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SEDOS SEMINAR SPRING 1982 REPORT (I)

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coming Events:

SEDOS GENERAL MEETING

^ Missionary Presence in Marxist Regimes in Africa (Angola:
Mozambique)

Tuesday 18th May 1982, 3:00 - 6:30 p.m.
FSC Generalate: Via Aurelia 476

Meeting for Information and Exchange on the Importance of
UNESCO and the various forms of Christian Presence at UNESCO.

Monday 24th May, 16:00 - 18 hrs.
FSC Generalate: Via Aurelia 476

Yoga Meditation Course: 25th - 30th May: 4:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Center for Interreligious Studies
Via Martino V, 26B (Tel. 622.1676).

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MISSIONARY PRESENCE IN MARXIST ETHIOPIA

Godelieve Prové, SCMM

On March 2, 1982 I was present at the meeting of the religious of Southern Ethiopia, in Addis Abeba. J. Bonzanino, Consolata Father confronted the group with the need to participate 'constructively' with the revolution.

In his analysis of the present situation, he made the following points:

1. 2000 years of Christian Ethiopian history, heavily oriented towards the past, maintaining Coptic cultural traditions, did not prepare the way for any social change, far less for a revolution. In the shattering of the revolution, the missionaries were marginalized and confused. Nobody was ready for it, nor prepared for it.
2. We observe three different reactions to the revolution:
 - a) Orthodox Church : passive and resigned, sees herself as the guardian of Ethiopian Christian tradition, hence maintains the status quo, and has no capacity to contribute to modernization and change. She is a national symbol.
 - b) Catholic Church: a minority church, not encapsulated in Ethiopian culture, adopts a quiet, supportive role under the leadership of prudent men. For Westerners these reactions may seem too cautious, but where Western criticism and confrontation is not accepted, quiet questioning achieves a lot.
 - c) Protestant Churches: their radical reaction, confrontation and provocation, show courage of which the wisdom may be questioned. Accused of political involvement, it becomes impossible for them to continue their work.
3. Missionaries who have lived through the past 7 years of the Marxist revolution find themselves tired, disappointed, exhausted, uneasy with the labor proclamation which favors the workers and puts them in the class of the exploiters. They continue to live under the stress of government attempts to privatize religion, to prevent the teaching of religion in schools. They are determined to keep hospitals, schools, social work for the poor and handicapped as long as possible, while living with the uncertainty of how long that will be possible. In the meantime they have to find new forms and alternative ways of presence and prepare themselves for the time when all these works will be nationalized, for what may come...

4. Fidelity to mission, in a revolution, demands the announcements of the Gospel in a new cultural context, inculturation in the post-revolutionary society, participation in a process of radical transformation. Is there an evangelical approach to nationalization? -"let them have our coat", this is nothing extraordinary. Do we continue to justify private property? Can we justify it? Our suffering because of our democratic ideas (freedom of press etc) or because of the loss of private property, is NOT a suffering for the sake of the Gospel!

5. Re-education is needed in order to persevere in the face of these humiliations: egs. the Marxist slogans: 'he who works saves himself': 'people waste time in prayer'; and 'prayer is a threat to production'.

Our liturgy is anachronistic. Our Christian life needs to include work, participation in work, and that should become integrated in our liturgy. Revolution needs a new liturgy, one for a time when there will be no religion at all. What is needed most of all is kerygmatic sobriety:

- we need a sober new language (the Ethiopian religion is for the revolutionaries what the Swiss guards in the Vatican are for us: nice, but useless decoration).
- traditional festivities/events have little impact; they should not be overdone.
- no exuberance of activities, no provocation - but quietly going on under the auspices of authorities, in cooperation with kebele.
- buildings, churches, halls, schools cannot be power symbols. They should be simple and shared with other groups, for other purposes.
- our programs for development should reach out to the broad masses (cfr. SCRIS documents on human promotion AND the contemplative dimension of religious life).
- human work is a key to answer the social questions.

6. The Orthodox Church needs aggiornamento. The future of Ethiopia cannot be made without the Orthodox Church. Could we/should we help this church? Can we as outsiders, providing an element of universality, have an indirect influence? For this to happen, it is important that no expatriate personnel keep higher positions in the Catholic church. If these positions are held by Ethiopians in the Catholic church, there will be an easier mingling, influencing of the Orthodox. But for all this to happen there has to be a much greater mixing of local clergy and foreign missionaries. Unless local clergy and foreign missionaries mix, and there is greater mobility among them, there is no possibility for the foreigners to contribute to the revolution and to convince by what they are, and what they do.

7. Intensified ecumenism. This is the time for intensified ecumenism in order to present a united vision of Christians against the united vision of Marxists. Now is the time to make sacrifices towards unity before it is too late. Unity is a vital exigence in the face of communism. What can be expected is step 1: rejection and elimination of Protestant church
 step 2: elimination of leadership of Catholic church
 step 3: taking in of local Orthodox church.
 Evangelization however should go on within the ecumenical movement without proselytism or intimidation. The latter are evils.

8. Heart of the matter: a more just society in which
 each gives according to ability
 each receives according to needs
 following the Gospel, following Marx.

We have to show that there is no real justice or development without God. But for that to be possible, some drastic steps are needed:

- We are called to share our faith AND possessions: let us note the following:
- We missionaries are professionals in sharing faith but reluctant in sharing possessions.
- We do have houses, private rooms, cars...how many Ethiopians have all this?
- We have a right to the minimum indispensable as have all Ethiopians. Right now we still make a class in a classless society.
- There are no "rights of missionaries"---Paul did not use these rights.
- Young Ethiopians are fed up with our words, our excellent schools for privileged children, our spacious facilities, our resistance to take three shifts of pupils, or to let them use our buildings...
- We have only one full right: to Christ.
- It is not a right to belong to the middle class. Let Francis lead us.

9. Conclusion: Let us bring the good news to today's Ethiopia in a warm way, in an emotional way. The Ethiopian masses cannot be taken in a rational way, only by the heart, by a personal way. They are in need of a feeling compassionate God and Church.

AN EXPERIENCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Fr. Filippo Commissari, PIME

I was one of the 223 delegates who attended the World Conference of Religions on "Religions and Man" in Cochin, Kerala, November 15 - 21, 1981. I still remember the Conference as a pentecostal event.

At the end of the Conference, all the delegates came to a final consensus with a noble and inspiring "declaration". At the conclusion of that declaration you read these words: (n.23) "We go from this Conference as a family that has grown together by a living dialogue...(n.24)...As many of us believe, the Lord of all is calling us in different ways to help build up the teeming millions of struggling human beings into one great family of God...".

From my personal experience I would like to say that these words written in the declaration are sincere. They come from the experience of life and from the hearts of people belonging to different religions.

At the very beginning of the Conference, I came to know Doctor Bhagwant Singh Dalawari, a bearded Sikh. He was one member of the preparatory commission of the final declaration. We became friends and we were able to share very intimate experiences of our religious life and our dedication to others.

Bhagwant Singh is over fifty years old, but if you ask him his age, the answer is that he is eleven years old! He considers his conversion to God, eleven years ago, just like a new birth. Under the direction of his Guru, eleven years ago, he understood that God was calling him to start a new life.

At that time he was a government officer and had been working in France and in other countries in Europe for a few years. But at forty years of age, under the direction of his Guru, he quit his nice job ten years earlier than his retirement date, left his family and started to work full time in a hospital in Tapovan-Amrava-ti (Maharashtra State).

There, he is completely dedicated to the care of 1300 lepers - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, men, women, children - taking care of them like his own relatives without any distinction of age or religion.

Bhagwant Singh knows the prayers of different religions. In the hospital, sometimes he helps the patients, even the Christians, to come together and pray according to their belief and in their own prayers. He considers every body, no matter what their religion, or sex, or caste, what country or what status they belong to, as his own brother and sister. He is firmly convinced that RELIGION must make men and women totally liberated. The conception of religion he has in mind is not ritualistic outer symbols or ceremonies but the heartfelt love and concern for all human beings in terms of the simplest gospel description: "Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself".

My friendship with Bhagwant grew to the point that we felt the need to pray together and, before leaving, we declared to each other our unity living in the presence of God 24 hours a day, and serving people and giving our lives for the promotion of universal brotherhood.

Some considerations:

-Bhagwant Singh, as many others whom I visited in India in Ghandi and Vinoba ashrams are a visible sign of the work of God among non-Christians. These people live a deep spirituality and live the Gospel values.

-In different ways, these people are looking for God and for the Truth, with sincere hearts. They are committed to the service and liberation of men and women with great love.

-Among them I have experienced the truth of the words of Christ: (Mt. 18,20) "Where two or three come together in my name, I am there with them". And the words of St. Peter: (Acts 10,34-35) "I now realize that it is true that God treats all men on the same basis. Whoever fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him, no matter what race he belongs to".

NB.

In our Seminar which is designed to arrive at principles of preparation and formation for mission today, can we share if and how nowadays in our communities young missionaries are trained to live "a dialogue of life" with people of other faiths can we learn to cooperate with them in building up a new humanity based on universal brotherhood and Gospel values.

"HOW TO RIGHT WRONGS"

(Involvement in the struggle for human rights in oppressive regimes)

Fr. Ronald Larkin, MSC

Today two religious went "underground" to work more closely with guerrilla forces to overthrow a rightist, military government in a country in Latin America.

The country could be the Philippines or in Africa etc. The case is not unique, as an attempt to trace its history will show.

In the late 1960's and early 70's the missionary group, to which the two religious belong, had little social consciousness. Like many such groups, their main work was typical of parish missionary stations, routine office work, visits and sacramental administration. In the mid-70's, however, they begin to become more aware of the situation they find themselves in, and of their own relationship to it. They begin to feel they should do something to change the situation in which their people find themselves: underpaid, no chance for a better future, no one to whom they can appeal against injustices, etc. The missionaries begin to feel that their "traditional missionary presence" is not doing much to help change the desperate situation. They want to have a more specific kind of presence, a new kind of presence. They begin to help the people form cooperatives, to build basic communities, to teach the people about their own Constitutions, about the rights given to them by these Constitutions, about their value as human persons, etc. They begin to support the people in their courage to protest openly, to march, to demand to be heard, etc.

The typical reaction sets in. Threats are made against the missionaries, against the people, against the leaders. Repression follows, properties are destroyed, scare tactics attempted. Then come the killings, brutal, bloody and many. Six missionaries are among the slaughtered.

The missionaries discuss among themselves what they should do. They eventually decide to leave the country, feeling that they are unable to do anything but to get killed and perhaps cause others to be killed on their account.

They move to a neighboring country, but with no new, distinct missionary task. They begin to question their decision to leave the first country. They begin to argue among themselves about what they should be doing now, what course of action to take. Their Superiors leave the decision to them. But the group is split, with contrasting ideologies. A sense of hopelessness sets in, feelings of inability to do anything to correct the situation in the country which some feel they have deserted. They don't seem to be able to get others, including members of their Institute and its Superiors, to comprehend or "feel" the situation like they do. They cannot understand how so many people can let the situation continue, almost indifferent. Etc., etc.

Today two of them went underground...

The questions are many? How do you help prepare religious to confront or simply cope with such a situation? What kind of "tools" can you give them to help them deal constructively with such situations?

The situation entails a military regime which has "national security" as its basic stance, its fundamental justification for all kinds of repressive measures.

The situation entails a local hierarchy of bishops who do not live in the abject surroundings of most of their people and who in many ways are closer to the government than to their own people. The bishops do not seem to really understand what is going on, nor do they want to risk open criticism of the government. They are often, at first at least, critical of the work of the missionaries.

The situation entails religious Superiors who sincerely want to help the missionaries. But the Superiors are geographically and psychologically and intellectually and emotionally far away. Recognizing this distance, the major Superiors often think it best to let the missionaries themselves make such decisions as whether to stay or leave the beleaguered country, or about what kind of new apostolate they should take up when they arrive in the new country, etc.

The situation entails the missionaries, who have a sense of being alone in the fight, of being unsupported by their superiors, of being misunderstood by their fellow religious.

How do you help prepare women and men religious to deal with and function in such situations? How do you help such dedicated missionaries to cope?

EXPERIENCES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES

Introduction: *(Most religious Congregations of Sisters and Brothers formerly took their institutional apostolate with them when entering a Third-World country.*

In the years since Vatican II especially, religious, social and political developments in these countries have been read as signs of the times by religious many of whom have responded by moving away from former types of institutional apostolate to more flexible living and working situations. Three examples of these new ministries are given here).

1. MINISTRY OF PASTORAL PRESENCE: BRAZIL

Sr. Thérèse Mary Barnett, S.C.M.M.-T

In Brazil in the Diocese of João Pessoa the Sisters of Charity of Our Lady of Mercy started about twenty years ago with a "traditional" mission; hospital, school, clubs, catechetical work etc. and with an expectation of vocations which has never materialised.

After about ten years there was a change in the whole approach.

Life-style - the sisters now live in houses similar to those of the people; they form basic communities, non-permanent but prepared to move on after four or five years at the request of the Bishop. They are associated with other small communities in the diocese and meet regularly with them for reflection and evaluation.

Apostolate - although practically all the sisters are trained in some professional field they do not pursue any definite apostolate. From acting as "pastores" and leaders in the parishes they have moved more and more towards co-operation with the laity and clergy. When asked to state their apostolate for administrative records they simply say - pastoral work. This embraces work with young men and women seeking to devote themselves to religious life in some form; with catechists and other pastoral workers; with women's groups; with prostitutes; with all kinds of groups struggling for the liberation of the people from oppression and exploitation.

The General Council followed these developments and made the necessary decisions with regard to property etc. Also, the financial support of the sisters falls on the congregation as a whole through the operation of our Congregation Solidarity (Consol) Fund.

The decisions arose naturally out of the developments of the Church in N.E. Brazil and the desire of the sisters to become more fully integrated with the people.

At no time have we had more than twenty sisters in Brazil. In the twenty years since the foundation of the mission 22 sisters have lived and worked there for longer or shorter periods.

So long as we have sisters in Brazil the present trend is likely to continue. However, the high average age of the group has to be taken into account in any future planning.

2. MINISTRY OF LEADERSHIP (THAILAND)

Sr. Mauraid Moran, R.G.S.

Description: This is a Leadership Training programme for young girls from the very poor rural areas of Thailand. It is centered on the "Good Shepherd Centre for Social Awareness". From 1976 to 1980, 127 girls from remote villages have completed the leadership course and returned to serve as facilitators in small centers opened in their respective villages. Each serves in this capacity for two years and aims to pass on the skills to others.

Recent development: Thailand has 22,000 villages, one third of them in the very poor North East. A Good Shepherd group of 4 sisters rented a house in the center of the North East, Nong Khai, and from there they take the Leadership programme out to the villages, staying one month in each village.

Aim: The original aim was to stem the flow of unskilled and unprotected young girls to the big cities. A further aim is community development in the villages of Thailand.

Principles on which the Project operates:

- a) SELF-HELP: respecting the dignity of these people by evoking their own capacity for leadership.
- b) SELF-RELIANCE: It is not an expensive project in terms of big buildings or 'plant', local resources are utilized.
- c) The needs that are met are the people's own 'perceived' needs, not those imposed by outsiders.
- d) The Nong Khai development aims to meet the very poor on their own ground.
- e) It is designed to keep the 'animators' in touch with the real needs of the people they serve.
- f) It stresses the mobility of the 'animators' to avoid a dependency situation.

Special Formation Requirements for this Kind of Ministry:

- a) A capacity to learn dialects quickly.
- b) Adaptability to physical hardship, literal sharing of the lives of the poor.
- c) Base in relating to a great variety of people.
- d) Knowledge of social analysis and capacity to evoke leadership.

3. A MINISTRY TO THE UNDERPRIVILEGED:
REACHING THE UNREACHED OF VILLAGE INDIA

Bro. Benildo Feliciano, F.S.C.

DESCRIPTION - since 1974 the project has been a total approach to the needs of a boys' village and surrounding villages in a poor section of the State of Madras.

- housing and food are provided for 60 boys; a government school is available for their educational needs.
- roadside dispensary (health services).
- employment: training in handloom weaving provides a rehabilitation program especially for those who cannot find regular employment because of physical and other disabilities.
- housing: construction of 150 houses in 3 villages.
- education: sponsorship of 700 children.
- assistance: direct financial help to needy families and individuals.

Principles on which project operates:

1. Only through this approach can we help the truly needy, as opposed to providing school (education) facilities and opportunities to those who have homes, parents.
2. Really poor people need, before schooling, decent housing and food, employment, health services.
3. Total approach helps the whole family.
4. The Director, Bro. James' role:
 - project coordinator.
 - channels resources (personnel volunteers and finances) from donors to recipients.
 - accountability in use of resources.
 - training villagers to function as a group.
 - use of local resources whenever possible.
 - screening: to ensure that the really needy receive priority.
5. Aim - total independence of village unit.

Formation/Training Requirements: From the viewpoint of preparing missionaries for this type of apostolate the following should be taken into consideration:

1. the personal qualities of the man - ability to live alone in a culture and milieu that is alien to one's own culture.
 - ability to learn languages and understand other cultures.
 - ability to deal with people with a much simpler background and formal training.
2. administrative abilities - fund raising; communication; accountability; coordination of people, programs.

Finally, the training of a missionary should help him realize that his work is to bring about a sense of worth among individuals; a sense of values; and, the realisation that he is helping build up the Church through this type of developmental work.

A MINISTRY IN BASIC COMMUNITIES: ZAMBIA

Christine Middelhoff, sa

CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING UP TO THIS FOUNDATION

In 1974, on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of independence, the bishops of Zambia exhorted the faithful to become a self-reliant Church, one of the means to attain this aim being the building of small christian communities.

In answer to this appeal, and after dialogue between bishop Milingo and the Provincial Team of Zambia, a community of 3 White Sisters was established at Mandevu 5 miles from the centre of Lusaka, in September 1975.

Up to March 1975 Mandevu had been an outstation without a residing priest, but at that time a missionary was appointed to reside in the parish.

Motivations: Our sisters felt called to join the Mandevu people in their efforts to build christian communities and to assist them in the training of their leaders. They also wanted to share the different life of the people, - and by living a poor life themselves, give an example of living the Gospel as a community. First and foremost they had in mind, to proclaim Jesus Christ and his message.

SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

Mandevu was originally a squatter compound around an abandoned farm, but it gradually developed into a shanty-town of about 38,000 inhabitants at the time of the sisters' arrival. Children made up 59% of the total.

Many nationalities, tribes and languages are represented at Mandevu; there are even some Zairian refugees. The main languages spoken are Nyanja and Bemba. In general the people are poor; unemployment is widespread especially among the youth.

From year to year improvements are carried out: shanties are destroyed, piped water is laid on, plots are allotted to the residents, who then have to build their own houses.

Zambia is experiencing many of the difficulties, specially economic, which accompany the integration of countries in Africa into the present world economic order. Her geographical situation does not help. Conditions in her neighbouring countries, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Angola and Zaire affect Zambia's main source of income, - copper-mining.

The Sisters live in the midst of the people, in close contact with the lower income classes and experience the deterioration of the economic situation: soaring prices, queuing for all essential commodities, black market, increasing unemployment and crime rate, etc.

CHURCH SITUATION

In 1975, about 20% of the population was estimated to be baptized Catholics, but very few of them actually practised their religion. About half of the christians lived in irregular marriage situations and most children, - up to the age of 16, - had never been admitted to the sacraments, although they had been baptized. Up to then, Mandevu had been part of one of the 17 parishes of the capital, Lusaka, a city of half a million inhabitants, speaking 9 different languages.

Mandevu parish as such is much too big to be run efficiently according to classical parish structures and so, it was decided from the start, to establish small basic christian communities of 30 to 40 families each, the leaders of which were to be chosen by the people themselves.

At the time of the Sisters' arrival until 1979 there was a parish priest who was in sympathy with the basic community approach. On his departure the Sisters were responsible for the parish for a period of seven months after which time a new parish priest was appointed. He did not reside in the parish, had no experience of basic communities and favoured a sacramentalistic pastoral approach.

There are only 7 African priests in the archdiocese and priestly vocations are rare; young men who finish higher studies, are attracted by well-paying jobs in the industries and in government functions.

WAYS AND MEANS OF CARRYING OUT THE APOSTOLATE

- Regular group meetings.
- Gospel sharing in the communities.
- Training of leaders through sessions:
on marriage guidance;

- for "alangizi", that is women councillors who volunteer to give young boys and girls a human and christian formation,
- for voluntary catechists,
- for members of the liturgical team,
- for prayer leaders,
- for the community leaders and church elders,
- Teaching of catechumens,
- Animation of youth movement, Legion of Mary, etc.
- Hospitality.

Besides this pastoral work, there is the social aspect of the sisters' activities, keeping in mind the development of the whole person. One of the sisters has organized sewing classes for women, with the aim of training leaders, who in their turn can teach others how to sew. Gradually these sewing classes developed into courses where, besides sewing, hygiene and house-keeping were taught.

HOW THE WORK IS DEVELOPING

The main aim kept in mind by the sisters was the living of a christian life and responsibility for Church life being gradually but actively assumed by the local christians. With this in view, the sisters' work, be it pastoral or social, is geared towards deepening the faith of the christians, so that the Gospel may become for them a challenge in their daily lives.

In 1977 after two years, the sisters noted in their annual report that 18 voluntary teachers, mostly parents, were teaching catechism to the children of school age and a lay man was preparing the children for First Holy Communion. One of the women teachers was in charge of the different administrative tasks, like registration of attendance. Members of the liturgical team were reported to be assisting the sisters at prayer meetings, attended by up to 300 children. Bible sharings for young girls were co-animated by one of them. As for the sewing clubs, 9 women trained by the sisters, were actively involved in teaching sewing to other women in different areas. The sister-in-charge reports that her presence is a mere "moral backing", the leaders being able to take the running of the clubs in hand. Later reports speak of great changes in the families concerning hygiene and child-care.

In 1978, the report speaks of 24 christian communities established in the parish and mentions 40 women councillors, "alangizi", who take charge of the christian "initiation" of young girls and boys into adulthood. Liturgical group members are being trained as prayer leaders, readers, choir masters, ushers, commentators, etc.

In 1980, they are reported to be preparing baptism - and marriage celebrations. As for the youth movements, the responsibility for animating the boys' section is gradually taken over by a young man and a lady takes the girls' section in hand. (1979-80)

Quote from the 1980 report: "The christian communities become more and more aware of their vocation as christians and more and more self-reliant. We realize that through their regular meetings and the sharing of the Word of God, they grow stronger in their faith and their christian commitment."

In 1980, a Seminar on Development was organised for the women-leaders, with the aim of conscientising them in face of certain unjust situations in the compound and in their lives in general. This year also, the training of marriage councillors was intensified through reflections in depth on christian marriage in the African context of today.

SOME IMPORTANT ASPECTS.

Collaboration: With the residing-parish priest the sisters met regularly for planning and evaluation. They met weekly for shared evening prayer, followed by supper together. The sisters took part in the deanery meetings held once every two months. Further, they collaborated with the Zambian Association of Sisterhoods (ZAS), and, for social work, with the community development officer or ward-councillor.

Difficulties: On the part of the christians: lack of social political responsibility and of involvement in a changing society; too passive and attitude in face of unjust situations. Youth, especially boys are difficult to reach. Many problems of youth, are connected with those of family life. The population is shifting consisting mostly of immigrant and uprooted rural people. There is a high drop-out rate among the boys after First Communion in attendance at catechism lessons. Frequent changes in personnel: sisters on home-leave, sick-leave, "Ter-tainship" etc. The parish priest may have no experience of building christian communities and have different views from those of the sisters concerning the parish apostolate in a developing city. Insecurity caused by theft. The sisters had to leave their house temporarily and when they returned later for the sake of safety, they reluctantly had it surrounded by a wall and had doors and windows secured.

After 5 years experience, the sisters realistically note, that a total community of destiny with the poor is beyond their capabilities and strength.

There are tensions between: The need for efficiency and the concern for friendly human relations. The desire to attain perfection (not to say perfectionism!) and the concern to give more responsibility to the lay leaders, taking the risk of "allowing" them to make mistakes. Proximity and security. Hospitality and the need to build a praying religious community. The apostolate and community life.

Attitudes needed: Willingness to live according to a poor life-style. Readiness to live close to the people, accepting the inconvenience resulting from such proximity. A desire to work as a team in co-responsibility. Readiness to let go the reins and to work oneself out of the job. An attitude of listening, as this type of work requires very attentive as well as very discreet assistance, while people are progressing along the road of faith.

Formation needed. A thorough grounding in scripture in view of building christian communities around the Word of God. (Two sisters followed a 2-year course at the "Ecole de la Foi" of Fr. Loew in Fribourg, Switzerland.)

Training in interpersonal relations, in view of building a solid community life among the sisters, comprising frequent reflections and evaluations on matters of faith and concrete apostolic situations.

Deepening of faith- and prayer-life.

Study of the language(s) and the culture of the people.

In-service training through study of the AMECEA documents, through sessions organised in the diocese: on liturgy, on building christian communities, etc.

QUESTIONS:

- 1) Has the time come to leave Mandevu to lay leaders and to move on elsewhere? Can lay people be prepared in 4 to 5 years, to take over a parish of such a size and with such a shifting population? When in the history of the Church has this occurred, except in situations of urgency? Does such a situation exist now?
- 2) Not every sister is able to function in a Mandevu-like set-up. Are there enough sisters available, who have the necessary strength and talents to continue this insertion for a few more years?

LES "PORTEURS" DE LA MISSION DE L'AVENIR

S. Lindemans, cicm

(This paper was presented by Steve Lindemans. It does not deal with a specific mission situation but raises the fundamental question of "How are the Missionaries of the Future".)

Parlant de la formation pour la Mission de l'avenir, il convient de tenir présents quelques faits qui affectent intimement cette formation. Il appartient au Séminaire et à chacun de nous d'en tirer les conclusions qui semblent s'imposer.

1. Le centre de gravité des nouveaux membres de nos Institutes ne se trouve plus en Occident, mais dans les Eglises des "Jeunes Nations". De plus en plus, il ne s'agit plus de missionnaires venus de pays riches, de culture occidentale, de race blanche, mais de missionnaires des Jeunes Nations, de culture, de race et de sensibilité asiatiques, africaines, latino-américaines. En outre, les Eglises des Jeunes Nations envoient déjà des prêtres "fidei donum" dans d'autres nations, ou ont fondé leur propre Institut Missionnaire National (Tanzania, Brésil, Philippines, Nigeria, India ...)
- Nous qui sommes présents ici venons encore en grande partie du monde occidental.

2. Le choc des cultures et la difficulté d'intégration seront au moins aussi grands pour les "nouveaux" missionnaires que pour les missionnaires "occidentaux". Durant la formation, il faudra affirmer et confirmer les jeunes pour leur valeur personnelle et les richesses de leur lecture de l'Évangile (éviter le danger du mimétisme du type de missionnaire occidental), tout en soulignant la relativité de beaucoup de choses.

Il appartient à nous, missionnaires d'aujourd'hui, de préparer les Églises locales dans tous les continents, à accueillir les missionnaires venus d'une culture non-occidentale, pour que ceux-ci se sentent acceptés et soutenus.

3. Dans les pays de plus en plus nombreux, s'installent des régimes autoritaires, de gauche ou de droite, qui souffrent de moins en moins les prises de position indépendantes de l'Église - à plus forte raison si celles-ci viennent de missionnaires étrangers (Burundi et Guatemala, pour ne citer que des exemples récents). Ceci est vrai aussi pour des missionnaires non-occidentaux.

Les missionnaires étrangers sont plus vulnérables, en un certain sens, mais d'autre part ils jouissent de certains avantages. Comme ils ne sont pas liés par des liens familiaux à certaines traditions, ils peuvent - proclamer plus librement les valeurs évangéliques. En outre, ils sont couverts jusqu'à un certain degré par la protection diplomatique. Ces prises de position doivent toujours être "d'Église", pas d'individus.

4. Prêtres et religieux des Jeunes Nations souffrent de moins en moins que nous, missionnaires étrangers, Nous nous parons du titre "missionnaire" - titre qui ne leur a jamais été attribué - tout en faisant le même travail qu'eux. Il faudra vivre davantage la particularité "missionnaire": première évangélisation, situations de frontière, enrichissement mutuel entre Églises-soeurs.

5. L'impuissance que tous ressentent devant les réalités du monde. Qui est "le porteur" de la Mission de l'avenir? A la racine apparaît Celui qui poussait les missionnaires dès le début sur d'autres rives ... Qu'en est-il?

Les "porteurs" de la Mission d'avenir ne sont plus à considérer uniquement dans un monde de religieux ou de prêtres...

6. La crise et l'impuissance d'une humanité qui se veut unie entre-temps se sent déchirée. Est-ce lieu ou cri où le porteur de la Mission est appelé à s'exposer, à vivre?

REPORT OF THE SEMINAR GROUP DISCUSSION

(Participants at the Seminar formed five groups (one Italian speaking, one French, three English) to evaluate the situations presented in General Assembly. We attempt to isolate here the salient points which arose from these group evaluations.)

(I)

MISSION AND MARXIST OR NATIONAL SECURITY IDEOLOGIES

The Seminar dealt first with the situations involving mission under a Marxist or a National Security military regime (see pages 143 and 147 above).

1. Social analysis of the situation both in its local and wider dimension can no longer be regarded as an optional element either in preparing people for mission or in living out the missionary vocation. Missionaries need to make serious, well informed and up to date study of the major political, economic and social systems that underpin the international order today.

All our actions have a political dimension. Missionaries must be sensitive to this and to the implications arising from it specially when they make an option for the poor.

The need for social analysis was perhaps the most frequently stressed element which emerged from the group evaluations. This entails a knowledge of the tools necessary to make such an analysis.

The social aspect of sin was also stressed and the need for an awareness of how this stands in the way of God's action in the world.

2. Many emphasized the need to have a "person orientated approach," to the apostolate. The Kingdom of God is already among us and the values of the Kingdom are paramount. The Church is a sign of the Kingdom and this is the touchstone of its truth. It is also a pilgrim Church and may be at times a counter-sign of the Kingdom.

The challenge facing Christians who make a prophetic stand today may well lead to martyrdom. Can one expect this stand of others if the missionary himself or herself is unable to face the same outcome? It is a fact of life that one who makes an option for the poor, or identifies with the poor runs the risk of being regarded as a "political communist". It is equally certain that one who makes an option for the defense of basic human rights and justice runs the risk of being persecuted.

3. There is no "mission spirituality" which is not related to the situation in which one lives. The concrete circumstances of the future situation cannot be foreseen in detail but the overall patterns can be identified and the required attitude incalculated.

To live out the prophetic role of a missionary religious in these situations requires an intimate relationship with the person of Christ. This demands a prayerful study of scripture, the record of God's intervention in the story of mankind culminating in the person of Christ. It demands also a close relationship with the people and their culture and an awareness of the factors involved in change.

4. Living in a revolutionary or oppressive situation is a great strain and it is a fact of life that in such situations people will judge differently the prudential action to be taken. It will not be possible to arrive always at consensus. It may be necessary to work with like-minded people. As someone remarks: 'If Jesus had waited for consensus he would not have ended on the cross'.

5. Nevertheless the role of the community is paramount. Consultation with the 'group' or community is an essential element in the process of discerning what action should be taken or can be taken. This entails that the community also should be in touch with the situation. Ideally it should be possible for the individual and perhaps a small community to withdraw to some distance from the situation for prayerful reflection and discernment. This is not always possible. Hence the importance of supportive communities, of well-informed and understanding Superiors, and of regular lines of communication between provincial houses or Generalates and persons or communities involved. We should give priority to being "communities of reconciliation" in so far as this is possible.

6. Living at ease with people in a person-to-person relationship, living the gospel values, sharing the life style of the people, their anxieties and cares and sufferings, being simply "with them", accompanying them - may well be much more important than being recognized for our professional skills. Hence the priority to be given to participation in small basic Christian communities in which the person retains his or her personal value and dignity, where people come together, reflect together and take risks together.

7. In situations where a Marxist ideology prevails can we not relinquish our security so often based on esteem, possessions, power, foreign connections, for the sake of the kingdom of God instead of being forced to give these up? Would this not be a return to the freshness, the enthusiasm and the radicality of the founders?

8. Serious ascetical spiritual and fully human formation, personal grounding in the word of God, contemplative prayer, are all stressed as indispensable but it is equally remarked that there is no adequate spirituality which is unrelated to the situation in which one lives. The missionary's experience of faith in God and the love of God will be articulated generally through other people.

9. Hope may well be the key virtue for to-day's disciple.

10. The all embracing phenomenon of rapid change is an inescapable part of mission to-day. One cannot ignore change or avoid being involved in it. Increasingly, to remain neutral is already to take a stand. Thus, the Ethiopian situation, for example, poses questions of helping 'aggiornamento' in the social and economic life of the country: co-operation

with the Orthodox Church; constructive participation in a revolutionary situation; defense of religious and human values and rights; and, of course, renewal of one's own religious-missionary life in accordance with the values of the Kingdom. The practice of religion may become purified by experiences like those in Ethiopia, Benin, Mozambique.

11. Consider whether the opposition is really directed against religious values or against perceived structures of power and wealth and an attitude of foreignness and lack of sympathy for the new regime. Such may well be the perceived image of the Church.

12. Missionaries must take a non-violent stand in accordance with the gospel message. But it is precisely the pursuit of Gospel values which prompt some to become involved to a greater or lesser degree in violent struggles for justice. Our concern should be for the persons concerned. Condemnation will achieve little. It is important that the persons concerned have contact with a community that is understanding and sympathetic while not necessarily agreeing with the decisions being taken.

13. Information is also important: on directives from the teaching Church and from the congregation or society; on the findings of an analysis of the local situation, and the broader social and political issues.

14. There is need for continuous reflection and community efforts to discern the demands of the Gospel in given situations. There must be respect both for subsidiarity and for the directives of legitimate authority.

15. African Marxism will find a middle road if it is left alone to develop according to African cultural patterns. The question is whether it will be allowed this liberty by the great centers of political and economic power. Fr. Arrupe's letter to the Jesuits concerning the possible use of Marxist analysis is still a most valuable guide.

Formation and Preparation:

16. Important elements of formation include the following:

A knowledge of Marxist and national security-ideology and their value systems. This should be as concrete as possible.

Practice in community discernment and the skills necessary to listen to "the other", again based on concrete situations; e.g. in the formation community taken in the wider sense.

Formation in theologies of liberation.

Understanding the Roots of violence, both terrorist and institutionalized.

Formation to the varied responsibilities of the people of God (people of the Gospel), for example, the roles of Bishops Conferences, Conferences of Religious, lay organizations, basic communities.

Formation to witness to accompany, to be willing to risk persecution and death, to relinquish control, to speak and to do the truth in following Christ.

(2)

SALIENT POINTS EMERGING FROM THE DISCUSSIONS
ON NON-INSTITUTIONAL MINISTRIES.

(see pages 149-156 above)

Suggested Requirements for Participation in Non-institutional Ministries.

1. An ability to learn the local language and willingness to take time to do so.
2. Maturity is required to ensure the ability to live and act independently, to be self-reliant.
3. Adaptability in coping with material difficulties, flexibility and acceptance of the temporary nature of some new apostolates.
4. The ability to work in a team.
5. The ability to form leaders and communities that will be self-reliant, to avoid an attitude of superiority and ethnocentrism.
6. Awareness of the value of one's own formation and the expression of this culture. Awareness likewise of the need for contextualization of the gospel message in mission. One excellent school of inculturation is awareness of the acceptance, understanding and toleration received from local peoples.
7. Ability to live with frustration - to be aware of the "success-orientation" of Western culture and its bias towards progress measured in quantitative growth.
8. Readiness and ability to share the life of the poor.
9. Being people of deep faith. The basic question for both the disciple and the hearer of the message is "Whom do men say that I am?"
- 10: "Cool nerves, perpetual optimism and an unshakable faith in human nature."

Suggested Elements of Formation 1. A formation in which people are encouraged to develop their own talents and which helps them to discover the talents present in others and to encourage their development. rather than an authoritarian style of formation which trains people who establish authoritarian relationships.

2. Preparation for new developments in ministry envisages new needs and new situations continually arising. Solid basic spiritual formation underlies preparation for recognising or taking on these ministries in any particular situation.
3. Recognize that the future missionary will very often not be from Europe or N.America.
4. Make a concrete experience of a missionary assignment during the preparation process.
5. Prepare for mission situations in six continents, for life in international communities, in inter-congregational and mixed teams. The importance of communications.
6. Recognize the importance of non-verbal communication based on the recognition of cultural values, of sympathetic listening and of simplicity in life-style.
7. Prepare for basic communities, recognizing their spontaneity and the different forms which they take according to the local needs. Recognize and guard against the tendency to control them. Great flexibility of adaptation is required.
8. The demands of inculturation to-day call in question many of our traditional patterns of formation but there may still be many Congregations having few or no "non-institutional ministries". So there is a challenge to risk preparation for these new situations in formation programmes. There is also the need to organize programmes of continuing education for those already formed and to integrate younger and older persons. The deeper challenge here is not one of intellectual achievement but of a change of heart.
9. In terms of formation it is not so much a preparation for a particular situation but rather preparation for
 - a) change, mobility, insecurity with concomitant frustration and tension;
 - b) interpersonal relationships and the ability to be oneself in a community or group. One should experience the **missionary** as a person knowing and experiencing Jesus and communicating the values of Jesus in her/his life;
 - c) living a faith that is incarnated, that is often put to test and **expressed** frequently in readiness to let go, to move on, to share in death and resurrection;
 - d) dependence on what the local situation offers in terms of finance and resources without too much **recourse** to "aid".
10. In practice formation should include:
 - a) an exposure to cross-cultural situations, to the hardships of adjustment to another language, culture, church model, to structures over which we have no control;
 - b) an exposure to different situations as a help to discover one's personal charism, always in dialogue with the local church and with the religious institute, and at times including a situation of conflict that may exist within the local church and religious institutes;

- c) a community context, in which real life situations are lived out, in which the members are truly involved and through which there is an opportunity to test the ability to develop relationships and to become a community with others in the widest sense.

The Ecclesial Dimension. 1. The ecclesial dimension should not be overlooked. With the ending of a unified model of the structure of the Church and the development of a plurality of forms the problem arises of ensuring continuity for new ways of presence at the mission level. Will it be possible to find people willing to take the place of the initiators of new experiences when they have to leave. The missionary does not fulfil only his or her personal vocation but is also the instrument through which the vocation/mission of the Church is implemented. Hence the importance of team work; of communitarian projects; of individual efforts being in contact with the wider community; of entry into the pastoral planning of the local Church.

2. Some of the conditions^s within which new ministries develop are:
- a) the missionary's prophetic role is not necessarily accepted or recognized by the local Church;
 - b) the local hierarchy, local clergy or local people may have different priorities - hence the need for dialogue and mutual search.
 - c) the local people's understanding of the missionary of the past may distant their expectations and be an obstacle to their understanding of new ministries.
3. We must acknowledge the reality of intra-Church conflict and distance ourselves from the illusion that there is no conflict within the Church. Christianity must be an true praxis of the Gospel. The Churches may be weak but their trust is in the power of the Lord. We have to develop the ability to cope with conflict both inside and outside the Church - or the Congregation. This entails more willingness to arrive at decisions based on group discernment and less reliance on individual judgements.
4. Spiritual formation at the individual level leads to faith in oneself in God and in others. There will be less "lone rangers" and more need for team work - work not for others but with others. It is well to remember: "God can cope" and "I am not God!"
5. Development of new ministries need not cause a confrontation between the new and old forms. Charismatic and hierachical ministries are complementary within the ecclesial community. It is important to note to-day the new discovery of the value and dignity of the individual person and the rejection of anonymity.

The Institutional Dimension. 1. There is a need to take deliberate steps at administrative levels to re-direct resources towards non-traditional apostolates, specially towards poverty programmes. This will almost certainly involve painful decisions about priorities.

2. One Group reflecting on these non-institutional involvements came to the following assumption with regard to institutions;

- a) that many old institutions which grew and developed over the years have in fact become institutions catering to a privileged group of people and are less relevant to missionary involvement today.
 - b) that a number of these institutions can be transformed/re-oriented and become once again a relevant missionary presence and involvement.
 - c) that new types of institutions must emerge from new situations and new involvements and that we should remain open to this.
 - d) that more and more frequently outside circumstances will force us to leave institutions, whether for political or financial reasons.
 - e) that there will be an increasing and continuing trend for non-institutional involvements.
 - f) it is necessary to research and prepare for work within local existing structures/institutions, whether of Church or government.
 - g) to work in non-Christian structures discovering the Gospel values within them and within structures over which we have no control.
3. Within Congregations/Institutes all will not be capable of these new roles. A choice of persons must be made, but the whole institute should be involved in a certain common process of discernment by
- a) listening to what is happening at "the periphery" - at the "grass-roots" level
 - b) conscientising the general body so that these projects become congregation projects - even if many cannot undertake them personally.
 - c) planning a new style of initial and on-going formation.

The Report of The Seminar will be continued in the next Bulletin on 1st June.
