

20 June 1975

75 n.22

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY -- AND HISTORY

As we mentioned last week, our General Assembly of 23 June will be of great importance for SEDOS. It will make history for us. So please study the Executive Committee Minutes and the Appendix, as the representatives of the Institutes will be expected to vote on the motions raised. How you vote will decide the future of SEDOS--and you, the Institutes, are SEDOS. Ballot papers containing the motions will be distributed at the Assembly.

To some extent the heading above is a play upon words, as our second item is concerned with history in the academic sense. The historical conspectus on the Church's record in reacting to the Signs of the Times is by the Editor himself. It is critical, and to some ~~it~~ it may seem abrasive, but the facts cannot be ignored. Our Catholic record is a mixed one and until lately depressing--but no longer, thank God.

The double article on Angola is very topical; some people there are reading the signs of the times.

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COMING EVENTS:

<u>GENERAL ASSEMBLY</u>	<u>23 JUNE 1975</u>	<u>4:00 p.m.</u>	<u>F.S.C. GENERALATE</u>
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ANNOUNCEMENT: Fr. L. Skelly, S.M.A., is resigning as Manager and Editor for health reasons.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee was held on June 12, 1975 at 1600 at the FSC's.

Present : Fr. Bouchard SJ, Sr. Danita McGonagle SSND, Sr. Godelieve Prové SCMM-M,  
Sr. Mary Motte FMM, Sr. Claire Rombouts ICM.

In the Chair: Bro. Ch. Buttimer FSC.

Secretary: Fr. B. Tonna.

1. The Minutes of the meeting of May 19 were taken as read and approved (75/450).
2. The period September - December 1975 were going to be crucial for SEDOS. Fr. Skelly had handed in his resignation to the President. Three options were spelled out:
  - a) adopt a holding pattern, retaining the rest of the present Staff (documentalist, receptionist, typist)
  - b) close down - temporarily or permanently
  - c) adopt one of the alternatives worked out according to the guidelines of the Executive Committee meeting of May 19 (75/452).
3. Option b) was discussed first. It was agreed that by closing down SEDOS permanently, an informal freedom and an opportunity for missionary sharing would be lost in Rome. Closing down temporarily would fatally jeopardize the documentation services.
4. The 5 alternatives (75/452) were then considered. Alternative 1 (Assembly, documentation, bulletin only) and 5 (all present services) were rejected. Alternative 3 (Assembly, Documentation, Bulletin, Adhoc meetings, working groups) was expanded to include Projects, without a full time coordinator (alternative 4) but with a generous contingency vote to cover extra typing and study contracts. This would bring down the membership fee by 25% to about 500,000 per year.
5. The Executive Committee, however, would like to know the mind of the Assembly about this. A vote would accordingly be taken on each of the current services in terms of what the evaluation exercise produced as regards their review. This would be spelled out in specific motions, to be given to the Assembly members before the meeting of June 23 (see appendix). These would be put to the vote before the break. The Executive Committee would meet during the break to review the situation and to present in a harmonized form the resulting combination of service.

6. The Staff situation was then reviewed. Prospects for candidatures for the post of Executive Secretary were good. Pending this appointment it was agreed to introduce the emerging alternative (combination of services) only on January 1, 76. Prior to this, present Staff would be retained after the necessary adjustments. Bro. Ch. Buttner would explain the details to them after the Assembly. Meanwhile Fr. Bano would be asked to act as Executive Secretary if no appointment for this post had been made by mid August.
7. The Executive Committee was informed that:
  - a) Mr. T. Waite's formation project - linked with the SEDOS Ongoing Formation project was being funded by an external source for 3 years.
  - b) CEUAM would be offering SEDOS a two week leadership programme in 1976. It will provide the Staff and the travel budget.
8. The Executive Committee would meet again on July 14, 1975 at 16.00 at the SEDOS Secretariat.

(FOR APPENDIX SEE OVER)

APPENDIX

Motion 1 : 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.

A. Does your Generalate want SEDOS to continue with its Assembly ? YES/ NO/ ABSTAIN

B. If yes, under which of the following forms suggested by the Evaluation exercise? TICK OFF APPROPRIATE BOX

- a) Once a year
  - half a day
  - one day
  - two days
  - more days
  - no preference
- b) Twice a year
  - half a day
  - one day
  - two days
  - more days
  - no preference
- c) Four times a year
  - half a day
  - one day
  - two days
  - more days
  - no preference

Motion 2 : DOCUMENTATION SERVICES : 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. At present, this costs SEDOS the salaries of a professional part timer and a full timer.

A. Would your Generalate want SEDOS to continue with the Documentation Services?

YES  
NO  
ABSTAIN

B. If yes

a) at present level ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  salaries)

YES / NO

b) at a reduced level

YES / NO

ABSTAIN

Motion 3 : 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.

A. Would your Generalate  
want SEDOS to continue  
with the Weekly bulletin?

YES  
NO  
ABSTAIN

B. If yes

a) once a week? YES/NO  
b) twice a month? YES/NO  
c) once a month? YES/NO  
ABSTAIN

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Motion 4 : 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.

Would your Generalate  
want SEDOS to continue  
with Ad hoc meetings?

YES  
NO  
ABSTAIN

**Motion 5 : 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.

Would your Generalate  
want SEDOS to continue  
with its Working Groups?

YES  
NO  
ABSTAIN

**Motion 6 : PROJECTS**

The December Assembly indicated areas of priority in following up on the Synod on Evangelization. These were translated into four Projects (Ongoing Formation, Signs of the Times, First Evangelization, Small Communities) which the March 75 Assembly approved.

Would your Generalate confirm the

- Ongoing Formation Project
- Signs of the Times Project
- First Evangelization
- Small Communities

YES/NO/ABSTAIN  
YES/NO/ABSTAIN  
YES/NO/ABSTAIN  
YES/NO/ABSTAIN

**Motion 7 : 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.

Would your Generalate want  
SEDOS to continue with Joint Venture?

YES  
NO  
ABSTAIN

PERCEIVING AND AVAILING OF "THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES": AN HISTORICAL CONSPECTUS L. Skelly SMA

It is said that all history is "slanted" so perhaps it is just as well for this writer to declare his point of view (or bias, if you like). He is an old-fashioned liberal trained in what is perhaps the most scientific school of history, the History Department of Cambridge. But he was a liberal in matters political and religious before ever he entered those hallowed halls, and what he studied of the heroic and foolish efforts of man merely confirmed him in his prejudices. What follows is written therefore from a definite viewpoint and if you do not share it you may interpret the facts differently. So having, so to speak, hoisted my colours I can plunge into my thesis.

It is encouraging to see that we Catholics are becoming aware of the necessity of detecting and making use of the "Signs of the Times". For too long the Catholic Church has been either shortsighted or blind in this regard. Or like Camute we have looked on the inevitable but refused to accept it. Or we have observed certain trends and seen only the threats they face us with, while not seeing the uses they could be put to. Worse still we have on occasion tried to reject the truth claiming that it conflicted with (our interpretation of) Divine Revelation.

Not that it was always so. The New Testament, at least in the form in which it has come down to us in the Canon, is in the koine Greek which was the most widely read language in the Roman Empire up to the sixth century. Without hesitation the Church began to use the philosophical concepts and language of its time to express and defend Christian truth. In some ways this was unfortunate as it tied the Church to variations of Platonic idealism and drew her away (at least in part) from the more concrete and down-to-earth language of the Bible itself. But the great Church Fathers realized that only in this way would Christianity penetrate into the intellectual circles of the day. And so the once-despised faith became intellectually respectable and a subject of much debate. The philosophical apparatus was also useful to the Church in defining the doctrines of the Church, as the Trinitarian and Christological disputes of the fourth to the sixth centuries were to show. But at the same time the Church did not canonize any particular school of philosophy and the Bishops of Rome often showed a testy impatience with the hair-splitting niceties of the more sophisticated East.

When it came to matters of liturgy variety of rites and languages was normal.. Greek was the most common language of worship (even in Rome for many centuries) but there were many others e.g. Syriac (related to the Aramaic of Jesus), Egyptian (later to become Coptic), and of course Latin in the Western part of the Roman world. But it could not be said that the Church totally adapted itself to the world. Though she adapted her system of dioceses to the Roman administrative pattern she would have no truck with attempts to "divinize" either the Emperor or the State itself. Hence the suspicion with which Christianity (like Judaism) was regarded and hence the persecutions. But in a world grown cynical about human "divinities" the persecutions became less and less acceptable to the educated classes. Hence when Constantine recognized Christianity he was in fact doing the prudent, politic thing - "if you can't beat them, join them". He himself was baptized only on his deathbed and it was not till the reign of Theodosius (near the end of the fourth century) that Christianity became the official religion of the Empire.



For the next three centuries and more Church and Empire were closely allied, indeed almost identified. The temptation to use Imperial power as its (religious) law enforcement agency was too strong for the Church to resist, and despite the semi-Arianism of Constantius and the attempted return to paganism by Julian the alliance persisted. But the balance tilted more and more in favour of Imperial power and the Emperors took it as their right (indeed their bounden duty) to direct the affairs of the Church, even to the point of summoning and presiding at Ecumenical Councils. The Church exalted the position of the emperor and did not protest when the latter arrogated to themselves titles such as "God's Vicegerent on Earth" and the "13th. Apostle". Indeed for many years the Popes and other bishops expected Imperial authority to suppress schism and heresy. They thought they were doing what was best for the Church for no one at the time could envisage the disappearance of the "eternal" Empire. But the alliance was an uneasy one and began to break down even before the barbarian peoples occupied the western provinces and parts of Italy itself. The sixth and seventh century Popes were still officially subjects of the Empire and owed allegiance to the Exarch of Ravenna but more and more they felt compelled to recognize that they had a duty to the peoples of the West, who were gradually being Christianized (or converted from Arianism, like the Goths). Gregory the Great and his successors saw the signs of the times and by creating their own state managed to assert a measure of independence.

This they found absolutely necessary since the Emperors in a vain effort to hold their eastern provinces together tended to compromise with heresy and then tried to compel the Popes to accept what suited imperial policy e.g. Semi-Monophysitism. But the Papal State was too weak on its own and we find the Popes of the mid-eight century turning for protection to the powerful Merovingian rulers of the Franks. When the greatest of that line, Charlemagne, began to treat the pope as little better than his personal chaplain and negotiated with Constantinople to obtain an imperial title, Pope Leo III, exercising a right he did not possess, created the Frankish King Roman Emperor. He thus ensured that the Carolingian family were dependent on the Papacy for their cherished imperial dignity. One unfortunate result was however that Charlemagne and his son, Louis the Pious, imposed the so-called Roman (Latin) Rite throughout their dominions and abolished liturgical variety in Western Europe.

During the ninth century the Papacy lost its powerful protector, for the Carolingian Empire was divided and subdivided, and chaos descended on Western Europe as the Norse and the Saracens raided it from end to end - including Rome, where the Saracens looted the Tomb of Saint Peter. This was the true "dark age", when it seemed as if society and with it the Church would crumble. It was due to the efforts of powerful individuals who restored a degree of royal centralism that "Europe" survived. It was only natural that the Church should support strong reforming kings, even if it meant involving the hierarchy in many of the tasks of government. For only in peace and order could the Church exercise her mission. And so she became part of the feudal system. Since bishops and abbots held high office in the system the kings and emperors demanded the right to appoint them. Gregory VII (Hildebrand) saw the danger of the Church being completely absorbed in the temporal order and the Investiture Contest was the consequence. He certainly detected the signs of the times. "I have loved justice (which for him meant the right order of values) and hated iniquity, hence I die in exile", were his last words. By and large the struggle of Gregory and his successors was successful. The independence of the Church and the priority of spiritual values were vindicated.

But, as so often happens, the Popes were too successful. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries they went on to assert their authority in the political domain. Gregory IX and Innocent IV succeeded in extirpating (literally) the proud Hohenstaufen dynasty and reducing Germany and Italy to a disorderly shambles, but succeeding Popes ran up against nascent national pride and were humbled by Philip the Fair of France and Edward I of England. It was not really a victory for despotic royal power however, since the monarchs in question were only expressing the national feeling of their subjects - particularly the growing class of wealthy and educated burghers. The fourteenth century kings were compelled to acknowledge the power of this emerging "middle class" which controlled the purse strings and hence could refuse "supply" i.e. of cash for wars etc. The same type of man was growing up within the structure of the Church, the professional theologian, canonist, classical scholar (sometimes all rolled into one), who was no longer prepared to accept the fiat of an autocrat Pope - especially since that autocrat was frequently a mockery of all that the successor of Peter should be, surrounded by a fawning court largely made up of relatives, and living in luxury, indeed often in open sin. The Avignon Papacy - bad, but not as bad as it is sometimes painted - and then the scandal of the Great Schism precipitated the Conciliar Movement but it would have developed in one shape or another anyway.

To a large extent it could be said that the Church had, by reading "the signs of the times" correctly, created the very class of people who were to trouble the rulers of Church and State during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Both institutions needed an educated class to man their increasingly complex administrations. It was the Church which created and encouraged the universities which sprang up all over the Continent during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. These poured out a stream of lawyers (in Canon and Civil Law), philosophers and theologians, who staffed the chancelleries of Popes, bishops, Emperors and Kings. Under Papal protection the cities of northern Italy in particular grew and prospered and their prosperity overflowed into the rest of Europe. And so there emerged the class of rich merchants and bankers, who became increasingly conscious of their importance to, and influence in, society at large. Popes, Emperors, Kings and lesser potentates found themselves increasingly dependent on these wealthy men to advance them loans for their wars and other (often building) projects. The business community played a large part in the financing of the Crusades, and indeed the Fourth Crusade was so dependent on the Venetians that it was diverted from its original purpose so as to attack Zara and Constantinople, the great commercial rivals of Venice! The so-called Albigensian Crusade was merely a pretext for impoverished barons from Northern France to seize the rich territories of the great County of Toulouse - and thus repay their debts and repair their fortunes.

And perhaps a short excursus on the result of the Crusades might not be out of place at this point. A creative dialogue between Christian and Moslem scholars had been developing, particularly in Spain and Sicily. The West, as we know, derived a great deal of its knowledge of Aristotle's works from Moslem sources. But the Crusades (and all, with the exception of that led by Emperor Frederick II, were backed by the Papacy) soured relations between the two great monotheistic faiths and created the climate of misunderstanding and suspicion, which we are only now beginning, very slowly, to overcome. What a misreading of the signs of the times!

The Conciliar Movement of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries sought to halt the centralizing, monarchical tendencies in the Papacy which had been developing since the pontificate of Gregory VII. This was not an isolated movement but corresponded with a general tendency in secular society at that time to make royal and aristocratic authority more responsive to the feelings and interests of the "lower" but wealthier orders. This was the period when Parliament was developing as a force to be reckoned with in England, and when movements of a somewhat similar nature, the Estates, were growing up in France, the Spanish kingdoms and the so-called Holy Roman (German) Empire. Popes, Emperors and Kings reacted by seeking to divide and subvert the forces opposed to their absolute authority, and by the end of the fifteenth Century absolutism in Church and State was triumphant - though only apparently and temporarily in England, where the Kings could use but not abolish Parliament. In the Church the Conciliar movement was dead and the chance of introducing the ideas of collegiality which eventually emerged in Vatican II was postponed for half a millenium. The Popes both within the Papal States and the Church as a whole slavishly imitated the absolute monarchs - whose absolutism involved a challenge (as Henry VIII and Charles V of Spain were to show) to the exercise of the Papal influence within their dominions. But the Popes failed to recognize this fact and looked fearfully inwards at anything which might challenge their absolutism within the Church organization.

It was for this reason that the initial stages of the Protestant Reformation were so clumsily and disastrously handled. Luther sought to reform the Church, not to break it up. There was little in his original propositions which many other serious Catholic theologians did not agree with at least in principle. But his challenge to Roman centralism and his appeal to Conciliar (really collegial) thinking was anathema to Leo X and his advisers. Dialogue was not seriously considered; complete submission was demanded. Even men like Thomas More (later to be martyred for his loyalty to the spiritual primacy of the Papacy) were horrified at the bungling way in which Luther was handled. And later opportunities to heal the split within the Church were just as badly - criminally? - used. Queen Elizabeth I is often condemned as a persecutor, which indeed she became but only after she had been publicly excommunicated and her subjects released from their oath of obedience to her - a release which the vast majority of her subjects, clerical as well as lay e.g. St. Edmund Campion, did not desire. The list of the misreadings of the signs of the times in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the sheer ineptitude with which matters were handled could be prolonged ad nauseam. The shade of Galileo will ever haunt us!

As far as missionary activity was concerned the initiatives of Ricci and de Nobili (which anticipated much of our present thinking on indigenization and the local Church) were eventually condemned. Whenever the Church was spread it was erected on a Western model liturgically, canonically and even artistically. In most areas the Church allied itself with the policies of the colonizing power (if it was Catholic) and there was no effort to establish a native hierarchy (even in South and Central America where the Church's record in opposing injustice was better than in most other areas). She was hesitant to condemn the institution of slavery, though she did protest against the worst excesses of the system. It was left to the English Evangelicals (the Clapham group of Wilberforce and his friends in particular) to awaken the conscience of Europe to the inherent wickedness involved in one man depriving another of his freedom and Christian dignity.

The Church ignored the scientific and philosophical advances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and we spent our time commenting obscurely on obscure commentators on St. Thomas (who was never obscure). Rome hitched her star to absolute monarchy in the eighteenth century at a time when it was tottering - but still a menace to the independent action of the Church. She refused to see what was good and honest in the writers of the Enlightenment and instead sought out their errors and condemned them extravagantly. When the French Revolution took place (supported by most of the lower clergy) the Papacy - after some hesitation - condemned the Civil Constitution of the Clergy outright instead of seeking a compromise. Had she sought cooperation with the National Assembly both France and the French Church might never have experienced the Terror, and Europe might have been spared the Revolutionary wars that followed. But the Church refused to see that the Ancien Regime had gone forever and that the tide of political liberalism was irreversible; so she latched on first to the rickety pseudo-stability of the Napoleonic Empire and then to the Restored Monarchy.

When de Lamennais tried in the 1830's to reconcile political liberalism and Christianity in "L'Avenir" he was (hesitantly, it must be confessed) condemned by Gregory XVI in Mirari Vos (1832). The efforts of Lacordaire and Montalambert in the mid-nineteenth century to achieve the same end were not condemned but neither were they encouraged. The enormous talents of Newman were ignored through the influence of the reactionary cabal around Pius IX. Now Newman is a prophet, then he was seen as a danger. The same was true of Acton the greatest historian of his day. Rosmini's fruitful ideas were condemned outright. Then there was the disaster of Quanta Cura and the Syllabus of Errors which condemned out of hand and without qualification the ideas of liberalism, progress etc. True, it meant to condemn the excesses - and how wise to do so - of these trends, to warn that these were not panaceas for the ills of the world, but the intention was not made clear. The impression was given that the Church had turned her back on the modern world.

This was further reinforced by the way in which the First Vatican Council was prepared for and conducted. Those known to be anti-infallibilist were as far as possible excluded from the Council, and even those known to be "inopportunist" i.e. those who considered the doctrine to be definable if placed within the context of collegiality, but who considered a definition inopportune at that particular time, were urged to keep silent. These included some of the most distinguished Catholics of the day including Newman, Acton and Bishop Dupanloup of Orleans. It was made clear even before the Council began that a "strong" isolated definition of Papal infallibility was expected of the Council by Pius IX. To be fair it must be admitted that cooler heads prevailed and that it was decided to define the papal prerogative in a very mild (even negative) way and set it within the framework of the infallibility of the Church as a whole. But as luck (and Pius, a benevolent and likeable man, seldom had luck on his side) would have it, the Council had to break up owing to the Italian assault on Rome soon after the definition of Papal infallibility and before the Fathers could go on to set it in a collegial context. The unfortunate impression was given that infallible teaching authority resided in the person of the Pope and him only. An attempt was made by the German Bishops to rectify this interpretation and Dupanloup protested against exaggerated claims made by some ultra-Montanist writers in France but to no real effect. The wrong impression had gained a hold among both Catholics and non-Catholics and it was not corrected by Pius IX or his successors. Indeed the way in which Pius X, Pius XI and Pius XII exercised their office had the effect of reinforcing the wrong and unhistorical interpretation of

the Vatican I definition. All decisions on doctrine, biblical interpretation, discipline and general Church policy were made in Rome - and often not by the Pope himself but by underlings in the Holy Office, the Biblical Commission, the Secretariat of State and other departments.

Then there was the fatal decision to hang on to the Papal States with the help of the adventurer Napoleon III. When he fell the Temporal Power did too. Pius IX rejected the Law of Guarantees (giving much the same as the Vatican State has today) and made himself the "prisoner of the Vatican". Leo XIII a shrewder and wiser man undid much of the damage done by his predecessor. He opened the Vatican Archives, made Newman a Cardinal and was accepted as a mediator in international disputes. He saw the evils of the Capitalist system and roundly condemned them in Rerum Novarum (1891). But he was also responsible for the attempt to give new life to Scholasticism and tie Catholic thought to one particular philosophical system - Neo-Thomism. The Biblical revival got under way under his auspices but when it seemed to get out of hand under his successor Pius X the latter panicked. Error there was but much fruitful research too. All was thrown together under the provocative name of Modernism and condemned - the baby was thrown out with the bathwater. A witch-hunt of "progressives" - even the future Pope John XXIII fell under suspicion - followed and went on till stopped by Benedict XV. But the damage was done. The Church had come to be associated in the mind of intellectuals (theologians and scripture scholars as well as scientists) with obscurantism. Indeed there was fear within the Church and little real scholarship emerged during the next thirty years - except on "safe" subjects.

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In the political arena the Church made its deal with Mussolini - and was cheated by him. The architect of that Lateran Pact was the then Secretary of State, Cardinal Pacelli. He learned nothing from his experience and made a Concordat with the Nazi regime which effectively killed the Centre (Catholic) Party, which was an obstacle to Hitler's plans to achieve complete power within Germany. Later an outdated style of Concordat was concluded by Pius XII (Pacelli) with the Francoist regime in Spain and the equally authoritarian government of Portugal. No doubt Pius' aim was to preserve the existence of the Church in these countries and exercise as beneficial an influence as possible, but in the process the Church imperceptibly lost her right to be a prophetic and protesting voice.

Since Vatican II Catholic authors have written some wonderful works on the rightness and benefits of the ecumenical movement. One would almost think we had invented the ideal. But in fact, outside the Malines conversations between Cardinal Mercier and Lord Halifax in the twenties, the Catholic Church made no contribution to the movement during the first century of its existence. In fact the *Ne Temere* decree completely soured relations between the Catholic Church and the other Christian Churches on the issue of inter-Church marriage at a time when unity in the face of atheism, secularism and hedonism was so much needed. The idea of the Church as being a great monolith, which could resist all storms but was itself impervious to change, was born at Vatican I and fed on itself. The odd thing was that not only did its members come to respect and admire this image of the Church but even some outsiders did too, seeing the "mass-concrete" Church as a bulwark against Communism, moral relativism etc. But in fact the Church was becoming more and more irrelevant to the world and the tide of history. The Chester-Belloc school of thought put the best construction on the situation, but though admired as writers they were too obviously apologists to have lasting effect. Brilliant men like Maritain and Gilson gave their authority and prestige to Neo-Thomism (how he would have protested at the thought of being dragged by the hair of the head into the age of technology) ignoring or denigrating the fruitful themes to be found in existentialism, personalism and linguistic analysis. More and more the impregnable fortress idea was

built up, but the garrison seldom if ever sallied forth to do battle with the imagined "enemy". The thought of talking to him was not even considered. It was better to ignore him and credit him with either malice or invincible ignorance.

No wonder Pope John felt he had to throw the windows of the Church open and let in the fresh air - and the Spirit - for not even the horrors that accompanied the Second World War had shaken the complacency of the Church establishment, lay as well as clerical. As if reading the signs of the times Pius XII encouraged Christian Democracy in Europe and condemned Communism as a totalitarian system degrading to human dignity. The totalitarianism of the Right in Spain, Portugal and Argentina were not referred to, so long as they did not interfere with the functioning of the Church. The Church bureaucracy behaved as if it was above criticism and invoking papal authority imposed - or at least tried to impose - on the faithful a rigid conformism in matters of doctrine and moral standards. The principle of subsidiarity was propounded in several papal documents but the Curia concentrated all power within the Church in itself. Any sign of independent thinking on the part of local hierarchies was swiftly smothered. Any departure from "accepted" teaching or writing on the part of scholars was condemned (secretly if at all possible). So the writings of Teilhard de Chardin and de Lubac were banned or censored.

But the lid could not be kept on the boiling pot forever. On the death of Pius XII Cardinal Roncalli, an elderly shrewd, holy but apparently "safe" man was elected Pope. It was suggested at the time that he was to be an interim incumbent who could be relied on not to rock the barque of Peter. Most of the College of Cardinals were probably unaware of his early history and the doubts which had almost, but not quite, labelled him as a Modernist. To describe him as a widely travelled, worldly wise "old-fashioned liberal" would probably not be far wrong. Even when he declared his intention of calling an Ecumenical Council many thought it was just an old man's fancy and that he would easily be persuaded to rubber-stamp definitions and condemnations drawn up by the Curial officials. Though he did his utmost to make it clear that this was to be a truly open Council, open not only to all schools of Catholic thought but to the world, few believed him. The Curia prepared its scholastically framed schemata and confidently presented them to what they expected to be a well-disciplined Council of Fathers. But the latter, who had been doing their homework, conscientiously advised by experts until then held in some suspicion e.g. Rahner, Ratzinger, Danielou, Murray, either totally rejected what was placed before them to approve or else altered the documents beyond recognition. And, what was worse, to the obvious relish of the aged Pontiff. The documents which eventually emerged from Vatican II are not all of equal quality but they did show that the Church was looking appraisingly at the world in which she found herself and recognizing the good that was to be found there. The idea of the impregnable fortress surrounded on all sides by hostile forces was abandoned, and the Church opened her arms and her heart to humanity. Without indulging in antiquarianism she went back to her sources of inspiration in Scripture and ancient practice to restate her identity as the People of God, to rejuvenate her liturgy, to recognize philosophical and theological pluralism in the formulation of Christian truth, to admit previous faults and failings, to accept wholeheartedly the "ecclesial" reality of other Christian bodies and to declare the virtues and values inherent in non-Christian religions. All that and much more besides. It was not a revolt - as Cardinal Ottaviani and his sumpathizers said - but a genuine revolution. But a revolution with a difference, for it was an attempt by a great institution (viewing the Church purely in its human aspect) to rediscover its fundamentals and deepest values and place these before the world - a world it no longer feared but embraced.

Of course revolution is always accompanied by excesses which in turn provoke reaction. We have seen the excesses - efforts to stress one aspect of Christian re-discovery to the detriment of others. There is always an over-enthusiastic advance guard which can so easily become a lunatic fringe. But the behaviour of a small - if noisy - clique should not be used to turn back the tide of genuine advance.

If history teaches us one thing it is this: that fear of the dangers inherent in any situation or current of thought must never be allowed to determine the Church's assessment of the favourable potentialities that may lie dormant in those situations or currents. The Church, if it really believes itself to be the presence of Christ in this world, must never approach the world He redeemed in a spirit of fear. For He took all that was human unto Himself and divinized it. And perhaps there is another lesson we could all learn. The Church is human as Christ himself was, that human element will never disappear. Being human she will often be disappointed. It was Chesterton (I think) who said that the Church must be of divine origin, as any purely human institution engaged with such rogues and ineptitude would have perished within a generation. A typical Chestertonian exaggeration, perhaps, but we could well remember that we are either discouraged or in a Utopian mood.

Let us be prepared to admit and learn from our mistakes. When Leo XIII decided to open the Vatican Archives a horrified official protested that all the scandals of the past would be revealed. The Pope, it is said, smiled scornfully and retorted, "If you had your way you would be able to wipe Peter's denial of Christ from the Gospels!" But to learn from the mistakes which we know of them, which in turn assures that we know our history as it happened and not as a triumphalist version of it. It is amazing - or is it? - how so many theologians of the present day can write, as it were, in an historical vacuum, lacking a sense of perspective and pointing the errors and half-truths of the past. What makes the case worse is that they regard their own traditional opponents of being ahistorical, scholastic and immobilist. If we have an historical sense then we will also have a sense of proportion. We will realize that the Church is always making a new beginning, that we have witnessed many "Reformations" and many falls from grace; that the Church is still very young, having existed for a mere 2000 out of the 3 million years of human existence. We are only beginning to plumb the depths of Christ's revelation and only hazily aware of what is revealed to us in man's strivings towards the God he may not know of. There will be many "signs of the times" to be observed and interpreted. It needs the help of the Spirit to detect them, but we must also learn from the experiences of the past. Let such lessons should not be an encouragement to hesitation but a spur to action.

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"Close corporations are proverbially inaccessible to new ideas, and blind to new facts: they are averse to any enlargement of mind from without, and..."

J.B. Hazelley

DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

A meeting of the above group was held at 4:00 p.m. on 4 June 1975 at SEDOS Secretariat.

<u>Present:</u> Sr. M. Motte	F.M.M.	Sr. D. McGonagle	S.S.N.D.
Bro. V. Gottwald	F.S.C.	Fr. C. Ruhling	S.V.D.
Sr. J. Burke	S.N.D.N.		

For SEDOS: Fr. L. Skelly, S.M.A. (Secretary)

Chairman: Sr. Danita McGonagle, S.S.N.D.

1. The minutes of the previous meeting were taken as read.
2. Fr. Skelly then gave a short analysis of the replies to the questionnaires received so far. They were in all: four from Guatemala, five from Thailand and one from the Cameroon (see Appendix). It was decided that a letter of acknowledgement and thanks should be sent to the respondents by the Secretariat. From the replies received it was clear that the questionnaire needed to be made more explicit if the information the Group needed was to be obtained. It was therefore decided that after the replies had been studied in greater depth the questionnaire would be re-drafted.
3. Bro. Gottwald suggested that since Cor Unum was attempting to integrate human promotion and evangelization in specific areas in cooperation with Episcopal Conferences and other agencies, the Working Group should establish liaison with that organization so as to ensure that the interests and expertise of our Institutes were represented in Cor Unum thinking and planning. In the coming year Cor Unum would be concentrating on the Philippines and one other country (possibly Peru or an African country). Could we not cooperate?  
 Sr. Joan and Sr. Mary pointed out that our objectives and those of Cor Unum were very different, as we were primarily interested in the interplay of Christian and indigenous human values. We could, and perhaps should, study the same countries as Cor Unum but our work should remain distinct. Our researches and conclusions could, of course, be transmitted to Cor Unum. The meeting was in general agreement with this approach.
4. The questionnaire replies were distributed to members of the Group for more thorough study. From this study it was hoped that a better model for a more precise questionnaire would emerge. Meanwhile the Secretariat and the members of the Group would obtain addresses of members of Sedos Institutes working in the Philippines.

The group decided to meet again on 12 June at 10:00 a.m.



DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP: APPENDIXA VERY GENERAL REVIEW OF REPLIES FROM GUATEMALA, CAMEROON AND THAILANDGUATEMALA:

Three of the four replies concentrate on socio-economic values i.e. that the people are concerned most of all with obtaining the necessary means of subsistence, with health matters and with obtaining a better life for their children. Where a community sense is built up (San Lucas, Tolman, Solola, there is less fatalism and the rebirth of a sense of achievement. In other words human promotion must be stressed alongside "pure evangelization".

The fourth reply has a more religious tone (Residencia Universitaria La Salle), while not neglecting the human promotion aspect. It stresses the profound religious feelings of the people, their respect for the clergy and an almost exaggerated confidence in Providence. It urges a reformation of forms of catechesis and of the local clergy.

CAMEROON:

Only one reply (Okola). It underlines the desire of the people for a better and healthier life and for educational opportunities for their children. 95% are nominal Catholics. The greatest threat comes from the Spiritual or Messianic Churches. There is also a tendency to turn to fetishism in times of trouble. Christian communities must be built up and leaders for these communities trained. Catechesis of a more realistic nature is very necessary.

THAILAND:

We had five replies and a short article. In general the replies tend to converge (with one exception). The people are concerned with a decent standard of living and good educational opportunities for their children. But they have also a strong sense of human dignity and wish to assert their freedom in all directions. These desires could be utilized and directed towards Christian ends--true freedom as children of God, who also have a responsibility for their fellowman.

The one exception comes from a leper's village. The concern of these people is to survive, recover and earn a living. They are very, very poor and scarcely realize what it is to be a Christian. They must be helped to achieve a greater awareness of their human dignity and to create a better life for themselves by cooperation e.g. Credit Unions.

ANGOLAI. FIRST MEETING OF AFRICAN PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS IN ANGOLA

The Catholic weekly "O Apostolado", issued in Luanda, capital of Angola, has published the final communiqué of the meeting of African priests and religious of Angola, which was held last March to discuss their essential role in the work of evangelization. In their two-fold role, as children of the country and corresponsable agents for the building of the Local Church, the participants pointed out that the Angolese people are essentially believing, but that their religious formation is insufficient. The African priests and religious, who have received the cultural values, which no doubt are necessary for the clergy, have been isolated from the people, ignoring its mentality, problems and psychology. The study of the Angolese socio-cultural reality has made the Church face the problem of its real incarnation in present day society. In the light of these considerations, the assembly has asked:

1. of the bishops:

- its own hierarchy, chosen from among the children of the country. The People of God, African in majority, know that the African priests, though small in number, are at the service of the people and entirely devoted to it.
- that the episcopal conference consult the people before taking decisions. With this in view they asked for the immediate creation of a commission of priests, religious and lay people, which will propose schemes of matters to be discussed. Thus the bishops will be better informed of the Angolese reality.
- the necessary Africanisation of the diocesan organisations by an effective presence of indigenous people.
- the immediate creation of an inter-diocesan commission for the restructuring of the studies and the formation in seminaries and religious houses.
- that the delimitation of the dioceses be dictated by pastoral imperatives and socio-linguistic realities and not by bureaucratic motives.

2. of the missionaries:

- that the foreign missionaries, whose presence and work are appreciated, show a total availability towards the local Church; that is to say: to serve but not obtrude themselves, to work for the good of the Church and not for the glory of their community of origin, to take account of the point of view of the indigenous clergy and religious.

3. of the Government and liberation movements:

- that the Government and the liberation movements recognise the juridical personality of the churches of Angola; that religious freedom and freedom of education be assured.
- that man has precedence to the economy, which must be at the service of the people, and that therefore greater attention be paid to the people of the rural regions inland.
- on account of the sacred character of the priestly work the enrolment of priests in any of the liberation movements seems inopportune. As sons of the nation, they are at the service of all without exception.

4. Of the Angolese people:

--"We belong to the people and are at the service of the people, as we have been ordered by Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us forget the past and the mistakes made. We want to break with a mentality formed by complexes of superiority, inferiority or passivity. We ask you, Angolese brothers and sisters for the same effort. The real incarnation of the Church asks for the collaboration of all people of good will."

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II. HOLY GHOST MISSIONARIES DRAW UP A SURVEY

Very Rev. Father Francis Timmermans, Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers recently passed a two and a half month stay in Angola, during which he visited all the missions entrusted to his Congregation so as to get acquainted with the apostolic activities and the present day problems.

At the end of his visit, he presided over a meeting in which, together with the superiors of the Holy Ghost Fathers, he analysed and rethought the pastoral work in Angola. After having drawn up a survey on the activities of the Congregation, a communiqué was published. The analysis of the positive and negative elements of this study has made it possible to fix lines of conduct which must lead to a missionary renewal and to the rapid autonomy of the local Church, as required by the socio-political situation of the country.. The following are in short the main points of the communiqué:

- Considering the past it was observed that the missionary action has had its limits and its deficiencies.
- The fact that the Angolese clergy clearly shows its concern for the future of the Church as well as its ability to answer positively to the demands of the present situation, must be considered and interpreted as a sign of hope.
- It is clear that the foreign missionary must pass from his condition of "leader and main man in charge" to the role of auxiliary and deputy.
- It is our intention to start in the course of this very year a noviciate of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers in Angola. The noviciate will be run by African Holy Ghost Fathers and the formation will be adapted to the mentality of the Angolan people.

In its conclusion, the communiqué reminds the missionaries of the fact that any change of what is loved, of what one has created and has seen develop, implies a great spirit of mortification. The missionary must remember that the motive of his presence must be the creation and formation of the Local Church and that the present sacrifice is a step forward in that direction. Like St. John the Baptist, the precursor of Christ, the missionary must work for the good of the local Church and not for the prestige of his Congregation.

--D.I.A.

LISTS OF PERIODICALS RECEIVED DURING MAY compiled by Sr. Agnetta, SSps

## I. EXTERNAL MAGAZINES

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
Nos. 37 & 38	Action, Aktion, Accion, Action
Nos. 1848-1852	Agenzia Internazionale FIDES Informazioni
Vol. 16, No. 10	Al-Mushir (The Counselor)
No. 10-12	
Vol. 11, No. 1	BIT Informations
No. 44	Bulletin du Centre de Documentation OICE
Vol. 4, No. 4	The Catalyst
Vol. 3, No. 4	CEM Mondialità
No. 1, 1975	Centro Pro Unione
Nos. 21-26	Circulars (USG)
Nos. 204-246	Documentation for and about Africa
Nos. 1675 & 1676	La Documentation Catholique
No. 2, 1975	Edumenisk Orientering - Aktuell
No. 1, 1975	Ekumenisk Orientering - Mission and Evangelism
No. 9	FAEC Newsletter
Nos. 3 & 4	Facts
Nos. 7-8	Filmis
Nos. 68	ICVA News
Vol. 10, No. 5	Impact (P.I.)
No. 5	Informatiedienst
Winter/Spring	Information Bulletin (Multimedia International)
No. 1 & Spec.No.	INTERKONKOM
Vol. 64, No. 254	International Review of Missions
No. 23	Letters from Asia
No. 100	Mani Tese
No. 55	Mani Tese Press
May	MARC Newsletter
No. 115	Mensaje Iberoamericano
No. 262	Messages du SecOurS Catholique
No. 3	Migration News
No. 1	Migrations dans le monde
No. 43	MISEREOR Aktuell
No. 45	Mission Intercom
March-April	Missions Etrangères
Nos. 75 & 76	Le Mois à l'Unesco
No. 4/5	A Monthly Letter About Evangelism
Vol. 4, No. 4	New Frontiers in Education
May	News Notes (AFPRO)
Vol. 7, Nos. 13-15	One Spirit
Solidaires and	Peuples du Monde
Nos. 81 & 82	
No. 60	Prudentes
Vol. 21, No. 3	Religion and Society
Nos. 17 - 20	Ruhr Wort

## EXTERNAL PERIODICALS continued:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
February	South African Outlook
Nos. 7034-7036	The Tablet
No. 35 (French) and No. 33 (English)	UISG
Nos. 51 & 52	Wereldwijd
March	World Vision

## II. INTERNAL PERIODICALS

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
Nos. 230 & 231	AIMIS (FSCJ et al.)
No. 5, 1975	ANS (SDB)
No. 5	Chronica (CICM)
No. 4	CITOC (OCarm)
No. 3	CMM News
No. 76	Communications (SM)
No. 54	CSSP Newsletter
March & April	Da Casa Madre
No. 85	Echos de la rue du Bac (MEP)
Vol. 8, No. 4	Euntes (CICM)
No. 288	Famiglia Comboniana (FSCJ)
No. 4	Fede e Civilit� (SX)
No. 25	FMM Information Service
No. 2	Giuseppe Allemano (IMC)
No. 4	Hello? Frascati! (SA)
Voorjahr	Mededelingen, Medische, Missiezusters (SCMM-M)
No. 16	Missionari Saveriani (SX)
No. 5 and 7	Missioni Consolata (IMC)
Nos. 4-8	Amico (Supplement to the above)
May	Missioni OMI
No. 10	Mondo e Missione (PIME)
No. 5	MSC General Bulletin
Nos. 166 & 167	Mundo Negro (FSCJ)
No. 9	Nigrizia (FSCJ)
No. 4	Notiziario Cappuccino (OFMCap)
No. 58	OMI Documentation
Vol. 5, No. 2	Information (RSCJ)
No. 5	Orientamenti Giovanili Missionari (SX)
No. 661	Petit Echo (PA)
No. 7	Piccolo Missionario (FSCJ)
No. 18	Roman Bulletin (SCMM-T)
May	SECOLI (FSC)
Vol. 3, No. 2	SJ News and Features
No. 80	SMM Intercontinent (SCMM-M)
Vol. 7, No. 3	SSpS Information Service
Vol. 15, Nos. 1-4	Verbum SVD
Nos. 1-2	Vincentiana
1975	The Word in the World (SVD)

## INTERNAL PERIODICALS continued:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Name of Periodical</u>
No. 137	World Parish
New Year 1975	Jesuit Missions (SJ)

Other SJ periodicals received during May:

Nos. 6 & 7, 1973/74; 5 & 6, 1975	Route de Lumiere
No. 1, 1975	Lumière du Monde
Vol. 21, Nov. 1974; Vol. 22, Jan. 1975	Apostolic Union Monthly Letter
August and December 1974	The Clergy Monthly
Nos. 101 & 102, 1974	Kateri
Nos. 6-12, 1974; Nos. 1-4, 1975	Gentes
Nos. 151 & 152	Chine-Madagascar
Nos. 1 & 2	Die katholischen Missionen
June & July, Nov. & Dec., 1974; Mar. & April, 1975	Popoli e Missioni

## BOOKS RECEIVED DURING APRIL AND MAY compiled by Sr. Agnetta, SSpS

I. Internal Books

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Institute</u>	<u>Title of Book</u> (number of pages in brackets)
3.98	MM	Sixth General Chapter Chronicle, Vols. I to III. (195)
3.99	SX	Notiziario Saveriano 1974. (376)
3.100	SCHM-T	Register of Professed Sisters, Aspirant Sisters, Novices and Postulants as of January 1, 1975. (132)
3.101	IMC	Annuario 1975. (286)

II. External Books

<u>Code No.</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Title of Book</u> (number of pages in brackets)
6.404	Università Gregoriana Editrice	Evangelisation, edited by M. Dhavamony, SJ. (404)
6.439	Centro pro Unione, Rome	Ecumenism around the World. (169)
6.440	Penguin Books, Ltd. England	Mozambique: Memoirs of a Revolution, by John Paul. (229)
6.441	Centrum Missiologicum, Rome	Théologie Missionnaire, Vol. 3: Salut et Religions de la Gentilité, by Andre Seumois, OMI. (220)