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This issue presents the final set of preparatory papers for the General Assembly. We have also included the list of panelists for each of the three topics and the three questions to be discussed by the panelists and by the participants. We look forward to a stimulating exchange of views at the 51st General Assembly.

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Coming Events

- 20 May Registration Slips for General Assembly due in at Secretariat
- 23 May Executive Committee Meeting at SEDOS - 4pm.
- *** 30 May 9am - 6.30pm. GENERAL ASSEMBLY - Generalate F.S.C.

We have just received the sad news of the death of
 Father James Lozé, sj,
 in a traffic accident on Tuesday. On behalf of the Executive Committee, the Secretariat staff and all the Sedos members, we wish to extend our prayers & condolences to Father Lozé's family and his Jesuit confrères. May Father Lozé now enjoy the reward of his dedicated work to extend the Kingdom of Christ on earth.

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SEDOS - SERVIZIO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE E STUDI

51st GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF SEDOS - MAY 1977

LIST OF PANELISTS

Theme: "NEW INSERTIONS FOR EVANGELIZATION IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES WHERE ..."

Panel " ... THERE IS STRONG MARXIST INFLUENCE"
One

Moderator: Fr. Vincenzo D'ASCENZI, sj

Panelists: Bro. Pablo BASTERECHEA, fsc
Fr. Joseph GROSSE, cssp
Sr. Kordia PUSKELY, ssnd

Panel " ... THE ROLE OF WOMEN IS CHANGING"
Two

Moderator: Fr. Frans TIMMERMANS, cssp

Panelists: Fr. John BLEWETT, sj
Miss Rosemary GOLDIE
Sr. Ludovic MARIE-MARC, fs

Panel " ... THERE IS CHURCH/STATE CONFLICT OVER HUMAN RIGHTS"
Three

Moderator: Fr. John FARREN, op

Panelists: Fr. Oliver KENNEDY, ssc
Fr. Robert RUSH, sj
Sr. Josephine WALL, snd-n
Fr. Albano de WALLAU, msf

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE PANELS

PANEL ONE - " ... where there is a strong Marxist influence"

Question

One

- In most of the Marxist countries religious are not allowed to live a community life with their fellow religious. However, they have to live the Spirit of the Institute, be moved by the charism of the Congregation and keep some link with their companions.
- There is an urgent need to deepen the real meaning of community. This is more a communication, a sharing in mission, in resources in life than merely living together.

How do we form young religious for this community living which involves:

- . better human relationships,
- . better communications, even from a distance,
- . real sharing, not limited to members and the living conditions of the community,
- . openness, sharing more in the conditions of the ordinary man, foregoing privileges?

* * *

Question

Two

- Aware today of the widespread influence of Marxism and of its rapid growth in areas where the political systems are changing,
- aware of the pugnacious type of atheism which often characterizes Marxism,

How do we live the Gospel message of bringing justice, peace and love to the world?

In the face of this challenge, do we give way to fear, discouragement, self-defence or collaboration?

* * *

Question

Three

- We have seen that in several countries, as soon as Marxism came to power, there has been a period of confrontation between the Church and the State.
- Most religious have not been prepared for such a situation: they had no objective knowledge of Marxism, and with generosity but without discernment they took decisions which they regretted afterwards.

What then should be the intellectual and psychological training we should give to those who have to face such a situation?

Questions for discussion by the panels - cont'd

PANEL TWO - " ... where the role of women is changing"

Question

One

- . What do we learn from the fact that wherever there is
- . revolution or liberation struggle, or strong Marxist
- . influence, the role of women is changing much more
- . rapidly than in other societies?

Question

Two

- . When planning new missionary insertions, what place
- . does the "role of women in evangelization" have in
- . our consideration, motivations, evaluations and scheme
- . of priorities?

Question

Three

- . Has the study of the changing situation of women in
- . developing society and of the missionary response to
- . this new situation a place in the formation programme
- . of our candidates for the religious and missionary
- . life? (In men's and women's institutes)
- . And in our on-going formation programmes?
- . If yes, does it perhaps need updating?
- . If not, why not, and how can this gap be filled?

Three questions for the panel: NEW INSERTIONS FOR EVANGELIZATION
WHERE THERE IS CHURCH/STATE CONFLICT OVER HUMAN RIGHTS.

PANEL
THREE:

- 1) In places where there is Church/State conflict over human rights what is the necessity of relating insertions for evangelization to the conflict situation and how is this relation realized?

Points for reflection:

- the newness of new insertions
- identifying the need for change now
- necessity of self-evangelization
- the recognition that the basic calls of the Church have to be supple/dynamic
- the need to create an awareness of the universal Church in the local community

- 2) In such situations how can it be brought about that the reality of the Church be lived in such a way that it will not be vulnerable to the point of control, manipulation, etc., by a totalitarian state?

Points for reflection:

- how to bring about a more immediate awareness of the relation between the Church and the daily life of the people
- the immediacy of the Gospel
- community and solidarity
- provoking creativity for new modes of insertion
- how to bring about an awareness that will relate faith to the political areas
- the need for mechanisms which are different from the one we generally use

- 4) In places where human rights are oppressed, whose task is it to:
- a) bring about an awareness of the needs for ministries in these situations;
 - b) develop these ministries;
 - c) perform the actual ministries that will bring about an alleviation of the oppressive situation?

Points for reflection:

- need to reinforce the legitimacy of lay ministries/ministers
- clearer delineation of the multiple vocations in the Church
- need to change our concept of vocation
- need to/how to create an awareness among the people about their needs
- the reality/possibility of deportation of missionaries.
- new awareness/understanding about lay ministries.

In Preparation for the General Assembly:

NEW INSERTIONS IN DEVELOPING SOCIETIES
WHERE THE ROLE OF WOMEN IS CHANGING

The Sedos ad hoc working group found in themselves and in others a certain hesitancy to get involved in this topic, based partly on their unfamiliarity with it, partly on questioning the relevancy of it in terms of evangelization. The following pages therefore rely totally on documentation. Far from giving an overview of the changing situation of women in different developing societies, it attempts to throw spotlights on a few general situations, and on certain countries, in order to set the scene for further exploration, reflection and exchange at the General Assembly.

From this first attempt to gather material on the changing role of women in society and the impact of this change on the Church and on Evangelization, it has become clear already that the questions raised by this subject are in more than one way related and therefore relevant to the two other topics of the General Assembly: the implications of Marxist influence and of Church/State conflict over human rights for future evangelization.

CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPING SOCIETY

Women in Western Society

In the foreword of the PRO MUNDI VITA BULLETIN entitled: "Women, the Women's Movement and the Future of the Church", the changing situation of women in society is referred to as "one of the most serious changes affecting humankind".¹

The bulletin distinguishes two kinds of feminism: "Its evolution in fact can be seen to fall into two stages. The first stage, lasting up to just after the last World War, was the effort of women to get into male society; the second, the stage we are now in, is that of the critical rejection of this men's society and the aspiration towards another society, in which man and woman would be partners and would work together to establish mutual bonds after a new model, a model that has yet to be invented as it is nowhere to be found. . . Talk about women's liberation. . . has not the same meaning today as it had formerly. Formerly it meant granting to women the same rights as men, but today it means recognizing their responsibility for creating a freer society not only for women but for everybody."²

Under the heading: "What is rejected and what is sought," the bulletin lists: i) Whilst not rejecting outright their role of wife,

but refusing to be reduced simply to that, (a) women no longer accept being considered as persons in the full sense only if they are married. They think that an unmarried woman is fully a person . . . (b) Nor do they think that a widow must necessarily remarry in order to be a person. (c) They no longer see their fathers or their parents choosing husbands for them. . . (d) They no longer imagine, or at least less and less do they imagine, that once they are married they are at the service of their husband. . . For them a married woman is not subordinate to but rather associated with her husband. (e) . . . They demand a person-to-person communication which leaves to each of the partners autonomy of thought and responsibility for personal maturation. . . (f) Although they aspire to a love that will last for good, they consider that a persistent failure in communication ought to be jointly and plainly acknowledged, even by divorce if the failure is without remedy. (g) For them too, a divorced woman, since she is a complete person and not reduced to her past role of wife, can remarry (or not). . . (h) For them, finally, a woman can even be a mother whilst not being a wife, without her being ostracized from society. . .

ii) While not rejecting outright their role of mother, but refusing to be reduced to just that, the women we are allowing to speak think (a) that a person is not defined by maternity any more than by paternity. . . (b) They reject the idea of motherhood as the automatic result of being a wife: maternity seems to them to be a distinct choice. (c) They refuse to have maternity imposed on them as just a fate connected with their sex, which hands them over to the will of a man, even if he be the husband. (d) Refusing enforced maternity. . . they look upon contraception as a moral duty. (e) Thinking themselves to be, in the last analysis, the only ones really qualified to decide to be mothers, in so far as they are autonomous and responsible persons, they consider that in the present state of our lack of knowledge abortion can be, in certain cases, a lesser evil than forced maternity." 3

The bulletin agrees with those who think that some of these ideas are excessive. "But it would be wrong to confuse the women's movement with these extremes and to shirk making an effort at an understanding in depth by a shrug of the shoulders in the face of expressions that tend to shock. Behind the worse excesses and beyond the most reasonable claims, an exceedingly serious agitation is seeking a way forward: nothing less than a new kind of humanity is being prepared. . ." 4

Women in developing societies

If the enormous amount of literature that is now coming from the research institutes, UN, and Government research centres is any indication, it would be fairly correct to say that if development really means anything, it is development for men at the expense of women. The disadvantaged position that women are occupying in the development process is becoming clearer and clearer, for many, many reasons.⁵

Development projects, even when touching on activities in which women already are engaged rarely provide services or training to women: Western assumptions about proper sex roles dictate that men receive the new training, new seeds or new loans. Thus, access to the modern sector, whether in agriculture or industry, draws men away from the household and

often even from their land, and this gives women additional tasks that formerly were men's work.⁶

Furthermore development has so disrupted the traditional balance within the family structure that more and more women are finding it expedient or necessary to raise their families alone. One out of every three households around the world is now de facto headed by a woman.

What factors have contributed to this sad state of affairs?

1. perhaps the major fallacy has been the stereotype of appropriate roles for men and women in a modern society that has been taught in Western colleges and universities popularized through American and European movies, and exported along with development aid. . . . It is this stereotype which leads to unfair planning.⁷

2. the feminine sector in economic and social development is largely outside the market economy, in which both the local elite and the Western officials are primarily interested. The ILO survey of employment in Kenya, notes that while 40% of the women were listed as employed, a broader definition of labour force would include 90% of the women. It is the work of the 50% which is hard to tabulate, and consequently too often ignored.⁸

Traditionally, in many societies men and women, young and old, all contributed in some respect to taking care of the children and providing the means of subsistence for the family unit. Although their roles vary from culture to culture, both men and women in subsistence societies have dual functions: they both have family as well as economic roles. These functions have been separated in economic planning.

3. new technologies seldom benefit women. Tendency has been for technology to be placed in the hands of men. Reinforcing the stereotype that it is more important for men to understand the new technology has been the fact that everywhere women are more likely to be illiterate, secondly the problem of availability of credit for women is a widespread difficulty.⁹

4. the disabilities of women of the third world are too great for them to exert beneficial social pressure for changes in policy.¹⁰

Just one example of a common development program that has had a negative impact on women's situation and on the family structure is the introduction of cash crops leaving the women without the men's assistance in the growing of subsistence crops, and giving men alone access to money. While undoubtedly many gave money to their wives to assist with the children, many others found alternative uses for their earnings, especially drinking.

More recent evidence notes the pressure of men to have the women not only continue the subsistence activities, but to take up additional cash crops. Result: less land for food, more work, poorer nutrition.¹¹

At a further stage of development, when families gradually change over to use part of the cash income earned by male family members to

purchase products which the women had hitherto produced, important changes in the women's position and outlook must occur. The need for additional money and the reduced amount of work for the family provide the women with strong incentives to earn a cash income. In many developing countries there is in fact a large supply of labour from women who are looking to work for wages, trying to produce crops for sale, or trying to engage in market trade or some other small business. However, in some developing countries in North Africa and South and West Asia women are passively accepting the reduction of their contribution to family well-being, because they or their male family members consider it improper for women to perform work for purposes other than family use. In many other developing countries, women's effort to contribute to the family income by earning money are frustrated, because they meet with no approval and sometimes even with hostility. They cannot get employment or access to training and credit facilities.

Moreover, if economic development in the country is rapid, women setting up these types of enterprises may turn out to be a short term solution because new industries super markets and other modern establishments conquer the market. Therefore countries, (West Africa for instance) where large numbers of urban women have specialized in small scale services and production, while only men are accepted as wage labourers in modern enterprises, a stage will sooner or later be reached when economic development once more threatens to reduce the contribution of woman, making her a burden on the family economy instead of supporter.

Thus there are two stages in the economic development of a country when women risk being squeezed out of the economic circuit: the first when production for family use is replaced by small-scale production for the market, and the second when small scale production for the market is replaced by larger enterprises which use wage labour and salaried personnel.¹²

What initiatives are taken to remedy this situation of underprivilege and wasteful neglect?

From a broad range of traditional projects, specific attention to the role of women had not seemed necessary. However the Worldbank, wanting to attack poverty directly where it is most felt, is designing "new-style" projects which now give far more explicit consideration to the role of women in economic and social development. These projects aim to increase the cash income potential for women in the project area and to improve the status of women within the community.¹³

Particularly in the rural areas, "intermediate" or "village technology" is being developed as having great potential to ease the burden in reducing the labor of water collection, the toil of fuel collection, the work of sowing, threshing, winnowing etc.¹⁴

These simple technical innovations are extremely important to free the children for compulsory or generalized primary education without leaving an additional amount of work to their mothers, and to give women indeed more time to think, to widen their horizons, and get them involved in activities.¹⁵

To this purpose, the World Conference of the International Women's Year saw the need for integrated or special training programs for girls and women in rural areas to enable them to participate fully and productively in economic and social development and to take advantage of technological advances and thereby reduce the drudgery of their daily lives. Such programs should include training in modern methods of agriculture, and use of equipment, co-operatives, entrepreneurship, commerce, marketing, animal husbandry, and fisheries, and in health, nutrition, family planning and education.¹⁶

And since studies show that the performance of children in school correlates positively with the education of the mother, but bears little or no relationship to the education of the father, these training programs for women, will not only effect the present well being of the family, and the agricultural production, but also the next generation.¹⁷

Without such opportunities to better their lives in the rural situation, the massive migration of rural women to towns will continue.¹⁸

It is important that the advantages to be gained from women's education by women themselves and by the community at large be made clear in a more intelligent way than in the past. What are the secondary effects on children, for example, -- and hence on standards of education in general -- if their mothers and the community of women around them are educated? What are the disadvantages if not? What positive and negative effects has the fact that their mothers work, not only on young children but also on older children? Is communication within the family helped or hindered by the fact that both parents work? What are the consequences on their activities outside working hours and the way in which they organize their time?¹⁹

Women in Africa

In many African cultures women have long held more prominent positions than is commonly realized. Some tribes are matrilineal, some even matriarchal. Women play an important role in agriculture, and thus have enjoyed considerable economic power. Traditional religion knows women diviners, in communication with the ancestors, women witch-doctors, engaged in worship and sacrifice, women involved in the initiation of the girls into the life of the tribe. The rising status of women in African separatist churches seems to be in line with this tradition. Many of the independent movements have been initiated by women beginning around the year 1700 right up to the present time. They can be found in West, South and East Africa. Many of these women became leaders at an early age, and some had enormous followings, approaching the hundred thousand mark.²⁰

The impact of colonial administration on the role of women has been ambiguous. Because the political power of women was usually indirect, often a function of their position as sisters or mothers, it was not openly recognized and inevitably ignored by the administrators.²¹

Dr. David Barret's conclusion is that the churches of the West have seriously under-estimated the social status of African women and, in the churches' neglect of giving due scope to the religious charismata

of women, they have "appeared to be practising an unjustified form of social control". Religious and magical rites had an important function in safe-guarding the dignity of women, whose role in society was thereby recognized. The result has been a growing revolt by African women which has reached tangible proportions across Africa.

In certain circumstances it is the westernized, urbanized and insecure African man who is most likely to object to an enhancing of the role of women in the Church. Women religious leaders do not seem so strange to the man rooted in the traditional norms of Africa.²²

Ghana - Within the framework of society in general the Church can claim (together with other Churches) to have raised the status of Ghanaian women by fostering their education, academic and vocational, and by insisting on monogamy in marriage. In Ghana's history women have had positions of importance as independent traders, queen mothers, judges, lawyers. There is no equivalent to this in the Catholic community as there is in some other Christian Churches, especially in the new independent Churches. Catholic women who think about these things express a grudge against the Church and assert that within the Catholic community they are second rate people and inferior beings. At the National Laity Apostolate Seminar, 1971, a lady speaker said: "Praying, singing and sweeping the church can hardly be the top performance women are capable of!". Yet, these are the usual answers to the question, "In what fields are women prominent in the Church?" It seems certain that Catholic Ghanaian women are ready to do a lot more in the Church than they are allowed to do.²³

Tanzania - Dr. Marjorie Mbilinyi, lecturer in educational psychology at the University of Dar es Salaam: "What is necessary is the rationalization of the many jobs traditionally considered to be women's work. In Tanzania it is possible to hire another woman to care for children and a man to do the housekeeping very cheaply. Lower-paid workers can get distant female cousins to live with the family and do this work free of charge. Such exploitation is contradictory to the socialist aspirations of Tanzania. A more desirable alternative would be to "industrialize" women's work. This is possible, as can be observed now in China or the U. S. S. R., but it depends on having a fully socialist economy in both the rural and urban sectors. The changes necessary for women's entry into history are those necessary for Tanzania's full development as an autonomous socialist nation. Women therefore must participate in the struggle against underdevelopment. However, while engaged in that national struggle, they must be conscious of the peculiar contradictions of their own lives and act to remove them at the same time. Women cannot expect anyone else to do this for them."²⁴

Mozambique - As a revolutionary party, FRELIMO (The Front for the Liberation of Mozambique) has stressed women's equality. According to President Machel, "The liberation of women is a fundamental necessity of the revolution, the guarantee of its continuity, and the precondition of

its victory." In 1967, FRELIMO formed a Women's Detachment to train women for military and political work. By 1972, FRELIMO, had expanded its military operations to four of the country's nine Provinces which made the creation of a broader-based women's organization an imperative. In that year, the Organization of Mozambique (OMM) was founded as a mass women's organization within the structure of FRELIMO. OMM's program is multi-faceted: it is working to increase the number of girls in schools, in establishing day-care centres and orphanages, and is trying to change the attitudes of both men and women regarding women's role. OMM also sends women to the Women's Detachment for military training. Each grupo dinamizador (in the ex-colonial areas) and party committee (in the liberated areas) has a special subsection on women's issues under OMM. Concretely, FRELIMO has abolished initiation rites in the liberated areas and has abolished the bride-price system nationally.

The President, Samra Machel, in a long analysis of the role of the school and on the educational system within the framework of the national liberation struggle, at the time of a major crisis within the organization on this issue, speaks about a new relationship between men and women:

In our definition of comradeship, a special chapter must be dedicated to the man-woman relationship, because of its special character. This relationship has been deeply falsified by the traditional feudal society and by the colonial-capitalist society. Traditional society denied woman all personality and reduced her to a mere instrument of reproduction. Colonialism and capitalism brought this situation to the supreme form of degradation: sex commercialization. On the other hand, in order to exploit the woman's labour force, capitalism felt the necessity to integrate her in social production. In this way woman became part of the revolutionary movement.

Colonialism and capitalism, while affirming the notion of love, empty it of its valuable contents. Such love is reduced to more superficial emotion, based on the beauty of the body, on attitudes, and most of all on social status. For us, love must, like comradeship, be based mainly on the mutual knowledge and identity resulting from the common adherence to the cause of the people.

This is why we use in the marriage formula the word "stimulating". Love, marriage, are conceived as a stimulus to the mutual transformation for the service of the masses. We note that these ideas, because they are new and radically different from those we have lived, are not always explained to the new generations and, when they are, it is frequently in a superficial way, without trying to help the new generation appropriate and live this new ideal. When unmarried comrades become pregnant, we find it scandalous; while in fact the scandal is not pregnancy, which is a biological consequence. The real scandal is that we were not able to educate these comrades, nor to help them appropriate the true meaning of love, and how the sexual relationship itself is integrated into love and into life. The scandal

is also that very often this pregnancy comes amidst total irresponsibility on the part of its protagonists. A political battle is thus to be led, especially among the new generation, so that our conception of love triumphs: a creative and revolutionary conception.²⁵

Women in India - During the Vedic period from 2500 to 1500 B. C. equality for women was a fact. They were accorded the same status as men and discriminatory or preferential attitudes did not exist. The deterioration in their status was gradual and was hastened by various political and socio-economic factors from 300 B. C. onwards until by the end of the 18th century the situation was reached of superior status for men and almost no status at all for women.²⁶

Let us examine a woman's life from her birth. Even in modern India the birth of a girl baby is not favoured especially in the weaker sections of society. Even the educated woman seems to prefer her first offspring to be a son. The girl grows up experiencing the preferential treatment given to her brother. In poor homes she is inducted to house keeping and child care roles early. Later on she is subjected to the spirit-suppressing double standards regarding freedom, aspiring for a career seeking a deeper psychological commitment and a sense of fulfilment outside the home; still further the stifling experience of assigned roles, the pain of having to conform to the ideas related to Sex Symbols - men upward looking and aspiring high - women subservient and sacrificing.²⁷

In modern times, Mahatma Gandhi is without doubt the person who has meant most both to India and to the country's women. During the liberation struggle he relied heavily upon them. It is partly because of him that today's India, despite the great cultural barriers, has a higher percentage of women in administration than any other country in the world. A contributing factor to this of course, was that the struggle for independence was fought by non-violent means. This gave women a much greater opportunity to participate than would otherwise have been the case. In Gandhi's eyes, women were a complement to men. This was a fact both parties had to recognise . . . In order to liberate themselves, Gandhi exhorted women to apply methods which suit the Indian disposition and environment, instead of Western methods.

The Indian women's organizations were established early mainly because of Gandhi's influence. But they have had difficulties in making themselves felt except as pressure groups concerning mainly legal matters. They have been firmly established among the upper classes of the cities. Since less than a seventh of all Indian women live in the cities their possibilities of working on a broad front have been rather limited.

In India the main emphasis has been upon improving the standing of women through legislation and emphasis on small and home-based industry. . . . It is not exactly known how laws should be put into effect against certain traditional customs and practices (usually religiously motivated) which are considered to be incompatible with the "modern" demand for equality, etc. Although there is a desire to abolish them it is considered necessary to recognize the freedom of each religious group to practice their religion (and specific culture).²⁸

Though the literacy figures are yet lagging much behind men, one can see women in all walks of life. . . . There are tractor-driving educated women in Punjab, women engaged in horticultural research in Himachal Pradesh, women managing large handicraft and handloom stores in several states. Women are in factories and farms, in industry and commerce, in Parliament and provincial Legislative Assemblies, on stage and in films, on the Radio and TV, even in mountaineering expeditions, in athletics and sports and one reads with abated breath about parachute-jumping young girls. . . . There are Indian women Yogis too, called Yoginis.

Despite progressive legislation and despite improved education and professional opportunities, the sad fact remains that more than half of India's population is deeply embedded in superstition and ignorance and scattered in villages and tribal areas. A big gap remains, even among many of the so called highly educated, between the status that the Indian woman enjoys in theory and what she has in practice. 29

Women in China - A woman in traditional China was subject first of all to her father, then to her husband, and in due time to her son. Men were essential for the perpetuation of the male line, for the agricultural labor force and for the performance of the ancestral rites. No woman could fulfill these obligations, and so boy babies became a top priority in any Chinese family. For nearly 2,000 years as dynasties rose and fell, the family unit was the cornerstone of Chinese civilization and within that unit small girls (if they were not abandoned at birth or sold in times of duress) were taught the proper role of women. Clan rules regulated a woman's conduct, her education, her position, and her responsibilities. They stated flatly that women are the major cause of domestic friction because they are by nature ignorant, jealous, sly and narrow minded. Furthermore, the proper way is for the husband to set the example and for the wife to follow. Against this powerful force of environment, women had little chance of asserting themselves.³⁰

From an interview with Han Suyin, novelist, physician and population expert: "Women's liberation in China started very early, in 1919 when the women decided to participate in the revolution. This had economic as well as political implications." The effect on marriage: "In 1950, the first marriage law was passed under which women could marry for love. Before that all marriages were arranged by the parents. Another of its provisions was that widows were allowed to remarry. . . . However it took until 1956 to convince men that a widow who remarried wasn't an immoral woman." On women's double job--in the factory, the office or on the farm and in the home: "However much we talk about equality women's burden will always be greater. And because of this, the state must be on the side of the woman, establishing as many facilities for her as possible. Most Chinese factories have nurseries attached to them and the worker-mother is allowed half an hour off every two or three hours in order to feed her baby. This is counted as working time." On the fact there is still a comparative lack of women in the upper echelons of the Chinese Communist party: "It is not so much the fact of having one woman Prime Minister which will make women free. You have to go to the villages and see how many women there are free. This can only be achieved through the commune where every woman works as an individual on her own, getting paid for her work which has absolutely nothing to do with her husband's work. This is important; it is recognition of the value of the individual, and it is to this end that

the revolutionary committees established in the communes must have a 30% proportion of women" On education in family planning: ". . . It is carried out street by street, and village by village. They get together and decide how many children should be born that year in that particular street. Supposing they feel the street should only have five children that year and there are seven prospective mothers, there will always be two to say, 'I'll wait till next year.' It is what is known as the covenant between the individual and society. . ."31

Indeed, there has been significant change in the life of the Chinese woman. She lives in a society where the prevalent ideology encourages her full participation in society. Mao Tse-tung is often quoted on the equality of women.

Women's questions are raised first of all most sharply as a part of the major political campaigns, when the most acute struggle takes place - during the Cultural Revolution (1966-67). Similarly in the 1974 anti-Lin-anti-Confucius campaign, women used the issues of the campaign to make people aware that women were not being fully treated as equals and to effect changes in their favor. Second a man who impedes the liberation of women is seen to be the victim of a feudal ideology, one who has a reactionary class stand. Third within the framework of the Chinese communitarian ethic, the Chinese woman seeks to better "serve the people". An editorial of the women's magazine, Chung-kuo Fu-nu expressed this orientation in 1966: "We (Chinese women) live for the purpose of making a greater contribution to the Chinese revolution and the world revolution and for the purpose of making the lives of others better. Only this is the greatest happiness . . . We must be 'oxen' to the proletariat and masses of the people; work for the people until we are exhausted; work for the revolution until we die".

Yet Chinese women have far to go before being fully accepted. The Chinese themselves are quick to admit this. Soong Ching-ling (widow of Sun Yat-sen and a leading statesperson in her own right) says, "If we ask whether the Women's liberation movement in China has come to its end, the answer is definitely no - much of the feudal patriarchal ideology still prevails." Soong goes on to say that ". . . genuine equality between the sexes can be realized and the Women's liberation movement will be ended when and only when, led by a Marxist-Leninist political party, the process of the social transformation of society as a whole is completed". . . . In other words, progress in the status of women is directly linked with the revolutionization of all Chinese society.³²

Women in the Arab World - It will be difficult to speak about the role of Arab women in a general way for many divergencies exist within the Arab World with respect to political systems, stages of development, natural wealth, degree of isolation or exposure to the outside world.

In pre-Islamic times, the women in Pagan Arabia were considered by men to be possessions that could be bought, sold and inherited. Islam recognised women as independent beings and legislated that a woman inherit from her parents the equivalent of only half of her brothers' share. This was a liberal innovation at the time; prior to this Islamic law these women had enjoyed no right of inheritance at all.

In regard to polygamy a fundamental verse in the Koran on the subject reads, "Take in matrimony two, three or four wives. If you fear that you may not be fair to them, then marry only one. . . and you will never be fair no matter how hard you try."

As to the veil or the segregation of women, this custom did not exist in the early days of Islam . . . it was borrowed from Persia and introduced much later, mainly after Muslim society had become wealthier and more sophisticated and when women began to be relegated to the recesses of comfortable homes, a regressive move, the veil was a mark of class distinction to differentiate the free women from the slave girls who were exposed to public scrutiny.

The social legislative system introduced by Islam which defined the rights and responsibilities of men and women in the family constitutes to this day the basis of family law for Muslims in all Arab countries.

The controversy over family laws is going on in many quarters of the Arab world. The orthodox groups will not hear of any attempt to codify Islamic law in line with changing social conditions. Tunisia is ahead of all Arab countries in having given men and women equal right to judicial divorce and making polygamy illegal, whereas, in most countries, it is much easier for a man to divorce his wife.

The League of Arab States in 1971 established an Arab Status of Women's Commission the functions of which are patterned on those of the United Nation's Commission by the same name which is to seek equal rights for men and women as well as the integration of women in development. The three year old commission is already proving its usefulness as a formal channel of communication among representatives of governments and of women's movements in various Arab States. There is need for a comprehensive and scientific appraisal of the status and role of women in the different Arab countries. To this end the Arab Women's Commission is urging member States to establish the National Status of Women's Commission which should study and evaluate the status of women and their role in the development of the respective countries.³³

One thing seems clear: this evolution in the situation of women and in the outlook of people concerning family life, will be linked to a new way of interpreting the Koran. This is probably the most fundamental problem that Muslims, both men and women, have to wrestle with, in this age.³⁴

Egypt - The Egyptian women seem to be leading the feminist movements in the Arab world. The 1929 economic repression is said to have contributed the first practical breakthrough: women were forced to seek gainful employment for the sake of sheer survival and in spite of tradition and prejudices to the contrary. The feminist movement started as early as 1923, when Hada Sha'rawi, the wife of a wealthy Egyptian, upon her return from a woman's conference in Rome, removed the veil in public in a dramatic gesture of protest. This started a mass unveiling of Egyptian beauties.

With the support of a few enlightened religious and political leaders the movement was successful in seeking the right of education for women, obtaining family law codification, and the enactment of the first labour laws ever regulating women's employment in factories and commercial establishments.³⁵

Palestine - Palestinian women, while at different times have limited themselves to perform 'charitable' tasks for their people, have now been forced generally, through the intense political struggle in their homeland, to throw off the chains of their traditional, sexist conditions and have emerged as fighters in their own right demanding not only national independence and the return of Palestinians to Palestine, but the complete liberation of the Palestinian Arab woman.

. . . From 1919 to 1948 Palestinian women were divided in their activity by their different class stands. The middle classes and bourgeois women were involved in petitioning, organizing demonstrations, and joining delegations. The illiterate village women were taking part in the armed struggle in the countryside. In the 1936 revolt especially, women played an important part, if only because the vast majority of men peasant guerrillas were in gaol or forced into exile.

In 1965, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was formed. Every woman who believed in "the revolutionary armed struggle as the only means of liberating Palestine" was eligible for membership. . . . The GUPW recognises that the way to liberation is through a people's war and that for this, a wide mass base is essential. So the GUPW took the initiative starting new activities such as civil defence and opening training camps. Before this the Union had been involved in political and social fields, campaigning against illiteracy, opening schools, conducting first aid and health programs. Recognised as being most important were the programs directed at raising the political awareness of women and the preservation of Palestinian culture. . . .

Women, equally with men have been the victims of the repression flowing from the imperialists' actions. . . , Palestinian women fighters distinguished themselves in the resistance to the Jordanian offensive in 1970. Women led the huge demonstrations against occupation in Jerusalem in 1968. The call to strike against the Israeli occupation in the West Bank, which resulted in school students and teachers striking in 1967, was issued by the Palestinian women. . . . The way in which many women have faced and endured torture and even death has been a contributing factor in the changing of attitudes of the men in the Palestinian resistance, steeped as many still are in age old prejudices and traditions. . . .

The GUPW was formed as a mass political party. The Palestinian women within it show an extremely high level of political awareness and activity. . . . Palestinian women are united as never before, due to the work of the Union. This unity is crucial because the people are dispersed throughout many Arab countries as a result of the occupation. Branches of the Union have been established in Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, and Kuwait. . . . Involvement in the Palestinian Revolution has meant for the Palestinian woman a process of shaking off years of tradition, however, they are still only in the middle of this process.³⁶

Women in Latin America - "Machismo", the myth of the superiority and inborn authority of men over women, is not only part of traditional customs and beliefs in Latin America, but it is very much alive in modern stratified societies. It has become an oppressive ideology expressed in many different attitudes and forms of behaviour, especially in economic life, employment and sexual life. The archetypal male appears as: strong, dominant, authoritarian, brave, aggressive, paternal, self-confident, the great seducer, polygamous, and naturally, unfaithful. The counterpart of this myth is the myth of docile femininity: woman is a gentle, submissive, self-sacrificing, maternal, wifely, obedient and faithful creature. These characteristics are considered 'normal' and 'natural' by people in Latin America. In fact they are both real and mythical. Real because they are part of the daily existence of men and women, though of course to different degrees. Mythical because they are considered 'natural' or innate whereas in point of fact they are a cultural acquisition. This mythology is expressed in ways which vary from one country to another according to its culture, and its social and economic structure such as religion or cultural exchange between different ethnic groups living side by side. But, in general, it leads to:

- completely different openings offered to men and women on the labour market.
- discrimination in favor of men in education, social security, civil rights and so on.
- a concept of marriage and family in which these roles are lived out, and in which love comes low down on the list of reasons given by both men and women for getting married.

And yet according to a world survey carried out some years ago by UNESCO, no country has laws obstructing the access of women to education, employment or a full social life. This may be so in theory, but in practice things are quite different.³⁷

That inner fear that the Latin male has of losing his feeling of superiority to an educated and more confident wife, serves to make him oppose and even stop many plans that a woman might have to assist a club or school that will teach her to better use her life. Perhaps the greatest negative fact in assuring the peasant women's role as one of inferiority is the fact that she herself accepts her role as she accepts her female sex. Both are understood as conditions in life that are not made to be changed. Many times her martyred acquiescence to this role leads her to become superstitiously religious, seeking her comfort in the Mass and the words of the priest who tells her she must endure her lot, for it is her role as woman, as given to her by God. Therefore what the peasant woman might feel and what she is told she should feel result in a clash within her own personality, leaving her frustrated and defeated.³⁸

It is in such a climate that no matter how reasonable legal or political changes may be, they can never become fully effective without a vigorous struggle. It is open to question, for example, whether the more exercise of the right to vote, which Ecuadorian women have enjoyed since 1929, has brought them a more favorable social situation than

that of Paraguayan women who have only been voting since 1961. Or whether Uruguayan women who can divorce without having to prove anything - Whereas their husbands must establish grounds for divorce - are better off than women in Argentina where there is no divorce.

Cuba - From many points of view an exception on the map of the Americas, Cuba has adopted a law obliging husbands to help their wives with housework. Cuba's Family Code promulgated on March 8, 1975, is perhaps the fairest and most human legislation in the world governing relations in the home: "Both spouses shall have the right to practise their professions or trades and shall have an obligation to show consideration and be helpful to one another in that respect, and also as regards studies or the improvement of their knowledge. . ." And it adds, with a true sense of realism: ". . . but they shall in any case strive to organize life in the home in such a way that these activities are coordinated with the fulfilment of the obligations that this Code lays upon them." In a society that thus establishes the basis of human dignity the many dreary arguments that are usually put forward in Latin America as reasons for marriage all fall by the wayside. The sole valid motive that remains - the Cuban Code does not say as much but it is obvious - is love itself, or the closest thing to it, even if it is occasionally only a mirage.³⁹

The above will serve to give some indication as to the vast amount of literature dedicated to this topic as well as to the various situations in which women throughout the world find themselves today.

--by S. Christine Middeloheff, sa, and S. Godelieve Prové, scmm-m

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WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

"Just as the Church managed to accommodate herself to slavery for nearly two thousand years, she has not seen any contradiction between the affirmation of the equality of man and woman and the subordination of woman to man, as if such was the will of God. (reference to Augustin and Thomas Aquinas in a footnote.) And what subordination! Is Canon Law anything else else but a monument of masculine law imposed on women, putting their inferiority and incapacity into a code, and reserving to men alone all power, all honours, all responsibility, all presidentship, all precedence - in short, everything?

Whereas for the past century laws have been modified everywhere in favour of women, Canon Law ... has on this point remained substantially unchanged. We had to wait for the (Second) Vatican Council to hear it said that 'with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination..., based on sex ..., is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent.' (Gaudium et Spes N° 29) But has not the application of this principle remained just a pious wish? ... (1)"

For the Church, the women's movement is a fact, a sign of the times, which did not have its origin within her nor at the wish of the Church herself, but rather is inevitably imposed on her by the fact of her presence in the world. Worthy of note is Table 2 in which the Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin lists "Stages of awareness in the official Catholic Church". Let it suffice to quote two of them, at an interval of ten years:

1963 - At the Second Vatican Council, Cardinal Suenens asked: "Where is the other half of humanity?"

1973 - Creation of a Pontifical Commission for the study of women in society and in the Church. (2)

"Women in a Society of global Dimensions" is a text drafted for this Commission by Mgr. Franco Biffi, Rector of the Pontifical Lateran University, with the collaboration of Guzman Carriquiry. It incorporates the result of discussion by the Commission during several plenary sessions and is meant to be an 'instrument' for further study.

Referring to the opening words of "Gaudium et Spes", the introduction calls it an honour and a responsibility for the Church to make "its original contribution to a movement which is spreading over the whole world, the

movement which aims at giving back to woman the fullness of dignity conferred upon her at the beginning by the Creator ". It ranges "the will to promote and the efforts to liberate women" "among the outstanding phenomena of our time ..." (3)

This study considers women in 5 great spheres:

- I Marriage and the Family
- II Socio-economic Life
- III Culture
- IV Political Life
- V International Life

The following quotations may be of interest for our discussion:

Culture: "... A human being is fulfilled through the cultivation of goods and values; shaping the world environment, dominating it gradually, ... enriching it with the creations of mind and heart ... Man creates culture ... Reciprocally, culture moulds man ... If, till now, woman has not fully attained the level worthy of a person, it is because she had no way of expressing her full personal dimension in society and in the world, but also because the culture surrounding her bears overwhelming signs of masculine domination."

"...To have, by right, full access to culture, to become a conscious and responsible moulder of it, to imprint on human society and the world her own characteristic marks, enriching culture with a dimension that has been lacking to it, that is woman's hope, the right she demands to have finally recognized, the task that she is decided to fulfil."

"Participation in cultural life signifies, concretely, the exercise of a triple right: the right to instruction, the right to education, and the right to information and cultural expression."

How far does the factual situation correspond to these hopes and rights?

- a) To be born a woman of the "Third World" is a handicap in comparison with children of technologically advanced countries: whereas in the latter, out of 100 pupils of primary schools there are 48 girls, in Asian schools there are 38, and in African and Latin American schools 37.
- b) Illiterate mothers who have to make a choice, (dictated by many reasons), prefer to send the boys to school rather than the girls.
- c) In some regions, only a minority of the girls remain at school till the end of the first cycle. In Africa, for instance, only a third of those registered for first year reach the sixth.

As for the training of women in the Sacred Sciences, here is what the study thinks of it:

"No 62 of Gaudium et Spes expresses the wish that "many laymen will receive an appropriate formation in the sacred sciences, and that some will develop these studies by their own labours". Unfortunately, in this field the Church has a long delay to make up. Fortunately, the ecclesiastical universities have understood that it is their duty to admit women also, and the latter are at last beginning to occupy places hitherto forbidden them. But various obstacles (the required languages and basic formation, financial means, and all the prejudices to be met with), discourage rather than stimulate the women who might dedicate themselves in suitable numbers to this most interesting field of study." (4)

Political Life:

With regard to woman's growing awareness of her role in the life of the 'polis' we read: "In the same way, in proportion to the clear awareness of her dignity as a person that woman is gradually acquiring, she feels the imperative need to participate actively in the life of the community and to assume greater responsibilities in the organization of that life in function of the common good."

However, legislation is not always in favour of such increased participation: "Although the rights of women have been stated in the United Nations Charter, and proclaimed all over the world through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (1948), in various countries there exist legislative limitations to the full exercise of the political rights of women" ... In actual fact, "in every country, independently of their politico-social régime, or their degree of development, taking into account their various differences, the participation of women in political life is very small".

But are women prepared for their participation in this field? The study thinks they are not: "There is a general lack of political education for women. They are frequently guided more by feelings than by reason. They support candidates rather than policies. They are only interested in political measures that affect their domestic field. Women's papers, the "woman's page" cultivate this alienating deficiency." (5)

If this is so on local and national level, what about women's participation in the 'humanization of society', in the 'building up of a world of justice and peace', in the 'elimination of war', in the promotion of 'the whole man, of every man, of all peoples'? (cf. Populorum Progressio)

International Life:

"Women must ... be the first to 'evangelize' women: it is for them to bring to their sisters the joyful tidings that the hour of liberation has struck, that all discrimination must be eliminated, that 'the wolf shall dwell with the lamb' (Is. 11,6) that what is happening at international level is decisive for the destiny of every woman in every part of the world."

"Admiration and encouragement are therefore due to women on every continent who are working to arouse in every woman a sense of international responsibility; ... who are working also to create an awareness of the

urgency of overcoming false nationalism and eliminating every form of discrimination, together with the will to cooperate in rooting out hatred, prejudice, rivalry, injustice, - the social sins which are a cause of war and an obstacle to peace."

"Finally, it must be remembered that the 'promotion' to be achieved is not only that of woman, but of a 'society that will offer both men and women the necessary conditions for human fulfilment ... a society focussed on the human person who, created in the image of God, is and must be the beginning, subject and goal of all social institutions". (Gaudium et Spes 25) (6)

WOMEN IN EVANGELIZATION

Early in 1976, the Pastoral Commission of the S. C. for the Evangelization of Peoples issued a document entitled: "The Role of Women in Evangelization". It is the fruit not only of reflection within the Commission, but also of wide consultation among Institutes and groups of women engaged in evangelization. The following extracts may give an idea of the importance of this document and its relation to our topic in discussion:

"If the Council invites us to examine 'the signs of the times', it must surely be asking us also to take note of the progress made in the emancipation of women. These developments not only invite us to maintain and reinforce the contingents of women already taking part in evangelization, in greater numbers than men, (two-thirds versus one-third), but urge all those in authority, both men and women, to question themselves more deeply on the specific role of women in evangelization, on the true nature of their charism, and on how this charism may be put to use in wider responsibilities, functions and ministries. They invite everyone to consider also how women may be best trained for the work of evangelization and how best they may work along with men in the common task undertaken for Christ." (7)

After enumerating certain specifically feminine qualities, which are "a precious resource for evangelization", namely:

- a great capacity for living in hope in spite of disappointments
- a gift for practical initiatives
- sense of continuity and fidelity
- respect for the individual person
- special capacity for contacts
- great capacity for personal adaptation

the document outlines the "Function of women in evangelization".

"We should make it clear from the start that the functions to be considered here, are not to be looked upon as supplying for an eventual shortage of male personnel, even though this may in fact arise. It is a question of considering what women, with their special charisms that we spoke of are actually doing, wish to do and can do for evangelization. Questioned on this point, dozens of groups of women missionaries have proposed the following tasks, to be taken up in so far as they are seen capable of bearing witness to the Gospel:

The traditional occupations of women missionaries - in hospitals, schools and welfare services, - are considered by all without exception to maintain almost everywhere their importance as a service rendered to developing countries and a witness to Christ's love for those countries. Groups engaged in such work should not give it up on their own initiative. They should, however, subject it to periodical reconsideration, to check whether it remains necessary in a particular case, whether it is directed to the best sector, namely those most in need, and how and when it might gradually be passed on to local lay personnel.

If the State decides to take over the direction of these works, women missionaries should continue to cooperate with them, in so far as they are allowed and in whatever way seems best, giving thus still greater proof of humble and unselfish service and playing an even fuller role in the life of the nation.

In countries where women have made sufficient social progress to warrant it, their role in direct evangelization and ministry properly so called should be greatly increased.

On the basis of experience, and in accordance with the suggestions of women missionaries, the part played by women in the proclamation of the Good News can take on many forms, which can be only briefly enumerated here:

- Catechetical work for both catechumens and Christians (cf. Ad Gentes 26);
- Apostolic home-visiting to the poor, the sick and the abandoned;
- Active contributions to retreats and spiritual sessions;
- Counselling, especially in connection with vocations;
- The teaching of religion, including theology, when one has the necessary ability and qualifications;
- Activity in the social communications media: the Press, Radio and Television.

As all these forms of activity are intended to promote faith, they presuppose deep faith and an appropriate pedagogical preparation in those who engage in them. When these are women, they will bring to their task their own special gifts of sensitivity and finesse." (8)

The document goes on to acknowledge that women have become more involved in parish activities not only in a subordinate role but more and more with full responsibility for decision-making. It is again stated that this is not based on the need to supply for the absence of a priest, even though this is bound to be increasingly the case. These activities are both administrative and pastoral, without however constituting ministries in the strict sense. "It is certain that sisters often suffer deeply at the sight of the neglected state of Christian communities, threatened by loss of vitality and death. Their requests to be entrusted with greater pastoral responsibilities spring from this anguish, and not from a spirit of pretension." (9)

With regard to participation of women in the work of evangelization, the Study Commission on Woman in Society and in the Church, considering ... that the evolution of woman's situation in society necessitates an urgent revision,

today, of her place in the life of the Church, addressed the following suggestions summarized here to the 1974 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops:

For Participation

1. that ... participation ... in positions of recognized and effective responsibility be promoted and developed;
2. that particular importance be attached to the participation of religious and lay women in ecclesial bodies for reflection, planning, decision-making and evaluation at parochial, diocesan, national and international levels;
3. that religious sisters be given their place in the work of evangelization according to their specific vocation and the charism of their Institutes;
4. that Episcopal Conferences study ... the expediency and the possible modalities of non-ordained ministries, open as much to women as to men.

For Education

1. that action be undertaken to bring about change in the way of thinking that will promote better relationships of collaboration between men and women in the work of evangelization;
2. that the education of the clergy enable them to have a good understanding of the various Christian vocations for women...;
3. that they attach special importance to the education of the faith of women. (10)

Women and Ministries in the Church

The Pastoral Commission of the S. C. for the Evangelization of Peoples and also the Study Commission on Woman in Society and in the Church, reflecting on the role of women in evangelization could not avoid the topic of "ministry".

For all involved in evangelization there are these pressing circumstances which more than all other valid reasons raise the question of ministries in the Church and their reservation exclusively for men.

"It is now well over ten years since religious communities in Brazil first began to take charge of parishes, leading the community in prayer, preparing its members for the Sacraments, directing liturgical celebrations, funerals, marriage and baptismal ceremonies, for all of which the sisters are directly responsible to the Bishop. A priest visits the parishes to celebrate Mass each week or each fortnight. Might authority in the Church perhaps become an authority of service, an authority of relationships? Might not this change be more capably fostered by religious women than by the clergy?"(11) From this point of view supplementing the priest today could be seen as the genuine mandate of the missionary sister, paving the way for the Church of the future. (12)

In this context, the "Declaration on the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood" is an important document. We quote extracts from the introduction and from Chapter 6.

"In the life of the Church ..., as history shows us, women have played a decisive role and accomplished tasks of outstanding value ... (some examples follow). But our age gives rise to increased demands: 'Since in our time women have an ever more active share in the whole life of society, it is very important that they participate more widely also in the various sectors of the Church's apostolate'. This charge of the Second Vatican Council has already set in motion the whole process of change now taking place: ... a very large number of Christian Communities are already benefitting from the apostolic commitment of women. Some of these women are called to take part in councils set up for pastoral reflection, at the diocesan or parish level; and the Apostolic See has brought women into some of its working bodies.

For some years now various Christian Communities stemming from the sixteenth century Reformation or of later origin have been admitting women to the pastoral office on a par with men. This initiative has led to petitions and writings by members of these communities and similar groups, directed towards making this admission a general thing; it has also led to contrary reactions. This therefore constitutes an ecumenical problem, and the Catholic Church must make her thinking known on it, all the more because in various sectors of opinion the question has been asked whether she too could not modify her discipline and admit women to priestly ordination."

"... The Sacred Congregation deems it opportune at the present juncture to explain this position of the Church. It is a position which will perhaps cause pain but whose positive value will become apparent in the long run, since it can be of help in deepening understanding of the respective roles of men and women."

"It is opportune to recall that problems of sacramental theology, especially when they concern the ministerial priesthood, as is the case here, cannot be solved except in the light of Revelation. The human sciences, however valuable their contribution in their own domain, cannot suffice here, for they cannot grasp the realities of faith: the properly supernatural content of these realities is beyond their competence.

Thus one must note the extent to which the Church is a society different from other societies, original in her nature and in her structures. The pastoral charge in the Church is normally linked to the sacrament of Order: it is not simple government, comparable to the modes of authority found in States. It is not granted by people's spontaneous choice: even when it involves designation through election, it is the laying on of hands and the prayer of the successors of the Apostles which guarantee God's choice; and it is the Holy Spirit, given by ordination, who grants participation in the ruling power of the Supreme Pastor, Christ (cf.

Acts 20:28). It is a charge of service and love: "If you love me, feed my sheep". (cf. Jn 21: 15-17)

"For this reason we cannot see how it is possible to propose the admission of women to the priesthood in virtue of the equality of rights of the human person, an equality which holds good also for Christians. To this end use is sometimes made of the text ... from the letter to the Galatians (3:28) which says that in Christ there is no longer distinction between men and women. But this passage does not concern ministries: it only affirms the universal calling to divine filiation, which is the same for all. Moreover, and above all, to consider the ministerial priesthood as a human right would be to misjudge its nature completely: baptism does not confer any personal title to public ministry in the Church. The priesthood is not conferred for the honour or the advantage of the recipient, but for the service of God and the Church; it is the object of a specific and totally gratuitous vocation: "You did not choose me, no, I chose you; and I commissioned you ..." (Jn 15:16; cf. Heb 5:4).

"... Women who express a desire for the ministerial priesthood are doubtless motivated by the desire to serve Christ and the Church. And it is not surprising that, at a time when they are becoming more aware of the discriminations to which they have been subject, they should desire the ministerial priesthood itself. But it must not be forgotten that the priesthood does not form part of the rights of the individual, but stems from the economy of the mystery of Christ and the Church. The priestly office cannot become the goal of social advancement; no merely human progress of society or of the individual can of itself give access to it: it is of another order.

It therefore remains for us to meditate more deeply on the nature of the real equality of the baptized which is one of the great affirmations of Christianity: equality is in no way identity, for the Church is a differentiated body, in which each individual has his or her role. The roles are distinct, and must not be confused; they do not favour the superiority of some vis-à-vis the others, nor do they provide an excuse for jealousy; the only better gift, which can and must be desired, is love (cf. 1 Cor 12-13). The greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven are not the ministers but the saints.

The Church desires that Christian women should become fully aware of the greatness of their mission: today their role is of capital importance, both for the renewal and humanization of society and for the re-discovery by believers of the true face of the Church." (13)

Parallel with organizations and individual men and women wanting women to have access to the different offices of the ecclesial ministry, and contesting the Declaration of the S. C. for the Doctrine of the Faith, there is also developing, especially among the young, a clear opposition against the

insertion of women into the existing framework of the clergy.

An observation published in *Le Monde* (25.12.1969) is significant on the subject: "They do not wish to inherit as such a condition and a responsibility which men are beginning to contest. Women do not have the vocation to pick up the broken pieces. They only think, together with many others, that it is the whole concept of the priesthood which must be re-thought." (14)

Conclusion

This latter attitude reflects within the Church life the second phase of feminism which is taking shape nowadays. The first claimed a place for women in the world of men; the second calls into question society as such, not bothering any more about the position that women might take in the society of men, but aspiring to another type of society in which each person would be recognized for himself or herself. These two movements are to be found in the Church. The first sought a place for women in the Church of men; the second goes with a realization that this Church of men is not at all a desirable place and aspires after the kind of Church that will become at one and the same time a Church of women as well as of men." (15)

According to a World Council of Churches document, women, because of their particular experience of oppression and the new insights they are receiving in the process of liberation, can often make a special contribution regarding participatory decision-making. They are exploring styles of leadership in which power and decision-making is horizontal rather than hierarchical, fluid rather than static. The Church, like the community, needs to receive this contribution, if it is to develop unifying and freeing structures. (16)

There are signs that women involved in evangelization could play a unique role in building this Church of the future. The situations mentioned, though tested in Brazil, can now be found all over the world, in developed as well as in developing countries, in the young Churches of Africa as well as in the oldest European ones. It is no longer a matter of a few exceptionally prophetic or charismatic women ahead of their times. It is the first wave of a tide that is slowly but steadily rising, without noise, without ideology, simply because circumstances demand it and congregations feel impelled to respond. (17)

NOTES

1. "Women, the Women's movement, and the Future of the Church", Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin (N° 56 1975, p.11)
2. Ibid. pp. 12-13
3. Mgr. Franco Biffi, "Woman in a Society of Global Dimensions: 1975", text drafted for the Study Commission on Women in Society and in the Church, published by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in "The Church and the International Women's Year 1975", pp. 117 - 160
4. Ibid. pp. 145 - 149

5. Ibid. pp. 153 - 157
6. Ibid. pp. 159 - 160
7. Pastoral Commission of the Sacred Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples, "The Role of Women in Evangelization", Omnis Terra (n° 75 March 1976 pp. 201 - 208)
8. Ibid. pp. 203-204
9. Ibid. p. 205
10. "The Participation of Women in the Work of Evangelization" - Recommendations made to the 1974 Assembly of the Synod of Bishops by the Study Commission on Woman in Society and in the Church, published in "The Church and the International Women's Year 1975" by the Pontifical Council for the Laity, p. 71
11. Sr. Marie Josée Dor, sa, "Woman and Mission - What will be the place and function of missionary sisters tomorrow?", Sedos Bulletin N° 15, 2nd May 1975, pp. 316 - 318
12. Sr. Ortrud Stegmaier, ssps, "Message without a Plan", Omnis Terra (N° 69, May 1975) pp. 305 - 309
13. "Declaration on the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood", published by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, (15 October 1976)
14. "Men and Women in Partnership in the Church and in Society", Pro Mundi Vita (Special Note n.21) p. 10
15. "Women and the future of the Church", Pro Mundi Vita Bulletin, op.cit.p 12
16. Extracts from Section V. "Structures of Injustice and Struggles for Liberation" (MCC Nairobi 1975), Church Alert (n.11, November-December 1976 p. 6
17. Sr. Marie Josée Dor, op.cit. p. 318

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Retraites Spirituelles Sur La Prière 1977 / Spiritual Retreats on Prayer

- Elles seront conduites par le Père Michalon à la "Maison Abbé Couturier", (+)
Chazay d'Azergues, 69380 Lozanne (près de Lyon), France.
4 July 6 p.m. - 8 July 12 a.m. Thème: "Nouveaux horizons sur l'unité des
Chrétiens". (+)
- 11 July 6 p.m. - 16 July 4 p.m. Thème: "sur La Spiritualité Oecuménique" à
l'Abbaye de la Rochette, Belmont Tramonet, 73330 Pont de
Beauvoisin (5 kms de la gare - ligne Lyon-Chambéry).
- 17 July 6 p.m. - 22 July 4 p.m. Thème: "sur la Spiritualité Oecuménique" à la
Maison Abbé Couturier, Chazay d'Azergues, 69380 Lozanne.
- Prix de pension 37/38 Frs par jour: Droits d'inscription 50. Frs.
Renseignements: à "Unité Chrétienne", 2 rue Jean Carriès, 69005 LYON, Tel: (78)
42.11.67.

SEDOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES 77/10

The Sedos Executive Committee met at Sedos on 9th May, 1977.

Present were: Fr. Frans Timmermans, cssp, Bro. Pablo Basterecchea, fso, Sr. Godelieve Prové, scmm-m, Sr. Mary Motte, fmm, Fr. James Lozé, sj, Fr. Joseph Lang, mm, and Sr. Joan Delaney, mm.

1. The Minutes (77/9) of 20th April were approved.

Matters arising

77/7 Item 6.5) - Since Sr. Francis Webster has given a talk under the auspices of Justice & Peace, it was decided that the Sedos Health Talk for 24th May would be a duplication and it is therefore cancelled. Sister is planning three meetings for the coming year.

- Sr. Kathleen Jobson, M.D., scmm-m, has been appointed to the post of Health Coordinator at the World Council of Churches.

- The Executive Committee extended its congratulations to Sr. Francis Webster on her recent appointment as representative to the Christian Medical Commission of the W.C.C.; and conveyed its gratitude to her for her work on behalf of the Sedos Health Group.

77/8 Item 4. - Sedos Agrimissio Project: Copies of Mr Waite's report are being sent to Sedos Members. Mr Waite will present a short report on the project at the General Assembly. The President has sent a letter to Mr. Waite commending his work but informing him of the decision reached at a recent meeting of the Executive Committee of Sedos and Agrimissio that the project will end as of March 1978, when the funding ceases.

77/8 Item 6. - Mrs. L. Cuturi is available for work as of July 1977. It was agreed that two or three members of the Executive Committee meet with her to finalize the appointment.

- Mrs Villa will begin part-time work (Tuesday & Thursday) in the documentation section until she finds a full-time job.

77/9 Item IIIa) Meeting on Angola: Nineteen persons attended the meeting on Angola held on 6th May at the Generalate of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Father Houdijk, cssp, and Fr. Verdijk, cssp, spoke of their recent visit to Angola.

2. MATTERS DISCUSSED

1) General Assembly

- a) Minutes of the Marxist and Human Rights meetings will be circulated with the bulletin.
- b) Discussion Questions and Panelists' names will be printed on coloured paper in the bulletin. Additional copies will be run.
- c) General Assembly Report - The panels will be taped using a separate tape for each one. Secretaries will also take notes. Sr. Godelieve has offered the assistance of one of her sisters. Panel moderators can go over the complete account to note salient points for the report.

- d) Liturgy - It was suggested this be related to the theme of the three panels. Names of celebrants were suggested.

2) The Bulletin

Fr. Lang went over the suggestions made in response to the questions in his report. The following decisions were made:

- a) Purpose of the bulletin - The bulletin is the organ of the Sedos Member Institutes. Its purpose is to stimulate thought and provide documentation about missionary trends for those in decision-making groups on a generalate level, in the hope that this will benefit those in the field. The bulletin is occasionally shared with Episcopal Conferences and mission related organizations.
- b) Subscription Policy - To generalates of Sedos Member Institutes -FREE. To members of Sedos Institutes outside of Rome - \$6 a year.
- c) Financial arrangements - The expense of the bulletin will be kept as a separate account, so the cost can be estimated yearly.
- d) Lay-out and material to be included - i) a yearly index to articles would be useful. ii) Using part of the bulletins for articles on one theme would be useful. The Executive Committee should discuss the bulletin once a year and see what themes emerge as a result of the contacts with generalates. iii) Articles should be arranged so they can be filed separately. iv) Documentation - Sr. Agnetta should be consulted on the best way to include this - résumés? quarterly lists? according to key words? Coloured paper might be used for documentation. v) French articles - It is hoped that more of these can be included in the future.

3) Executive Secretary's trip to Switzerland

- a) Plans for the proposal to have a Sedos office in Geneva: It was felt that use of the existing organizations there would be more desirable at present.
- b) Mission to Europe: It is planned to provide an occasion for Sedos Members to reflect together on this topic in September. Knowing what the Third World has to say on this is important.

4) Any other business

- a) Fr. Joblin, sj, of the ILO is in Rome and will visit the secretariat on May 10th.
- b) The Executive Committee approved the publication in the bulletin of a request for personnel for Bethlehem University.
- c) The Executive Secretary has applied for membership in the International Association of Mission Studies.
- d) Sr. Joan has been asked to participate in a renewal workshop to be given by the Sisters of Charity of Tilburg.
- e) The Executive Secretary will attend the International Conference on Sociology of Religion from August 27 to September 2 in Strasbourg.