

News:Sedos Executive Committee Meeting, Tuesday, Oct.18.

Items:

- 1.) The assessment of the 'Dialogue with Buddhists' Seminar held on Oct.11 was favourable. The Speakers, Fr. Marcell Zago and Edward Malone were particularly appreciated. There was a dearth of participants having a real experience of Buddhism so dialogue in general tended to be topic of discussion. The implications of genuine dialogue and the uniqueness of Jesus Christ need to be studied more profoundly. The theology has not yet been elaborated to deal with this tension.
- (2) The committee made final preparations for the Seminar 'Dialogue with Post Christians' which will be held on Nov.8, 1983.
- (3) Preparation of the Annual General Assembly continued. The Committee examined the financial situation; fees have not been increased for two years; some modern equipment is needed at the Secretariate; the Documentation Centre has reached the limit of manual control and will need to be computerised: We will investigate installing a terminal and printer in collaboration with the SVD computer facilities.
- (3) Fr. Thomas Cullinán, OSB will be the main Speaker at the Seminar "Spirituality for Conflict" which will be held in conjunction with the General Assembly. Some letters received from overseas manifest already an interest in this topic.
- (5) The increasing number of 'up-dates' on situations in mission is much appreciated.
- (6) Preparation for the March 1984 Seminar on Ministries in Mission continue. Fr. David Power, OMI has confirmed his attendance as one of the main speakers.
- (7) Replies to the CMSM Document on Clericalism are coming in slowly. If you have not sent yours there is still time to do so. Replies so far received show a wide spread of reactions which will be of help to the CMSM Secretariate in Washington DC.
- (8) A meeting will be held on Monday Oct.24 to co-ordinate the Sedos Seminar programme and the topic for meetings of Commission VI.
- (9) Next meeting of the Executive, Wednesday, November 16, 1983.

Mozambique 'Up-date': A group of fourteen met at the Generalate of the Comboniani on Oct.14th to hear and discuss the reflections of Fr. Salvatore Calvia, superior General on his recent month-long visit to his confrères in Mozambique. The political-Social situation is one of great incertitude. Details of the guerrilla war were shared and the difficulties faced by the Church and by missionaries.

In spite of the difficulties there is a real unity between the people and those who remain among them. They are a source of encouragement and a sign of hope for a better future. The people take on more responsibility and their faith grows deeper. A confidential report of the meeting is being circulated to those who attended. Copies can be had from Sedos Secretariate.

SEDOS SEMINAR NOV. 8, 1983
DIALOGUE WITH "POST-CHRISTIANS"

The masses of people who claim to have passed beyond an experience of Christianity because they found it wanting is a phenomenon of many countries in Europe. Recent (1983) polls in Germany for example, claim to indicate a continuing decrease in belief in the divinity of Christ and even in the existence of God.

The phenomenon is not confined to Europe. Yves Morel in a recent contribution to *Spiritus* describes how, for example, educated Christians in Tchad, Ivory Coast and Upper Volta, after a first favourable acceptance of the message of Christianity, have entered on a period of criticism of the Church. A similar rejection of Christianity is evident among 'intellectuals' of English speaking countries of East and Central Africa and in countries of Asia.

How does the missionary to-day present the God of Jesus Christ to the "new-pagan" who is defined precisely by his or her rejection of the Judeo-Christian tradition, who simply does not ask anything of the Church but is in search of some new religious experience?

A new phenomenon has appeared in many of the protest meetings of youth in Germany where the young people often begin by constructing a simple building as a centre of prayer for the duration of their meeting.

There is evident also a renewed interest in reading and studying the word of God in the scriptures. Has the process of secularisation reached its climax or is it still developing?

The forthcoming Seminar will present the religious aspects of the various movements for individual, bodily and emotional perfection which are often placed in the context of the "ecological" movement to-day.

It will discuss and assess the Christian answer to those new religious experiences which are often wrongly described as "new paganism".

It will ask the question "Is post-Christian" youth to-day on the verge of a new movement of de-secularisation?

Mission is in all continents. It is everywhere. While some member groups of Sedos emphasize their rich tradition of first evangelization, reflection on the "Post-Christian" phenomenon prompts others to go beyond a territorial concept of mission to one which recognizes the call to all mission situation where the Gospel needs to be proclaimed. One such situation is dialogue with "Post-Christians".

The Seminar will deal with this situation.

 THE FUTURE OF MISSION

Simon E. Smith, S.J.

(Les réflexions du P. Simon SMITH sur l'avenir de la Mission résumant les thèmes qui ont été abordés ces dernières années dans plusieurs Congrès Missionnaires. Ses remarques, données en langue française, ont été traduites en anglais: cette traduction conserve la fraîcheur de style de l'original. Ses analyses des conséquences de grande portée découlant de la prise en compte de la culture et du langage et la signification du dialogue ne nous surprennent pas, pas plus que l'importance qu'il attribue à la nécessité du partage de la pauvreté qui est fondamentale dans l'option pour les pauvres.)

 INTRODUCTION

It is not without a certain sense of fear, even trepidation, that I find myself here today at this podium, not only because I do not speak your beautiful language too well, but especially because I have been asked to probe, to explore the future of mission. What does that mean: the future of mission? Is there actually one? After these days here together, after the influence of these conferences and the sharing of ideas which we have just had, will there be a future for mission?

Certainly! There is one and these will be one.....but mission as we have known it, experienced it, is dead. The mission of the future will be quite other than what we have known up to now. Why? Because all that we have heard here at this Congress, all that we have just studied and on which we have just reflected demands that we re-do not only our missiology (i.e. our theory or theology of mission) and the practical consequences which follow from it, but also the very foundations, including the methodologies, of the whole endeavour.

And my task today -- unfortunately, I think -- is to sketch out missiology yet to come. I say "unfortunately" because who can trace the plan or sketch an outline of what isn't yet born? Who can divine the future or final form of what is still forming itself? Myself? I doubt that! But let us try together, you and I, to gather some indications already available and already pretty clear which can help us formulate some principal lines of the future of our mission or maybe better said: the mission of our future (because it is not absolutely clear that we ourselves will be missionaries in the future).

 PREVIOUS EFFORTS

I have been asked to probe, to make a sounding of the facts, the currents, the tendencies already in existence which can help us to limn, to sketch the future. Why probe? The sounding has already been made for some years and for several Congresses. It is enough merely to cite the Congresses of the last five to eight years (i.e. since Evan-gelii Nuntiandi of Paul VI in 1975):

NAIROBI; Melbourne: There were the Conferences of the World Council of Churches at Nairobi (1975) and Melbourne (1980) and their 1983 position statement entitled "Mission and Evangelism,"

Lausanne; Pattaya; Ventnor: The Conferences of Evangelicals at Lausanne (1975) and Pattaya (1980) and the whole series of ecumenical meetings at Ventnor, NJ, under the patronage of the Overseas Ministries Study Center on the topic of the future of the missionary enterprise (1975-81, and especially last year),

BIMA; Puebla; Knock; or the more or less Catholic Conferences, the regional ones like the BIMA series (of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences; 1978, '80, '82) or even the Puebla documents (1979), or the positions taken at Knock, Ireland (1979)

Manila; SEDOS; Baltimore: or the more comprehensive ones like that of Manila (1979) or the SEDOS Seminar (1981) or the Congress at Baltimore in March of this year.. and especially this Congress at Montréal,

EATWOT: and just on the margin of all these more or less "official" Conferences, there is the whole EATWOT (Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians) series since 1976 at Dar es Salaam, Accra, Wennapuwa (Sri Lanka), São Paulo, New Delhi, and more recently Geneva which have produced a whole sequence of provocative texts full of challenges on the topic of third world theology, naturally including implications for mission.

Montréal: The sounding has already been done and what we have heard and shared here at Montréal reflects and summarizes all the key ideas of these regional and global, ecumenical and Catholic conferences. We need only probe ourselves at this Congress to grasp the elements of the mission of the future, for example:

Liberation - and the struggle for justice as a constitutive, even integrating part of evangelization . . . everything is very clear, isn't it? But what does it mean for Chad or India? Why haven't the Africans and Asians reacted yet with the same enthusiasm as we or the Latins? And as for the Latins themselves, it seems to me that the liberation of which they speak is still to be attained . . . !

Faith and Cultures - they speak of inculturation of the Gospel, of the faith, of the Good News, of missionaries themselves, etc. But who is thinking over the long run about the very radical nature of this concept itself, of this notion of inculturation? Who up until now has really probed this new idea to its depth? It has to be done, I think, because the process is already well under way and we don't know where it will lead us.

Other Religions - the profound theological implications of this dialogue with Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, are truly frightening for our Christology and Soteriology . . . aren't they? We know that the challenge is real and serious because Rome has already vigorously reacted. But hadn't we ought to look a little closely at this phenomenon here to see its implications for ourselves?

Spirituality - I feel somewhat confused by this topic partly because I am not a guru, not a good spiritual director, partly because it seems to me useless to speak of a spirituality of mission when mission itself is so much in question. If we here could trace a few lines of the mission of the future, maybe its spirituality could follow its own development through the very experience itself of the new mission. At least, I think that at this moment one can say very little on this subject, and so I'll be very brief.

Hence, I propose to address these topics successively in order to treat them from the point of view of their long- and short-term implications. And I mention to you, in passing, that all next week at Providence, RI, there will be a meeting of some 25 U.S. persons (mostly Catholic) to review the results of the Baltimore Congress and to try to reduce them to practical recommendations (guidelines or action criteria) for those responsible for mission in the future. I'm sure they'd be prepared to share these specific recommendations with you all.

LIBERATION

The key word "liberation" has already become sort of a catch-all which in fact includes a whole raft of things and movements, e.g. insertion or immersion among the poor, the preferential option for the poor, basic communities, lack of priests, the struggle for peace and justice, the bishops' statements at Medellín and Puebla, even the support of the Pope during his visits to Mexico, Brazil and Central America, and also all the theology "of liberation" (unfortunately less available in books than in mimeed sheets which disappear too quickly!).

The roots of this phenomenon are very deep and stretch back over more than 25 years. We can explore them in many books at last available in English and French. But what I want to stress here, from all these roots, is merely this one point: it's called normally "insertion among the poor." The importance of such an experience cannot be exaggerated.

Insertion among the poor: Consider for a moment the historical process itself: sisters and brothers and priests in Latin America, already 20 years ago, started to reflect on their own reality and their life-circumstances, i.e. situated in middle-class parishes, schools and institutions, generally touching only or principally the families and children of the dominant class (and I am speaking here even of our Congregations which were founded for the poor ...) and leaving to one side the majority of people, the poor. Surely, we launched programs of aid, of development, of soup kitchens, etc., what the Latins call "assistential" works. But our own life in community, our daily life was totally wrapped up in, buried in our institutions which were closed to that reality of poverty, not directly touched by these poor, except from time to time when we'd mount some campaign or initiate some new program to help them . . . but not to change their reality.

Whatever may be the reasons for such isolation, we were almost hermetically sealed in our institutions behind our huge, excluding walls. But little by little (and especially after the appeal of Pope John XXIII, when we launched a veritable wave of missionaries to Latin America), we started to leave our fortresses, to put ourselves in contact with the poor, to initiate new programs among them, to insert ourselves in their slums, to share their life, their lack, their misery, their fears, their hopes.

But note that up to this moment we hadn't yet abandoned our institutions. Each evening we could return to the religious houses, escape the shocks of each day, hide away again in our security and our relative comfort. This was not yet a radical commitment toward the poor and among the poor.

Leaving the protection of institutions: Then, some individuals heard the call of the poor in a more radical way and left the protection of their institutions in order to insert themselves totally among the poor, adopting their same life-style, without the services and accoutrements of normal bourgeois life. At the beginning this was very difficult, even severe. These individuals suffered from the lack of understanding of their brother and sister religious, as well as from that of the very poor among whom they had inserted themselves. But the sharing of life as it is among the poor brought about a conversion for these religious. The principal aspect of this conversion was an almost total commitment to the cause of the poor. The sharing of experiences, the sharing of suffering, of despair had worked its effects on the religious. More and more they engaged in the struggle for justice with a single accord with the oppressed and impoverished. This experience changed, once and for all, not only the agenda of the religious and their Congregations, not only their life-style, but still more radically their understanding of the essence of Christian life itself, of what it means to be a Christian, that is, like Jesus Christ, to be at the side of the poor, inserted and living among them, sacrificing all one has and all one is for them in order to change the conditions, the circumstances, the structures of their life which cause this poverty and this oppression.

It is this act of commitment which is the basis of all theology of liberation. "Commitment," says Gutierrez and so many others, "is the first act of theology." Without this commitment one cannot really understand this movement, this theology, this challenge. And the Latin American bishops seem to me to have grasped the importance of this when they adopted and promoted the preferential option for the poor at Puebla.

Shared experience: I am suggesting here that we cannot really understand either liberation or theology of liberation without having shared the experience which is its basis, which lies below all this new theology and its vision. To really grasp not only the importance of this theology, its roots and its methodological developments, but especially its essence, its heart, its revolutionary impact, we have to displace ourselves from our normal bourgeois life and insert, plunge, immerse ourselves in the reality of the poor in all its aspects.

As long as we lack such a displacement, the possibility of being truly aware of what liberation means, whether liberation means, whether liberation of the poor or our own liberation, escapes us.

Commitment among the poor is the first act of theology. A treatment of this perspective and this challenge is available, either in the reports of the meetings of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (especially those of Wennapuwa, Sao Paulo and New Delhi), or in the recent book of Fr. Gutierrez, *La fuerza histórica de los pobres* (Lima, 1979), recently translated into English as *The Power of the Poor in History* (Maryknoll, 1983) or especially in the experiences and reflections of our sisters and brothers present here who are themselves blessed with such a life-style and to whom I render homage.

One can note here that I have said nothing about many of the points usually considered essential to the subject of liberation, e.g. the poor as a privileged place of revelation, as a new and contemporary *locus theologicus*, the need of social analysis, the necessity of solidarity with those who struggle for justice as in Central America, the witness of new martyrs like Archbishop Romero, the importance of

basic communities as in Brazil, etc. I am well aware of all these omissions. But I am personally convinced that all these other points will fall into line once we have displaced ourselves and really inserted ourselves definitively among the poor of this world, whether here in Montréal or in the third world.

I recall, too, that the religious of both English-speaking and French-speaking Canada, during the Fourth Interamerican of Religious held here in Montréal a few years ago, expressed their sensitivity to the call for ministry among Canada's middle class. I respect that decision. I support it. But I must ask myself if the response to that call might not have been more efficacious if the religious could not have displaced themselves to spend, each one of them, a few years inserted among the poor?

INCULTURATION

The relativization of perspectives, of points of view, of social analysis which can flow from a radical insertion among the poor fades into insignificance beside the relativization implied by inculturation.

But before considering this subject, I wish to make a distinction which is fairly important, although it is often forgotten or omitted. I refer to the distinction between inculturation of the missionary as a stranger in someone else's culture and inculturation of faith or of the faith or of the gospel message or of the Church.

Inculturation of missionaries means speaking of ourselves, the strangers, the visitors, the religious people at the service of men and women of another culture. Our task is evidently to adapt ourselves, to render ourselves sensitive to the values, priorities, wishes, ways of conduct, of communicating, of relating to others, etc., all those subtle factors which together make a culture distinct and different from others.

Learning a language: The first stage of such a process of adaptation of a missionary to a new culture is to learn the language (or sometimes the languages) of the region where he/she will work. This is an absolutely indispensable element of inculturation. If the missionary is not gifted with this talent, he should not be sent -- quite simply. If, after several years in the mission country or region, it is obvious that he cannot learn the language, he should be recalled to his home country -- quite simply.

Why such severity? Because without understanding the language current among the people one cannot hope to sensitize oneself to the culture. One will lack all subtlety in communication, in interpersonal relations, in understanding of cultural values, in short one will not be sensitive to the elements of the culture into which one should inculturate oneself. And I insist on this point because I have already seen too many strangers working, ministering, often suffering in the midst of individuals and of a culture about which they understood practically nothing! Enough of this nonsense, of this insult to others. To learn and really master the language of the host people is the first indispensable element.

Respect: The second (for the inculturation of a missionary) is equally valuable and indispensable, but rather difficult to discern. It is the element of respect for others. One can have or engender respect for many reasons. We respect power, or money. We respect the

elderly and leaders. But I am speaking of a kind of respect which comes close to the experience of love. I am speaking of the respect one has toward another simply because he exists, a respect based on our faith that everything that God created is good in itself. Without such a fundamental and active respect toward the people one serves, one cannot inculturate oneself.

Love: Finally, I make bold to assert that the third element (still more delicate and subtle) is love itself. If I do not love one or some specific persons of this culture, I should abandon the goal of inculturating myself. I do not speak here of the love of a people (e.g. the Africans, the Puerto Ricans, the Quechua, the Japanese . . . all these terms are abstractions and one doesn't love abstractions!). I am speaking frankly of love, of affectionate relations between me, the missionary, and he/she who is by chance (i.e. by creation, by the will of God) other than I, whether he is black or red, whether she has slant eyes or kinky hair. I will not now say more on this topic, except to repeat the three principal elements of the inculturation of a missionary: language, respect, love.

Now for the other inculturation, that of faith or of the Gospel. I mentioned briefly above that this process is quite relativizing. Allow me to explain a little. But first, I have to stress that the principal agent, indeed the unique agent of this inculturation is the indigenous person him/herself and not us the missionaries. We could and we should facilitate the process, but in the final analysis we are standing on the outside of the process itself. In addition we are not judges, nor referees, nor preservers from error, nor defenders of certain truths, nor directors of the process. We are, finally, but spectators and maybe (if they ask it of us) facilitators. This is a major point, as I hope to indicate right away.

It is frequently said that inculturation is the process whereby the faith becomes indigenized, whereby the Gospel is expressed in terms comprehensible by an indigenous people, whereby the Christian message is clothed or puts on a truly indigenous raiment. Lots of examples are proposed: liturgy with drums or dance or tinkling bells or flowers or incense; the existence of an indigenous clergy or even hierarchy; catechisms adapted to remove certain racist or first-world examples or expressions; the adoption of more indigenous processes, e.g. consensus for reaching decisions, indigenous gestures of respect or homage (which often strike us as sexist or unjust), etc.

But I submit to you that none of these examples is really inculturation. They are examples of adaptation and nothing more! All these examples presuppose that there exists a certain body of data, a message, a body of doctrine, a certain minimum which we have to adapt adjust, clothe or I don't know what. Is there a single Gospel "message?" Is there an irreducible *depositum* of the faith, always and everywhere the same? The bishops at Vatican II tried to articulate the hierarchy of truths.....and they gave up!

(To be continued..)

**IDENTIKIT MISSIONARIO
DELLA CHIESA IN ITALIA**

(The Italian language missionary Review MISSIONE OGGI published a special issue for September - October, 1983, devoted to the topic THE ITALIAN CHURCH AND MISSION. Following is an excerpt from the key article which attempts to set out A MISSIONARY IDENTIKIT OF THE CHURCH IN ITALY. The article identifies a wealth of widespread initiatives which are working towards an increase in modern mission awareness in the Church in Italy and also considerable growth in the co-ordination of these initiatives at official and diocesan levels).

Pastorale tra missione e "gestione": Qualcuno ha definito il Concilio Vaticano II un "terremoto ecclesiologico". Esso infatti è venuto a mettere in moto un movimento che ha sconvolto fin nel profondo mentalità e strutture. La missione ne è stata particolarmente toccata. Restituita alla chiesa locale essa ha perduto la sua caratterizzazione geografica divenendo "globale". Da attività è divenuta "dimensione". I ruoli che sembravano definiti sono stati messi in discussione. Tutti hanno capito che devono essere missionari.

"La chiesa esiste per evangelizzare" ha detto Paolo VI nella Evangelii nuntiandi. Dappertutto, senza differenze di contenuti. Non può esistere pastorale di pura gestione dell'esistente. Tutto deve essere in funzione della evangelizzazione.

Un'idea questa che ha messo in subbuglio ogni realtà di chiesa. Cosa significa passare dalla missione come "attività" alla missione come "dimensione" della chiesa? Quale collaborazione assumeranno in questo contesto vescovi, laici, sacerdoti, agenti di pastorale?

Abbiamo rivolto queste domande ad alcuni vescovi. Ecco alcune risposte.

Scriva il Vescovo di Cosenza: "Di fatto ogni componente della chiesa locale vive la 'dimensione' missionaria.

Manca però a volte la coscienza di essere missionari". Chi si impegna nella chiesa allora vive la missione, è missionario. Tuttavia in molti manca questa coscienza e la missione viene anche delegata, almeno teoricamente ad alcuni corpi specializzati. Ci pare che questa sia una situazione abbastanza comune, che, anzi, spesso si assista ancora alla contrapposizione tra pastorale e missione. Ciò che, in proposito, scrive un vescovo, ci sembra abbastanza sintomatico: "Il problema missionario non è l'unico, anche se è il primo. In diocesi sono tutti protesi a lavorare, ma le forze sono relativamente poche, per cui bisogna accettare quello che viene dato. Il centro missionario opererà perché la missione diventi dimensione costitutiva della chiesa". Emerge, ci pare, ancora una visione parziale di missione, quasi che essa fosse in concorrenza con la normale attività diocesana, quasi che la pastorale fosse una cosa e la missione un'altra. In questa visione,

anche con la buona volontà non vengono assolutamente armonizzate le diverse necessità perché manca il luogo unificante che, a nostro avviso, è appunto la missione evangelizzatrice.

Si capisce allora quando scrive il Vescovo di Rovigo: "La missione come dimensione nella chiesa e quindi, di ciascun cristiano, non è sentita e vissuta abbastanza. L'animazione e la cooperazione missionaria appaiono come compiti secondari, compiti delegati all'Ufficio missionario e agli istituti missionari. La missionarietà non è sufficientemente entrata nella pastorale ordinaria e straordinaria". Si capiscono ancora le difficoltà che alcuni vescovi, particolarmente aperti alla missione e alle missioni trovano in proposito. Uno di essi scrive: "Io, come vescovo sono disposto a lasciar partire ogni prete che si sente di aiutare chi è più povero di noi. La mia chiesa locale sente assai i problemi dei luoghi senza operatori pastorali. Ma non ci siamo quanto all'idea di un facile interscambio.. Anzi, nei più c'è ostilità nei confronti di queste scelte che sono chiamate 'privazioni gratuite'. Per me, tra i tanti problemi, sta quello del come 'essere serviti qui', risparmiando tante cure qui, perché siano date 'là'".

Scrivono l'Arcivescovo di Vercelli, Mons. Mensa: "È molto difficile far entrare questo concetto nei sacerdoti, nella parrocchie, nei gruppi e nelle associazioni. Siamo ancora troppo 'campanilisti', chiusi in una concezione poco 'cattolica' della missione. A mio avviso occorre una formazione nei seminari, oggi certamente più 'attrezzati' per una teologia missionaria alla luce del Vaticano II e dei documenti della CEI. Umilmente devo confessare che in questo senso avrei dovuto io personalmente educare meglio i miei diocesani".

Certo, il cambiamento è difficile. Scrivono Mons. Gottardi: "Come concetto, la dimensione missionaria della chiesa è vissuta a livello piuttosto intuitivo. Tutti coloro che sono impegnati nei vari settori della pastorale credono a questo principio. Nella pratica le cose sono diverse per motivi più vari. In questi motivi entrano: la tradizione, la maniera di presentarsi dei missionari, il concetto e la maniera di vivere la chiesa come logica conseguenza di un tipo di catechesi. Entrano poi anche il fattore personale di ogni operatore pastorale. Forse è ancora il concetto che importante è aiutare le missioni e non tanto saper vivere in stato di missione. La strada da seguire è la formazione degli agenti di pastorale a tutti i livelli: portarli a capire e a vivere la missione come una dimensione essenziale del proprio essere cristiani".

E qui fatto un elenco di cause che entrano in gioco a rendere difficile il passaggio ad una pastorale di tipo missionario. Fra queste ci pare di dover mettere in evidenza in maniera particolare la responsabilità dei missionari che spesso si presentano con atteggiamenti che sono diseducativi per le comunità. Tanto per non restare nel vago, ci pare di dover ricordare certe forme di animazione misurate con la calcolatrice, oppure la presentazione delle realtà missionarie in termini di sola fame e miseria, forme che rischiano di assomigliare il missionario ad un mendicante di fondi e nient'altro. Cose stradette, ma pur sempre vere, che si riscontrano nella prassi con cui spesso sono celebrate le giornate missionarie o altri momenti che potrebbero invece divenire qualificanti per una vera animazione missionaria delle comunità cristiane.

Mons Conigli: Ci pare di aver colto, dalle risposte dei vescovi, una grande lucidità di analisi. Mons. Conigli, ad esempio: "La missione come parametro cui rapportare scelte e decisioni pastorali della chiesa diocesana, sta assumendo dimensioni più consistenti in questi ultimi anni.

Ciò vale sia per i sacerdoti-parroci (disponibilità ad accogliere i missionari 'rientrati' per l'opera di animazione; maggiore disposizione a celebrare nelle rispettive comunità la GMM e le altre 'giornate' di sensibilizzazione missionaria; attenzione con la quale seguono iniziative per l'aggiornamento e l'approfondimento della dimensione missionaria del loro sacerdozio).

Religiosi e Gruppi: Lo stesso discorso vale per i religiosi (forse in toni minori). Riguardo a gruppi, associazioni e movimenti, svolge un ruolo di mediazione il MGM che assieme agli altri organismi laicali è stato chiamato dal Vescovo a far parte del Consiglio dei Laici.

Tra le difficoltà, forse quella non ancora del tutto superata è una fondamentale frammentarietà nell'organico del corpo ecclesiale che si traduce in iniziative a volte scoordinate. Il motivo di ciò sta nella mancanza di un rapporto capillare e diretto degli operatori della pastorale missionaria con le altre componenti il corpo ecclesiale.

Quello della missione è un problema di 'coscienza missionaria' che ha bisogno di essere costantemente formata, sollecitata e verificata poi nelle scelte e c'è bisogno di persone che sappiano spendere la propria vita a servizio di questo ideale".

Varie altre diocesi: Nella stessa scia si situano varie altre diocesi. Stralciando: "La 'dimensione-missione' della chiesa non è, in genere, vissuta con la dovuta coerenza.

C'è ancora troppo individualismo (di singoli e di gruppi), poca apertura, difettosa disponibilità alla 'mobilità'.

Tutto ciò fa sorgere seri problemi per il coordinamento delle varie iniziative pastorali.

Una diocesi non può operare efficacemente, senza una costante drazione nella prassi di questa dimensione, costitutiva *anche* di ogni chiesa particolare' (Mons. Angelo Criscito - Lucera).

"L'assunzione della ecclesiologia del Vaticano II è lenta. Ci sono, però, fermenti e prospettive. E funzionale il Consiglio Presbiterale, il Consiglio Pastorale, la zona pastorale, la Consulta dell'Apostolato dei laici.

I problemi emergenti sono: una tendenza ad evadere rinchiudendosi nel proprio guscio e schema operativo; c'è un disimpegno in riferimento ai giovani (costano fatica); si sente una certa sfiducia; dinnanzi all'emergere dei problemi così densi e vasi c'è bisogno di molta fede, creatività e comunione.

La dimensione missionaria nasce in misura che cresce la chiesa" (Mons. Giuseppe Agostino - Crotone).

Dietro queste difficoltà sta spesso la paura del passaggio ad accogliere i tempi nuovi che si presentano. Allora si mettono in **evidenza le enormi difficoltà che la realtà attuale presenta e diviene difficile operare scelte razionali e coraggiose**. C'è la tentazione di "correre ai ripari" per "salvare il salvabile". Dice in proposito il vescovo di Fossano:

"La chiesa diocesana di Fossano in quanto tale sente su di sé importanza e l'urgenza della dimensione missionaria, anche se poi questo non significa ancora un corrispondente impegno di tutti in questa direzione.

APRIRE DI PIU I CONFINI DELLA PASTORALE

I ripetuti inviti del Vescovo ad aprire di più i confini della propria attenzione pastorale per aiutare realtà più bisognose vicine e lontane, si scontrano spesso con una scarsa disponibilità da parte dei sacerdoti a 'lasciare' e a 'partire'.

La "Scristianizzata": La preoccupazione grossa, che frera, anche se ingiustamente, l'apertura missionaria, è sempre quella che si fonda sulla constatazione della difficoltà già notevole e sempre più accentuata ad evangelizzare la nostra realtà locale che è sempre più 'scristianizzata'.

Purtroppo però, già in questa attività, diventa preminente il 'salvare il salvabile' rispetto alla autentica 'missionarietà' che si fa attenta anche in loco alle realtà più lontane.

Ciò non toglie che qualche segno di speranza ci sia, ed esso va individuato in particolare in alcune realtà di gruppi diocesani o parrocchiali o di alcune esperienze nuove che dimostrano notevole attenzione a questa dimensione di missionarietà.

Sarà necessario, come chiesa locale, appoggiate, aiutare e potenziare queste esperienze e incoraggiare la nascita di altre ancora perché diventino lievito nella massa".

I tentativi, tuttavia, vengono portati avanti con notevole buona volontà e anche con fantasia. C'è chiara la consapevolezza che la chiesa non sarà capace di vivere veramente la missione se non si sente tutta impegnata nella evangelizzazione, anche al suo interno. In una pastorale di "gestione" la missione sarà sempre qualcosa di anomalo, di staccato dalla realtà quotidiana e feriale della chiesa. Essa sarà sempre delegata ad altri. Lo scrive molto chiaramente il vescovo di Assisi:

Assisi: "Ritengo che una chiesa particolare è missionaria nella misura in cui essa è evangelizzante al suo interno. La mentalità prevalente, soprattutto nel clero anziano, è quella dell'individualismo pastorale e della parrocchia concepita come proprio campo riservato. Nel clero giovane, soprattutto in quello che ha maggiormente assimilato il Vaticano II, si va diffondendo la mentalità dell'impegno zonale o addirittura diocesano. Ritengo che nella misura in cui il clero e il laicato si sentiranno responsabili dell'evangelizzazione nel proprio territorio si apriranno alla dimensione universale della missione della chiesa".

Lecce: A Lecce c'è tutto un programma: "Porre la chiesa locale in stato di missione", con tutta una struttura in merito che vede impegnati i vicari pastorali per ogni attività:

"L'affermazione con cui sollecito la comunità: 'Porre la chiesa locale in stato di missione' spiega la prospettiva di porre la pastorale diocesana che non deve considerare la missionarietà come attività, ma dimensione fondamentale.

Si cerca di dare coscienza di essa con la proposta di contenuti, anche se molti tra sacerdoti, gruppi associativi, parrocchie rimangono ancorati ad una visione limitativa della missione con il semplice aiuto economico. E sintomatico però il fatto che la missione sostenuta fino a poco tempo fa dagli istituti missionari ora segna un cammino di risveglio, di sensibilità a tutti i livelli. Il problema in diocesi da chiarire sempre più è l'impostazione di una pastorale organica. La difficoltà

in parte da me è superata con la costituzione del Consiglio Episcopale dove fanno parte i 10 Vicari Episcopali delle specifiche attività pastorali in diocesi. Lo stesso Vicario Episcopale, per le missioni con il consiglio è chiamato a chiarire i problemi e a coordinare il lavoro'.

Verona: Significativa, ancora, a questo proposito, l'esperienza raccontata dalla chiesa di Verona:

"Oggi la dimensione missionaria della chiesa sia all'interno che all'esterno dei propri confini, in Verona è assai presente.

Inserendosi sulla scia già tracciata il Vescovo - poiché si sente Vescovo della chiesa universale, e responsabile con il Papa e gli altri Vescovi della evangelizzazione del mondo intero - ha compiuto particolari passi di comunione verso sacerdoti diocesani e laici, i religiosi, le religiose in servizio missionario all'estero, soprattutto con i suoi viaggi in America Latina ed in Africa.

Anche le parrocchie sono state aiutate ad aprirsi sempre di più ad un rapporto forte di comunione con coloro che dalle parrocchie stesse sono partiti per un servizio missionario all'estero. Così i gruppi missionari sono stimolati a farsi carico di questo rapporto di comunione, per trasformarlo in una forte occasione di animazione all'interno della comunità parrocchiale stessa. L'inserimento poi degli operatori del Centro Missionario nei vari momenti della pastorale (ragazzi, pre-adolescenti, adolescenti, giovani, famiglie) e la collaborazione stretta che ha con il Centro Catechistico, il Centro per la Pastorale del mondo del lavoro, e il Centro Diocesano Vocazioni, hanno permesso di allargare a molte persone, organismi, associazioni e movimenti, questa sensibilità fondamentale. A noi sembra che i problemi che possono nascere nell'ambito delle normali attività della diocesi possono essere tutti superati con ottica di apertura universale.

La strada che stiamo seguendo perché la dimensione missionaria risalti come costitutiva della nostra chiesa locale è quella di un sempre più forte inserimento all'interno della pastorale diocesana a qualsiasi livello e in qualsiasi momento da parte del Centro Missionario Diocesano con tutti i suoi operatori, religiosi, religiose, laici, preti diocesani".

ALCUNE VALUTAZIONI

Lo spazio a disposizione ci impedisce di approfondire maggiormente la ricerca sulla realtà ecclesiale italiana in ordine alla missione, così come ci appare dalle risposte di vari vescovi ad un questionario che avevamo preparato per loro.

Da ciò che siamo andati dicendo e da altre risposte che ci sono pervenute ci sembra si possano trarre alcune considerazioni:

a) In Italia esiste un risveglio missionario: ciò che fino a non molto tempo fa era delegato quasi esclusivamente agli istituti missionari, ora viene assunto come proprio anche dalle chiese locali. Si assiste in tante diocesi alla nascita di gruppi che prendono la missione come punto di riferimento e di impegno. Molti vescovi si sono recati in chiese missionarie, molte chiese locali si sono assunte impegni di rapporto e di scambio con altre chiese, si sente dappertutto l'esigenza di una pastorale che assuma la missione come dimensione essenziale.

b) Si fa sentire il peso del passato: se esiste questo risveglio, esso cozza con tutta una serie di tradizioni e di strutture che impediscono al nuovo di crescere velo-

cemente. Esiste ancora diffusa la mentalità della missione intesa in senso tradizionale, come delega a qualcuno; c'è tutt'ora nella gran parte delle nostre comunità l'idea che in fondo si è chiamati ad *aiutare* le missioni; da parte di vari missionari si fa ancora un'anima-zione diseducativa sulla missione; i sacerdoti risentono di una formazione chiusa che certo non ha respirato il mondo; c'è da parte di molti la tentazione di rifugiarsi nei propri problemi rinchiudendosi dentro il proprio guscio.

c) Al fondo di tutto resta l'interrogativo sulla missione: dalle
risposte
ricevute dai vescovi che abbiamo interpellato emerge - anche se in
maniera minima - la necessità di un chiarimento sulla missione. In che
rapporto sono missione evangelizzatrice della chiesa e missione "ad Gentes".
Se la missione è stata restituita alle chiese locali, quale ruolo hanno i
missionari e gli Istituti Missionari? Più a fondo, dove porterà un vero
scambio tra chiese? Dice il Vescovo di Rovigo: "Resta chiaro che l'obiet-
tivo che intendiamo raggiungere è che il rientro di personale apostolico
da altre chiese aiuti a una revisione dei criteri pastorali con i quali
viviamo e operiamo all'interno della nostra realtà diocesana". Ma cosa
significa questo? Ha il coraggio la chiesa italiana di operare questa
trasformazione?

Lasciamo questo punto interrogativo perché risposte esatte non sapremmo darne. È tutta una ricerca quella che siamo chiamati a vivere, senza voler salvare posizioni acquisite o privilegi corporativi. Una ricerca a cui sono chiamate insieme tutte le forze operanti nella chiesa e come chiesa. Pensiamo soprattutto agli istituti missionari i quali, nella nuova visione ecclesiologica del Concilio Vaticano II devono rivedere le proprie posizioni e interrogarsi sulla propria identità e sul proprio carisma.

C'è bisogno di tutti in questo sforzo per rendere sempre più vera l'affermazione del Concilio: "Inviata per mandato divino alle genti, la chiesa è per sua natura missionaria" (A.G.1).

Ref. Missione Oggi: n.8 - Sett.-Ott. '83. Viale S. Martino,8,
43100 PARMA.

- fine -

SIXTH ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES
VANCOUVER, B.C. - JULY 24 TO
AUGUST 10, 1983

Reported by Mary Motte, FMM.

(Soeur Mary MOTTE faisait partie des observateurs catholiques romains à la dernière Assemblée Mondiale des Eglises à Vancouver. Elle était l'un des représentants du Secrétariat pour l'Unité des Chrétiens. Elle rédigea ce texte à la demande du Comité Exécutif de SEDOS auquel elle appartenait avant d'accepter la responsabilité d'organiser le Congrès Missionnaire de Baltimore.)

People came from all six continents of the world to participate in the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), under the theme, JESUS CHRIST - THE LIFE OF THE WORLD. They came from the more than 300 member churches of the WCC, including Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox. They also came from other churches and groups which have a close working relationship with the council, but who are not members. The group of twenty delegated observers from the Roman Catholic Church was headed by Mons. Basil Meeking of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), and was made up of women and men, including bishops, laity, priests and religious from different parts of the world.

The best way to visualize the organization of the meeting is to see it as a series of concentric circles: the inner circle with about one-thousand persons where the programs and activities of the WCC were reviewed and planned; a larger circle made up of accredited visitors, who numbered around three-thousand, and who assisted at plenary sessions of the assembly, and also had their own program around the assembly theme; and finally, an outer circle opened to a wider public, where highlights of presentations on aspects of the theme were offered.

Eventually there will be much written about Vancouver. There has already been much in the media, a good amount of it focussed on the political issues which arose for discussion. However, it is important that these reports do not divert attention from the major focus at Vancouver, for that was Church Unity. In fact, this assembly will probably be noted in history as one which signified a major step toward the realization of Christian unity. The reason behind such a forward move has been the Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry (BEM) document brought together after fifty years of work, by theologians of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC. These theologians come from the different Christian churches, including Roman Catholic. This text, completed at the Faith and Order meeting in Lima, Peru in 1982, represents the theological convergence that has been achieved under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it had a tremendous impact on the members of the Sixth Assembly.

It is of interest to note that BEM has now been sent to all the churches; a response to it is requested by the end of 1985. All of

the Roman Catholic Episcopal Conferences have received a copy of this text from the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, requesting study and response. The Secretariat will send a follow-up letter in autumn, 1983 along with a copy of the book, Ecumenical Perspectives on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, (ed. Max Thurian), WCC, 1983.

The Sixth Assembly has also made a significant contribution from a missionary perspective. One of the most important experiences to develop during the days of the meeting was that of public common witness, in the times of worship which permeated the eighteen days at Vancouver. The participants gathered every morning at 8:15 under the yellow and white tent for the first official act of worship, which then wove its way through the day. The important place given to worship and the serious way in which the participants engaged in acts of worship, has contributed to a greater understanding of how this kind of common witness is a basic moving force in mission. The number of persons gathered, their cultural, linguistic and confessional diversity, and the involved, active presence of handicapped persons along with children, youth, women and men, reinforced the significance of this common witness. This variety gave testimony to diverse ways of confessing a common faith.^{1/}

The focus on the Eucharist during the assembly confirmed the increasing recognition accorded the centrality of the Eucharist since the world missionary conference in Melbourne, Australia in 1980, by the WCC.^{2/} On two occasions a public Eucharistic liturgy was celebrated in the worship tent at Vancouver. The first celebration July 31st, followed the order of an ancient Eucharistic liturgy which had been appended to the Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry document. This liturgy, is popularly known as the Lima Liturgy, after the place where the meeting of the Faith and Order Commission was held which finalized the BEM document.

The second celebration was on August 6th, Feast of the Transfiguration. The Liturgy was that of St. John Chrysostom, and was celebrated by the Orthodox for the participants of the Sixth Assembly. A number of visitors also took part in this celebration.

On both these occasions the existing divisions among Christians were existentially focused through the inability of all to take part in the reception of the Eucharist. The words of Archbishop Runcie in his introduction to the celebration on July 31st were helpful in calling attention to the reality in a way which seems important at a time when all the churches are not in full communion. For some of the churches, and particularly for the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches, participation in the Eucharist is a sign of full communion, unity -- a reality not yet achieved. The fact that all did not take part in communion at these celebrations gave public recognition to the journey still to be completed by all in the search for full unity.

^{1/} One of the major tasks carried out by the Joint Working Group of the World Council of Churches and the Roman Catholic Church in the last seven years has been a study of Common Witness based on case studies from different parts of the world.

^{2/} At this conference, sponsored by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the WCC, a section of the report was devoted to "The Eucharist as a witness to the Kingdom of God and an experience of God's Reign".

However, the pain experienced by many, including Roman Catholics, over this continued sign of separation around the source of unity; the joy of many over being able to share the Eucharist in spite of continued confessional differences among Protestant and Anglican churches; the recognition of growing convergences about belief in the Eucharist among all churches -- these experiences underscored once again the centrality of the Eucharist as the source of missionary motivation, along with the Word of God. This would appear to be one of the important developments at Vancouver. Hopefully the future will bring even greater convergences in these areas.

Carrying the dynamic of common witness beyond worship proved to be a more difficult task at the assembly. It points to a basic need if there is to be a further development of our understanding and experience of common witness through collaboration in mission; namely, the identification and exploration of how our collaboration in mission with other christians moves toward unity of the Church. This difficulty also represents the question ever before us as christians: how do we relate our faith experience to the context of the world and vice versa?

The questions which concern the relation of christians to persons of other faith traditions (Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists...), are crucial and are at the cutting edge of mission today. What we mean by evangelization (evangelism), what we mean by witness, and what we mean by dialogue; and our intent in all these areas, represent multiple visions and ways of looking at the questions. This fact was clear at Vancouver, as it has been at other meetings in recent months. The way of relating to persons of other faith traditions requires a different perspective from that of how we relate mission to persons of no belief. If we, as christians, are to understand what God is calling us to in mission for the future, then much more study, prayer and reflection -- all done ecumenically -- are needed to situate our^{1/} missionary vocation in relation to those of other faith traditions. ^{1/}

In closing this report, I just wish to add a word about the pre-assembly women's meeting. Four of us from the Roman Catholic group of delegated observers participated in this three-day meeting at the request of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity; we were three women and one man. We spent a good part of this meeting in Bible Studies centered on the theme, Jesus Christ - the Life of the World. Two of these studies, one on Living Stones and the other on Birth, enabled us to look at life from a feminine perspective. The men who were with us, also appreciated the variation provided by this different starting point for theological reflection. It was also interesting to note that concern about women's role is not limited to Europe and North America, but is a priority for women from the Pacific, Asia, Africa and Latin America. The contribution of Orthodox women was most noted for its ability to broaden the basis of women's participation in the life of the Church beyond the question of ordination.

Throughout the whole assembly the attention given to participation was recognized by those of us who were Roman Catholic observers as a question to us as Roman Catholics. How persons can participate

^{1/} There were representatives of other faith traditions present at Vancouver.

in the life of the Church; how much concern is given to this question of participation; what does participation mean in the context of our tradition; what is being experienced and said by persons in different local churches; the need to listen and to understand: all of these points need more consideration and attention.

Vancouver has now become history and another milestone on the ecumenical map begun with Edinburgh in 1910. The event was extremely well organized, and a special thanks is owed to the World Council of Churches for bringing together such a large and diversified group of Christians. The welcome accorded everyone by the people of Canada was ecumenical in every sense -- and it was a wonderful joy to be received so warmly and well!

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'NINOY' AQUINO - EXCERPT FROM A PERSONAL LETTER

Written on his 270th day in prison, where he spent almost eight years in solitary confinement in the Philippines.

I was stripped naked. My wedding ring, watch, eyeglasses, shoes, clothes were all taken away. When they removed my glasses, I suffered terrible headaches. For the first three or four days, I expected to be 'liquidated' any moment. I suspected our guards were the dreaded 'Monkeys' who were licensed to kill. I even suspected they were putting drugs in my meager ration. So I refused to eat. Later, the guards gave me six crackers a day. I subsisted on six crackers and water for the rest of my stay. I became so depressed and despondent. I was haunted by the thought of my family whom I have not seen since February 24..... At this point of my desperation and desolation, I questioned the justice of GOD. I prayed the rosary, but more mechanically than with feeling. Would God allow me to die without seeing my family. What terrible crimes have I committed to deserve this fate? The magnanakaws are living it up and I who tried to walk the narrow path of public service with integrity am now about to meet an uncertain fate? Is this justice? These questions assailed and kept me sleepless.

Cory, my children, our stay at bonifacio, our nightly sessions, our debates and lively discussion kept flashing back like a montage. I couldn't close my eyes because every time I did I saw the faces of my children whom I am soon going to leave at the mercy of a fatherless world. And my poor wife Cory will have to carry my responsibilities on her frail shoulders.

The mysteries of the Rosary started me on my meditation. It was the life of Christ from birth to the ascension. Suddenly, Jesus became a live human being. His life was to become my inspiration. Here was a God-Man who preached nothing but love and was rewarded with death. Here was a God-Man who has power over all creation but took the mockery of a crown of thorns with humility and patience. And for all his noble intentions, he was shamed, vilified, slandered and betrayed. Then it dawned on me how puny were my sufferings compared to Him whose only purpose was to save mankind from eternal damnation.....

Ref. Human Society Monograph. La Ignaciana Apostolic Center. Philippines 2802. September Special Issue, 1983.

- end -

B E R E C O N C I L E D

It is not true that the only drama in the world today is the economic conflict between the North and the South.

It is not true that all the misfortunes of the working class stem from the oppression of the "employers", from "capitalism" or the "multinationals".

It is not true that things will necessarily improve in Africa with the disappearance of the small minority of privileged people whose wealth is an insult to those who wonder what they will be able to eat tomorrow.

It is not true that all will be resolved when one half of the planet falls into the arms of the other half.

It is not true...

Or rather, yes, it is true, but on one condition:

That we put our finger on the sin that causes the rifts (for we must call things by their correct name),

That we put our finger on the root of evil.

We have to recognize humbly the fundamental inability of the human heart to allow the power of the Love of God to capture it.

We have to recognise that reconciliation will not come about through our own efforts,

That it comes to us from elsewhere.

Reconciliation is there: in the pierced heart of the Lord.

*It is up to us to receive it
and to live it - each day
where we are - each day.*

"Peace to you! Go! I am sending you..."

Sr. Suzanne Le Gal

*Ref. Hello? Frascati. Oct. 1983.
Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa.*

- end -