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SPECIAL ISSUE

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SEDOS SEMINAR  
SPRING 1982  
REPORT (II)

In this issue: This issue completes the Report of the Sedos Seminar held at Villa Cavalletti from 10th - 13th March, 1982.

There are also three short articles that have a special relevance to the Seminar theme: Thomas Michel writes about Education for Dialogue, Father Panteghini shares his experience of a recent visit to Mozambique and there are some interesting comments on the difficulty of bringing about change.

Due to the strike at Rome airport on 17th and 18th May, Fr. Quirinus Houdijk, one of the speakers, was unable to come from Amsterdam to Rome and the Seminar on Mission in Marxist Regimes in two African countries was cancelled. We have an alternative date for the Seminar - 18th June 1982 but we will confirm this at a later date if we can make the necessary arrangements. We regret very much any inconvenience which you may have been caused by the cancellation.

Note: The French text of the Report on the Sedos December 1981 Seminar: "Towards A New Spirituality of Mission" is now available at the Sedos Office. We thank Fr. Steven Lindemans, CICM, for making this translation available.

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(3)  
 SEDOS  
REPORT OF SEMINAR DISCUSSION  
ON  
AN EXPERIENCE OF INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

*(This is a summary of the key points made in the group discussions on this topic.)*

- 1) The credibility of the Church is not proved by expansionism, efficiency or projects, but rather by an authentic living presence; therefore, the missionary must be prepared to see his or her vocation not primarily in the conversion of others to Christianity, but rather in being a living witness to the Christ in whom she or he believes.
- 2) This man or woman needs to be rooted in contemplative prayer and needs to be able to share the personal experience of God with those of other beliefs. Also the missionary needs to be able to explain to others the basic values which he or she holds but which may be foreign to the other, e.g. monogamy, celibacy, equality as sons and daughters of God....
- 3) Missioners should be able to recognize and foster the values and truths of the great religions. They must realize that God reveals himself and saves others through these religions.
- 4) It is all too easy to get a wrong impression of other religions because of seeing defects in their adherents. Judge them rather, in their best expressions and be conscious of how Christians similarly betray the beauty of the Gospel by their behaviour.
- 5) People of Europe and North America show their so-called Western superiority in many ways which are off-putting. One has to work through the painful crisis of recognizing this and re-assessing oneself in the light of another's culture and faith.
- 6) Inter-religious dialogue is not to be seen as a new tactic for approaching people, but as an authentic religious experience which leads us to God through the religious experience of the other.
- 7) Truth is all important but it is not the prerogative of Christians in all its dimensions. Other people too are open to truth.
- 8) In the matter of conversions, it is necessary to recognize that not all are called to become Christians, but we are called to proclaim Christ, to evangelize each new generation.
- 9) Missioners, as indeed all Christians, need to search for and recognize the presence of God in their lives and to articulate this in life and love. The Kingdom of God is within us and it is the only absolute. All else will pass away.
- 10) We have a continual need for conversion from our many prejudices. This need for conversion will remain with us to the end.

Formation/Preparation:

11. Those in formation need to see their experience as one of the possible religious experiences and to realize that the Holy Spirit is working beyond the visible boundaries of the christian community. They will be working for the coming of the Kingdom of God, and not only for the growth of the Church.
12. This entails an intellectual training which includes study of other religions.
13. Those who study and work with other religions must be thoroughly grounded in Christian Scripture and doctrine. They must respect the values of other religions, with reverence and devotion even while remaining in their own tradition.
14. Ongoing formation or re-formation of the present generation of missionaries is necessary.
15. In order to be able to carry on this dialogue there may be need to begin a sharing of faith and prayer in our own communities. Dialogue can begin at an early age before prejudice sets in. Hence the importance of parents understanding dialogue and initiating their children in it.
16. a) Seuls les spirituels peuvent dialoguer en profondeur - formation spirituelle profonde, compréhension du plan de Dieu dans son amour pour tous les hommes - de la valeur des religions comme chemin du salut. Tous les hommes sont déjà partie du peuple de Dieu.
- b) Développement de qualité "naturelles" particulièrement nécessaires
  - ouverture = aptitude à partager, à écouter, à communiquer, accueil de l'autre tel qu'il est;
  - patience = le dialogue demande du temps -
  - prise de conscience du cheminement nécessaire - savoir commencer par:
  - une approche dans la vie quotidienne
  - un travail en commun, une collaboration pour la promotion de l'homme, la défense de ses droits
  - un accueil dans la prière commune.
- c) Connaissance de la religion avec laquelle on sera appelé à dialoguer, pour une meilleure appréciation.
17. Formation programs will consider the problem of how to reconcile inter-religious dialogue with Christ's command: go, teach and baptize. They will also deal with the distinction between working for the kingdom of God and working for the church:

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WHO ARE THE "MISSIONARIES" OF THE FUTURE?

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Steven Lindemans, CICM  
(English version)

*(Father Lindemans' paper was an essential part of the background against which the discussions took place.)*

1. The center of gravity of the new members of our institutes lies no longer in the West. The missionaries of the future will be missionaries of young nations, of Asian, African and Latin American culture, race and sensitivity. More and more churches of young nations are already sending their "Fidei Donum" priests to other countries, or have founded their own national missionary institutes (Tanzania, Brazil, Philippines, Nigeria, India).
  
2. These new missionaries will also experience cultural shock and difficulties of integration. During their formation we will have to affirm these young men and women for their personal values and the riches of their insights in the Gospel, while stressing the relativity of many things. It belongs to the missionaries of today to prepare the local churches of all continents to welcome these missionaries from non-western cultures so that they may feel accepted and supported.
  
3. In more and more countries, totalitarian regimes, whether of the right or left, will less and less tolerate that the Church takes an independent position - and that will be even more true where foreign missionaries take such positions. This holds equally for non-western missionaries. Foreign missionaries are on the one hand more vulnerable, while on the other hand they can proclaim the Gospel values with greater freedom, as they are not bound by family ties or certain traditions.
  
4. Priests and religious of young nations can no longer accept that foreigners decorate themselves with the title "missionary" - a title which they never received, while living exactly the same life, and doing exactly the same work. There is a need to be much more specific about the "missionary" characteristics: primary evangelization, frontier situations, mutual enrichment between sister-churches.
  
5. We share a powerlessness in the face of the realities of the world. Is the crisis and the powerlessness of a humanity that wants to be united but feels itself torn apart, the cry to which the carrier of the good news is called to expose him/herself, is that the place in which he/she is called to live? Who will carry the mission of the future? At the root appears the One who from the beginning urged the missionaries to go to other shores...
  
6. In the future the carriers of mission will no longer be found only in a world of religious and priests.

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AN AFTERWARD TO THE SEMINAR

*(This issue of the Bulletin completes the report of the recent Seminar held at Villa Cavalletti in March 1982.)*

The May 15th issue of the Sedos Bulletin contained the text of the six short papers describing actual mission situations which were presented at the Seminar. It contained also the findings of the first and second group discussions.

This issue: contains the findings of the third group discussion at the Seminar. It contains also the English version of Fr. Steven Lindemans' paper which raised a basic question: *Who are the "Missionaries" of the future?* The French text appeared in the May 15th issue.

This "Afterward" situates the Seminar in the evolving program of mission seminars being held by Sedos and attempts to bring together the key points or conclusions of the Seminar.

Experiential Model: The Seminar was organized on an experiential model. The method was designed to consider some actual mission situations in which members of Sedos were involved today and to attempt to clarify some practical conclusions about the preparation, training and formation needed for these situations.

The situations were chosen at preliminary meetings of small groups of Sedos members. The final selection was made at a further meeting of representatives of these groups. The situations are real, not imaginary, and they are existing now. They pose problems and challenges for those engaged in mission in a changing era. The Seminar, attended by sixty participants did not attempt to arrive at an organized set of principles. It did evaluate the experiences presented both in general assemblies and in groups - (one Italian-speaking, one French-speaking, three English-speaking), and again through general discussion. Final group reports were made in writing.

Resource Persons: There were three resource persons present throughout the Seminar: Fr. Sydney D'Souza, SJ  
Fr. Mpongo Mamba, CICM  
Fr. Sean O'Riordan, CSSR

Plan of Seminars: The Seminar was part of a planned follow-up to the Sedos Research Seminar of March 1981. The topic "Towards a New Spirituality of Mission" was dealt with in the December 1981 Seminar. This time Sedos focused on "Formation and Preparation for Mission".

Already in preparation for the December 1981 Seminar "Towards a New Spirituality of Mission" we wrote:

*The Spirit is leading (missioners) into paths that are heretofore unknown and uncharted, into situations of risk and danger, into ways of living that are insecure. Many are led by the Spirit into situations of conflict, involving, for example justice, poverty, armaments, economics. These conflicts can lead to suffering, isolation, loneliness, persecution and death.*

*It is evident that "something new" is happening in the lives of many. What have the Institutes of Sedos to say to their members who do "something new?" Support them? Marginalize them? Listen to them? Be changed by them?"*

In this present Seminar Sedos tried to come to grips with some of these actual situations for it is in the actual reality of such situations that one has to live the Gospel and proclaim it.

Participants at the Seminar were aware of a certain urgency about the topic. How does one proclaim Jesus Christ, the timeless one, the same yesterday, today and forever, to a world changing so rapidly and drastically. They were aware of the tensions and strains that often accompany the work of evangelization today and also that missionaries are surely not exempt from the medical condition "burn out", now clinically observed and documented.

Not consensus seeking: The Seminar did not seek consensus. The experiential approach did not lend itself to a search for consensus. There was a realization that differing views had to be acknowledged and respected yet a considerable agreement emerged on the attitudes which should characterize formation for mission today.

#### CHRIST CENTRED FORMATION

There was first and clearly, a demand for a solid scriptural and intellectual preparation, a formation based on a close and personal relationship with Christ and an emphasis on prayer and specially its contemplative dimension. It was important above all to form "men and women of God", people who were able to witness by their lives and able to discern the Spirit's presence and action.

In the same vein the Seminar underlined the "formation of formators". Conflict often emerged in the relationships between those having responsibility for training and formation and those being trained or formed. Special care taken to form formators.

Three Themes: The three main themes which emerged simultaneously with the above were the need for an introduction to and an appreciation of the importance of:

1. inculturation
2. dialogue
3. justice with special references to the place of social analysis.

Much of the discussion centred around the methods by which these three essential factors could be inserted realistically into the formation program while not forgetting that the overall aim of the preparation is to bring the good news, the liberating Gospel of Jesus Christ to all mankind.

#### INCULTURATION

Periods of "internship", of experiencing the actual conditions of a mission situation or pastoral experience are important in formation. These situations are to be found in all parts of the world. (One of the participants came from Appalachia in the USA, where Catholics are 1.8 of the population of nine million and where poverty and exploitation are endemic).

Without such experiences it is extremely difficult to concretize the attitudes required. One cannot be sure of future conditions or situations, but attitudes can be formed. The problems of inculturation are universal. Missionaries from Europe and North America must realize that when they preach the Gospel in, for example, the Philippines, Latin America or Africa they are not preaching the pure Christ but the Christ of their culture be he French, Italian or Irish etc. This realization may be the beginning of conversion for the missionary.

Tensions within the Church around this problem reflect the tensions in society. One of these arises precisely from the fact that the institutional Church seems to be giving different messages about the demands of inculturation and even attempting to reverse trends already well established.

An uncritical emphasis on inculturation without taking account of the transforming power of the Gospel could result in misunderstanding the urgency of evangelization and proclamation. Future missionaries must be aware of the factors involved in this tension.

Sensitivity in change: This topic brought out the need for great sensitivity in mission. Today many people are searching for a national identity, taking pride in their cultural roots having the courage to accept themselves. The missionary entering such a situation needs great humility, sensitivity, a willingness to exercise only supportive leadership, to support and to accompany others, leaving to the people the task to be accomplished even though it may be done less efficiently by the missionary's standards. It is much more difficult to support and to empower than to undertake tasks and projects independently.

How ineffective if not counterproductive in mission situations of Africa, Asia and Latin America is much of the "spiritual literature" emanating from Europe and North America? It was conceived in a "conquest-mentality", has reference to historical moments, is based on a "giving-receiving" model of mission, and largely ignores inculturation and dialogue. Those who are on the receiving end of this literature ask how does one explain the scandal of poverty in Spain, Portugal or Latin America? Long committed to the Gospel?

And is it not true that some missionaries from the West project on to local people the problem which they inherit from their own home countries?

Windmills far-away? Many of the problems of the "Missions" are rooted in Europe and USA where much of the formation takes place. The challenge may well be to become involved in the struggle for justice and peace in the structures of these countries. Contact between the Major Superiors of the USA and those of Latin America raised the consciousness of the North American Superiors to a startling degree. A similar spur was needed to conscientize the Religious Superiors of Europe where in many countries the Church has considerable economic power and upholds the 'status quo' ecclesiastical and social. The recent writings of Karl Rahner have drawn attention to this situation on numerous occasions.

A final comment comes from Africa. "The Gospel is becoming". It is preached and lived in the light of a culture by which it is appropriated. Missionaries don't "have the Gospel here and take it elsewhere". The Gospel is everywhere.

*(Father Michel's article on Education for Dialogue is of special interest to us in view of the Seminar's discussion of Filippo Commissari's experience of an inter-religious dialogue.)*

## EDUCATION FOR DIALOGUE

by Thomas Michel

The interreligious dialogue movement, which dramatically came to the fore in the Catholic Church during the pontificate of Pope John XXIII and given impetus by Vatican Council statements, and the teaching and example of subsequent Popes, has reached a stage of crisis. Dialogue remains until now something engaged in by a committed few, while most Christians, bishops and clergy as well as lay people, look on with skepticism and suspicion and are disinclined to devote themselves to this activity.

Those involved in the apostolate of interreligious relations are often frustrated by the apathetic and often antipathetic attitude towards the work of dialogue expressed by their fellow believers. Positive encounter with people of other religions is still not accepted by the mass of committed Christians as a fruitful and important activity of the Church. Unless the scope of this activity is broadened considerably, the work of interreligious dialogue seems destined to fall of its own weight and become a marginal and basically irrelevant activity within the life of the church.

Elitism? Those engaged in dialogue must face seriously the objections and predispositions which prevent Christian people as a whole from adopting the attitude of dialogue with enthusiasm. For those involved in the evangelical task of struggling for social justice and defending human rights, dialogue is often viewed as a series of expensive and time-consuming meetings between leaders and specialists of various religious groups to discuss irrelevant and miniscule theological issues. In an age where anything that smacks of elitism is automatically suspect, many in the churches view interreligious dialogue as scholarly sessions carried on in brahminic isolation, in which traditional beliefs are subtly redefined in order to make them more acceptable to erstwhile opponents.

Fifth Column? To those who identify the mission of the church in all ages as a preaching of the good news with a view to bringing the human race to baptism and incorporation into the church, those involved in dialogue are seen as a fifth column, undermining the efforts of proselytization. Particularly in the case of Christians who consider non-Christian religion as manifestations of the domain of Satan in today's world, the battle of the church militant to bring all things under the banner of Christ is held to be seriously subverted by the dialogue movement which bases itself upon mutual respect and human equality among believers of various faiths.



another by practicing the highest values taught by their religions. The BIRA II Statement reads as follows:

Dialogue of life. Christians living among Muslims should recognize the importance of dialogue with their Muslim brethren. For most Christians, this means what can be called a dialogue of life. This is the most essential aspect of dialogue and it is accomplished by Christians and Muslims living together in peace. Each gives witness to the other concerning the values he has found in his faith, and through the daily practice of brotherhood, helpfulness, open-heartedness, and hospitality, each shows himself to be a God-fearing neighbor. The true Christian and Muslim offer to a busy world values arising from God's message when they **revere** the elderly, conscientiously rear the young, care for the sick and the poor in their midst, and work together for social justice, welfare, and human rights. We encourage Christians to be ever more deeply involved in this dialogue of life. (2)

Formal dialogue and theological dialogue are secondary, though also important, aspects of dialogue. But to limit the concept of dialogue to a commonly-held notion that it means theologians sitting in a dusty room redefining basic religious beliefs is to rob the concept of that which lies at its heart and gives it its deepest meaning - that is, believers of different religions bearing witness concretely to the human and spiritual riches they have discovered in their faith.

3. Christians have not been well-prepared for the activity of dialogue. They often know very little about the religion of others, and what they do know is mixed with prejudices and untruths. They often are not aware of church teachings that point to God's universal will to save and the role that non-Christian religions can play in the salvation of their adherents. They may feel threatened by a teaching which extends Christ's salvation to Muslims, Buddhists, and others. Christians do not well understand what dialogue is and what the purpose of it is; most of all, they do not see it as something for *them*.

Once again, I would like to quote the Asian bishops gathered at BIRA II:

"Many Christians feel they know very little about Islam and thus find it difficult to understand the practices and ideals of Muslims. Christian parents, catechists, and educators should teach their children about God's love for Muslims and about the many good and holy values in the Islamic religion. Basic knowledge about the beliefs and practices of Muslims, taken from reliable and objective sources, should form a part of Catholic catechetical training. Education about Islam should give an unbiased presentation of the religion of Muslims, while at the same time avoiding any tendencies towards indifferentism. ~~While firm in their commitment~~ to Christ, Christians must respect the beliefs and practices of Muslims." (3)

Education for Dialogue. The bishops at both BIRAs stressed the importance of education of Christians for dialogue. At all levels of church ministries - the conscientious parishioner, the basic Christian Community leader, the catechist and religion teacher, the parish

Sincerity. The sincerity of interreligious dialogue is also questioned.

There is a suspicion - particularly vis-a-vis Islam - that the underlying motivation is not evangelical love, but expediency. The specter of rising oil prices and Islam's new political and economic strength seem to be factors who have found their way even into Church policies. Christians are now urged to lay down their arms against the newly powerful heathen and sue for peace.

Efficacy. More sober observers of dialogue, including many who have given of their own time and efforts to the work of interreligious encounter, question the efficacy of the whole project. They themselves may have attended too many conferences, seminars, and workshops which have brought together mutually-suspicious antagonists who are careful not to state their views frankly for fear of turning the meeting into an angry debate. And after the seminar, what has really been accomplished? Have the real issues really been faced? In the day-to-day living situation of believers with different faiths, are not the tensions and causes of religious strife left unchanged?

In response it must be said that the attitude of dialogue is a very recent phenomenon. People are still feeling their way. Centuries of suspicion, fear, competition, chauvenism, and anger cannot be swept away in a period of less than two decades. It must also be admitted that a learning process is going on. Those committed to dialogue are constantly re-viewing the success and failures of past dialogue situations. They are consciously trying to expand the numbers and types of people involved. They are trying to find ways of bridging the gap between actual participants and the far greater number of believers who have not had the dialogue experience.

But is this enough? Does not the very understanding of what dialogue is need to be broadened and deepened? Have Christians been prepared to see this as an attitude and activity they are eager to support and be part of?

Bira I & II. It was in an atmosphere of these kinds of questions that the Asian Bishops came together in 1979, in Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, for BIRA I and BIRA II (1) The basic issue facing them was "Where do we go from here?" What does interreligious dialogue mean within the context of the life of the church? What are its goals? How will Christians come to accept this as an expression of their Christian commitment?

The most important conclusions to come out of these seminars, in my opinion, can be summarized as follows:

1. Dialogue is an essential aspect of the life of the church. A church that is not in dialogue with its culture - and particularly with the religious aspect of that culture - is not fully carrying out its mission to our world. Dialogue is not a voluntary hobby for a select few, but must be a lived attitude of the whole church. Dialogue and mission are not opposed, but are two aspects of the same activity of calling all people to submit to the Kingdom in their lives and societies.

2. Dialogue must first be understood in the sense of "dialogue of life" - Christians and others living together in peace, mutually enriching one

priest, the seminary professor and seminarian, the social action worker, the Christian involved in the communications media, the bishop-Christians are in need of a solid grounding in the religions of those with whom they live and work, as well as in the theology of religions and dialogue.

Parents' role. Noteworthy, too, is the central place the bishops give to the teaching which parents, first of all, give to their children about the people of other religions. This takes place, often unconsciously, at the level of attitudes rather than of concepts. The general attitude which Christian parents display towards Buddhists, Muslims, etc. is "learned" quickly and deeply by their children, who often will retain that earliest teaching more tenaciously than anything they learn later. Thus the bishops say, "Christian parents should teach their children about God's love for Muslims and about the many good and holy values in the Islamic religion."

In the statements quoted above, the Bishops are referring specifically to dialogue with Muslims, but the same basic Christian attitudes towards "the other" should mark Christian relations with Hindus, Buddhists, and persons of the indigenous religions of the place. The teaching of the church seems to be clear that Christians cannot live in isolation from others, but must bring and discover the divine Face and message in their surroundings.

Formation and Preparation. The implications of this teaching mean what we must take seriously the work of preparing ourselves for dialogue. We must raise questions on the local, national, and international levels. Are we teaching about the religion of our neighbors in our seminars, catechetical centers, and renewal programs? Are we training persons to be animators and educators in the theology of dialogue, in the salvation of non-Christians, in the religions of our regions? Are we considering the need and feasibility for centers of training for dialogue on the international level?

Are we preparing teaching materials - texts, study guides, audio-visuals - that can be used to teach the Christians about the evangelical attitude towards our neighbors of other religions in secondary schools, in parish groups, in university setting, in seminaries and renewal courses? Are we preparing joint study-sessions, where Christians and others can mutually learn about one another's religions? Are we ready to work together with, to share with, and to learn from Christians of other communions in the matter of preparing ourselves?

Each local and national church must study these questions; and each will give its own answers, according to its own needs and possibilities. Many areas are already well advanced in their consciousness of the Christian meaning of dialogue. In other places, this attitude is still found only among a small minority, and much preparation for dialogue must still be done. But although the importance of dialogue can no longer be denied in the church, the work of education for dialogue is only beginning.

Footnotes:

- (1) The First Bishops' Institute on Interreligious Affairs ("BIRA I") took place on 11-19 October 1979, in Bangkok and focused on Christian-Buddhist relations. The Second Institute ("BIRA II") was held in Kuala Lumpur

on 13-20 November 1979 and dealt with dialogue between Christians and Muslims. Cf. P. COUGHLAN, *Bulletin N. 43* (1980-XV/1) pp. 67-91, for a report on these institutes as well as the complete texts of the statements.

(2) BIRA II *Statements* par. 14.

(3) BIRA II *Statements* par. 17.

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Reference: Bulletin secretariatus pro non christianis, 1981-XVI/3 48.

## THE CHURCH IN MOZAMBIQUE

Impressions of a visit.  
Fr. Antonio Panteghini  
interviewed by  
Enrico Jemma scj.

### INTRODUCTION

For two years Fr. Antonio Panteghini, Superior General of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, tried to obtain an entry permit to visit our missionaries in Mozambique, but without success.

Recently things seem to have improved a little in this respect. Thus, with the aid of the Apostolic Delegation, several people have not only been granted visas, but have actually been treated as VIPs. This was Fr. Panteghini's experience on arrival at the capital, Maputo, and on various occasions during this first visit to Mozambique last May-July.

On his return to Italy, to meet him was to interview him. He was very happy to have the opportunity of meeting the 45 SCJ missionaries who have remained at their posts despite the bitter trials of the last few years and of seeing at first hand their apostolic zeal and effective pastoral methods.

His answers reflect his satisfaction and optimism. The trials are not yet over, but the Church in Mozambique is already showing signs of new life.

How did you find the general situation of the country after six years of independence?

I can only give you a few impressions. It would be presumptuous to attempt anything more after a visit of only six weeks. In the first place I would say that Mozambique compares very favourably with other African countries I have visited; it seems to be orderly and fairly well organized. Maputo, for example, is not chaotic like many other African capitals. Corruption, quite shameless and widespread elsewhere, is not evident and, I believe, is dealt with very severely if discovered.

With the help of foreign aid the Government is pressing ahead with a massive programme in the industrial and agricultural sectors: road building, factory construction, extension of power lines, expansion of plantations and farmlands in general. At the same time, however, there is a serious food shortage. It is the typical situation of socialist countries, which can achieve considerable technical success, but cannot provide a decent meal for their people. Basic commodities, from bread to soap, are in short supply, everything is rationed and the queues are endless.

Other negative aspects, which have been criticized by the local bishops, are the lack of religious liberty, discrimination based on personal opinions, the re-education camps, the manipulation of youth against the wishes of parents (thousands are sent to Cuba and East Germany for a better "education"), the forced removal of people to the aldeias comunais (community villages); these in fact offer many advantages, but in them the people lose the basic freedoms so dear to Africans.

On the positive side, great efforts are being made in the field of education, which is compulsory for all children and for illiterate adults. The schools are bursting with girls and boys; in the afternoon you can see the mothers heading for the school with the little ones toddling behind them, and after work it is the men's turn. Unfortunately much time is devoted to political and ideological indoctrination, and many of the teachers are not up to the mark. The extension of medical services throughout the country is also impressive, though there is an acute shortage of locally trained personnel; practically all the doctors are foreigners.

To sum up, I would say, that the Government has excellent plans, but at the present moment life is hard for the people.

1) Missionaries have had a difficult time since independence. How have our SCJs fared?

It has been a severe trial for all, but it has not been without fruit.

In fact, even before independence the missionaries in general and ours in particular were in serious difficulties; their espousal of the Mozambicans' cause in the struggle for independence brought them into conflict with the colonial power. In addition to trouble with the authorities and at times even with the bishops, they had to assume the responsibility for a decision that not all shared, but that turned out to be the better one in the long run.

Groups of missionaries belonging to various congregations decided to leave the country in protest against the colonial government. Our confrères discussed the matter and by a majority decision chose to stay as a group, of course leaving each one free to do as he thought best. As things turned out, all decided to remain so as to keep close to the people.

After independence the desire to stay on became even stronger, despite the difficulties and disappointments. None of Frelimo's many promises materialized and the missionaries who had openly supported the move for independence found themselves regarded as intruders and undesirables. Before long they had lost everything; their houses, churches, schools, dispensaries, plantations were all taken over by the State. They had to leave the mission centres, find a piece of land to clear, build themselves a hut and start

again from scratch. This was a great hardship, especially for those that had spent 30 years or so building up their mission at the cost of enormous efforts and endless sacrifices.

But, as I said, the trial has not been fruitless. The calm and resignation with which they accepted everything has convinced the Mozambicans that their motives for being there are very different for those of the other whites. The missionaries themselves now admit that the changes and sacrifices have borne more fruit than many years of preaching in the past. "The Christians now understand the real motive that keeps us here."

2) It has been said that independence has given birth to a new Church in Mozambique. Did you find this so?

That is true. It is now a Church that has lost everything and is even persecuted. But despite all this, it has remained with the people. And it has emerged from this trial as a more radical Church, trying to practice what it preaches and witness to Christ's love. Stripped of power, it has become more authentic and effective, more African closer to the people. The new situation has purified it and also freed it of opportunist members. The Catholics who have remained faithful are genuine; by their witness they are an example and inspiration to others: Thanks to this witness, conversions are still numerous despite all difficulties.

3) The Christian communities are often quoted as being a very important pastoral development in the Church in Mozambique since independence. Would you agree?

Certainly. But I must point out that our missionaries in Zambesia began experimenting with this form of pastoral action even before independence. The present situation has proved its value, so much so that today it is the official policy of all the dioceses.

The traditional framework of a centralized and "clerical" Church is replaced by a Church composed of small communities of Christians, with leaders and other persons holding positions of responsibility chosen from the community itself. The nationalization of the large mission centres hastened this pastoral development. The Christian communities (in Latin America they would be called basic communities) are very successful in helping members to live a more responsible Christian life, of taking things into their own hands instead of depending on the missionaries for everything as they did in the past. Each of our missions in Zambesia has 40-50 communities, made up of 100-250 members.

4) Did you have any direct experience of the life of these communities?

Yes. I spent Pentecost Sunday with one and was greatly impressed. The meeting place was a mud and straw chapel, the second put up by the community in a year; the first was confiscated by the Government for use as a school. My arrival, together with the missionaries, were greeted with songs and gifts: chickens, eggs, bananas, rice. There was about 200 present including many young people. When they learned that I came from Rome, they wanted to hear all my news and particularly about the assassination attempt on the Pope. Then we celebrated Mass, which lasted more than two hours; the participation was very lively with many local hymns, dialogue homily and spontaneous prayer of the faithful that I thought would never end.

After Mass all remained for the annual elections of community heads and others. So as to make sure that everything was above board, they had invited two scrutineers from a distant community. I was an observer. All filed past the scrutineers, men and women, young and old, even children, and cast their vote by word of mouth. The two leaders already in office, having satisfied everyone, were re-elected. The result was welcomed by faith and joy. The wife of one of the leaders, asked if she had any objections (a leader has to spend much time away from the family), replied that she could not object, because it was God's will. At 1 o'clock we left, but the people stayed on until all offices had been filled.

After two leaders had been chosen, the people proceeded with the election of those with other tasks in the community, such as catechesis, charge of the eucharist, care of the sick and children, and so forth, as well as the couriers, who maintain contact with the missionaries. These men travel 50-80 km on foot to carry out their function. The person responsible for the eucharist makes a similar journey when he goes to the missionary and brings back the sacrament for the people. All these services are performed gratuitously; in fact, the office holders often incur personal expenses in performing their tasks.

The elderly people are like a senate of the community. They have to keep an eye on how the community is going, check preparation for the sacraments (baptism, first communion, confirmation, marriage), pass judgement on people's behaviour and hand out penances to those that don't come up to the mark as Christians. Sometimes the penances are very severe; some have to wait months before being allowed into the Church again to attend Mass and receive the sacraments. In one community I saw the solemn re-admission of a dozen or so penitents; they were led into the church by the missionary and stood around the altar during Mass; they were greeted by all at the Pax and received communion before the others as a sign of their reconciliation with the community.

5) The Christian communities seem to be ideal for committed Christians  
But could concentration on this form of pastoral activity weaken the  
missionary thrust of the local church?

Not at all. In the past the work of evangelisation was carried out by the missionary, assisted by paid catechists. Now the missionary thrust comes from the Christians themselves; under the leadership of the missionary they become propagators of faith and by their example lead others to the knowledge and practice of Christianity. There are many conversions despite the fact that a three-year catechumenate is required. Further, the young people are beginning to show renewed interest in religion. During the first few years of independence they were lured to the Party by its fine promises, which however have not been realized: disenchanted, they are now looking for deeper values. Another encouraging aspect of the present situation is the enthusiasm of the people, both Christians and non Christians, for reading the bible.

Reference: MISSIONALIA, XIth year - number 1 - 1982.

## THE ANGUISH OF CHANGE

### The Anguish of Change

As Christian leaders we have been told that we are change agents. We are in the business of leading people to higher ground, to new adventures, to new accomplishments for God. We have been instructed that change needs to be "managed". But too often as we set about managing change, we fail to take into account the anguish for which we are responsible.

We need the change. We need to move to higher ground. We need to mature in Christ. We need to right the wrongs that are out in the world, to change them for the better. But in the midst of our quest, however noble it may be, we need a deep appreciation of not just how to accomplish our goals, but how to bring about change in a manner that will produce a minimum of distress.

### WHY PEOPLE CHANGE.

Change only takes place in people when they are discontent. If we are satisfied with the status quo, why should we change? Skillful union organizers and other mobilizers of public opinion have traded on negative discontent. If one can find enough people who dislike the same thing, then one has a group with a common goal, namely to get rid of that which they dislike. The role of the change agent is then to provide a solution to the common felt need.

But there are also those who are in the business of creating what might be called positive discontent. When the pastor calls us to maturity in Christ on Sunday morning, he or she is creating in us a holy discontent, a discontent with the way we are, a desire to become more than we are.

### RESISTANCE TO CHANGE

Resistance to change takes place in the same way. If people are presented with new situations which threaten that to which they have grown pleasantly accustomed, then the discontent will be aimed at removing the cause of potential change. The amount of resistance to change will be proportional to the threat to perceive vested interest. It is important to understand that resistance may not be against the change agent or even to the program that is being proposed. Both may be intellectually perceived as excellent. But however good the program, if it is going to result in what is perceived as changing the way things have always been, it is natural that it will be resisted. Committees or departments can present programs which are obviously beautifully prepared and will in some way produce excellent results for large numbers of people. But time and time again such groups are startled when they present their well thought through plans to another group and meet with cold silence or warm rejection.

The task of the Christian leader then is to introduce change in a manner that will encourage people on the one hand and not discourage them on the other.



### DIFFUSION OF INNOVATION

Westerners in general, and Americans in particular, tend to focus on individuals rather than groups. In few societies in the world are the perceived needs to the individual given so much attention. This emphasis on the individual can blind us to the fact as to how change really takes place. For a number of years sociologists have been describing the change process within groups of individuals as "the diffusion of innovation". They have recognized that when an innovator poses a new idea or does something differently, there will be some who will see the personal advantages to them very early. These "early adopters" are usually in the minority. The majority are "late adopters".

Then there is another minority which never adopts the change. The important idea here is to see that both early and late adopters accept change because they observe its benefits in others. The notion of the diffusion of innovation gives us some insight into how to plan for change, particularly in volunteer organizations, such as local churches.

### PREPARING FOR CHANGE

In what follows we are assuming that some group or manager has thought through the new program, new policy, new procedure. Furthermore, we are assuming that it is a good plan. The schedule is realistic. The costs have been calculated. There are people who are willing to own the goals. In short, all the technical planning is in good order.

We are also assuming in the planning that every attempt has been made to involve as many people as possible in the design of the plan. ("Good goals are my goals and bad goals are the planning committee's goals.") See the *Christian Leadership Letter* dated January 1981.

First, avoid the obvious temptation to make the establishment of the new program, policy or the procedure the end goal. Too often people feel that once they have gained acceptance -- the policy is approved, the procedure adopted -- the task is completed. Rather, the end goal should allow enough time to demonstrate that the program, policy or procedure is producing good results. We have to think through what would be indicators that what we have attempted is being successful or effective. What are the qualities that we might expect to find? For example, if we are going to institute a new worship service in a local church, six months later what would be the indications that the worship service is really bringing people closer to God? Or, if we are introducing a new policy on expense accounts, one year later what will be the indicators that this policy is producing the results we want? To give a third example, if we are instituting a training program to train boards, committees, or departments, one year after the program has begun how will we know that the program was effective?

Why such a long time? While the early adopters may be very enthusiastic about the program shortly after it is begun, the majority of the staff or congregation are going to withhold judgment, or even negative feelings towards the program, for a longer period of time. In other words, it is very helpful to think through how long it is going to take before all those who will eventually accept the innovation have had an opportunity to adjust to the situation.

Second, wherever possible, introduce the change to a group smaller than the entire organization. Find a group that is most likely to accept the idea. Indicate to them, as well as to the entire group, that this is the nature of an experiment. They are really a "pilot study" group. This not only raises the enthusiasm of those who are involved, but it also relieves the threat to the rest of the group. After all, if it doesn't work here, then obviously it won't be imposed upon the rest of the group. At the same time people are not threatened by change that is taking place in others. And if they are "late adopters", watching what happens with others will often bring them to a point where they are not only ready to accept the new idea, but are actually clamoring for it.

Third, consider the real losses that are going to result as a consequence of the change. Some people are going to lose authority or responsibility. Familiar patterns are likely to be disrupted, as in the case of change in the worship service. In some cases benefits that accrue to some people are going to be withdrawn. Wherever possible, build into the change plan a way of replacing these losses with some benefit. All change is experienced as loss, but the reason that people are willing to accept change is they perceive that the gain, and the feelings associated with it, are greater than the perceived loss.

Fourth, in designing your plans to introduce change, leave as much flexibility as possible for the how the change is to take place. Quite often there are many different ways of achieving the end goal. By inviting discussion on the ways and means of bringing about change, we give people a sense of participation in their own destiny. One way of doing this is to present a number (always more than two) of ways of achieving the goal, all of which are acceptable. Now, instead of asking people to accept or reject the goal, we are asking them to choose ways of reaching the goal.

Fifth, build in an evaluation system that will identify the early adopters as well as the late adopters. The reason people are late adopters is that they like stability. If you are disrupting that stability, they are going to be hurt in some way. If you can identify these hurts, which may not be anticipated ahead of time, you can often modify your plans to help offset the anguish that people are feeling. For example, suppose a new policy or procedure has been introduced which changes the relationships between individuals who previously were encountering one another or meeting with one another on a daily basis. By suggesting that these people continue to get together, perhaps once a week, to discuss how the new policy or procedure is affecting them, you give them the opportunity to express their feeling and to emotionally disengage.

Finally, in all of this, it is important to look for a win/win situation. Too often, in trying to overcome the objections of other people, we view them as adversaries who have to be won over or even (if only subconsciously) "beaten". If we can remember that the people we are dealing with are brothers and sisters in Christ, are members of the same body of Christ of which we too are an integral part, we can try to understand the impact that our actions are going to have on them and move to try to build them up, then the very actions we are taking will communicate to them our desire that we want the very best for them.

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Reference: CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP LETTER, World Vision, February 1982.

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### DIALOGUE

Fr. Commissari's testimony of his recent experience in India brought out in a basic and uncomplicated way the consequences of meeting, in prayerful dialogue a brother (or sister) of another religion. One is never the same again. It is difficult to sensitize those in preparation for mission to the richness, beauty and goodness of other religious traditions without experiencing this phenomenon personally. It is important for formators to inculcate attitudes of listening, of appreciating, of seeing the other as he or she is. So often the other is seen as a caricature based on prejudices and historical inaccuracies be he or she a Muslim, a follower of an ancestral religion, a Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, or whatever.

It may be possible to prepare for such situations of dialogue by sincere dialogue within the formation community itself or with the local wider community including the poor. This raises the question of how one can dialogue in the name of a Christ who was poor, with those who are poor without being poor oneself?

### JUSTICE: SOCIAL ANALYSIS

Mission is situated in an international community and the missionary can no longer evade the responsibility of trying to understand how this community operates. The Gospel is not preached in a vacuum. Historically the Gospel message and the Christ who was proclaimed were frequently associated with movements of empire, colonialism, or nationalist struggles for independence. It is not surprising that today his message is associated with movements for liberation, communism, marxism, capitalism or national security.

Social analysis may become another catch phrase, but the Seminar repeatedly stressed its importance or the importance of the reality behind it and the need to introduce it in formation. As these notes are being written a one day Seminar on Social Analysis organized by the Centre for Concern of Washington D.C. and announced at the Seminar has been held in Rome. A packed audience indicated the interest in it.

There is a great need for the missionary to be aware of his or her place in the world. The missionary is sent frequently by a Congregation or Institute or a sponsoring agency to a local Church. The search for the values, options, and methods that are most in harmony with the kingdom values in such situations demands a balanced assessment of the results of a social analytic approach and discernment in community, of the Spirit's presence and guidance.

Violence and oppressive structures: It is particularly important to be aware of the scope of structural violence not only in mission situations but also on one's doorstep. It is present in the structures of many of our countries, our institutes, our formation programs and our Church. The missionary has to contend not only with overt actions and reactions of violence but also with oppressive structures of violence.

In dealing with this our theology is still too spiritualistic, too individualistic. There is need of a more communitarian based, collective spirituality, a spirituality which acknowledges a situation of conflict within the Church which is prepared to deal, for example with situations of injustice when they are within the Church, with the role of women within the Church, with the structures of injustice in "Western" countries, the growth

of multi-nationals, the control of information, the armaments race, the destruction of primary resources, the imbalance between North and South.

The Seminar also called for courage and for resistance to the temptation to abandon work in difficult circumstances arising from "the left or the right". To continue serving and ministering in a marxist orientated regime or a regime committed to the ideology of national security may demand heroic commitment. Not all are capable of such heroism but the possibility, if not probability, of living in such situations should be part of the formation process.

Honesty in acknowledging the difficulties is essential. Facile judgements or condemnations of those who become involved in conflicts illustrated during the Seminar are to be avoided. The potential personal problems should be faced in the period of preparation.

#### NEW TYPES OF FORMATION FOR MEN

The need for new types of seminaries or courses of preparation for missionaries emerged. A participant from India had pointed to the difficulties encountered by men and women who are trained in an institute or system which took them away from their cultural roots and style of life. "It was easier for the rich to go to the poor than for the poor to return again to the poor after having experienced a higher life style." This led to a fruitful sharing of experiences about experimental programs.

The essential formation should be embodied in new forms allowing for the demands of pluriformity, inculturation, incarnation. Some mens' societies had moved away from common or regional novitiates and theologates. Provinces had their own novitiates perhaps in small houses, in villages.

Regional theologates were being arranged so that students could be trained largely in the areas where they worked or lived, integrating into their reflection and study an understanding of the local people's experience of God.

Periods of study at the central theologate, where the official teaching of the Church was studied and assimilated were followed by periods of return to village life and local experience.

Pilot schemes in Latin America were being built on local leaders who were chosen by the community and received special training for ministerial responsibilities and possibly ordination. So-called "academic" standards were waived.

But a similar type of experiment in a West African country, eschewing formal courses leading to degrees or diplomas was resented by the local clergy already trained in the "traditional" - European mould. The problems and opportunities revealed here can be applied also, given the necessary adaptations, to the formation of women.

#### THE WORLD IN MISSION

Missionaries of the future will be coming from the first, second and third worlds. (The terms are already outmoded). They will be missionaries from everywhere to everywhere. The whole world is "in mission" and the proportion of lay people involved in mission will be much greater. Lay ministries will be much more developed and diversified. This change of emphasis must be reflected in formation programs.

The missionary of today is a "doer", an organizer. In future he or she will be much more one who forms, encourages, empowers - others. But none of these new insights or approaches can be absolutized.

The actual situations discussed in the Seminar revealed all too clearly that each situation was a "locus theologicus". Mission entails continuous formation learning, conversion, study of the actual situation, revision.

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