major concern of modern man
- e) accepted the fact that, as an Institution, it often reflected a particular political, economic order
- f) accepted the challenge that secularization could be a new way of living the faith
- g) accepted pluralism
- h) accepted dialogue with atheists on the meaning of life and of the world

AUSTRALIA

Mgr Cahill noted that, in his secularized society, many are clamouring for a simpler style of life. He opted for a wider use of the mass media and new forms of Church involvement in welfare. He quoted as a negative experience current theological confusion.

CANADA

Mgr. Fortier mentioned a few experiences which could be signs of the deeply felt need for renewal: small groups dedicated to the spiritual life, to study, to charismatic renewal.

JAMAICA

Mgr. Carter referred to his experience that in ecumenism, preaching the Gospel together is more important than engaging, together, in social work. In the Carribeans, Catholics were now full members of the local Council of Churches. The same spirit was moving Catholics to "localize" - and this should be reflected in Canon Law. He also stated that the celibacy rule for Priests could be reconsidered.

NEW CALEDONIA

Mgr Klein said that the real obstacle to evangelization in the Pacific, was the lack of priests and that, at present, the only solution was the ordination of married Catechists. Other needs are the good example of the elder priests and closer adaptation to the local culture.

U.S.A.

Mgr Quinn observed that the problem of youth is that they cannot see the Church as the Light of the Peoples. They often do not see in its representatives the joy and love of Christ. The solution to the present dichotomy between Gospel and Church should not be sought in method and structure but in the person of the Church minister.

Card. Krol remarked that the two priorities of evangelization were youth and inactive Catholics. Youth should be inserted in Church life. Inactive Catholics could be reached through active Catholics and through the mass media.

NEW ZEALAND

Mr Ashby reminded the Synod that the catechesis of the people of God was the first step towards the evangelization of the modern world. The Synod should keep in mind the Catechistic Directory and its instructions on this point. We should also stress the divinity of Christ.

EUROPEGENERAL

Mgr Etchegaray reported that in a secularized Europe, Christian values still circulated aids (penultimate not ultimate) to life. This Europe was divided into the liberal West and the Marxist East. The Church does not judge either but asks for space to breathe in each. Europe is marked by mobility (work, tourism, cultural exchange). It needs God's word to balance the uncertainty spread by its "masters of mistrust and suspicion". If it is to engage in this evangelization with vigour, the Church must forget itself and go to its Lord and to men - in dialogue, in the Sacraments, in witness. It needs the catechumenate, good theology. All its members must be missionary minded. It should read two particular signs of modern times: a) Youth and b) Ecumenism.

It should commit itself to

- a) build up Europe
- b) be present to non-Christians in Europe
- c) defend local, non European, cultures.

AUSTRIA

Mgr Weber noted that only 30% of Catholics share the life of the Church. The majority of young people did not consider the Church an adequate answer to their expectations. They thought it was just an institution. What did the world mean to the Church? What do we do to accept it as the field God wants us to cultivate? Community spirit is a condition to the quest for right answer.

BELGIUM

Card Suenens reminded the Synod that Christ was actively present in history, raising witnesses in the power of his Spirit; that the Church must become more credible (and this affected the new Canon Law) and that the uncertainty about overseas missions should be clarified.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Mgr Tmasch shared his experience that Gospel preaching should first be directed to our own hearts.

FINLAND

Mgr Verschuren reminded the Synod of the situation in his country: the Catholic community is small and foreign. One must give women a better place in the Church if we are to "secularize" in a secularized society.

Christians here - mostly Lutheran - were doing their best to be present among this society.

FRANCE

To Card Marty, evangelization meant the proclamation of the Gospel to people in their own communities. It seemed that one should seek first the communities of youth, of the workers, and of the leaders of our society.

GERMANY

Card Hoeffner spoke about non participating Christians:

- their numbers are increasing
- because of indifference, propaganda, and secularization.

We must answer by :

- a) preaching Gospel clearly
- b) Living it, in small communities
- c) personal relationships
- d) creating a new church image

Card Doepfner focussed on the burning issues of evangelization today: the sense of the Transcendent, defeatism about the value of the Gospel; loss of missionary spirit; the dichotomy between evangelization and development; the Church as an obstacle to adherence to the Faith. Vatican II could still show the way.

GREECE

Mgr Varthalitis stressed the importance of the quality of Christian communities in evangelization projects. We might be a "little remnant" but our strength did not come from numbers. We should be sensitive to the world (e.g. urbanization process in Greece) and be more concerned to defend the rights of men than our rights.

IRELAND

Card Conway referred to two special experiences a) small communities (which are catching) and b) initiatives to turn the family into an evangelizing community. He admitted that the conflict in N. Ireland was a hindrance to evangelization but asked the Synod to note that the responsibility for violence belongs only to less than 1 % of the population and that its motives are not religious at all.

ITALY

Mgr Bartoletti indicated as the first priority of the Italian Church contact with non practising Catholics, to lead them towards a personal form of Faith. It has formulated a Plan to achieve this. It relies on the catechumenate, on the renewal of the administration of the Sacraments on Catechesis and small communities.

NETHERLANDS

Card Alfrink thought that contemporary men may not be attracted by the Church also because of the stance of some Bishops. The joy of the Gospel is perceived by youth, for example, but through individuals rather than through the Church-Institution. The latter could be inhibiting the freedom of the Spirit - as also creativity and pluralism.

SPAIN

Card Tarancon stated that a Church freed of human power appeared more credible. To step up evangelization activity one could renew parish structures, introduce the catechumenate of adults, small communities and link evangelization with concern for justice.

SWITZERLAND

Mgr Vonderach feared that one was insisting too much on the psychological side of prayer and of small communities, and hence playing down the hierarchy. Pastoral and Presbyterian councils and Synods had been found useful in his country.

U.K.

Mgr Worlock stressed that the laity should be given a wider say in evangelization. The Church should also become more sensitive to the urbanization process by exploring new patterns of ministry in the cities.

YUGOSLAVIA

Mgr Skvorc noted how fruitful had been the experience of the liturgical renewal. But the road is uphill all the way: dialogue with atheists, with the Orthodox, with Muslims is practically minimal. The Church cannot plug in on the media. The family could be a first priority.

ORIENTAL RITES

Patriarch Maximos V Hakim of the Melkites listed the major obstacles: secularization and the indifference of youth. Positive experience emerges after the hand over to the laity of evangelization responsibilities. The proclamation of the Gospel "happens" through social service. But no Christian should forget the obligations of world evangelization.

Patriarch Hayek of Syria defined evangelization (with the working document) as that activity through which the Gospel is proclaimed and explained, and by which living faith is "started" in non Christians and "stimulated" in Christians. In prayer life is being promoted by small communities. Apriority, here, is union between the various Christian groups.

Patriarch Cheikho of the Chaldeans pointed to common religions concerns of Muslims and Christians: the religions education of children within the family, devotion to our Lady, care of the poor and of orphans.

Mgr Kocisko of the Ruthenes shared the Byzantine rite experience where the Liturgy serves as a carrier of the Gospel.

Card Slipyi of the Ukrainians reminded the Synod about the vexations reserved for Ukrainians in some countries. They deserved a word of protest. The injustice meted out to them is obviously an obstacle to evangelization.

Mgr Hermaniuk of the Ukrainians observed that, within the Catholic community, the Latin Church still dominates the Eastern Churches and this inhibits dialogue. A solution could be the handing back, to the Synods of the oriental churches, of their rights, the renewal of the membership of the S.C. for Oriental Churches in a way that it be formed by the delegates of these churches, and the extension of the jurisdiction of the same over their people, who live outside their territories.

Fr Agostoni, FSCJ, referred to the Vat. II idea that mission is communion between Churches (who help one another to evangelize). It is no longer a one way street from the West. But the contribution of Western countries is still indispensable. And it is also a positive sign these countries are already receiving missionaries - with Religious women often preceding the rest. The two way "traffic" should not be limited to people : ideas and experiences must also circulate. The idea of mission also embraces dialogue, human development and local church growth

Fr Arrupe SJ, observed that Religious Life is itself a source of evangelization. In fact recent experience has shown that Religious men and women often faced crisis situations - exactly because they found themselves on the frontiers of the evangelisation thrust. Recent experiences were often bold but the failures should not lead us to do drop the achievement. It is clear that:

- a) the best way to evangelize is to live the Gospel - and the best is evangelical Religious Life itself.
- b) the radicality of the latter makes Religious fully fledged evangelists
- c) more "space" should be given to Religious women, especially in the ministries
- d) Religious should step up their links with the local Church, through pastoral planning.
- e) the international dimension of Religious Institutes is of major significance to contemporary evangelization and to the local churches
- f) there is room for optimism - as well as realism for Religious in the future of evangelization.

Bro. Charles H. Buttimer FSC, referred to the enquiry held by his group in thirty two countries and to its conclusions:

- a) young people expect, from the Church: i) integrity in its leaders ii) patient and open understanding iii) commitment to peace iv) strength in its stand for truth v) that it be rooted in tradition, as a source of security and tradition
- b) young people, in the Church, could share more in the liturgy and work harder for a new social order inspired by the Gospel.

Fr. W. Goossens CICM, stated that human development was today seen as an integral part of the total Plan of Salvation and of struggle against Sin - an essential element of the Kingdom and real evangelization through witness. The Church is called to educate people, from within, to this sense of human development. He then offered a few guidelines for the activation of this concept.

Fr Koser OFM referred to the known contribution of Religious Women to evangelization. This should be strengthened by refusing to treat them simply as faithful servants. He also referred to the contribution of small fraternities when moved by a disciplined spirit and inserted in pastoral planning.

Fr. Letayf OAM, stressed the importance of Religious Life for evangelization in the Middle East. It was also ecumenic action. He examined the factors which made such action difficult and asked the Synod for more sensitivity to the ecumenic side of evangelization today.

Fr. Rywalski OFM-CAP referred to the difficult conditions under which evangelization today has to "happen" and indicated ways of surmounting them in ordinary pastoral work, in special ministries and in charismatic activity.

CURIA ROMANA

Mgr. Delhaye, Secretary of the Theological Commission warned of the disarray which, in the West, was being created by untested theological opinions. He deplored the fact that the mass media were often more concerned with what attracts than with what matters.

Mgr. Deskur noted that (a) the proclamation of the Gospel today happens in the context of the mass media, (b) the professional pressmen merited special attention of our pastoral services, (c) the Church did not desire to dominate the media but, aware that so many spend hours before the TV screen, the radio or the newspaper, it could not shirk from using them.

Cardinal Garrone observed that (a) priests are worried (b) the "teaching world" is crucial to evangelization - especially in its initiatives for ongoing education, (c) information is a dimension of major significance for evangelization.

Cardinal Pignedoli stated that the first aim of dialogue should be the witness of love and service of Christians to all men. People in dialogue open up to the desire to know the religious experience of their counterparts and to offer them their own. A major problem today is the evangelization of Christians: if they are not Christians "de facto" they cannot witness to others.

Cardinal Vagnozzi made a plea for more concern for artists, who could be carriers of the Gospel. Priests could be introduced, during their training, to the theology of art.

Cardinal Willebrands reminded those present that the Bible is an instrument of evangelization. And yet no part of it has been translated in at least a thousand languages. Cooperation with other Christians on Bible translations, however, is gathering momentum. Other hopeful experiences: common prayer, theological dialogue, human development.

APPENDIX: B

THE EXCHANGE OF EVANGELIZATION EXPERIENCES: A SUMMARY

A synthesis of the 88 interventions in the Aula (and of the 20 given in writing) was offered to the Synod Fathers by Cardinal Cordeiro on October 4, 1974. Here is our summary:

1. "We must take concrete situations as our points of departure. Because it is exactly in their context that God is present and reveals Himself to us. They will be like "signs of the times" which must be read, examined and interpreted in order to understand the plans of God for today and to derive a theology of evangelization which will allow us to agree on method and planning in our evangelization activities".

The Church thus meets

- a) the great religions
- b) popular religiosity
- c) new nations in search of identity and authenticity
- d) a Third World marked by poverty
- e) a world marked by industrialization and urbanization
- f) and by secularization
- g) atheism marks the Second World.

2. In this world, God works to save. In the Risen Christ. And he shows it in the love generated by the Spirit in the Church, the Sacrament of Salvation for all.

- a) The image of this Church betrays negative elements: alliances with the West, with the Establishment, legalism, authoritarianism.
- b) But it has its positive sides: dedication to its mission, care of the poor, educational and health services.
- c) The image must become one of a local community docile to the Spirit, permeated by the experience of God. To radiate the Paschal Mystery of Christ. To strive for the unity of mankind.

3. The main responsibilities of the Church correspond to the conditions outlined above:

- a) in prayer and contemplation, it incarnates the Gospel in the life of its members, makes it understandable in the local context.
- b) respects and loves the local culture and its religious traditions, moves to dialogue.
- c) purifies popular religiosity of less worthy practices
- d) because integral human development is part and parcel of evangelization, takes up the cause of the poor and the oppressed,
- e) reaches out to the non-practising by opening up to them the experience of ecclesial life
- f) studies ways and means for dialogue with atheists, especially where freedom is limited.

4. The "Subject" and "Object" of evangelization

Evangelization belongs to all and its subject embraces Bishops, Priests, Men and Women Religious, Laity, Women Catechists. Among the "objects" of evangelization who merit priority, the Bishops singled out: the family, youth, workers, public leaders.

5. The "means" for evangelization today

- a) the mass media
- b) the Presbyteral and Pastoral Councils
- c) Biblical and catechetical renewal.

6. First evangelization

We must study ways and means to bring the Gospel message to all - even if not all will embrace the faith.

a) Difficulties: The foreign image of the Church, the fear of proselytism, alienation of convert from his/her community, restrictions on religious freedom in some countries, inaccessibility of some peoples, past links with colonialism, rigidity of Church laws, excessive centralization, decay of the family, secularism, materialism, atheism and corresponding systems, indifference, lack of Church credibility, confusion in concept of evangelization, polarization on certain issues.

b) Openings: Awareness of presence of the Spirit, charismatic movements, small groups, prayer, liturgy, ecumenical progress, coming of age of the laity, integration of Religious in local Church, ideals of youth, commitment of Church to human development, respect for the individual and for basic values (Brotherhood, peace, renewal, etc.).

7. From this synthesis emerged:

The ten topics proposed for discussion in each of the 12 language groups (in this order) :

- (1) Interior life - as contemplation and conversion
- (2) Local Church - advantages and difficulties of acculturation
- (3) Basic Communities - positive and negative sides, distinctions
- (4) Popular religiosity - expressions, meaning, validity
- (5) Pastoral care of non practising Catholics
- (6) Dialogue - with other Christians, men of other Faiths (and of no faith).
- (7) Liberation - responsibilities of Christians, links to evangelization.
- (8) Youth: pastoral care and their participation in evangelization.
- (9) Specific groups: family, workers, intellectuals, politicians
- (10) Human rights: evangelization and freedom of conscience, of religion.

N.B. Of these, nos. 1,2,3,5,6,7,8, were included in the Working Document of June '74. In turn, the following were in this document but have now been dropped: Pastoral and Presbyteral Councils, Laity, Mass Media and Liturgy.