

77/20

December 15th, 1977

This issue includes preparatory material on Women for the January Seminar/General Assembly. In the discussions which have taken place, one point that has been considered is New Models of Collaboration. The articles on women reflect not only the problems of our service in the light of woman's changing role but how we can cooperate in the ministry of service.

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Coming Events

January 9 (Monday) Sedos Health Group at the Medical Mission Sisters Generalate at 4pm.
 January 10 (Tuesday) Executive Committee
 January 19 (Thursday) Sedos Seminar/General Assembly at the Christian Bros. Generalate

Office closed from 23rd December to 2nd January inclusive

NEXT BULLETIN IS — 15th January 1978

M E R R Y C H R I S T M A S

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SEDOS - SERVIZIO DI DOCUMENTAZIONE E STUDI

TOPIC: THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN - Preparatory material for the January Seminar/General Assembly

THE WOMAN IN INDIA: YESTERDAY AND TODAY

by Helen Mendonça, F.M.M., India

"...When you hold your lamp in the sky
it throws light on my face,
and its shadow falls over you ..."

The song of the poet Tagore is a meditation on the destiny of the Indian woman. Yesterday the witness she gave even as she still does today is one of unassuming laboriousness, of hard sacrifice, of kindness and patience, hidden in the shadow but throwing light on the path of others.

Evolution of Woman's Role in Indian Society

The great adventure of Indian society has now reached the point of its history where it is constructing a modern democracy which unites its aspirations for economic, political, social and intellectual progress with its ancient traditions, enlightened and sustained at every step (at times disconcerting for Western observers) by the silent fidelity of the women whose role, century after century, had undergone a significant evolution.

'In ancient India' the woman was accorded a consideration unknown to women in other ancient civilizations: the Book of Upanishad speaks of the place of honour held by the woman in her family, and calls her the symbol of the 'heart', of the 'home'. Although education was then the privilege of the boy and the man, the young girl was encouraged to cultivate singing, music and the dance - arts which still have a place in the education of every Indian girl. Feminine education was not seen in the light of an accumulation of abstract knowledge, but rather in the formation of a mind capable of thinking, of judging, and trained to discern between good and evil. During this period, even though the woman was always dependent on 'someone', whether he be the father, brother or husband, she held a place of honour in her family and in society. "Where women are honoured, the Gods dwell" is an ancient dictum.

'In Medieval India' Moslems and Hindus lived in close contact with one another and common features developed in customs, lifestyles, art, music and finally traditions. It was through this contact with Islamic doctrine that the Indian women adopted the 'purdah' and began to live segregated from men, never appearing unveiled except in the strict intimacy of the family. This segregation was probably not observed by women who worked in the fields, nor in the villages; but it was certainly accepted and adopted by women of a

higher social condition.

Such a way of living was not only an obstacle to the development of a full and complete social life; it also precluded the isolated woman from forming an ideology of her own; and the children who spent the greater part of their time with women could not receive from them anything like a complete formation for a true social and family life.

'In modern India' it was the national movement for independence that finally drew thousands of women out of this pattern. Gandhi encouraged them to use the same privileges and the same liberty as the men in the struggle and the rejoinder. At first limited to a group of middle-class women who took off the purdah and threw themselves into the political and social movement of the Congress, it soon developed into a mass movement. When the greater number of men engaged in the struggle for independence were imprisoned, something surprising happened: the women left their homes, and assuming frontline positions, they replaced the absent men and took to the street the struggle of 'non violence', to the great surprise of the British government. These were women of the middle class who until then had lived in seclusion, and women of the fields and villages. They were ready to defy the government and foreign police, giving proof not only of courage and daring, but also of great capacity for organization that could not be ignored.

In 1947 when India became independent a Constitution was drawn up which officially broke down every social barrier, barriers which had prevented the complete development of the individual and the group. The Indian woman who already in 1920 had been given the right, though limited, to vote, was now the political and social equal of the man, and she assumed a more important role in the life of the nation. This role which in ancient India had already accorded her a place of honour in the family and in society, now took on a new dimension in the rejuvenated life of the country. Women of the élite were named to post of importance: ministers and ambassadors, governors of states. After university preparation every profession was opened to a large number, and to all was given the possibility of exerting more strongly their influence in the social, educational and health fields.

As 'this century nears its end' India is at grips with an evolution rapid gaining momentum, in which there is a formidable conflict between the values of one of the world's oldest cultures and those of the modern civilization built on science and technology. In this India in transformation the woman is invited to assume a new role, a unifying one, having its roots in ancient India: an invitation to encourage the spirit of adaptation to changing situations in village and city; to inspire hope as each day dawns, renewed in the strength of this adaptation in spite of the different and difficult circumstances lived and suffered; and finally to a liberty of spirit, the fruit of all this.

INDIA: MODERNIZATION AND MUSLIM INDIAN WOMEN

by Maya Vanti and Ralla Ram

In the post independence era Muslim society in India is at the crossroads. In the educated sections, there are indications of rational inquiry, new thinking, and modernization flickering on the road ahead. The path, however, is flanked and opposed by the orthodox 'Ulemas' (Muslim Divines) and semi-orthodox thinkers.

It is not easy for a traditional society to move from its accepted position wherein authority is established and well-defined in the 'pater familias'. In recent history traditions were broken down in a number of Muslim countries not by the method of discussion and argument but by a volteface. Turkey, for instance, is an example of a country in which a military leader like Kemal Ataturk exercised his power to put aside the prevailing Muslim law and replaced it by a civil code when he found the traditionalists incapable and unwilling to modernize it. In order to begin a new evolution he abolished old symbols like the wearing of the Farash or the veil and the Fez cap by men. In this way he ushered modernization into a tradition-bound society.

In Indian Muslim society the pace-setter was education, as no radical step could be taken to infuse modernization trend in their lifestyles. It was not by magic that Muslims in India could leap out of the rut of orthodox thinking. In the last decade or two (1950-1977) the educated Muslim community began to think for itself. The important question here is, what part are the Muslim women playing in this drama of change?

Muslim Women and Social Change

Visual observations which strike the eye such as a group of women standing shrouded under the cover of Burka (a cloak which envelops the body with a veil across the face) can be misleading. A survey of 140 Muslim women in the predominantly Muslim areas of Delhi reveals that there is a gradual shift from fixed notions of wearing the burka or the veiled apparel, accepting a second wife of her husband, or the acceptance of the Talag (sentence of divorce by the husband), to a position where the younger groups of women decline to go out with burka. Women of different age groups are resentful of the law which permits Muslim husbands to marry with ease for the second time, and disallows the wife who remains as the first wife, an equal divorce. In real life the situation is such that when a Muslim husband decides to marry again, he expects his wife to accept the situation and he allows her to have his name and occupy a portion of his house. But any resentment from the wife can bring him to the point of giving her the 'talog' or in other words a divorce without much compensation. There is awareness among different sections of women that something must be done to make the position of an Indian Muslim wife more secure. Muslim women who are students and who attend co-ed colleges are tending to discard wearing the veil or the burka as it hinders their social mobility and acts as a barrier between them and the moving world. This sets a tendency already toward socialism which is part of the modernising process.

New Attitudes

A recent survey carried out by the Regional Health Office, Southern Region, Bangalore, in a random sample of 500 Muslim women in the city revealed that 96% wanted a small family. As many as 81% of the women approved of family planning methods while only 15% disapproved of them on the grounds that the adoption of such methods was against their religion. Furthermore, after discussing family planning methods with their friends, a good majority (45%) wanted to learn more about them. This shows that in this area Muslim women have put aside the old concept of rearing a large family in the name of Allah, and that they prefer modern practices. But this applies to big cities and metropolitan areas where urban influences are strong and push women to the fore in matters of employment and civic work.

By and large Muslim women living in villages have an attitude of tacit approval to what men say. The attitude of change is voiced by a section of educated women who dwell in cities like Delhi, Bombay, Poona, Bangalore, etc. One such group was organized by the Indian Secular Society and a Women's organization at Poona in Western India on December 29, 1971. It called upon the Central and State Governments to take the necessary steps and to change the present laws of marriage and divorce for Muslim women.

Grievances on their social situation are also expressed by several educated Muslims in newspapers. A few of them pointed out that the Hindu Code Bill of 1958 put Hindu women on an equal status with men. Why should Muslim women stay behind (Letter to the Editor, Hindu Times, December 29, 1971). Another Muslim lady from Bombay said in an exclusive interview to a newspaper that in the new awakening taking place Muslim women were increasingly sensitive to their place in the social structures. They were eager to enter the mainstream of Indian life and get rid of old customs like the black tent of burka. It is necessary to know that there is a fine distinction between Purdah and burka. Purdah was observed by Hindu and Muslim women in cities and villages all over India, in the sense that it consisted of separate living rooms for women in the same house, while burka was worn physically in the form of a long drape by Muslim women only.

Modernity as an attitude has been taken up by another section of Muslim women who are middle class, but are living in the heart of cities away from the jet setters. Some of them who are housewives continue wearing the burka, as a symbol of conformity to the community in which they reside. Others working have given up wearing it and move about in the city areas with little or no make-up. They have gained their emancipation by applying their educational degrees to get employment. Those who begin to work as teachers, college lecturers or librarians have a certain sense of equality with their colleagues in the office. But there are very few Muslim girls in the office cadre of women e.g. office assistants, stenographers, secretaries, or telephone exchange personnel. Till Independence, this type of office work was the virtual monopoly of Eurasian (Anglo-Indians) but with the progress of women's education, office jobs are being done by Hindu, Sikh and Parsee girls. Christians form a minority group and Christian girls are advanced in taking to all forms of employment.

The Employment Issue

It is a recognized fact that the employment of women in large numbers in factories and their confrontation in terms of wages with the management gives them a plank for gaining equal wages with men workers. The poor section of Muslim women in the villages seldom migrates to towns to become factory hands. The observance of Purdah in the sense of their being segregated from men more strictly than women of other communities is a preventive factor. The poor Muslim women usually get employed as maid servants in the houses of better class Muslims. Those who shed wearing the burka sell vegetables and biris (local cigarettes) on the city pavements.

In the middle classes, the kind of work most acceptable to Muslim women is teaching. This might be true of women in many developing countries. But women have moved on to newer types of jobs and sought new opportunities in these countries. Indian Muslim women have been restricted from entering new fields by their traditions and customs which have weighed on them and had repercussions on their economic position. Statistics point to the fact that the largest number of primary teachers are Muslim women. But there are, however, exceptions to the rule, as individual Muslim girls have taken incentives from the new trends of emancipation drives amongst Indian women and struck out individually in lines of their own. There are few Muslim women beauticians in cities like Delhi and Bombay. A few are doing business through private firms. They are represented in television and broadcasting programs. But, unfortunately, the numbers are not large enough to establish any trend which might indicate that employment is used as a means of modernizing the community.

The nature of employment, also, determines at times the pace of modernization in employed Muslim women. The fact that the woman does a paid job does not liberalize her attitude. In most cases she has to give her entire earnings towards the upkeep of her family. School teachers, for instance are poorly paid in all state regions, except in Centrally administered areas. Hence, they have very little social mobility. There are other causes which restrict them, such as close attachment to the family, and taking permission from a male member. The librarian's job keeps a woman within the bounds of her privacy. The women who have come out in jobs in which civic or national participation is involved, such as legislators, administrators, business or office executives, are freer. More emancipated modernisation has been achieved in sections of educated and employed women, but has yet to involve the community as a whole.

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Excerpt from: " THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PRESERVING HUMAN VALUES "
by : Rose Marie Cecchini.

IMPLEMENTING HUMAN VALUES IN SOCIETY

A nation's cultural heritage is bestowed upon each new member of that society to enrich human life. At the same time, culture is embodied in the lives of all people who share a common culture and it is through these persons that living culture is communicated. Within our present century, as never before, the culture of each nation is being increasingly influenced by accelerated change from technological, scientific and other innovations. One of the most significant changes in the nature of social reality today is that things do not simply "happen" any longer in our society and world. More and more things are "made to happen" through organized planning and social engineering.

How do people in any culture learn to evaluate these far-reaching changes taking place? How do citizens participate in directing change? What criteria are used to differentiate the varied aims and goals of value systems which conflict? When clashes arise between economic or political values and those

human values which promote human life and environment, how are crucial human values upheld in policy decision-making? Each passing day reminds us of urgent global issues and concerns, instantaneous satellite communications also enable us to observe how one nation's crisis is not simply a domestic problem, but one that is tied intimately to relations with other nations as well. Thus it is no longer possible to live in personal or familial isolation, ignoring the real crises facing all members of the human family.

Education, housing, environmental pollution, employment, care of the aged, health care, rising cost of living, racial and sexual discrimination, growing crime and violence, pornography, drug addiction, diminishing national and world hunger, the nuclear arms race, human rights, the growing gap between rich and poor nations and world peace are some of the major issues which will require the unified effort, collaboration, creative ability and full human resources available among people of every nation, at all levels of society, if world-wide solutions are to be achieved.

Women are no exception to this, and in growing numbers today, they are actively participating in social changes which will insure the priority of their nation. Examples of groups in which women discuss social concerns and act together in response to the issue are many. Although the number of such women may still be a minority in Japan, Italy or the United States, they are, nevertheless, making a valuable contribution toward the revitalization of their societies through such groups as the federation of UNESCO Associations, citizens' groups concerned with environmental problems, consumers' issues, pollution, housing, labor, election participation, educational or legislative reform.

Women's innate sensitivity to human values, arising from their nurturing capacity and experience of fostering life, can have a transforming influence when introduced into social structural change within their respective societies. Basically, one of the fundamental causes of dehumanizing influences in society is due to structural lag, the gap between economic values and human values. Institutional changes which provide the goals and application of technology and science have pursued progress in terms of economic profit, political gain and national security. Unfortunately a low priority in policy-making has been given to human values, social justice, nonviolence, ecological stewardship and the participation of people in decision-making. Thus, today we are witnessing an ethical lag and absence of human values in domestic policy which is decided in the economic, political and social structures of society.

There is also another reason why women's direct participation in society is essential through such channels as profession, occupation, employment, volunteer work or participation in citizens' groups. Life-long education in a learning society is becoming increasingly important in order to cope with life today and the problems facing us in the 21st Century.⁵ While women may be academically literate, they also need to maintain social literacy. This implies not only that they are informed on key issues in their social environment, but that they are directly experiencing and responding to concrete social realities with other concerned citizens. This becomes a form of ongoing adult education within society which provides women with the experiences and channels for directing their energies, talents and time in a creative manner which holds personal meaning for them.

Women who, for whatever reason, feel isolated, alone, unfulfilled and powerless within their family and society, cannot hope to contribute toward a healthy home environment for their children. Maintaining a balance between family-oriented roles and society-oriented roles is assuming major importance for woman's own continuing human development. How each woman chooses to accomplish this will be part of the freedom we hope more and more women will enjoy in the world.

Notes

4. Toffler, Alvin - Future Shock. New York: Random House Inc., 1971
5. Learning to Be. (UNESCO Report on Education) International Commission on the Development of Education, New York: United Nations Building, Room 22001, 1972.

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ZAIRE: KINSHASA

Ministères d'équipe

L'APOSTOLAT

A L'INSTITUT NATIONAL DE PEDAGOGIE

EST-IL POSSIBLE?

par

Sr. Josepha Nduhirwe, Socur Blanche Zairoise

".. Voici les trois points que nous aimerions passer en revue:

- . Un petit aperçu sur les activités académiques de l'I.P.N.
- . Un petit aperçu sur l'animation spirituelle de l'I.P.N.
- . Les perspectives d'avenir sur l'animation spirituelle

1. Aperçu sur les activités académiques de l'I.P.N.

L'I.P.N. a été fondé par l'UNESCO en 1961. La mission de cet Institut est d'être pilote de tous les Instituts Supérieurs de Pédagogie (I.S.P.) de la République et d'insuffler un sang nouveau dans toutes les écoles tant primaires que secondaires du pays. L'I.P.N. remplit-il sa mission? Y répondre n'est pas de notre ressort. Mais pour s'acquitter de sa mission l'I.P.N. comprend trois niveaux:

- a) Le niveau du Graduat qui forme les Professeurs du Secondaire, cycle inférieur;
- b) Le niveau de la Licence qui forme les Professeurs du Secondaire, cycle supérieur;

- c) Le Centre de Recherche en Pédagogie Appliquée (C.R.P.A.) qui est le cerveau de conception, de publication, de critique des articles qui apparaissent dans la Revue de la Pédagogie Appliquée ainsi que de la recherche pédagogique dans l'amélioration de la méthode et des manuels employés en Primaire et en Secondaire.

L'I.P.N. reçoit chaque année un nombre accru d'étudiants. Cette année, nous avons environ 2000 étudiants, garçons et filles, mariés et célibataires, venant de tous les coins du pays et de toutes les confessions. Il y a aussi quelques étudiants étrangers venant surtout des pays limitrophes.

Le corps professoral est composé des nationaux et des étrangers, divisés en professeurs à thèse et en assistants.

2. Aperçu sur l'animation spirituelle, ces deux dernières années

Dès sa fondation, l'I.P.N. était un Institut laïque et même, au début, fort allergique à tout ce qui est religion. Peut-être, consciemment ou inconsciemment, cet esprit devait-il contrebalancer ou concurrencer à cette époque l'Université Catholique de Lovanium. En 1970-71, les autorités du pays décident de former une seule Université du Zaïre (U.N.A.ZA.) qui groupe en une seule institution les trois Universités du pays et tous les Instituts Supérieurs.

Jusqu'à cette date, aucun évêque ni supérieur religieux n'admettait qu'un de ses prêtres ou de ses religieux aille étudier à l'I.P.N. C'était un monde prescrit. C'est ainsi que des prêtres ou des religieux qui n'étaient plus en bons termes avec leur évêque ou leur Congrégation se réfugiaient à l'I.P.N. soit comme professeurs, soit comme étudiants. C'est ainsi que cet esprit non d'hostilité mais d'indifférence envers la religion commençait à devenir comme une tradition à l'I.P.N.

Avec la fondation de l'UNAZA, il n'y eut plus d'Université Catholique, ni d'Université Protestante, ni d'Université d'Etat, le tout formant une seule institution avec des Facultés différentes. Les étudiants et les professeurs se sont orientés vers la Faculté de leur option. Ainsi, l'I.P.N. a vu des religieux et des religieuses s'inscrire comme étudiants - avec autorisation de leurs supérieurs - ils pouvaient même être professeurs. Les circonstances avaient obligés les autorités ecclésiastiques à accepter cette évidence. Est-ce l'Esprit qui poussait son Eglise à s'ouvrir à ce milieu?

En 1975, amenées par des circonstances qui seraient trop longues à relater ici, nous nous sommes trouvées quatre sœurs assistantes à l'I.P.N.:

- . Sr. Kitembo, Sœur de Notre Dame de Namwa
 - . Sr. Nzenzili, Sœur Franciscaine Missionnaire de Marie
 - . Sr. Tshibola, Sœur de la Charité de Gand
 - . Sr. Nduhiraho, Sœur Missionnaire de N-D d'Afrique
- et dix-neuf Frères et Sœurs étudiants.

L'USUMA (Union des Supérieures Majeures) m'ayant demandé d'encadrer les soeurs étudiantes, je fis part à mes collègues de cette demande et nous avons décidé de nous encadrer mutuellement, Soeurs et Frères étudiants et assistants, dans notre milieu de l'I.P.N. car tous "nous devons témoigner de l'Espérance qui est en nous". L'idée de lancer des rencontres régulières entre ecclésiastiques de l'I.P.N. s'est réalisé avec comme objectif:

- . L'entraide spirituelle et la connaissance mutuelle
- . Le témoignage de l'Evangile dans le milieu I.P.N. avec les moyens concrets pour y arriver
- . De temps en temps, évaluer nos activités apostoliques à l'I.P.N. C'est à partir de ces rencontres que nous voyons pratiquement comment essayer d'introduire un esprit nouveau dans ce milieu - étudiant, en tant qu'étudiant, et professeur, en tant que professeur.

Après une année de sensibilisation (année 1975-76), à travers les cours et les rencontres personnelles surtout avec des étudiants et des étudiantes venant des écoles des Frères et des Soeurs, l'année académique 1976-77 a vu naître dans le coeur d'un certain nombre d'étudiants un désir d'approfondissement de la foi, de la prière, et une meilleure connaissance du Christ dans l'Evangile. D'après les différentes demandes, les groupes que voici se sont formés:

- . les Clairons - encadrés par Sr. Tshibola
- . le Cercle biblique (groupant surtout les étudiants mariés) - encadré par Sr. Kitewo
- . le Cercle biblique (groupant surtout des étudiants protestants) - encadré par M. Tshipungu
- . les Focolari - groupe qui fonctionne seul, mais qui manifeste le désir d'avoir un religieux ou une religieuse parmi ses membres.

L'aboutissement normal de tous ces mouvements de foi et de prière est la Célébration eucharistique.

Voyant l'ouverture inattendue des étudiants, leur désir de vie spirituelle plus intense, et à la demande de certains d'entre eux, nous avons pensé que le terrain était prêt pour l'acceptation de la Célébration eucharistique à l'Institut même. La fête de la Pentecôte s'offrait comme une occasion favorable.

J'ai fait des démarches auprès des Dirigeants de la Jeunesse du Mouvement Populaire de la Révolution (J.M.P.R.) pour en obtenir l'autorisation. Ayant eu 'feu vert', j'ai lancé un communiqué aux étudiants et grand fut mon étonnement de voir 60 d'entre eux y répondre nominalemment et individuellement. Le jour même de la Pentecôte, ils étaient plus nombreux. Un petit groupe s'est présenté pour assurer les chants car, disaient-ils, "c'est notre première messe".

Le R.P. Tsasa, maître des novices des Pères de Scheut, un homme spirituel et très indiqué pour parler à des universitaires de ce milieu, avait fait un sermon plein de profondeur, sur le rôle de l'Esprit Saint dans nos vies. Après la messe, les étudiants ont demandé que, à partir de ce jour, la Célébration eucharistique leur soit assurée chaque dimanche. Ce qui fut fait!

En voici la réflexion des Dirigeants de l'Institut et de la J.M.P.R.:
"Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas organisé cela depuis longtemps?"

3. Perspectives d'avenir

Le 19 juin 1977, nous, membres du groupe des ecclésiastiques de l'I.P.N., nous sommes réunis pour faire le bilan de notre apostolat et voir comment le structurer à l'avenir. Voici les conclusions:

Il faut que les activités commencées continuent et s'intensifient.

a) Les groupes (2) du Cercle biblique feront mieux de se mettre ensemble pour ne pas multiplier les groupes; cela permettra aux deux confessions de se retrouver et d'échanger autour d'un idéal commun. Ils seront animés par Sr. Kitewo et par le citoyen Tshipungu.

b) Les membres du groupe des ecclésiastiques devront aussi répondre à la demande du groupe Focolari.

c) La célébration de la liturgie à l'I.P.N. est un point essentiel sur lequel nous devons porter toute notre attention, pour assurer la continuité de la Célébration eucharistique et l'animation de la vie sacramentelle. Pour cela, il faut que le responsable de l'apostolat en milieu universitaire, au niveau national, nous donne un prêtre qui assure les services relevant du pouvoir même de prêtre. Animation liturgique et vie sacramentelle seront assurées par ce prêtre éventuel, par Sr. Josepha Nduhirahe ainsi que par d'autres membres du groupe des ecclésiastiques qui s'y intéressent.

Conclusion pratique

- Le travail d'animation du groupe des ecclésiastiques de l'I.P.N., qui permet d'atteindre les objectifs prévus, demande une certaine organisation matérielle:

Avant chaque rencontre prévue, il faut faire des démarches pour trouver un prêtre qui l'anime; aller discuter avec lui sur le thème proposé par les membres. Il faut encore faire des achats pour assurer le dîner de quinze à vingt personnes, ceci pour ne pas déranger la communauté qui nous accueille et aussi pour diminuer les frais de participation. Il faut aussi contacter ceux que l'on voit rarement.

- Pour assurer l'animation liturgique des étudiants, il faut être ponctuel, arriver à l'heure convenue, car ces derniers ont, en premier lieu, leurs études à assurer.

C'est ainsi que notre apostolat à l'Institut National de Pédagogie a donné ses premiers fruits et pourra se poursuivre avec la grâce de Dieu, car nous y croyons."

- Extrait du bulletin des Socurs Blanches, Allo? Frascati, Octobre 1977

(For another description of team ministry see "A Team Approach to the Youth Apostolate" by Marvin Deutsch..... available at the Documentation Centre.)

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NOTICES

Chapter News

* . At the recent chapter of the PIME Fathers the following
** elections took place:

****	Superior General	-	Fr. Fedele GIANNINI
***	Vicar General	-	Fr. Ruggero ALICINO
**	Councillors:	-	Fr. Lorenzo CHIESA
*		-	Fr. Filippo COMMISSARI
		-	Fr. Severino GRINELLA

*
**
*** For information on the James A. Walsh-Thomas F. Price
**** FELLOWSHIP for Mission Study and Research 1978-79

** Contact the Sedos Secretariat
*

* An English woman recently graduated from Durham University, and
** hoping to train for parish work in the Church of England, is
*** interested in working for one or two years for a Church organiza-
**** tion in Italy.

**
*

- If you wish to contact her, write to: Fiona Brampton,
St. John's College, Durham DH1 3RJ, England

WORK GROUP ON - NEW MINISTRIES WHERE THE ROLE OF WOMEN IS CHANGING

In the first meeting held on 22nd November the participants agreed that "ministry" is to be understood in a pastoral sense; that it is a basic role of women i.e. that they are not called to serve just because there is a shortage of ministers; and that ministry is to be considered in terms of those from whom it comes and those to whom it is offered. Education for ministry must include education for flexibility as needs continually change.

If new forms of ministry are happening among women in developing nations, we should identify the style, method, content, formation, etc., that have made them significant.

The Work Group concluded that the following points would be discussed at the 5th December meeting:

- . Collaboration in service (hierarchy, clergy, religious)
- . New forms or models of service which are emerging or have emerged
- . Education of men and women for collaboration in service

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The December 5th meeting elaborated the three points listed above: the need for full collaboration in pastoral planning; the need to reflect on ways to overcome obstacles to this collaboration, many of which are financial; the study of authority relationships which will be affected by a full, effective and recognized collaboration.

The need to be able to do an in-depth analysis of a situation is necessary to identify the existing models, and the emerging models of service. There needs to be reflection on what the role of women is to be in relationship to the needs of basic communities and the promotion of justice. Ministries, it was felt, should be recognized and accepted primarily by the community.

Education for collaboration has been helped by the more 'open' type training of younger priests and religious. It requires an emphasis on on-going formation since many were not trained for this style of working. In local congregations it may mean beginning with more emphasis on a higher level of general education as a formation.

These reflections will be incorporated in discussion questions on the theme of the Seminar

MISSION: OUR PRESENT RESPONSE MAKES THE FUTURE

M A R X I S MREPORT ON THE PREPARATORY MEETINGS

held on November 16th & 23rd

OBJECTIVE

To prepare for the January 19th, 1978, Seminar of Superior Generals of SEDOS Member congregations through meetings/discussions in small groups: to draw up questions and/or relevant points on the topic New Lifestyles in countries influenced by Marxism. Particular attention should be paid to the aspect of our service as religious/priests in those countries; and our response in the form of new lifestyles, to make our service more effective.

MATERIAL

SEDOS Bulletins: N°8 pp.181ff.; N°13 pp.329ff.; N°17 pp.429ff.
Most of the material published in the Bulletins provided summaries of the theory of changing lifestyles, and also experiences of those who have lived under Marxist/socialist conditions.

POINTS FOR REFLECTION

1. Search for new lifestyles is a phenomenon today; reasons for this search for ways to a renewed life; ecological reasons; attention to the great disparity between rich and poor (Social Justice).
2. In the Church the gospel values of simplicity and of looking for Christ among the poor; an encouragement to change lifestyle from the more affluent (excessive consumption?). Sharing with others.
3. In Marxist-influenced countries, new philosophies demand a reorientation of our lifestyle; restrictions on community, movement from place to place, etc. Rather than fear changes, we should face the new demands: what changes are possible towards more effective service?
4. Some positive values we can learn from the China experience:
 - . Simplicity -- no disparity between rich and poor; avoid waste
 - . Basic Needs-- there is not enough for everyone to live very comfortable lives (compare this with situations where luxuries are available at the cost of exploitation of others, or of misusing resources)
 - . Community over Individual

Discussion (16th November)

(It was pointed out that there is a reluctance on the part of religious with experience of Marxist situations to speak openly, and the group decided it would be best not to name the participants.)

While Communism in Russia tended to be dogmatic and less revolutionary, Cuba, China and African countries continued to stress the revolutionary aspect. In looking at Marxist situations one should take into consideration the stage of development of the country at the time of the takeover, the differences between the cities and the rural areas as well as the position of religion in general and Catholicism in particular at the time of the change.

If the Church is strong, it represents a threat and poses more of a problem. We need to reflect more on - what is the strength of the Church? Can a Church be strong without institutions, in spite of not having candidates to religious orders, with ^{no} formal ties between the Government and the Vatican? Can we identify a "strong" Church?

With reference to lifestyle in Marxist situations, the type of work presents several problems. In some Eastern European countries the government authorizes the work of religious, and if one works with youth, one can lose one's authorization. We give the greatest witness by service, by doing what others do not want to do e.g. caring for the mentally ill, the aged, the incurably ill. Witness can also be given when we have the courage to admit our religious status when it is not respected and may even lead to persecution. There is a need to stress the spiritual values over the material ones in both the Marxist and non-Marxist societies, since both are suffering from materialism - one theoretical, the other practical.

It was agreed to invite persons with experience of Cuba, Laos and Mozambique to the next meeting.

Discussion (23rd November)

1. LAOS - Communists took over two years ago. The same communist plan was used as has been used in other countries (e.g. Mozambique). Foreign missionaries had to leave. The sisters are doing good work in the villages. They live simply as people of the villages do. Meetings on Sunday would seem to be alright for religious groups but there are so many government sponsored meetings on Saturday and Sunday that it becomes impossible to go to Mass. The churches were taken over by the government and only one was left open. There are no qualified people for education because all the qualified people were sent to camps or fled the country. Putting great emphasis on WORK, the government gives extra money to those

who - arrive on time for work, work well, work joyfully, work to the end. The ministers, catechists, and sisters will help the Church to survive in LAOS.

2. MOZAMBIQUE - The development of "comunidades de base" has created a different situation in Mozambique. There is a nucleus of four or five families who meet. Five of these nuclei are a community. Five communities make a mission. Five missions form a small pastoral zone.

- The communists have set up certain "liberated zones" (communes) which are closed to outsiders. Here Communism is to be lived in its purest form. In some of these "liberated zones" the people are asking for prayer, etc. This brings great HOPE.

- Another area where hope comes is from the Health Services. There is possible evangelization or pre-evangelization through those who are involved in Health work.

3. CUBA - Schooling is for all: free, well-organized, but qualified teachers have fled the country. There is a strong program of indoctrination and only members of the Party may be teachers. In order to study for certain professions you must be a Marxist. According to the Constitution there is always freedom, but freedom is limited to Party members.

The Health Service is free for all the people. Only very few doctors have a private practice.

There is work for all (48 hours a week) followed by volunteer work. There is a pension system which includes all. Salaries are rather low but people have nothing to get even if they have money: everything is rationed. Housing is limited and there is a long and discouraging process in order to get it. Houses of religious are respected and not touched. Prostitution is forbidden. The divorce rate has increased. People are divorced and must remain living in the same house. There is no choice. There are many committees and many meetings. For some Committees you do not have to be a Party member. In general, communications are poor and the people do not appear happy with their situation. Every kind of opposition was eliminated in Cuba.

You get the impression that the Church is only for old people, but there are some active young people. Seminarians are not interfered with by the government. They go to work in the fields as other students do. The number of seminarians is small and, therefore, is not a threat to the government. Some days of recollection seem to be allowed. The Christian community can only meet in church. The Jehovah Witnesses are growing - they are free to say and do what they wish.

Cuba is isolated (as an island) and the Christians represent the traditional Church. There does not seem to be a group that does critical thinking. Printed matter from the non-Communist countries is considered subversive literature.

FINE

LES CATHOLIQUES AU SUD-VIET-NAM

par François Houtart

"
p.4...LES QUATRE ORIENTATIONS PRINCIPALES PARMIS LES CATHOLIQUES AU SUD VIETNAM

On peut, en résumé, définir de la manière suivante les principales orientations existant chez les Catholiques du Sud-Viet-nam. Toute typologie est évidemment artificielle et risque de simplifier les choses; mais il semble bien que les quatre groupes suivants correspondent à la réalité.

1. Le groupe certainement majoritaire est celui qui reste sur la défensive par rapport à la situation actuelle. Il faut se rappeler que les Catholiques avaient été fortement intégrés dans la vie culturelle, sociale et politique antérieure. Les préjugés anti-communistes étaient profondément enracinés et l'action religieuse avait, dans certains secteurs, été centrée sur la lutte contre le communisme.

Cependant, le groupe catholique dans son ensemble a été bien impressionné par la manière dont la libération du Sud et, plus particulièrement celle de Saigon, a été réalisée. Ils s'attendaient eux aussi à un bain de sang ou, en tous cas, à une répression sévère. Rien de tout cela dans le processus de libération, puisque le mot d'ordre était la réconciliation. Mais, peu à peu, ce groupe, comme bien des habitants de Saigon, a été déçu par le nouveau régime. En effet, la dureté de la situation nouvelle sur le plan matériel, la pénurie de vivres, l'austérité, tout cela a joué un rôle pour approfondir une certaine incompréhension vis à vis des difficultés concrètes de la reconstruction du pays. Il est évident que les gens sont sensibles aux aspects immédiats de la vie quotidienne et il est parfois difficile de leur faire accepter les explications rationnelles d'une telle situation. Par ailleurs, pour résoudre les problèmes urbains, il était nécessaire de transplanter une partie importante des populations vers l'extérieur, ce qui, quelles que soient les conditions concrètes dans lesquelles cela a été réalisé, est toujours une opération pénible. Enfin, certaines limitations mises à l'action idéologique des groupes religieux, ont été également considérées comme un élément négatif.

Face à tout cela, ces Catholiques sont inquiets pour l'avenir. Il est difficile de les convaincre de s'intégrer dans la construction d'une société nouvelle, car ils n'en comprennent pas toujours les objectifs, ni surtout les moyens utilisés pour y parvenir.

2. Le deuxième groupe peut être qualifié de groupe réactionnaire. Il constitue la minorité irréductible dans le catholicisme du Sud-Viet-Nam. Parmi eux se trouve une partie de l'ancienne bourgeoisie catholique, qui n'était pas numériquement très nombreuse et dont une partie a d'ailleurs quitté le pays. Il faut également y inclure un certain nombre de prêtres, anciens aumôniers militaires, ou encore ayant été à la tête d'organisations anti-communistes. Dans le diocèse de Saigon, il y a une cinquantaine de prêtres qui sont actuellement dans les camps de rééducation, la plupart d'entre eux étant d'anciens aumôniers militaires.

3. Le troisième groupe est celui d'un certain nombre des Catholiques qui étaient en désaccord avec l'ancien régime, mais sans avoir pris des positions politiques engagées. La plupart ont actuellement accepté le socialisme comme système d'organisation sociale et politique et considèrent que les Catholiques doivent collaborer à la construction de la société nouvelle.

Ils pensent qu'une place doit exister dans le nouveau régime pour les Catholiques ayant lutté contre l'ancien et acceptent un socialisme, peut-être défini de manière trop idéaliste. Leur référence semble être l'Eglise comme institution et ils estiment qu'actuellement le Gouvernement prend certaines mesures qui risquent d'aboutir un jour à son affaiblissement. C'est pourquoi ils estiment que l'appui à donner à l'Eglise institutionnelle doit, dans les circonstances actuelles, être inconditionnel. Il s'agit de taire la critique interne dans l'Eglise, car celle-ci est en position de faiblesse.

Ce groupe a pris parti pour les faibles, notamment en défendant les prisonniers politiques dans le régime Thieu. Actuellement, ils soutiennent les familles dont des membres se trouvent dans des camps de rééducation. Il se manifeste, chez un certain nombre d'entre eux, une certaine déception face au régime, à la fois parce que tous les Catholiques qui avaient été actifs dans l'opposition à l'ancien régime ne semblent pas avoir des positions privilégiées dans le nouveau, et à la fois parce qu'ils estiment que l'Eglise comme institution risque de ne pas pouvoir survivre de la même manière qu'auparavant. Cela pose évidemment tout le problème de la conception de l'Eglise et de celle du Chrétien dans la société, qui dans ce groupe ne semblent pas avoir été remises en question.

4. Enfin, le dernier est celui des Chrétiens qui s'affirment socialistes. Un certain nombre sont des prêtres qui sont actuellement engagés dans des responsabilités sociales et même, l'un d'entre eux, comme député de l'Assemblée nationale. On y retrouve les anciens aumôniers de la J.O.C. et de la J.E.C.

Ils estiment qu'il faut s'engager dans le processus de réconciliation, dans lequel la société nouvelle essaye d'orienter le pays. C'est véritablement une expression très fondamentale de l'amour du prochain

dans la situation actuelle. A titre d'exemple, ils donnent les mesures qui sont prises pour la rééducation des personnes engagées à des niveaux importants de responsabilité dans l'ancien régime. La politique consiste à agir par persuasion et non par coercition. C'est évidemment plus lent, mais, à long terme, c'est beaucoup plus efficace. La grosse difficulté pour le régime est l'équilibre constant entre le laxisme et la dictature. Une attitude trop dure ne ferait que provoquer la haine, et une attitude trop douce permettrait au contraire aux opposants de continuer à se manifester. Il faut surtout penser aux générations futures, et, par conséquent, autant que possible, de développer une politique de réconciliation.

Mais c'est là pour ce groupe de Chrétiens une attitude concrète et pratique pour l'immédiat. En fait, leur position va beaucoup plus loin dans l'acceptation du socialisme. C'est comme Chrétiens, estiment-ils, qu'il y a un apport à faire au socialisme. L'objectif est bien la construction d'une société nouvelle, et pas d'abord la construction de l'Eglise comme force capable de contrebalancer l'Etat socialiste. Il s'agit, au contraire, d'infuser le dynamisme de la foi dans la construction d'une société socialiste et, ainsi, de contribuer au plan de Dieu. "Nous nous engageons, disent-ils, comme Vietnamiens, avec le dynamisme de la foi, ce qui est profitable à la fois à la société: l'infusion d'une force nouvelle, et, d'autre part, à la foi, par l'approfondissement que cela représente."

Bien sûr, ils savent que cela doit se faire dans une attitude réaliste. Le socialisme n'est pas le paradis et, par conséquent, il faut être conscient de ce que signifie l'engagement que l'on prend et les difficultés auxquelles on va se heurter...."

(Extrait du Foi et Développement, N° 51, novembre 1977)

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