

13 June 1975

75 n. 21

THE 47TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SEDOS

Most of this issue is devoted to documentation relevant to the General Assembly which meets on 23 June. This will be one of the most important Assemblies we have ever had--perhaps the most important. All Generalates were sent an Evaluation Questionnaire in April, and we present an analysis of replies below; unfortunately some replies came in too late to be included, but an examination of them shows that they do not significantly alter the picture.

The Minutes of the Executive Committee are also worth careful study, as they contain a list of possible combinations of SEDOS services and posts. We are at a cross-roads and must determine our future direction and form.

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COMING EVENTS:

GENERAL ASSEMBLY                      23 JUNE 1975                      4:00 p.m.                      F.S.C. GENERALATE

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF 23 JUNE 1975

The 47th Assembly of Generals of SEDOS will be held on Monday 23 June 1975 at 4:00 p.m. in the F.S.C. Generalate, 476 Via Aurelia.

AGENDA:

1. Minutes of the 46th Assembly. (SEDOS 75/217-224)
2. Consideration of the Analysis of the Evaluation Questionnaire. (SEDOS 75/441)
3. The future form and role of SEDOS.

The business meeting will be followed by a reception in honour of the out-going Executive Secretary, Fr. B. Tonna

An analysis based on the response of 25 (out of 40) Generalates to the Evaluation Questionnaire distributed in April 75.

1. The Generalates think that SEDOS has a substantial Mission role to play, today and in the future. The only exception seems to be the White Fathers: "what Sedos has done, had to be done. Thanks to many of its initiatives, Generalates have acquired excellent habits. But must one continue to rely on these crutches when one can proceed on one's own?", taking exception to the EC statement "Mission is not possible without being together. The question : What do I get from Sedos? is therefore not valid. It should rather be: does Sedos effectively bring us together? (75/243). Their comment: "together, yes, but what for?"
2. Though none of the other Generalates took exception to the "cooperation" philosophy of SEDOS in this way, many did question the methodology in which it is currently striving to live it out, mostly because of the emergence of new factors like USG-VI, PMV, RCA. This involves a review of the Secretariat. The most radical was, again, that of the White Fathers: SEDOS should only produce a bulletin, classify and circulate documents.
3. Again, the other Generalates did not agree with this drastic reduction of SEDOS activities and services. Indeed, consensus on dropping one or more of these emerged only in one case: Joint Venture (13 out of 25) which, again according to the White Fathers, was "a typical case of waste of time and energy". In fact, no one Generalate gave JV, (listed among 6 activities and services in Question (1) more than fourth priority.
4. This particular question (What are the most fruitful activities or services of SEDOS?) produced an unmistakable preference for the weekly bulletin: 21 gave it first priority, the other two second and third. In between the bulletin and JV, consensus emerged as follows :  
The Working Groups - 2 "first" 7 "seconds" and 4 "thirds"  
The Doc. services - 7 "seconds" and 3 "thirds"  
The Ad Hoc meetings- 7 "seconds" and 8 "thirds"  
The Assemblies - 1 "first" and 8 "fifths".  
The details are given in Table 1, which breaks down respondents into three categories: Exclusively missionary Institutes of Men, Other Institutes of Men-Religious, Institutes of Women Religious.
5. The weekly bulletin (Q.4)
  - a) Is the weekly bulletin read by your staff? 23 answered yes. 4 encountered difficulties because of language and length.
  - b) Could you mention items which you found useful recently? The Synod coverage was mentioned more often (11), with the Signs features second (6). Other items mentioned were : reports on international meetings, on countries, on theological and other trends, on youth, on evangelization, local church, development.
  - c) Have there been items which you found without interest? Four cases were reported by 4 different Institutes: doctrinal articles, full reports of working groups,

the slant of particular articles (75/145 ff), lists of documents, woman's year.  
 d) Suggestions: less theory, jargon, verbiage, bias, less frequent (twice a month),  
 more subtitles, news from, for Generalates, interviews, experiences  
 highlighting of documents, French.

Four Institutes asked for a reduction of present frequency to twice a month. One  
 pleaded for better delivery, another for better production.

#### 6. The Working Groups (Q.3)

7 Generalates did not answer this question at all.

9 referred to the Development Group, 4 to the Communications group and 4 to the Health  
 group.

The Health group was commended for its good atmosphere and for the methodology -  
 a steering group guides the work of a broad group which reaches out beyond SEDOS.  
 The Communications Group was questioned: isn't SEDOS itself "communication". Sugges-  
 tions were made that it become an "ad hoc" group. It was noted, however, that its  
 weekly bulletin services had once been widely used in Generalates.

The Development Group was criticized by one Institut as vague, academic and closed.  
 Another Institute thought it excellent because of the issues it tackled - in a detail-  
 ed, open way. In particular, its work on the Urban Mission was much appreciated  
 (and shared) in one Generalate.

General suggestions were offered for all groups: opening up to other languages, whole  
 day meetings (instead of monthly); shorter, ad hoc, studies; wider use of interview  
 techniques; meetings with other groups; link up with the persons who are working on  
 reflection and continuity to help Councillors who are often absent from Rome; better  
 preparation of participants.

#### 7. The Documentation Services (Q.6)

a) How often has your Institute utilized the Documentation Services?

2 Institutes answered often, 13 occasionally, 5 not at all.

b) On which topics? Specific problems in particular geographical areas were mentio-  
 ned most frequently. The response was otherwise scattered: catechists, mass media  
 contracts, chapters, religious life, small communities, local church, formation,  
 global awareness, concept of Mission today, theology of incarnation,

c) Did you find what you were looking for? 13 answered yes, 2 no.

d) Did you find the documentation easily accessible? 13 answered yes, 2 no.

e) Does your Generalate provide SEDOS with documentation? 12 answered yes, 4 no.

f) Suggestions: a directory of documentation sources in Rome, coordination of SEDOS  
 work with them, file-card system for use at individual Generalate, summaries of  
 documents, the employment of a professional documentalist.

#### 8. The Assemblies

All the Generalates reported regular participation in the Assemblies and specific  
 names were given. The question (2c): what do you expect from these Assemblies? ge-  
 nerated consensus on information about the Mission today (8) and about Sedos itself (4).  
 4 looked for policy making for this group, 4 for consideration, in small groups, of  
 the conclusions of the working groups or of a common missionary concern.

To the question (2d) which asked whether these expectations were met, 6 gave a posi-  
 tive answer - referring to the contacts made and to the topics recently chosen. The

reservations made by 2 of these 8 and by the others gravitated towards a plea for more enthusiasm (2), more method (2), more linkage with the day to day concerns of Generalates (1), more input (2), and more time (3), more depth (1), more openness (2). 13 did not answer the question about the appropriate style to adopt in these Assemblies (2e). 3 asked for less formality, more reports, more group sessions and 1 for more solidarity. 6 Generalates suggested two or even one Assembly a year.

Specific suggestions made (2f) were scattered: liturgy, clear formulation of topic, better organization, fresh insights from external speakers, preliminary paper work, coffee at the beginning of the sessions, more French, "hotter" topics. One Institute questioned the present heterogeneity of the Sedos group, another thought it too large.

#### 9. Joint Venture

14 Generalates did not think JV useful (5a), even though some found it interesting (5b). Indeed no one found it necessary and one did not think that SEDOS needed be known outside the circle of its own membership. The 12 Generalates who found it useful offered various suggestions for its improvement: its transformation into a quarterly report on Sedos activities (3), its coverage of the highlights of the weekly bulletin - particularly interviews, policy elements (3), its production by the Communications group (2).

One way of replacing JV was to contact pressmen in Rome.

It was noted that, insofar as JV was intended as a public relations instrument, its evaluation should really be made by the non-Sedos members to whom it is sent.

#### 10. The new programme

The preferences <sup>for</sup> each of the 4 projects were distributed as follows - with some of the Generalates selecting more than one:

- Signs: 10; Formation 9; Primary evangelization 6; Communities: 4.

As regards the specific questions:

7b: why are you interested? 6 considered Signs as basic for mission today. Trans cultural trends have to be identified before an adequate response can be worked out. 2 considered formation a basic need and another 2 thought it was a specific function of Generalates to promote it by investigating new approaches. One considered it as a unique opportunity for cooperation. Primary evangelization today demanded new approaches - for example the development of dialogue - and certainly the removal of current ambiguities.

Small communities were considered by one Generalat as the trend in the Church and by another as the means to revitalize religious life. Guidelines were badly needed. To the questions "what do you expect from each (7c) and "what do you think is the best way to proceed (7d), the answers varied according to the Project.

Signs generated pleas for more depth and better method, perhaps through the help of professional analysts (1). The most important signs could be identified and one or two "read" in depth, through input sessions (1), review of literature by the Secretariat (1), mutual animation for discernment and cooperation (1). One Generalate suggested that this project be combined with the one on Primary Evangelization.

Formation could produce a joint programme (3) and instruments (1), a sharing of what is already going on (3). One Generalate expected a new methodology (1) which would put Formation squarely in life, by life, through planned meetings and research.

Primary Evangelization would call for wide information and insight sharing (7) especially as far as geographical and sociological areas are concerned (1). The concept itself has to be classified and guidelines developed (1). Experts could be called in but in a context of carefully planned meetings and research.

Small communities also requires wide information sharing and consequent publication in the bulletin. It could generate an instrument for planning, an overview of what is going on.

The response also produced general remarks about method: preference for small sub-groups of 4-5 (1), stress on the pastoral ministry of visitation.

#### 11. The role of Sedos today (Q.8)

The key question "In present day Rome does Sedos fulfil a useful role which is not fulfilled by others?" produced a whole range of motivations to substantiate the general, positive consensus highlighted under 1 above.

These motivations could be synthesized as follows:

Thanks to the breadth of its membership, "Sedos is Synthesis" - bringing together men and women in a situation of equality, integrating theory and "grass-root" reality, generating opportunities for cooperation.

In fact, "it offers more than we take advantage of". It could become more of an instrument through which a Generalate could do more for Mission, by opening up new horizons for the Councillors, new challenges for mutual support, more exposure to other views. It could become a policy making body, a pressure group - thanks to its unofficial and informal character.

It was remarked, however, that it had become less useful than before (3). The dangers of duplication, meaningless generalities, baroque administration were there. In this perspective, the questions on which Sedos activities and services should be continued (8b), should be reduced (8c) should be added to (8d), become crucial. The answers:

- continue the weekly bulletin;
- " the Health and Development group, but consider tying them up to the new programme (1);
- continue the documentation service but in the light of the answers to Q.6;
- " the Assemblies, but perhaps reducing their frequency (see q.2);
- improve the methodology of the ad hoc groups and of the new programme;
- drop Joint Venture.

Among the services to be added or strengthened : situation reports (1), referral system (1), ongoing orientation about the shape of Mission today (1), services of analyst (1).

#### 12. The Secretariat

The visits of the Executive Secretary to the Generalates were considered too rare by 13, sufficient by 9. They were considered fruitful for the following reasons:

- a "living synthesis" of the SEDOS group
- wider perspectives of the Missionary enterprise
- a challenge to one's commitment to Mission
- information about Sedos.

4 Institutes thought the membership fee too high.

The following Generalates would consider the possibility of offering members of the Institute to serve on the Sedos Secretariat:

14. Provisional conclusions and alternatives

Consensus <sup>on</sup> a useful role for Sedos in the present Roman set up.

Readiness to revise its original role in the face of new realities.

And consequently its activities and services by: dropping Joint Venture, developing methodology of group work - including Assembly. People feel guilty when they cannot attend meetings.

- sharpening the brief of the documentation services.

- continuing the weekly bulletin; perhaps reduced to twice monthly.

- stepping up the visits of the E.S. to the Generalates.

In the frame of the new programme - re-affirmed as valid.

P.S. Classification of responding Generalates used in the tables:

Women: FMM - ICM - RSCM - RSCJ - SCMM-M - SHCJ - SNDN - SSND - SSPS - OSU = 10 out of 1

Men - mixed: CM - FSC - O.CARM - OFM-CAP - SDB - SJ. = 6 " "

Men - exclusively missionary : IMC - OMI - PA - SMA - SVD. = 9 " " 1

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TABLE 1 - PREFERENCES FOR ACTIVITIES / SERVICES

QUESTION 1	Women	Men - mixed	Men - excl. Missionary
ASSEMBLY	6 - 1 - 3 - 4 5 - 5 - 5	6 - 5 - 5 - 3 2 - 4	5 - 5 - 4 - 2 - 2 - 6 - 5
W. GROUPS	2 - 5 - 2 - 2 3 - 4	2 - 2 - 4 - 1 5 - 2	4 - 3 - 3 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1
BULLETIN	1 - 3 - 1 - 1 1 - 1 - 1 - 1	1 - 1 - 1 - 1 1 - 1 - 2	1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 1 - 2
JOINT VENTURE	4 - 6 - 6 - 6 6 - 3	5 - 6 - 6 - 6 5	6 - 3 - 6 - 6 - 5 - 5 - 6
DOCUMENTATION	2 - 2 - 5 - 5 4 - 3	4 - 4 - 2 - 4 3 - 6	2 - 2 - 2 - 5 - 3 - 4 - 4
MEETINGS	3 - 2 - 2 - 4 3 - 2 - 4 - 4 2	3 - 3 - 3 - 5 4 - 2 - 3	3 - 2 - 4 - 4 - 6 - 2 - 3

TABLE 2 - DOCUMENTATION SERVICES

QUESTION 6	Women	Men-mixed	Men Miss.
Often consulted	2	0	0
Occasionally consulted	5	4	5
Never consulted	2	1	3
Outcome : YES	6	4	4
NO	2	0	0
Accessible : YES	6	4	4
NO	1	0	1
Input : YES	5	4	4
NO	2	1	4



TABLE 3 - NEW PROGRAMME

SEDOS 75/447

QUESTION 7                      Women                      Men - mixed                      Men - missionary

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Primary Evangelisation                      1                      2                      3

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Signs of Times                      6                      1                      3

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Small Communities                      2                      1                      1

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Ongoing Formation                      4                      1                      3

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Generic response                      0                      1                      0

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TOTALS                      13                      7                      10

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TABLE 4 : ACTIVITIES - to continue  
to reduce  
to suspend

QUESTION 8

		ASSEMBLY	W.G.'s	BULLETIN	J.V.	DOCUMENT.	AD HOC MTGS
CONTINUE	WORKING MEMBERS	5	5	7	0	6	6
	MEMBERS	2	4	5	2	4	4
	WORKING MEMBERS	2	2	5	0	3	3
REDUCE	WORKING MEMBERS	1	0	0	1	0	0
	MEMBERS	2	1	1	1	1	1
	WORKING MEMBERS	1	0	1	0	2	0
SUSPEND	WORKING MEMBERS	0	0	0	2	0	0
	MEMBERS	0	0	0	3	0	0
	WORKING MEMBERS	2	1	0	3	0	1

TABLE 5 - VISITS OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

<u>QUESTION 9</u>	WOMEN	MEN-MIXED	MEN-EXCL. MISSION.
TOO RARE	8	2	4
SUFFICIENT	2	4	3
TOO OFTEN	0	0	0
NOT AT ALL	0	0	1
TOTALS	10	6	8

CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDING GENERALATES :

WOMEN : FMN - ICM - RSCM - RSCJ - SCMM-M - SHCJ - SNDN - SSND - SSPS - OSU.

MEN-MIXED : CM - FSC - O.CARM - OFM-CAP - SDB - SJ.

MEN-EXCLUSIVELY MISSIONARY : IMC - PA - ONI - SMA - SVD - SX - CMM - CSSP - MSF.

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING OF 19 MAY 1975

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held at the Sedos Secretariat on 19 May at 4:00p.m.

Present were: Sr. Claire Rombouts ICM, Sr. Francis Webster SCMM-M, Sr. Mary Motte FMM,  
Sr. Danita McGonagle SSND, Fr. Ary Roest Crollius SJ, Fr. Joseph Hardy SMA,

Chairman: Bro. Charles Henry Buttimer FSC.

Secretary: Fr. B. Tonna.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved after inserting the addendum "through them" to the last paragraph. It was agreed that, in future, minutes would be circulated to the whole membership in a draft form, before their formal approval by the Executive Committee.
2. The synthesis of the response to the evaluation questionnaire was then taken as read and discussed. The following points emerged:
  - a) "Together for what?!" had asked the White Fathers, in their answer. A Sedos "philosophy" of cooperation had been formulated on several occasions. It seemed that, right now, we should be very modest about it and speak more in terms of "mutual services rendered". Sedos would then become more of a service centre.
  - b) The malaise seems to gravitate around the real danger of duplication. It seems we have not done enough to eliminate it. At the same time it is normal that the same people would go on meeting under different umbrellas. These people are probably those who are expected by their Generalates to keep contact with the outside world.
  - c) The SEDOS group is now heterogeneous. The original "exclusively overseas missionary sending Institutes of men" opened their "club" to other men-Institutes which had other aims, besides the overseas missions. At a later stage the "club" was opened to Institutes of women. The fact was considered positive and it would not help the Mission--and, indeed, no one--if SEDOS splits up into "missionaries", "mission-sending" and "women's" Institutes.
  - d) A report on previous evaluation of JV should be circulated among Generalates. This would substantiate any recommendation about its future and about our real options.
  - e) Six (6) names of possible candidates for Executive Secretary were mentioned but, as yet, no firm prospect emerged. It was considered essential that the description of this job be clarified further before interesting Generalates in it.
  - f) It was re-affirmed that the programme endorsed by the March '75 Assembly would continue to guide the activities of SEDOS. Indeed, even if reduced to the documentation and the bulletin services, SEDOS would still need a programme--even if only to guide the selection of documents for classifications and for circulation.
  - g) SEDOS could consider offering "study contracts" to individuals or teams of theologians, sociologists and other experts. This would have the effect of focussing better on our real documentation and study needs. It could also reduce expenses on overheads and salaries.

THE SERVICES DESCRIBED:

- A. Assembly: All members of SEDOS gather to take decisions, to study common concerns or simply to be together. The present Statutes require 4 assemblies per year. These were organized on a half day (afternoon) basis. But SEDOS members also used to meet for symposia and seminars.  
Options: Once a year, twice a year, four times a year: morning, afternoon, two (2) or more days.
- B. Documentation Service: books, periodicals and fugitive documents are collected and classified at the Secretariat because of their contemporary missionary interest. They are carefully selected in terms of the needs of the Institutes. They are indexed by subject, country and origin. A list of items classified is distributed to the Generalates every month. Requests for documents are cleared by the Secretariat.  
Options: Computerization -- already being considered.
- C. Weekly Bulletin: the weekly, 20 page hand out which is circulated among interested members of the SEDOS Generalates every week. It includes announcements, reports of meetings, excerpts from new documents, situation reports on special topics and other features. Options: Once a week, twice a month, once a month, less than 20 pages.
- D. Ad hoc Meetings: Meetings convened to sound opinion or to communicate "messages" about an issue considered to be a common missionary concern. There is usually no formal follow-up and the meetings are called "ad hoc" because they do not belong to a series. Options: set a limit -- not more than 2 a month.
- E. Working Groups: At present there are two active working groups focusing, respectively on a) development issues and b) the health ministry. A third group for communications is dormant. According to the Statutes: "Each working group elaborates joint projects in a specific area determined by the Executive Committee, which also selects its members on the basis of their competence in the field defined by its terms of reference" (Art. 19). These members usually commit themselves to a monthly meeting and to some aspect of the project developed by their group.  
Options: Each group selects its own secretary to write reports and coordinate activities.
- F. Projects: This is a new development in SEDOS methodology. The December '74 Assembly indicated areas of priority in following up the Synod on Evangelization. These were translated into four projects--which the March '75 Assembly approved. It is not yet clear who will guide the work which each requires--a special coordinator for each? the Executive Secretary? the Executive Committee? a core group?
- G. Joint Venture: a 50 page quarterly publication on Mission and SEDOS contributions to Mission sent free of charge to Episcopal Conferences, Associations of Major Superiors, Pastoral Institutes and other groups indicated by the Generalates. There are two editions: English and French.  
Options: hand outs to press men; press conferences.

4. THE ALTERNATIVES

NB: The list of 5 combinations of services is progressive, with a service added at each stage, according to the preferences shown by the evaluation returns. Other combinations (for example ABCF) are of course possible.

ABC	<u>Assembly / Documentation / Bulletin</u>
Secretariat:	Executive Secretary, his/her secretary, part time documentalist
Budget:	Overheads: £ 5m
	Salaries: <u>4m</u> + 3m + 2m
	Total: £14m
Membership Fee:	£ 350,000 per annum

ABCD	<u>Assembly / Documentation / Bulletin / Ad hoc Meetings</u>
Secretariat:	Executive Secretary, his/her secretary, documentalist
Budget:	Overheads: £ 6m
	Salaries: <u>4m</u> + 3m + 3m
	Total: £ 16m
Membership Fee:	£ 400,000 per annum

ABCDE	<u>Assembly / Documentation / Bulletin / Ad hoc Meetings / Working Groups</u>
Secretariat:	Executive Secretary, his/her secretary, documentalist
Budget:	Overheads: £ 7m
	Salaries: <u>4m</u> + 3m + 3m
	Total: £ 17m
Membership Fee:	£ 425,000 per annum

ABC DEF	<u>Assembly / Documentation / Bulletin / Ad hoc Meetings / Working Groups / Projects</u>
Secretariat:	Executive Secretary, his/her secretary, documentalist, Coordinator of Projects
Budget:	Overheads: £ 7m + 2m for "study contracts"
	Salaries: <u>4m</u> + 3m + 3m + 3m (for coordinator)
	Total: £ 22m
Membership Fee:	£ 500,000 per annum, without study contracts £ 550,000 per annum, with study contracts

ABC DEFG	<u>Assembly / Documentation / Bulletin / Ad hoc Meetings / Working Groups / Projects / Joint Venture</u>
Secretariat:	Executive Secretary, his/her secretary, documentalist, Coordinator of Projects
Budget:	Overheads: £ 7m + 2m for J.V. + 2m for study contracts
	Salaries: <u>4m</u> + 3m + 3m + 3m
	Total: £ 24m
Membership Fee:	£ 600,000 per annum

Estimates are based on the SEDOS budget for 1975 (74/845) and are in Italian lire, with m standing for million. The membership base is taken as 40.

5. The Job Descriptions Re-considered

Executive Secretary: The Statutes described this job under four heads: a) directs the personnel of the Secretariat, b) prepares projects. . . , c) presents quarterly reports on the activities of the Secretariat to the Executive Committee, d) assists at the meetings of the Assembly and the Executive Committee and takes their minutes. (Art. 18)

The Executive Committee would add: visits the Generalates regularly; edits the bulletin; selects documentation.

Personal Secretary to the Executive Secretary: This person would be a professional who would be expected to take over from the routine office duties: reception, filing, typing, production and distribution of bulletin, etc. English, French and Italian are essential.

Documentalist: This person would select, classify, index, store and eventually retrieve relevant documents in close collaboration with the Executive Secretary. When the computerization negotiations are concluded, the job could become part time.

Coordinator of Projects: This person would be expected to activate the specifications of each project approved by the Assembly.

Present jobs which could be reviewed or abolished:

- 1 - Editor of Bulletin - part time - £ 1.5 m
- 2 - Assistant to English speaking groups - full time - £ 2.5 m
- 3 - Assistant to French speaking groups - full time - £ 3 m
- 4 - Clerk typist - full time - £ 1.8 m

1 - The Editor's duties would be taken by the Executive Secretary.

The other three jobs would be amalgamated in the new job of Personal Secretary.

6. The next meeting of the Executive Committee will take place on 12 June at 4:00 p.m. at the F.S.C. Generalate.

EVANGELIZATION IN SRI LANKA

A Study by Bishop Edward J. Fernando, O.M.I.

### 1. Bald Realities

The image of the Church in Sri Lanka is a mixed one. The reaction of the populace based upon the impression she has created down through the years has ranged from admiration and friendship to rivalry, suspicion and hostility. There is also an attitude of indifference on the part of many people. The Papal call for evangelization could bring us blessed renewal.

There is to a certain extent admiration for her efficient organization, the dedication of priests and religious, the loyalty of the laity and the general discipline and order prevailing among her members. People are also grateful for the service she has retained in the educational spheres.

At the same time, the Church has been considered as a 'closed' community--unable to cherish interests other than her own and standing aloof from the cultural, social and economic aspirations of the Nation. She is considered as being Western in her thought, outlook and ways of life. She is also regarded as a community which does not place enough emphasis on such values as poverty and simplicity.

### 2. Change of Attitudes

Inspired by Vatican II and her own National Synod, and impelled by the vastly changed and changing conditions in Sri Lanka, the Church has honestly acknowledged the inadequacies of the past, and is committing herself to the present with sincerity. The pace is still slow but a beginning has certainly been made. In recent years, there has been a great deal of rethinking and change of attitude. The Church has been integrating herself more and more in national aspirations. She has cooperated in very concrete form with definite initiatives of the nation as housing, shramadana (voluntary manual work) and development. She has taken very meaningful and even daring steps forward in shedding Western ways and 'ceylonising' her outlook and her Liturgy. She has grown increasingly sensitive about being associated exclusively with any single political party and has tried to understand the respective aspirations of all parties and adopt their positive values. She has projected an image of much greater openness.

The external appearance of churches and ecclesiastical institutions as well as their internal decor and furnishings could be more in keeping with Christ's poverty.

The Church has been at fault by not serving humanity sufficiently--in the fields of seeking justice for the people, distribution of wealth and influencing social patterns. Though in years gone by she inspired the Social Justice Movement, in recent years she has been more or less indifferent to these problems. It must be admitted, however, that certain organizations like the Socio-Economic Training Institute in Kandy, the Social and Economic Development Centre in Colombo and the Civil Rights Movement are making some impact in the socioeconomic sphere.

The Church has also failed to make a substantial contribution to healing the maladies of racial and caste discrimination in our country. Even now there does not seem to be any positive thinking along these lines.

### 3. Evangelization

The vast majority of our people have not realised their sacred duty of taking the Gospel message to each other and to the world, to bear witness to the truth, to justice and to charity. The work of evangelization has been considered the duty of priests and religious



only, and not of the laity. Due to this mistaken notion of the mission of the Church, a large majority of Christians in Sri Lanka are totally indifferent and uncommitted.

Even priests and religious--but more especially the laity--due to this mistaken notion of the mission of the Church--need to be oriented towards and grow in this sense of mission--the true mission. To provide motivation each Diocese should set up a special committee to study and promote the work of evangelization. Its membership should include Priests, Religious and Laity.

#### 4. Eyes on the Future

Efforts are being made to implement some of the decisions taken at our Synod: a) Seminars have been held at National and Diocesan levels to ensure the continued training of Priests; b) In an effort towards shared action, Priests' Councils have been set up, though with varying degrees of success; c) Liturgical experimentation has been permitted in certain instances.

#### 5. Liturgy

On the matter of liturgy, much remains to be done. The Liturgical Commission should be prodded on to work effectively and to be of help to priests.

As leader of liturgical worship, the priest should make religion meaningful to his people. Recent liturgical changes have made services more relevant to the people. But the individuality of some priests tends to obtrude itself at the expense of the actual needs of the local Church.

It has been felt very strongly that every priest should be proficient in the two national languages. Effective measures should be taken in this regard in the Seminaries. (The Colombo Minor Seminary has been asked to teach both languages to its students.) Unfortunately too, the complete ritual is not yet available in all three languages.

#### 6. Parish Movements

The dynamism of the priest is essential in activating movements at parish level, and especially at implementing directives and decisions made at national level. In the furtherance of this, closer collaboration of priests themselves is required--both at district and national levels.

#### 7. Population

With the influx of the rural population into towns, the language problem is creeping in, bringing with it racial divisions and differences. There is also the economic disparity between the haves and the have-nots; the superiority of the educated vis-a-vis the uneducated; the superiority of the products of the city schools over those of the village schools. All these factors impede the growth of real parish communities.

#### 8. A New Phenomenon

Manifesting itself in the Church of God in Sri Lanka after Vatican II is an uncertainty with regard to her teachings. This is due to varied and often conflicting theological interpretations given by some priests and by others on subjects in the teaching magisterium. Such are birth control and confession. This has given rise to confusion and uncertainty in the minds of the laity and has proved a stumbling block to many. An effective clarification is essential in the wider interest of evangelization.

#### 9. The Religious

Over the past hundred years, the Religious living in Sri Lanka have done much to bear witness by their consecrated lives of spirituality and dedication. They have rendered invaluable service to the Church and to the country in the fields of education and social

apostolate. The children in schools, the sick, the orphans, the handicapped and the aged have all been the objects of their solicitous concern.

In the past, the service rendered by Religious had been ~~mainly~~ institutional. Their spirituality was one of separation from the world. As a result, their life-style tended to be cloistered, secluded and cut off from the people. There had not been a deep involvement of the Religious in parish activities especially in the urban areas. The Religious living in rural areas definitely cut a better picture by their almost total involvement in the working of the parish. Now there is a marked change for the better in the attitude of religious living in urban areas too.

After the nationalisation of schools, many religious have begun to seek their apostolate outside the seclusion of their walled-in convent schools. Religious life in Sri Lanka has readjusted itself to meet changing conditions. Now we find religious engaged in the catechetical apostolate outside schools, working in clinics and dispensaries, guiding youth movements, participating in developmental projects and dedicating themselves to pastoral work in estates and rural areas.

In spite of all the changes--or partly as a consequence of them--there is a further search among some religious, especially the younger ones. This often leads to a certain sense of dissatisfaction, even of frustration. Though the numbers leaving the Religious Life are comparatively very few in Sri Lanka, still it remains a challenging factor for the Church

#### 10. Lay Revival

At present, there is great scope for the laity to fulfill their duty of evangelization by witness in Sri Lanka. Paradoxically, there is a religious revival in the country. Many, disillusioned in their belief in materialistic ideologies as a consequence of the hardships they have had to face, are turning to religion for solace and solution to their problems.

#### 11. Current Orientations

The present orientations have taken into account the following:

- a) The Christian today is no more living in a world of static and unchanging values, but in a rapidly changing environment where everything is questioned in terms of pragmatic values.
- b) The phenomenon of secularization where the sacred is being pushed out of line as less important and even irrelevant.
- c) The Mass Media explosion and the horizontal explosion of child-education.
- d) Socialization of political life and the belief that it is a panacea for all economic and social problems.
- e) Urbanization and industrialization.
- f) The institutional mode of religion more concerned with maintaining the established order than leading mankind meaningfully with a due commitment to transcendental values.

#### 12. The School Take-over

Since the nationalization of schools, the so-called catechesis in school has suffered a severe setback, although religion itself is a compulsory subject in the school curriculum. Significant factors are: lack of adequate time and suitable environment, absence of competent teachers, dispersion of students in largely non-catholic schools and even direct challenges to the faith of students by the presentation of contrary values in other subjects.

#### 13. Mass Media

Mass Media can be an effective means of announcing the good news of salvation. The Church has also the duty of instructing the people in their proper use. There has been a

definite improvement in the use of the Mass Media by the Church in the fulfillment of her mission. However, it is generally felt that much more could be done.

a) Films: A National Film Office has been established to animate and Christianize those working in this field. A large number attended the conference held in this connection in 1973. Since the film is one of the chief sources of entertainment and relaxation open to the people, film appreciation courses should be given high priority.

b) Radio: The radio apostolate has been limited to the hours given by the State Radio. Sinhala and Tamil programmes have been allotted to different persons in the various dioceses. They either produce the programmes themselves or send in scripts. Diocesan representatives for this purpose have been appointed by the respective Dioceses. Training Seminars have been held in script writing and programming. Some dioceses have organized Listeners' Clubs to review programmes and conduct discussions on them.

This is a field where much improvement is essential. Programmes which would be more beneficial to the people are lacking. The complaint now is that programmes cater to special groups and are not of mass appeal. More personnel should be trained; at present nearly all are amateurs. The use of commercial radio has not been exploited yet due to lack of funds. The possibility of relaying programmes, not particularly Catholic, but of moral and human interest, should be explored.

c) Literature: The Catholic weeklies should be made **effective** instruments to proclaim the message of Christ. Efforts should also be directed at improving the standard of novels so avidly read by thousands. Novels of human and Christian values could be published in greater numbers if the Church extends her patronage to deserving writers. Religious instruction by means of correspondence courses is fast gaining popularity and the Church should use this means of evangelization too.

#### 4. Apostolate to Estate Workers

a) General background: There are one and a half million estate workers the majority of whom are Indian Tamils of Hindu origin. Their religious background, with belief in God, renders conversions from among them easier than from Buddhists. There are conversions every year, though comparatively poor. Eighty percent of Catholics in the Kandy Diocese and forty percent of the Galle Diocese are plantation workers.

b) Pastoral care: During the last ten or fifteen years, the pastoral service and care these workers received from the Church has improved. A noteworthy feature is the opening of small communities of Religious Fraternities in these areas. A few full-time catechists (young men and girls) have also been employed. An annual Inter-diocesan Seminar and one at diocesan level every six months, help to update those engaged in this apostolate. The Socio-economic Apostolate of the Church has so far touched only marginally the interests of these plantation workers.

c) Immediate requirements: At a Seminar held recently, an evaluation of the work done was made. More lay catechists need to be trained. Priests and religious with a good knowledge of the Tamil language should be given a course in Missiology and directed to this apostolate.

The opening of more 'Fraternities' in these areas would be of great help. Where this is not possible, teams composed of a priest, religious and laymen should spend a few days on each estate. Adult education is a priority.

There could also be more involvement to obtain for them a better share of human rights. This is also an area open for the apostolate in the educational, social and moral upliftment spheres.

### 15. Workers' Movement

The Christian Workers Movement and the Young Christian Workers collaborate closely. There are Worker Movement Groups in the dioceses of Colombo, Galle, Chilaw and Jaffna. These groups tackle the problems of the workers in their respective areas. Current affairs, trends in the country, national and international problems, government Bills, are also discussed at meetings at Headquarters.

### 16. Welfare and Thrift Societies

These have been formed to help fisher-folk and farmers. These Societies are of great help to migrant fishermen in particular.

Groups of working mothers too have been inaugurated. A National Shramadana Secretariat plans and directs organized voluntary work campaigns. Direct dialogue between the Clergy and Laity will help all engaged in this apostolate to understand each other's problems more realistically and to help each other in their activities.

### 17. The University

General background: No more than four percent of the 12,500 students in the five campuses are Christians. The majority of our Varsity students are politically apathetic and conformist in practice. The interests of most of them are confined to their books and lectures.

However, in the campuses there are political movements affiliated to the major political parties in the island and socialist ideologies have much influence over the students.

There is a decline in religious awareness due to lack of instruction and the influence of materialistic ideologies. They begin to find difficulties in certain dogmas and moral teachings of the Church. Gradually they become quite indifferent and apathetic towards religion, even to the extent of being reluctant to be called Christians.

The aim of the apostolate has been to cater to their spiritual needs, to keep alive their religious commitment, to make them alive to their duties and responsibilities towards society, to guide their critical outlook and to provide for clear and logical thinking.

SPECIAL MEETING ON ETHIOPIA AND MOZAMBIQUE

A meeting was held at 4:00 p.m. on 22 May at SEDOS Secretariat to give Fr. W. Goossens, CICM, an opportunity to report on his visit to Africa, and to Ethiopia and Mozambique in particular.

Present: Fr. G. Lautenschlager C.M.M. Fr. J. Lang M.M.  
 Sr. M. Motte F.M.M. Sr. L. M. Bankes S.N.D.N.  
 Fr. L. Bano F.S.C.J. Mr. Terry Waite  
 Fr. A. Orlando F.S.C.J.

For SEDOS: Fr. B. Tonna and Fr. L. Skelly, S.M.A.

1. Fr. Goossens explained that his tour of Africa had had two purposes (a) to find out the most suitable fields for new missionary work, and (b) to locate areas in which missionaries, who had been, or might be, compelled to leave their present areas of evangelization, could work.
2. After mentioning brief visits to Senegal, Ivory Coast, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Zaire, Kenya and Uganda, Fr. Goossens went on to dwell at length on his impressions of Ethiopia (where he spent three weeks) and Mozambique (where he spent a fortnight).

ETHIOPIA

The first thing that strikes a visitor is the poverty--that and all the evidences of malnutrition. The ordinary people have been exploited by the feudal aristocracy for hundreds of years. It is difficult to know what the politics of the new military government (the DERG) are, socialist certainly and perhaps Maoist. Until the revolution missionaries were only admitted to the country as "experts" for human promotion. So far this policy has not been changed. 50% of the population is Coptic Orthodox but Islam is advancing from East to West. However vast/<sup>areas</sup> are inhabited by unevangelized animists. In Addis Ababa he visited the Nuncio, the Archbishop and various Catholic agencies, but concluded that there was no future for evangelization there. He then went on to the Vicariate of JIMMA in the south-west. The Lazarists have worked there for 20 years but have only about 9,000 Catholics in a population of three million. Little pastoral work is possible in the area, but schools, clinics and agricultural centres have been established. In another province of the Vicariate some Holy Spirit Fathers--from the former Biafra--were engaged in first evangelization among a people (800,000) who are animists. In another area Maryknoll Fathers were engaged in adult education, youth work and training of clergy.

The Prefecture of Awasa contains about a million people. The Comboniani (FSCJ) are working there and have met with a good response (10,000 Catholics in 10 years). Most of the people are animists and primary evangelization has a future. But there is a danger of using outdated methods. Among a tribe of nomads in the area 3 Holy Spirit Fathers are working. Some Consolata Fathers have begun vocational education in a Moslem area. There, some of the Orthodox clergy have asked for retraining facilities to be made available. The CICM's are opposed to taking over a whole area, preferring more limited and definite commitments. To this the Bishop has agreed.

A visit was also made to the Vicariate of Harrar which is a largely Moslem area with scarcely any opportunities for evangelization.

Fr. Goossens summed up mission priorities in Ethiopia as follows: (a) Animation in the ecumenical sense, of the local Coptic Church. Young men, specially trained, would be needed to do this; (b) Human promotion work as Christian testimony; (c) Primary evangelization among animists. All missionaries should learn Amharic and a regional language.

On account of the fighting going on in the northeastern part of the country (between Ethiopians and Eritreans) no visits to the area were allowed.

#### MOZAMBIQUE:

The Frelimo takeover of power will deprive the Church of all privileges and leave her free to build up a church based on community. Frelimo is socialist and looks to Tanzania and, to a lesser extent, China for inspiration. Some of the leaders are anti-Christian, but the most important figures seem to favour collaboration with the church. Bishop Vieira Pinto of Vila Cabral (expelled by the Portuguese) has returned and is a very popular figure. He has been elected President of the Episcopal Conference. Two Africans have been made bishops and this has created a good impression locally. The White Fathers (who left Mozambique in protest at the trend of events under Portuguese rule) will be returning shortly to the diocese of Beira, which has always been in the vanguard of animation and renewal.

Frelimo is doing its utmost to prepare the country for independence and to create national, patriotic consciousness. Their aim seems to be a multi-racial, socialist society. They have no illusions as to the difficulties that lie ahead. If the Church adopts a co-operative attitude the future for Church and State could be very promising. Some of the Portuguese clergy (not those belonging to international Institutes) seem reluctant, however, to make any effort to collaborate.

Mozambique has a population of nine (9) million of whom about 20% are Catholic. So there are many opportunities both for primary evangelization and development work of all kinds. The people as a whole feel good will towards the missionaries, particularly the White Fathers, the Picpus Fathers, the Comboniani and the Consolatas--and, of course, to the Sisters of all Institutes. The future of the Church is to a large extent in its own hands.

--L. Skelly, S.M.A.

## NEWS FROM AND FOR THE GENERALATES

## A LETTER FROM AN OLD FRIEND:

Dear Brother Charles Henry,

Greetings from the back of beyond. If you want to see where I am, you must look at a map that shows Lake Tanganyika and then go inland 60 km to the West from Moba--that is the former Beaudouinville. It is a very old mission station (1903) set in a valley where the ground mist rises to greet the morning sun and where the evening sky is a kaleidoscope of unimaginable colours and forms. Between morning and evening the temperature rises to 30°C. and at present there is enough breeze to stir the leaves but not the dust. It is indeed a far cry from the Via Aurelia and yet this letter will show you that I do not forget the good friends and their plans for the advancement of the kingdom.

I had a letter from Sister Jane in which she mentioned that she was expecting and looking forward to a visit from our dear Gottwald, so I gather that he resists the onslaught of the years and rises above the interminable fatigues--I trust you are doing the same and that the Roman scene is encouraging and that the new faces have brought new inspiration.

Since you have communities of Brothers in Zaire, you will be acquainted with the current questions, uncertainties and changes of policy and orientation. It is for me a testing ground of so many of our discussions: here, there is no difficulty in seeing the need for clearer ideas on "presence", "witness", "integrated evangelisation", "development", "initiatives" and so on that we used to discuss with each other in Rome. The difference lies in the context; it is a little easier to deal with problems when resources are so lacking that they are easily identifiable. Another difference lies in the community sphere: here we really do need each other not just to work but to live, and to hope. And as you know in the African milieu the charismatic individual may have his place but the witness that speaks loudest is the group united in sharing and planning and praying and being friendly. We have not reached that degree of perfection, but it is perhaps easier to keep it in mind here than there.

It does seem to me extraordinary that for so long so much confidence should have been placed on religious instructions in schools in general--I do not speak of schools such as your own where the convictions of the teachers might be taken for granted. There is sign of a break-through towards family education, towards appreciation of the laymen, towards the need for forming the local leaders of the communities, not just in a bit of knowledge but in Christian animation.

That animation: even on the side of the religious and of our Fathers there is a constant demand for it, and it has become almost a habit to expect it from superiors. There are undoubtedly some superiors who have what it takes, but they are few. In any case, after one month here, it seems to me that the problems are so varied and complex that the animation must come from the group: the wider the variety and the wider the scope of talent and experience, the better form of real animation may emerge. We are inevitably living through the last stages of the old "activity" "constructivitis" era, and there is a glimmering of a realisation that Christianity builds "people". It is of course difficult, especially for the older ones, to face the decline and even decay of so much that represents the lives of former missionaries both men and women. It is difficult to distinguish between what may be of value in the future if preserved, and what can profitably be abandoned. In this compound, I am told, there is one kilometre of roofing; in the past it was seminary and normal school and parish. How much can three men keep in condition for the sake of the Gospel and the people it is liberating. . .?

.../...

I said that I remember you often, and your colleagues men and women for whom I have great affection and esteem. I ask only a little remembrance before the Lord from time to time. I do not expect you to add an answer to this letter to your already over-full timetable. You have been and will remain an inspiration and encouragement for me.

With every good wish and greetings especially to Pablo,  
Frank Moody

(Mission Lusaka, B.P. 59 MOBA/SHABA,  
Rép. du Zaire, 8 April 1975)

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CONGRATULATIONS:

This year Brother Gerald Schnepf, S.M., celebrates the Golden Jubilee of his religious profession. Brother was for several years Treasurer of SEDOS and his shrewdness and wisdom contributed much to the organization. On behalf of all SEDOS member-Institutes we extend heartiest good wishes.

On the occasion of a Solemn Eucharist in honour of the occasion Fr. Tutas, the Superior General, had this to say:

"In the past 50 years, Brother Gerald has spoken often and long as a teacher, professor and administrator, but this has been especially true in the past few years as we moved from one meeting to the other in our effort to be of service to the Society throughout the world. We recognise the great value of the apostolate of administration: working with those who in turn work with others.

"This is the way I see our celebration of the Eucharist this afternoon. This is the way I understand what God is saying to us. All that we must do is be aware of His voice, of His loving call, and respond to it most heartily with great gratitude for all His goodness to us symbolized in the 50 wonderful years of Brother Gerald's life thus far in the Society of Mary. This celebration inspires us to pray with great confidence for the continued development of the religious vocation in the Church throughout the world."