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CONTENTS

PAGE

MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH

SEDOS SEMINAR - OCTOBER 9, 1990

I	MISSION IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH Dom Ivo Lorscheiter, Bishop of Santa Maria, Brazil	285
II	FOURTH LATIN AMERICAN MISSIONARY CONGRESS (COMLA 4), LIMA, PERU. FEBRUARY, 1991 Romeo Ballan, MCCJ	293
2.	THE MISSIONARY DILEMMA: A GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE Alfons Merten, SVD	301
3.	INTERNATIONAL ST. FRANCIS PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: CANTICLE OF ALL CREATURES; OUR COMMON ENVIRONMENT IN THE SPIRIT OF ASSISI	306
4.	SEASONS OF MOTHERHOOD June Johnston	311
5.	NEWS/COMING EVENTS	314

IN THIS ISSUE

This issue contains the texts of the two papers delivered at the SEDOS Seminar on the MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH.

BISHOP IVO LORSCHETER asked the question "Church of Latin America, how is your missionary awareness and practice today?" Five reasons made this a particularly important question: The 500th Anniversary of the arrival of the Spanish; the missionary commitment of so many Europeans since that event; the fact that by the year 2000 approximately 50% of the world's catholics will be in Latin America; the 25th Anniversary of Vatican II; and the Fourth General Assembly of the Latin American Bishops which will be held in Santo Domingo in 1992. Dom Ivo commented on these and then outlined some missionary initiatives of the Latin American Churches in situations of mission within Latin America.

He gave priority to the serious challenge of evangelization among the Indios - the indigenous people, still strangely the most neglected of peoples, and the Afro Brazilians. The main effort overseas is being directed to Mozambique in Africa because the pastoral policies of the Church there are close to those of Dom Ivo's diocese. (see also News. Page 314)

FR. ROMEO BALLAN, MCCJ who is coordinator of the preparatory committee for COMLA 4 brought us up to date with the preparations for that meeting which will be held in Lima, Peru, in February 1991. He did this in the wider historical context of the COMLA meetings which aim to

coordinate and stimulate missionary efforts of the Latin American Churches on a continental level.

FR. MERTEN, SVD has lived his entire active life as a missionary in Ghana yet he entitles his piece THE MISSIONARY DILEMMA. He sees the continued "European-ness" of the Church in Africa as the greatest obstacle to its growth and wonders whether missionaries will be seen as the "grave-diggers of the Church" if they do not make radical changes in their approach to the African mind and heart.

Missionaries increasingly draw attention to the importance of respect for the environment as a specifically missionary concern. An important manifestation of this concern was the first Awards Ceremony of the INTERNATIONAL ST. FRANCIS PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: CANTICLE OF CANTICLES. This was held in October in the Franciscan Basilica at Assisi in the presence of an influential gathering of people dedicated to the environment. We give here the Statement from the Seminar held on that occasion; the members of the prestigious Awards Jury; the names of those who received awards and finally the Canticle of Canticles.

We draw your attention to the SEASONS OF MOTHERHOOD, a classic example of contextual theology. We propose it as an Advent and Christmas meditation for all missionaries. It comes from a laywoman JUNE JOHNSTON a mother who also works outside her family.

There are important items of news and coming events.

MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH

SEDOS Rome, October 9th, 1990

Dom Ivo Lorscheiter

"You will be my witnesses not only in Jerusalem, but throughout Judea and Samaria, and indeed to the ends of the earth." (Acts. 1.8).

The Lord promises the strength of the Holy Spirit for this work. This is what is important, what sustains us in our effort. We worship this Spirit and we call on the Spirit at this very moment as we meet here and consider with trepidation the missionary responsibilities of Latin America.

The Lord tells us that the Father has determined by his own authority the times, the moments, the ways of this task. Who knows? We in Latin America could even say that the Lord, of his own authority, has fixed the time, the steps, the ways of this task so that we, too, in Latin America may take upon ourselves this universal missionary responsibility.

As we worship this Spirit and prepare ourselves to know "the signs of the times" that the Father has determined, we call his presence upon us today.

THE RELIGIOUS CHARISM

I would like to greet the members of SEDOS whom I have the honor of meeting for the first time, with its leaders, staff, and all the missionary and religious institutes that are part of this service. It is my wish that here at SEDOS it may be possible to produce a growing steady flow of common activities on behalf of the missionary cause.

Since we are dealing here with religious families allow me to tell you with all my heart: never be afraid to be what your religious charism calls you to be within the Lord's Church. Your religious charism - and we must say this with great joy - calls you to be the spearheads. Religious must be the pioneers in discovering the pastoral and missionary needs of the Church. This is your gift. And you must not even wait for the hierarchy to call you. The

hierarchy has its own charism of coordination. You have the gift of being the first, the pioneers, the spearheads. This is your joy and your specific responsibility.

I recall reading a biblical meditation by the famous Fr. Bernard Häring, who was commenting on what happened on the morning of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus when the two apostles, John and Peter, ran to the tomb. The Bible tells us, (in an acute way, I might add) that John was running faster than Peter. Häring says that it is a symbol of what must also happen in the Church. John represents the religious charism, and must be faster than the hierarchy. But Peter, representing the hierarchy, must gather up also those who lag behind and so he must not be too far ahead!

It would have been a false respect on the part of John, if he

had slowed down. It would have damaged Peter himself. In fact, seeing John so far ahead, even made Peter make a greater effort not to arrive too late! The hierarchy is stimulated by the charism of religious.

But then John himself tells us in his gospel that, when he reached the empty tomb, he waited for Peter. He did not wait out of fear. He did not enter the tomb; not because he was afraid of angels or the dead but because he wanted to recognize the charism, the responsibility of Peter. Peter arrived, surveyed the scene and then John, having followed protocol, later described the scene in the most minute details.

So please! All religious, members of SEDOS or not, must live with joy this pastoral and missionary gift. This is written also in the *Mutuae Relationes* of 1968, issued by the two Roman Congregations, for Religious and, of Bishops, that the charism of religious is to be agents of renewal and of creativity. Because of this, the charism will often be uncomfortable - this is exactly what the document says. We Bishops are not afraid. The Church will get along well in the measure that you religious will live this missionary charism.

Having made this important point I would like now to try to express the theme of this morning's talk in the shape of a question:

Church of Latin America, how is your missionary awareness and practice today?

FIVE REASONS FOR THE QUESTION

I believe that we in Latin America must ask this question of ourselves: How do we live this missionary consciousness? How do we translate it into a missionary practice? You too, in SEDOS from many Churches, and Congregations, will want to ask this same question of

yourselves. I think it is important to keep this talk in the form of a question, so that we may appreciate the stimulating challenge it contains. I would like to consider some special circumstances and motivations that prompt the question.

1) 500th Anniversary

First, in October 1992 we will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the history of the Americas. We all know that there is a lot of controversy around this 500th anniversary. Today, even among us bishops there are ever stronger opinions. On the one side we have a "gloomy reading" that sees in the history of these 500 years only mistakes, crimes, grave errors, violations of human rights and of traditional cultures. Everything is gloomy. Everything was a sin. On the other side there is the "rosy reading" of history which sees everything as beautiful, clear, bright and sees only the advantages, the merits, the great realizations of missionary evangelization.

The history of these 500 years, not unlike the rest of human history, must always be looked at "with the humility of truth" - the words of Pope John Paul II in this context. We should avoid unilateral triumphalisms on the one side, and false scruples on the other. For this reason we try to ensure, and we pray to the Lord, that this historic event may lead to serious studies that make us recognize the mistakes which are many and serious, but also remember, even with joy and gratitude, the undeniable examples of heroism of the missionaries who did so much. May it be an objective history without being unilateral. It is in the context of this 500th anniversary celebrations that we find the first and strongest reason for asking the question: **Church of Latin America, how is your missionary awareness and practice today?**

2) The Missionary History

There is a second historical reason. During these 500 years of history, there have been numberless missionaries, who left their own countries. They faced the unknown - often in poor and very difficult situations. They tried to do a work of evangelization in their own way and according to their own pastoral insights. We in Latin America must give thanks to the many religious orders and congregations that have made this history possible. We must remember the many nations and countries - Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Holland, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland and others that have sent their sons and daughters to us for this work of the Church.

Since so many people have worked so hard in the past, and are still working among us at the present time, we must ask ourselves how is our own missionary spirit? Perhaps this question should be asked even more seriously because we are told that in the countries I just mentioned, missionary and priestly vocations are decreasing.

3) Catholic Latin America

There is a third reason. Latin America is practically the only Catholic continent in the world. Soon it will have 50% of the Catholic population of the world. This is a powerful challenge. What is our responsibility before other peoples and regions of our planet? There are over 300 bishops in Brazil alone. The Pope always tells us, "You are the first episcopal conference." Perhaps he says the same thing to the Americans and the Italians! I do not know. This is what he tells us and so the question arises: what does it all mean for us?

You may have already read elsewhere that Brazil is 90% Catholic. In the past there has been strong op-

position to other religions. But a Presbyterian priest in Brazil, a Calvinist, has challenged us. Compared to North America or Europe the Catholic ethical outlook is useless. Catholic Brazil, Catholic Latin America has nothing but poverty, injustice, discrimination, while in the North there has been progress, social harmony, etc. He has thrown this challenge to us. The challenge has been answered rather polemically, as was customary at the time, with a famous work - The Church, The Reformation and Civilization, but the challenge still exists today, perhaps in a new form. What is there about Catholic morals that we are so lacking in this respect?

Allow me a personal note. I have a brother who is a Jesuit missionary. He has been in Japan for 40 years where he teaches at Sophia University in Tokyo. He told me once that his students in Japan often challenge him: "Well, Father Lorscheider, we are happy to know that you came from Brazil to stay with us, we are even sympathetic towards your religion, Christianity, Catholicism. But you must understand that we cannot become Catholics. It is a matter of being consistent. You in Brazil are the largest Catholic country in the world, but you have so much corruption and injustice. Your system does not work. We would rather remain in our political and cultural system and follow the religions we have in Japan because at least here we are doing well." And I asked my brother: "But you, what did you answer?" "I could not answer anything," he said. "The answer is up to you who still live in Brazil. You must show that Catholic ethics have the power to be the leaven of transformation."

Their question is still pertinent to Latin America in general. What has happened in our history? What is happening today? Perhaps a new missionary spirit and practice could change the situation?

4) 25th Anniversary of Vatican II

And now a fourth reason for the question. On December 8 we will celebrate the 25th anniversary of the end of Vatican II. How have we understood and translated into practice the missionary directives of the dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* or of the decree *Ad Gentes*? Twentyfive years have gone by. What have we done? Soon after the Council the missionary fervor declined. Some say or believe that the decline is due to a way of understanding and reading other statements of Vatican II, - on the respect due to the religious conscience of the individual, or on the values present in other religions, cultures and the dialogue that we should all have. Perhaps it has not been easy for all to reach a correct theological interpretation of these statements.

Even among ourselves, there are those who say that today the age of missions is over. We Bishops too say that the age of missions is ended, but that "Mission" continues. Others say that today even Europe is a mission land. Everything is mission, and nothing is mission. The vision becomes confused. and so, 25 years after the end of the Council because of this confusion we must ask the question: **Latin America, how is your missionary awareness and practice?**

5) 4th General Assembly of Latin American Bishops

The fifth motivation for asking the question arises from the fact that we are beginning to prepare the 4TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE LATIN AMERICAN BISHOPS. This is not the 4th Missionary Congress, (COMLA 4) but the 4th general gathering of the Latin American bishops, which will take place in October 1992 at Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. The theme will be, **A New Evangelization for a new Culture**. This 4th gathering is already raising many serious discussions.

Previous Assemblies

The first of these Assemblies took place in **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1955**. It was important, not only because it was the first, but also because it gave birth to CELAM (Latin American Episcopal Council). This is not the same as the GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES. CELAM is small, simply a Council, nothing more. The General Assemblies instead involve the whole episcopate of Latin America and we must clearly distinguish this from CELAM.

The importance of the 1955 meeting is also due to a famous letter of Pius XII. In it he wrote: "May you accomplish in this vast continent, which is so proud of its Catholic faith, the mission that Divine Providence seems to have prepared for you, - that you too, may take part in the noble task of sharing the precious gifts of peace and salvation also **beyond your frontiers**." John Paul II has repeated these words.

The second general gathering took place in **Medellin, Colombia, in 1968**. As you know, that gathering became the turning point of the pastoral renewal of our continent. Medellin applied to Latin America the ideas and the spirit of Vatican II. But without taking away any of its merits, Medellin did not touch the missionary dimension of the Latin American Church.

The third general gathering took place in **Puebla in 1979**. The Puebla meeting tried to give flesh in Latin America to that masterful apostolic exhortation *Evangelii nuntiandi*. That document may be the reason why Puebla produced its famous page on the missionary dimension of the Latin American Church: "Finally, the hour has arrived for Latin America to increase the reciprocal help between local Churches and to open beyond their boundaries, namely, *ad gentes*." N.368. The hour has come to change. We must look more to mutual responsibilities. We must open up *ad*

Gentes. The hour has come! This was in 1979.

And so we arrive at **Santo Domingo in 1992**. It has given rise to serious discussions. There is not a real enthusiasm for it.

(1) Many groups in the Church are even a little afraid of what may happen there and I could identify myself with some of these anxieties and fears. Today, with the neo-conservative winds blowing through the official Church, some ask what can we expect from a gathering of bishops? Personally I would answer with great freedom of spirit that if there were no difficulties, if every problem had been solved, if we all thought the same way, then truly we would not need these expensive assemblies. The present Synod is important because, on the formation of priests, we do not all think the same way, neither does the Roman curia, nor do the bishops. This is the importance of the Synod and the justification of the expenses involved in keeping over 200 bishops in Rome for a whole month.

The Assembly in Santo Domingo will take place in difficult times, when this neo-conservative wind will be very strong. For this reason, basic to it all we must feel the presence of the Spirit.

(2) Another difficulty raised is that the presidency of CELAM does not inspire trust today. Many people are not very happy with the way CELAM is going. Perhaps CELAM might want to manipulate the meeting. I have already said that no matter how one may judge the present executive of CELAM, and I myself have good reasons for not being totally enthusiastic about it, CELAM cannot dominate Santo Domingo. CELAM is much smaller than the episcopal conferences. That is why, in the process of preparation for Santo Domingo, we want the participation of all the churches, all the communities. All of 1990 should be used to study the text of the

Preparatory Consultation - "Elements for a Pastoral Reflection". It is not a proposal; nor is it a working draft; it is only a consultation which will be successful inasmuch as it will surface criticism. Therefore we tell our priests, religious and lay people, please, to express their criticisms, bring out their suggestions. This is important. It is not up to CELAM to set the direction of the Assembly.

(3) Another difficulty arises from the Quincentenary of 1992, a date which is full of polemics in itself. For many people, 1992 is already suspicious. I think that Santo Domingo will be very important for us. There we will again ask the question: **church of Latin America, how is your missionary awareness and practice today?**

II

SOME LATIN AMERICAN INITIATIVES

Now I will try to tell you quickly how Latin America is trying to give some answers to the question. Naturally, I will speak mostly of Brazil because I know it better. In other countries, for instance in Mexico and Colombia, there are worthwhile projects, even better than ours and their mission plans are already more advanced, - but I know Brazil better.

The meeting at Puebla in 1979 spoke with good reason, not only of missionary areas, but also of missionary situations. This distinction has helped us quite a lot.

The Indians

Puebla directed our attention, for instance, to the serious and immense situation of the indigenous population, the Indios, and the problem of pastoral work among them. How is this working? Better in some

countries than in others. In Brazil for several years we have had the well known CIMI (Indigenous Missionary Council) which officially belongs to the Church. It is rather progressive in the best meaning of the word. It defends and fosters inculturation and the protection of the rights of the indigenous people in the distribution of land, etc.

CIMI works in spite of the official policy of the government which is an absolute disaster. I notice in the audience, Bishop Conti from the Consolata Fathers whose founder was canonized last Sunday. Bishop Conti is from Roraima in the extreme North of Brazil where there is perhaps the highest concentration of Indios in all Brazil. There they experience the very serious problems that you read about in the papers. Having resigned because of poor health, he is now with me in Santa Maria. He could really tell you how the official policy of the government is a total disaster and how the Church there comes into conflict with the government. I believe that the witness to, the interest in, the respect for, and the defense of these Indios will be one of the most important pages of the history of our missions.

The Afro-Brazilians

The same situation applies to the Afro-Brazilians. It is said that in Brazil 60% of the population has more black blood than white. We are a very mixed population. The work we do to combat racism and discrimination is gaining more and more attention in Brazil. In 1988, the 100th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in Brazil, we built our Lenten programme around this theme: the rights of the Blacks. We were able to make some progress in this mission situation. We would like to see the abolition of all types of discrimination.

Migrants

Another missionary situation

arises from the great number of migrants within the country. Our problem is not emigration, but internal migration from one area of the country to another, from the countryside to the city and the problems of mission in the urban concentrations. Today in Brazil 72% of the population is in the cities. In Europe perhaps this would not be a serious problem, but for us it is catastrophic. The last 15 years have seen a reversal of a trend. We were mostly a people of farmers, but today we witness a disorderly and rapid change. People come to the city without any preparation, hoping to find better living conditions. The cities grow to an incredible size - Sao Paulo, for instance. The challenge to our missionary outreach is enormous.

"Twinning"

Since 1972 we have tried to do something in Brazil. Allow us, even though we are poor, to have a holy pride in this. We are proud of our Twinning Project. It came about because of a visit by members of the episcopal conference to some regions of the Amazon in 1971 and 1972. Something had to be done. The gap was too wide and so we launched the twinning project. The dioceses of South-Central Brazil are in a better shape than the others and so they try to come close to dioceses of the North or Nordeste or the far West for pastoral and spiritual twinning. It has been working well. Dozens of Churches are involved. We in Santa Maria are the twin Church of Roraima - the extremes of North and South for Roraima is next to Venezuela while we are next to Uruguay! We do not do enough, I am sure, but two of our best priests are in Roraima. We pray for and with them, we help in the maintenance of their parish, and we help materially and spiritually. Other dioceses probably do even better. For us it is an important project. It has helped us increase our missionary awareness.

Ad Gentes

This concerns missions outside Brazil. There has been a slow growth in the number of foreign missionaries. We are almost ashamed to say it, but for a long-time there was nothing. Now we have 974 Brazilians in the foreign missions - for us a cause of satisfaction, - for you perhaps a ridiculous figure. Ever so humbly, we are doing something. The largest number, 353 are in Africa; 261 are in other Latin American countries, such as Bolivia, Paraguay, Haiti; 208 are in Europe, - maybe in the various Generalates (perhaps that too may be a mission situation!); 85 are in the USA; (I do not know whether that is a mission land or a mission situation! 55 are in Asia and 9 in the Pacific Islands.

For the most part these Brazilians come from Congregations founded in Brazil. Some of our religious communities of women are very much imbued with the missionary spirit, - the Missionaries of Jesus Crucified who work in Angola, the Franciscan Catechist Sisters also in Africa, the Franciscans of the Apparition of Our Lady in Guinea Bissau, etc. These new Brazilian foundations are born already with the spirit to go *ad gentes*.

**Brazilian Episcopal Conference
Mission Project**

In 1988 the plenary assembly of the bishops' conference of Brazil published a very important official document in which it proclaimed "the missionary hour of Brazil". This document is extremely important for us. While thanking all the religious institutions and safeguarding their autonomy, the Episcopal Conference has said: now the hour has come also for us. It wants to make a statement that, yes, the religious are missionaries, but now also the secular clergy must be missionary, and the dioceses too. Brazil should not wait until it will be rich in vocations in

order to go to the foreign missions.

The missionary spirit will be, not only a consequence, but also a cause of the maturity of the local Churches. For this reason, we, the Bishops have said that, in Brazil, we must organize a national programme for the foreign missions. We are now at the phase of asking ourselves how to organize it. We have just published a detailed pilot project which has been published in various official bulletins. It is still in the discussion stage, but the time to act is near. We respect the work done by religious. Now the time has come also for the secular clergy, the laity, and for religious who want to join the project. This project gives us hope.

We have already clarified several points, while others still remain to be decided upon. For instance, how do we include the laity?, and the secular clergy? What type of national coordination should we have? Freedom must be preserved. Some say that we should establish a Brazilian Society for the foreign missions. It is a time of great hope and creativity.

Mozambique Twinning Project

In this sense, out of the spirit of mission *ad gentes*, our region in the deep South of Brazil, Rio Grande do Sul with 15 dioceses, is preparing a project to link us with Mozambique. Within the national programme, we want to become the twinning region of Mozambique. At the end of this month of October we will meet for three days in Porto Alegre to study the situation, the history, the problems and the hopes of Mozambique. If you have documentation on Mozambique, please let us have it. These three days will be for people, including diocesan priests, who have already offered themselves to go to Mozambique. Two are already scheduled to go there. I think that early in 1991 the first group should be able to go.

We would like to start with the archdiocese of Beira.

I have said all this with great simplicity in order to show that, with humility and enthusiasm, we are trying to give a first answer to the question: **Latin America, how is your mission awareness and practice today?**

Why Mozambique?

Because we want to be present and useful in a place that is compatible. We have set two priorities. First we want to go to Africa, because we have heavy historical debts to pay to Africa for all the slaves that have come from there and we feel this historic responsibility. The second priority will be the rest of Latin America. We thought of Mozambique, because several bishops from there have visited us. Furthermore, we have the same language. Also, I think I can say it here without offending anyone, that the Church of Mozambique is very close to us in its pastoral policies, in the belief in basic Christian communities, and in the line of the theology of liberation. All this makes Mozambique a very attractive field.

Mozambique is different from

Angola, where we already have many missionaries. However, officially the bishops' conference there does not see eye to eye with us. What can we do about it? We are not as good as we would like to be, but Angola follows a different direction from us. They are a little afraid of those Brazilians who are too far to the left, Communists, subversives, standing for liberation! What can we do about it? We seek fidelity to the Holy Spirit, and for this we ask your prayers. We made this choice so as not to give rise to controversy. We will not exclude Angola and many religious will still work there, but we will send our first groups to Mozambique.

I am here also to thank you all at SEDOS, and to ask for your prayers, your contribution of ideas, since you have a lot of experience to offer to our Brazilian project. If your Congregations have people in our area, tell them to get in touch with us and we will put together a good programme for Mozambique.

Thank you for your attention. Pray for us. If there are gaps to be filled, Bishop Conti can fill them. If you have any questions, I am at your disposal.

Will you found a national missionary institute?

Our Conference of Bishops is considering this. We see that the religious/missionary institutes have already their structures for this purpose. We need a central coordinating structure for the secular priests and laity. We are studying the initiatives taken in other countries. We are in contact with the Bethlehem Society based in Switzerland.

How do new religious movements fit in with your plans?

In Latin America movements such as Cursillos, Charismatics, Neo-catechumenate, Focolarini already exist. They give sometimes rise to

tensions and even to conflicts in our pastoral planning. Personally I tend to have a conciliatory approach, for "in my Father's house there are many mansions". Canon Law assures Christians the right to belong to these various movements. I am not enthusiastic about them, but as bishop I must give them liberty to be and to act. But I say to their members: "Be truly Catholics! Respect the diocesan pastoral programmes. Do not separate yourselves or act as if all people should belong to your particular movement!"

Tell us about the state of ecumenism in Latin America

Brazil has a great ecumenical rela-

tionship with the main Evangelical Churches. We are partners in the National Council of Christian Churches (CONEC) on a level of equality with other evangelical churches (Episcopalian, Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Calvinist). This bears good fruit. People see, that those who read the Gospel arrive at the same important pastoral conclusions in face of social, political and cultural problems.

But sects are another matter. Far more numerous than the mainline evangelical churches in CONEC, they cater for simple poor people - especially the Assembly of God and the Pentecostals. Sometimes their success is attributed to their access to North American dollars - but I believe the causes lie deeper. They are solely "spiritualist". We tend rather to search for God in an interior spirituality which always reaches out to consideration of social problems. Our pastoral programme does not lead to a deeply personalist presence among these poor and simple people.

The sects emphasize "giving witness". They do not stay at the level of "ideas". They study the Bible superficially and their approach is: "I have experienced Jesus Christ as my Saviour." This impresses simple people. We are studying the causes of this phenomenon, how to deal with it, what strategies to use. I am not in favour of a crusade against the sects as some Latin American Churches seem to favour. Is their spiritualist campaign not better than the crass materialism against which there is no crusade? Sects do not thrive where there are active basic christian communities.

What is your attitude to "Evangelization 2000"?

The motto "New Evangelization" backed up by the strong personality of Pope John Paul II is widespread. He calls also for re-evangelization in Europe and as a response to his call the project "Evangelization 2000" has been launched. It is backed by considerable financial support from Holland. The charismatic groups support it, so do "Communion and Liberation" and others. Fr. Forest, its organizer, has come to Brazil to promote it. He has founded groups with their own schools for the formation of "Evangelizers 2000".

The Bishop qualified in catechetics and chosen by us to accompany this programme is neither enthusiastic nor wholly condemnatory. We Bishops do not want this movement to become a parallel structure to the diocesan pastoral plans, but to be integrated into the diocesan pastorate. Also the incredible sums of money supporting the Communication project "Lumen 2000" to go with "Evangelization 2000" worries us. We are not in favour of this huge expensive continent-wide project. We already have 120 Catholic radio stations in Brazil. My diocese of Santa Maria alone has 4. There are 700 altogether in the Latin American countries. We favour these local programmes nearer to the people of the dioceses - even if CELAM seems to favour a centralised information service.

What about the CLAR project "Palabra y Vida" (Word and Life)?

This has been and still is a painful problem for the Latin American Church. The CLAR project seemed to us in Brazil to be very good, not without some faults of course - but what project is perfect in this world? We Brazilian Bishops were very happy with it. But for years now the presidencies of CLAR and of CELAM have not followed the same path. It was not so in the past when Cardinal Lorscheider was President of CELAM. Now CLAR is said to be subversive, a parallel organisation, etc. I do not wish to judge intentions, but the Congregation for Religious has entered into this question and it has now become a painful public problem and continues to be so for the Latin American Church.

CLAR now does not wish to continue with this project on a continent-wide basis as had been planned; it does not wish to be in conflict with the Holy See. And if CELAM is not interested, it remains for the Bishops, and people of each country to make their own decisions. National projects of Palabra y Vida have now begun. In Brazil the Conference of Bishops, through its Commission for Doctrine and in collaboration with the Conference of Religious has taken up the project.

The first volume has already been published dealing with "Lectio Divina". It was precisely the manner of reading the Bible which had caused

the difference of opinion. The reading of the Bible in Palabra y Vida was seen as ideological and slanted, the Exodus being interpreted as liberation theology, etc. The problem still exists but we in Brazil have solved it - the Religious saying to the Bishops - "We want to produce something good and valuable, let us do it together!".

Radio and Television - which is more useful in the pastorate?

We have made an option for the poor and the poor have opted for radio! TV is powerful but the poor everywhere can tune into radio even at work, walking, everywhere. Local radio stations are "theirs". We have had to resist grandiose projects which might be financed by Misereor or Adveniat.

Is the experience of the L.A. Church valid for the universal Church?

We are a poor Church, a sinful Church, we do not want to be triumphalistic about what is our experience, we have some characteristics which we see as important - option for the poor, basic christian communities, theology of liberation. These three go together. The letter of approval written to us by John Paul II in March 1986 seemed to put an end to Rome's opposition to liberation theology. He even said that the rest of the Church could learn from it. When Cardinal Gantin read the Pope's letter to us the Bishops sang "Alleluia!". But now the opposition continues. Why? We do not want to be triumphalistic flag wavers. But we are 300 Bishops, and we have 13 000 priests and 40 000 Religious. There will be obviously be

some more to the right and some more to the left.

Why does injustice and poverty persist in Latin America?

This is a source of deep pain for me. The answer perhaps is that we have too much dependency on the 1st World? Possibly our pastoral planning is not sufficiently integrated with justice. We must finish once for all the opposition between these two. Even James in this Letter wrote about social justice - help the poor and the widows. All that oppresses, be it political, social or economic is against the gospel.

Why has the plight of the poor not changed 25 years after Vatican II? Has the Church learned anything at all about transmitting Gospel values in Latin America?

Many say that the Santo Domingo Meeting in 1992 should stress "New Evangelization and the Poor" instead of "New Evangelization and Culture". We have ongoing difficulties with the central authority in Rome about how to do theology - how to transmit gospel values. Our approach is inductive. The Congregation for Doctrine's approach is deductive, from principles. Why must there be only one possible method? We prefer to look at reality and ask what does it teach us. We emphasize the signs of the times as well as the deposit of faith. This may be a simplistic explanation of a complicated process, but I invite you to read again and to study John XXIII's opening address to Vatican II!

**MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE
LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH**

and the

**FOURTH LATIN AMERICAN MISSIONARY
CONGRESS (COMLA 4)**

Lima, Peru, February, 1991

Romeo Ballan, MCCJ

Latin America is not only the continent in which a certain theology of liberation was born, it is becoming also the continent of the missionary hope of the Church.

The Missionary Hope of Latin America

Presently there are between two and three thousand missionaries born in Latin America working "beyond their frontiers," as Puebla puts it, many of them in Africa, Asia and the Pacific Islands besides those who work in Europe. Two or three thousand are not many. We are still trying to define the exact number a little better. In fact in Bogotá at COMLA 3 we spoke of about 2,000, but it seems that the number is perhaps close to 3,000. However, if we consider that Latin America by 2000 A.D. will have about half the Catholics in the world 40 or 50% of the missionaries of the third millennium should come from Latin America. Instead, out of 200,000 missionaries in the world, only a little over a mere 2% are from this continent.

This small proportion has a very complex historical explanation. But there is a new fact that truly makes us refer to Latin America as the "continent of the missionary hope of the Church." Only 20 or 30 years ago, it was exceptional to even hear about the possibility of a missionary expansion of Latin America. Traditionally it was a continent that

called for help, both in personnel and finances, from sister Churches and other continents. The very fact that in these few years there has been an awakening of such a strong missionary awareness is surely a sign of the Spirit who is guiding this Church along new paths.

In addition to what Dom Ivo said this morning, there are other facts that justify the missionary hope emanating from Latin America. First of all there is the impact that the Latin American church has had within the universal Church. Evidently this impact, giving rise to seeds of a different ecclesial presence in sister Churches and on other continents cannot be measured in numbers. We can only gauge it from the diffusion of some ecclesial intuitions typical of Latin America, such as the creation of basic Christian communities and the flourishing of ministries among the laity. I quote the former Director of the Propagation of the Faith in Belgium:

"It is very surprising to see how the Latin American Church has arrived in a very short time to be a Church which is young, dynamic and prophetic, a Church which has detached itself from its powerful and rich allies to move instead towards the poor, the marginalized, the oppressed. By choosing to stand by the poor, with the poor and at the level of the poor, it has experienced a conversion and has become a leading

model of Church renewal. In its fidelity to the Gospel, the example of this Church suggests an examination of conscience that would fit even other Churches. The Latin American Church is fighting to free itself from the consequences of colonialism..."

Besides this pastoral inspiration, there are other elements of a more institutional nature. The Latin American Church was the first to organize itself at a continental level. CELAM was founded in 1955. The Federation of Episcopal Conferences of Asia, (FABC), SECAM in Africa, the Council of Episcopal Conferences of Europe, etc., have followed the Latin American model in different forms.

The Journey Towards Puebla

In the last few decades the mission department of CELAM has done a service of animation within the Latin American Church. It has produced several booklets, perhaps not very impressive, but certainly relevant. They have served as instruments of reflection, gathering the thoughts of mission theologians from Latin America, or who work in Latin America, and spreading them at the level of the episcopal conferences.

The journey towards that No. 368 of Puebla, has been long. There are at least 20 numbers in Puebla that speak of the universal missionary thrust coming out of Latin America. Numbers 365-366 especially, are the result of various conferences and meetings of the Latin American episcopate called by the mission department of CELAM - Ambato in 1967, Colombia in 1968, Caracas in 1969, Mexico in 1970, Quito in 1971, and others. These led to the famous No. 368: "Finally the hour has come for Latin America to reach beyond its frontiers."

Among the more recent Latin American institutions at the service

of mission, I mention the Center for the Formation of Missionaries, the result of a promise made to Cardinal Tomko by Msgr. Castrillon the president of CELAM at the end of COMLA 3 in Bogotá, 1987 that he would create another structure within CELAM, dependent from the secretariat of CELAM itself to form missionaries from Latin America. This experiment has not worked out very well as yet, and those in charge are the first to admit it.

Episcopal Conferences

The missionary commitment of various episcopal conferences is growing. For the first time bishops, gathered in a collegial atmosphere are taking clear positions in regard to the missionary involvement *ad gentes*. Colombia, for instance has published a document on it after having spent several days on the commitment *ad gentes*. Just before COMLA 4 in Lima, the episcopal conference of Peru will give three full days to a reflection on its commitment *ad gentes*.

Dom Ivo already talked about Brazil this morning. I would like to underline the importance of the document he quoted: "Church, Communion and Mission in the Evangelization of the Poor in the World of Labour, of Politics and of Culture." Above all I draw your attention to numbers 113 through 131 dealing with the commitment to the evangelization of the poor.

Smaller Churches such as Honduras, Panama, and others are realizing that a "new hour" has come for the whole Latin American Church. In fact several bishops are ready to send their priests *ad gentes*. In answer to an initiative of the mission department of CELAM it was the bishops who most needed priests who were more willing to send some of theirs to sister Churches.

Mission Congresses

Mission Congresses have been among the activities that have most helped the Latin American Church to grow in its missionary commitment. There have been many such in Latin America, especially in Mexico. As we meet here the 11th National Mission Congress is taking place in Tijuana. The COMLAs were born in Mexico. The first and second COMLAs were held there in 1977 and in 1983. Periodically there have been mission Congresses in other countries as well, in Colombia, Argentina, Ecuador, Brazil, Bolivia, Peru. These Congresses have a very popular style. They are not gatherings of experts for a small number of people. They are for the masses with the idea of implanting a missionary fervor. They may romanticize the missions which can be dangerous. These gatherings have a festive atmosphere peculiar to the Church in Latin America and also the African Church. It is not possible to have a gathering without a festive celebration. COMLA 4 too, will be a celebration.

Mission Magazines

The preparation for COMLA 4 has been long. Mission magazines have been an important tool these past years awakening and forming a missionary awareness in God's people. In spite of serious financial difficulties, difficulties of distribution and the high rate of illiteracy the magazines of Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, Costa Rica, Chile, Ecuador, Paraguay and Venezuela, provide a very important service of information and formation of missionary awareness. Fortunately our superiors - and I include Father Francesco Pierli, your SEDOS President - are backing us. There is no financial gain in producing these magazines.

Missionary Congregations

Missionary Congregations have had a very special role in the forma-

tion of mission awareness - but here we must express some reservations. They come from Dom Ivo's predecessor, Dom Luciano Mendes de Almeida, who is attending the Synod. When he was secretary of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil he chided the missionary orders, - "You missionaries have made Christians out of us, but not missionaries. The specific role of mission orders is to inculcate in the people the holy germ of missionary awareness." This reproach is justified, I and other missionaries believe that many missionary Congregations in Latin America have become part of the establishment. There are missionaries who leave their countries just to be pastors in Latin America. We need pastors, but I believe that a missionary Congregation which exhausts most of its energies in providing pastors in Latin America is not answering the specific purpose of its charism of ensuring that the Church will be a missionary Church. This task demands a type of freedom which evidently is not compatible with the many demands on a pastor's time.

Another very positive indication of the missionary outlook of the Latin American Church is the presence of missionary Congregations born in Latin America. Examples are the Xaverian Missionaries of Yarumal, founded in 1927; the Society of Santa Maria de Guadalupe for the foreign missions founded in 1949; the Missionaries of St. Clare of the Most Blessed Sacrament; the Missionaries of Jesus Crucified, who are, at present the largest missionary congregation in Latin America. We already find projects, and desires (already realised in Chile), to found missionary Congregations.

II

COMLA 4 AN ECCLESIAL EVENT

COMLA 4 is an exclusively Church event. On February 3 through 8, 1991, this 4th Missionary Congress will

take place in Lima. From the very beginning the aim of the "COMLAs" has been to coordinate and stimulate missionary efforts on a continental level and to encourage local Churches in Latin America to take responsibility for the evangelization of all the peoples of the earth. The bishops of Peru put the aim thus: "To strengthen the answer of the local Churches in Latin America and, from Latin America, to face the challenges of the mission *ad gentes*".

The local Churches are called to strengthen efforts that already exist in their own internal missionary situations. At no time must the mission *ad gentes* mean a running away from local realities and duties. But the local Church is also called to go from Latin America towards other continents. COMLA 4 means to support, guide and prepare the local Churches, so that they may answer the missionary call out of their own experience of the Christian faith especially by sending out Latin American missionaries. This sending of missionaries will be a meaningful part of the Lima Congress. At the closing ceremony, departing missionaries will be given the mission cross.

Along this journey, we have received very precise directives both from the bishops and from the Pope. First of all we have the document of Puebla which reads:

"Finally the hour has come for the Latin American Church to intensify the mutual services between local Churches and to go beyond one's own boundaries, ad gentes. It is true that we, ourselves, need missionaries, but we must give out of our own poverty."

Speaking with some bishops at Puebla about this very statement, I found that they themselves at that moment were not even aware of the importance of their statement, of the inspiration to be found in it, of the courage that made them say: we must give out of our poverty. This state-

ment has now become one of the most common themes in the missionary reflection which is going on in Latin America.

Pope John Paul II has often appealed to the Latin American Church, that it may open ever more to its mission *ad gentes*. The emphasis has increased from the beginning of his pontificate up to his declaration of last June. This is evident in the 500 talks given by the Pope during his 10 journeys in Latin America and in his talks *ad limina*.

During his first journey in 1979 to Puebla, there is only a short mention of the invitation to move towards missions *ad gentes* when at the end of the opening talk he said, "I too repeat with Jesus, go and preach the gospel to the whole world."

But, as the years go by he seems to be more and more aware of the urgency that Latin America should open beyond its boundaries.

"In closing these reflections on the new evangelization of this continent I wish to refer to a challenge that is about to awaken a certain apostolic restlessness among many of you, namely, the necessity and the responsibility to evangelize beyond your borders. The hour has come when you, consecrated men and women of Latin America, will have to be present ever more in other Churches across the world with a dynamism without barriers, and that you too, may offer with generosity, out of your poverty, a help to the evangelizing mission of the Church in other nations. This mutuality, proof of Christian and missionary dynamism of the Churches where you work, will also be a manifestation of the maturity of a continent which, evangelized five centuries ago, wants to be today, within the universal church, an evangelizing continent". (#29 in Allocution of the Pope to Religious in Latin America).

On other occasions, such as at Bogotá, he has repeated very clearly, "The hour has come for Latin America to start an evangelization without frontiers." Speaking again in Bogotá, in 1986, he said, "The Holy See asks of CLAR collaboration, fidelity and responsibility for the evangelization of Latin America and of the world."

We spoke with the executive body of CLAR about the upcoming Congress at its meeting last March, near Lima. There is a clear commitment on their part: "As religious we must take upon ourselves the mission *ad gentes* as a task, a field proper to us."

The Historical Context of COMLA 4

I would like to underline the points mentioned by Dom Ivo - the celebration of the 500th anniversary of evangelization, the fact that 50% of Catholics will soon be in Latin America, the programme of new evangelization, the upcoming 4th General Meeting of Latin American bishops, etc. These make us reflect that it is necessary to make a qualitative leap in the contribution of the Latin American Church beyond its borders.

Finally, after 500 years, the Church will be able to outgrow the almost total dependency on outside by finally having missionaries leave from Latin America. This is not a loss, but, in the ways of the Gospel, an enrichment for the very same Churches. The time has come to pay our foreign debt! Not the 500 billion dollar debt, but the foreign debt that the Latin American Church has accrued from having received freely the gift of faith. Today this Church is called to share this same gift freely with the 3.5 billion people who do not yet know the Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We are faced with a change from receiving to giving. We will still need help, in kind and in personnel, but we must give out of our own poverty. This demands a great change

of mentality for it is not easy to make people understand when they see situations of great poverty in their own dioceses. This qualitative change consists in having courage and faith, to give like the widow of the gospel gave. It is not an escape from internal problems, but a special grace. It is a source of renewal (AG37) and a sign of an awakening of vocations also for the local needs. The mission *ad intra*, and the mission *ad extra* are tied together. They enrich each other, and must be developed together. They are simultaneous and complementary.

Immediate Preparation for COMLA 4

There have been at least 6 meetings at continental level of bishops, mission office directors and experts. Many preparatory gatherings are already taking place at diocesan and national level. Various episcopal conferences such as Peru and Venezuela are studying the theme. Booklets have already been printed. There will be an estimated 2,000 participants - no small challenge in the present situation of Peru. Religious and missionary superiors, and SEDOS as well, are asked to encourage their members to attend. Major superiors too should attend. Their presence will help COMLA itself and will energize their members - one of the main objectives of COMLA. Otherwise we end up as so often with beautiful statements. The missionary commitment can be measured more from the number of missionaries who actually go, than by the beautiful statements. If no one goes, it means that the tree is not bearing fruit. Beautiful leaves, but...

III A MISSIONARY REFLECTION IN THE LATIN AMERICAN CONTEXT

"New" The theme of a mission *ad gentes* coming from Latin America is new and very promising. As recently as 20 years ago, because of the

magnitude of its internal needs, no one even dreamed that Latin America would open so much to a mission *ad gentes*. This opening is already bearing fruit. There is greater awareness about foreign missions as we move from one COMLA to another. It is no longer a novelty.

"The Hour" Another theme that is very often reflected upon is the biblical "hour". Also for Jesus Christ "the hour had come." Pius XII already spoke in these terms. It is important that this chronological "hour" intertwined with the 500th anniversary celebrations, may also be an hour of grace and salvation.

"Frontiers" The theme of the "frontiers" also deserves attention. The term was used at Puebla. Even more, we remember the words of God to Abraham, "Come out of your own land," and the mandate of Jesus, "Go into the whole world." The term used at Puebla has inspired movements of young people called "*Sin fronteras*". Several magazines published by the Comboni Missionaries in Latin America carry this title: three at least in Brazil, Peru, Ecuador and Colombia. To go beyond one's frontiers has become a form of spirituality. In fact it is not simply a matter of packing and going somewhere, but of going beyond racial, religious, and cultural barriers.

Communion and Sharing The two words that are basic to the documents of Puebla, "communion and sharing" bear reflection. Many theologians see in them a missionary meaning, and use them as synonyms of mission to indicate "communion and sharing" of the gift of the faith that we have received.

A Paschal Event Mission is a paschal event, an ecclesial event, born out of the paschal mystery, fruit of the power of the Spirit on the day of the resurrection. By virtue of the resurrection, human beings are able to see others as brothers and sisters. Out of the

resurrection comes the task of announcing the good news of Jesus as new life. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the center of gravity of any missionary consideration. So the centrality of Jesus Christ in his paschal mystery becomes the origin of missionary commitment, the joyous announcement of a new life.

IV

LATIN AMERICA'S CONTRIBUTION TO MISSION

A clear indication comes from a speech by John Paul II on the occasion of World Mission Sunday, 1982. There are no totally rich Churches and totally poor Churches; each Church is rich and poor at the same time. Each one has something to give and something that it needs to receive from others. Therefore each Church has gifts to share with its sister Churches.

The second part of the famous No. 368 of Puebla read: "On the other hand, our Churches can offer something original and important: Their understanding of salvation and liberation; the richness of their popular religiosity; the experience of the basic Christian communities; the revival of its ministries; its hope and joy in the faith. We have already done missionary work. May it deepen and be extended ever more." These are some of the values typical of the Latin American Church. Strange that in this context another value is not mentioned, one of the greatest assets of our faith - devotion to the Blessed Mother. Though not mentioned in this number it is very much present in other parts of the document. In Latin America there are at least 2,000 names of cities, villages or places that refer to a mystery, litany or title of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Naturally, these values are not confined to Latin Americans, by birth

or passport! The important point is that these values must be accepted personally.

Option for the Poor

The missionary dimension of the preferential option for the poor is well known in Latin America. The mission department of CELAM has suggested they must be applied, not only to those who are materially poor, but beyond that. There are peoples who are doubly poor. They may be materially poor not unlike much of Latin America, but even more so because they do not have the gift of faith. Starting from this option for the poor it is logically possible to reach a greater commitment to the sharing of faith with others who are poorer because they do not have this gift.

North-South-North

Traditional evangelization, carried out by the North to the South has been characterized by examples of generous and exemplary lives, but also by a certain sense of superiority, certainly in the financial sphere, but also culturally. This has brought about a certain complex of inferiority in the South. Missionaries who share the ecclesial choices of Latin America, may help to bring about a new style of mission, no longer from North to South, but from South to South, and perhaps even from South to North, with the consequences that this change may bring about.

Material help will be clearly distinguished from the number of baptisms! Latin American missionaries, not bringing money as Europeans do, may be able to preach a gospel more authentically free in the measure that they will have made their own the values of the Latin American Church.

In times of tension and division

mission has a unifying dynamism within the Church. Inasmuch as we live our mission with a sense of emergency or urgency it is easier to solve internal tensions and divisions. We see it in our own homes. If a home is burning, no one is too concerned about saving a flower, or closing a door, but we try to save what is essential. Mission then becomes the platform where we all can meet, even though we may have different ideas, and make different choices. This is important also in the present context with regard to the theology of liberation.

V

PROBLEM AREAS

There is need of a deeper reflection in Latin America. Theological reflection is still not sufficiently deep and could also be better coordinated.

There is need for a clearer understanding of the connection between mission *ad intra* and mission *ad extra*, - not separated but moving along together as complementary parts of the same mission. It is not right to say that we will first take care of local situations, then we will think of the rest of the world.

The quality of the missionaries must be emphasized. The mission *ad gentes* demands a serious preparation for a long-lasting commitment. It has never been easy to be a missionary.

There is also a need for greater commitment on the part of the diocesan clergy. Missionaries are still for the most part religious. Out of the 2.000, only very few are diocesan priests, and they come mostly from just two dioceses. There is a need also for greater participation on the part of the hierarchy.

There is a need to move from words to deeds; in Latin America, and not only there, it is always easy to

write beautiful documents without reaching concrete results. An Asian bishop at the 1974 Synod in Rome reminded the participants how important it was that all the fervor that comes through the many mission congresses may not stop at the level of a missionary romanticism, the consequences of which have affected us all for better or for worse in the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th. Missionary romanticism runs the risk of creating a crusading spirit. We must let motivation take the place of emotions, always aware that the gospel and faith are gifts that we must offer to others humbly, respectfully, on our knees.

Concerning the relation between universal mission and integral liberation, there is a feeling that, in some circles close to the practical experiences of the theology of liberation, global mission is looked upon as an escape from local needs - which are mostly in the social order. This is why, from various corners a

request has gone out to the major exponents of the theology of liberation, asking them to integrate the concept of mission *ad gentes* into the concept of "giving out of our own poverty."

Conclusion

The mission *ad gentes* is a fruit of faith. I remember the words of Cardinal Martini when he came to Lima last February to preach retreats. I told him of COMLA 4: "Your COMLA is an act of courage!" he said. It is an act of courage that becomes a new richness. The courage to leave. *El valor de salir*, - in Spanish does not mean only the courage to leave, but also the richness that underlines the leaving. This is how the Latin American Church should live this moment of grace, this *kairos*, this salvific "hour", with its inner vitality, this awakening of the Latin American Church matching the hour of its opening to the world.

THE MISSIONARY DILEMMA

A GHANAIAN EXPERIENCE

Alfons Merten, SVD

I want to be a missionary, not a church administrator! But after 30 years as a missionary in Ghana I am still trying to find out how to be one. A missionary is caught in a dilemma: he is a lonely wanderer between two worlds; leaving his own behind, he tries to enter into a new and unknown one. In doing so, he suffers many disappointments and disillusionments, much frustration, frequent failure, and at times real agony. To present Jesus and his teaching - the gospel as the pearl of great value it claims to be - to people who have found different sets of values in the course of their history, amounts to a personal missionary adventure whose outcome cannot be predicted. Is this struggle of today's missionary recognized, acknowledged and taken seriously by church leaders and fellow Christians?

The European-ness of The Church in Africa

The church has its roots in Europe. Just as Islam is determined by Arabic tradition, history, language and mentality, so is the Christian church by its European origin. Add to this the colonial trauma, the slave trade, today's plight of the Third World, and it should be evident that the European-ness of the church is the greatest single obstacle to the evangelisation of Africa.

The European church, like European society, needs and loves clearly defined principles and truths, codified laws and rules,

solid structures and administrative control. These are the strength as well as the weakness of the church. Since the church considers itself to be the custodian of revealed truth it feels bound to formulate this truth in the European tradition of doctrinal teaching and moral application. This applies likewise to its liturgy and ministry. It is actually the gospel in its European attire which is offered as the indispensable means of salvation to humankind. In the same vein, the magisterium, the government, the judiciary are the realm of the clergy which is set apart and kept aloof from the laity. This begins with their training in the seminary. Matters that concern the established European church are considered as ordained by God. A long tradition has convinced church leaders that God identifies himself with them and their actions. A grave error.

Our European-ness impedes an easy approach to the African mind and heart. A liturgy which in many cases is celebrated but rarely, and hardly ever really understood, a catechesis, a church language, forms of ministry and rules of discipline which are rather foreign and, to a considerable degree, unrelated to the real life experience of our people, fail to offer that feeling of interior enrichment and that sense of fulfillment which their own traditional social and religious convictions and practices have given them over centuries, and continue to give them today. As a consequence, the church worker, whether African or European, is caught in the dilemma of how to reconcile two

differing views of world and life. The weight of this burden makes some suffer so much frustration that they are in danger of becoming disaffected, demoralized and in the end split personalities.

What is 'Unchangeable'?

To my mind there is no doubt that, if we continue to celebrate the eucharist and the sacraments, present Christian doctrine, and adhere to European norms of ministry and discipline the way we are doing now, we will become, and will go down in the history of Africa, as the grave-diggers of the church. Painful as it is, we are forced to recognize and to admit that the very factors which made for the unshakable strength of the church in the past must be seen today as the main obstacles to its growth. In trying to meet and face this challenge we have been quite flexible in external and non-essential matters but far less open to change in what we consider to be untouchable and unchangeable principles. The question we have to ask ourselves here is whether what we think unchangeable is truly so in God's view. Are we not rather dictating to God what he must accept as unchangeable?

If we continue to be as rigid, as unimaginative, as inflexible as we are now, the church will become less and less attractive and appealing to the unbiased people of Africa. While we go on insisting on complex administrative structures and increasing numbers of experts in mushrooming departments, we have long ago been overtaken by the independent churches which claim, and I believe rightly so, to offer more personal and continuous pastoral care than the established churches. In search of these values, even members of our own church turn to the independent churches in the sure hope of finding there what they are missing with us.

Challenge of the Independent Churches

The African Independent Churches (A.I.C.) undoubtedly represent the strongest reaction, inspired by the Bible, to the unsatisfying performance of the European established churches. Being more concerned about persons than structures, they both sense and answer successfully to a spiritual void in people. They are flexible and open to change. The independent church leaders try to offer their countrymen what the established churches so often fail to give them - the joyful experience of togetherness and of being uplifted. They do not erect barriers between leaders and laity, men and women. They handle their own finances. And because they answer the psychological and spiritual expectations and needs of their followers, their church attendance is often overwhelming.

How are we going to face the challenge of the independent churches? As the saying goes, "If you can't beat them, join them"! We had better adopt some of their forms of worship. As an expatriate I cannot really prescribe the way or set the pace, but our Ghanaian pastors should. It was exhilarating to see our own church members, both adult and children, join in the singing, handclapping and dancing of an apostolic congregation as we witnessed recently here at Donkorkrom at the Christian Home Week service. The people know their songs and they love them; they feel at home with them. At Donkorkrom there are 17 churches, the greater number "apostolic". In December 1987 six neatly dressed SDA preachers appeared in town, went from house to house to invite people to their crusade, set up a big tent with a generator and loudspeakers, preached and sang and attracted people for three weeks. On the last Saturday they transported 60 new members to the lake and baptized them.

Everybody was given a Bible. Presently they are building a chapel. No wonder that our choir master complained recently that more and more people were attracted by the SDA singing and if we did not improve our own performance we would lose many.

Meeting the living Christ

However, I am not just appealing here for the infusion of some external forms of worship into our church's bloodstream. The problem we are facing today has far deeper dimensions. Our talk about "gospel" and "Christian message" is often lacking in depth; it is too superficial, too cheap, and therefore not satisfying, not convincing, not inspiring. We have been lecturing our members rather more on the doctrinal and moral aspects of the sacraments, emphasizing the conditions for their validity and worthy reception, but failing far too often to lead them into the central mystery of sacramental belief and life. Are we successful in presenting the sacraments as holy actions in which we meet the living Christ and enter into union with him? Do we lead our people to the experience of joy and a new sense of fulfillment and freedom?

There is an inflation of words like "joy", "peace", "spirit", but do they convey a truly Christian meaning and reflect a real experience, or do they rather satisfy emotional desires? I am afraid that where we had too much doctrinal terminology before we have too much unrealistic psychology now. Whatever we do must be related to the real and often dirty world in which we live and work. Common-sense-people have a good feeling for whether something is true or not to the real life situation. If it is not they reject it. Is not this the reason for the deplorable fact that school leavers are often also church

leavers? That our organisations, like "CYO" or "Christian Mothers", are kept alive with difficulty? That our chapels are often so neglected and dirty? And that there is such a lack of Christian witness in public life? Far from being the conscience of the nation Christians tend to blend with the social and political currents of the day. Christianity proves to be a convenience, not a conviction. Thus we find ourselves in a country which is demoralized, pitifully devoid of fearless Christian spokesmen who give guidance and encouragement to their countrymen. Merely to blame the politicians for all failures is seriously inadequate and does not absolve us from our share of guilt and responsibility.

To remedy this situation, we must find an approach to the cult mystery of the church which is attractive, enriching and convincing. The celebration of our Christian sacraments must become for our people, a more rewarding experience than the celebration of their customary rites at their shrines and in the home. Let us be clear about this: the requirements which constitute a sacrament are found at these customary rites - communion with the godhead present. We shall fail in our apostolate if we do not succeed in leading our Christians to the personally and truly valued experience of the saving Christ present in the liturgical action of the church. We must endeavour to give the sacraments the central place they have held in the church since its beginning and challenge all other churches in this regard. A type of ecumenism which tempts us to give second place to the celebration of the central mysteries of our church must be critically analyzed and challenged. This can never do harm if it is done in service to the gospel. I believe that such a challenge will help our members to wake up and to ask themselves why they are Christians and how they can maintain their Christianity.

God in History

Here, of course, arise questions which lie underneath the surface, questions which today's church authorities may refuse to consider but which must nevertheless be asked because the time is ripe. As St. Paul puts it, the *kairos* is present. Even if sympathetic reactions are less likely to be expected today or in the near future, just to open up the public debate on these pressing problems may quite soon prove to be a step in the right direction. God reveals his salvific plan for all humankind in the course of evolving history. Unfortunately, all too often our church has failed to see God at work in history, in evolving social questions, in "the proletariat", in press freedom, in the rise of dictators, etc. etc. All too often, when the train of history had almost passed, did the church just manage to jump on the last step of the last carriage in order not to be left out altogether. For this reason, a good number of sincere people of this modern age are rather less convinced of the church's sincerity when it makes pronouncements on peace and social justice. In our modern society the church often finds itself in a position of weakness in political and social issues and this determines its way of speaking. Not so long ago, when it exercised power and influence, there were quite different modes of speech and reactions. What Jesus said of the leaders of the synagogue he could quite often have said of the leaders of his church: "You can predict the weather by looking at the sky but you cannot interpret the signs concerning these times!"

No man/woman is an island. No religion or church either. The whole world and all humankind are today one single island. Missionaries have left the European church island and find themselves in the young and challenging African world with its

many problems, but also its vast potential. Are they ready to try and solve the former by tapping the latter?

"The Grave-diggers of the Church?"

Here I repeat my earlier statement: If we continue to celebrate the eucharist and the sacraments, to present Christian teaching, to adhere to European norms of ministry and discipline the way we are doing now, we will become, and go down in the history of Africa as the grave-diggers of the church. In an effort to prevent this from happening, we could ask some questions:

(a) How long are we going to insist that seminary trained clergymen alone can be pastors? African tradition as well as former church practices offer alternatives. Our system rather excludes the African elders and wise men from helping to build Christian communities. There is simply no place for example in our church for a fetish priest who becomes a sincere Christian, to use his talents in the service of the gospel. Likewise our attempts at getting the laity involved appear to be awkward and artificial. When praying for vocations, we tend to dictate to God what type of vocations he ought to provide, whereas God himself no longer seems to agree with our view and is already moving in a different direction. Who prevents the church from growing?

(b) How long are we going to insist that European psychological preferences and social structures must form the foundation of our worship and teaching, of our understanding of marriage and of our administration?

(c) How long are we going to insist that the diocesan clergy be bound by the law of celibacy? Again African tradition and former church

practices know an alternative. Do our church leaders know the opinion of their clergy? Would it be good to conduct secret opinion polls? Maybe such an action, very common today, will put new life into our old system by spurring public debate and awakening a deeper interest in the future course of the church. Or are we too, concerning this and similar "dangerous and delicate" problems, committed to a "culture of silence", an abuse of silence, as happens also in the political field?!

(d) How long are we going to behave as if Christian values are the only true and real values in religious beliefs and practices? Mere rhetoric is not enough here. If the traditional religions of Africa have survived and flourished for centuries, it is due to their inherent values which were sought and appreciated by the people. Gospel faith must be built on the values of traditional faith. This is not a contradiction; it is a real and realistic approach to the missionary task.

INTERNATIONAL ST. FRANCIS PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT: CANTICLE OF ALL CREATURES

STATEMENT OF THE AWARDS SEMINAR:

OUR COMMON ENVIRONMENT IN THE SPIRIT OF ASSISI

ASSISI October 19, 1990

The understanding of the environment on the part of increasing segments of the world's population is the result of the efforts of educators, scientists, international organizations and associations for the protection of nature, and of the mass media.

Environmental problems impose themselves today with ever-growing urgency on every individual's conscience, on the consciences of those responsible for business enterprises, on states and governments, and on international organizations. The understanding of these problems can no longer be local but must become global, a necessary perspective if the quality of life of human populations is to be assured in the future.

Coordinated Global Commitment

To protect the environment, a coordinated, global commitment is required which must be wisely managed and fully implemented, - a commitment that will take into account the great differences which exist in the world, not least of which is the unequal distribution of the world's resources. Consequently, environmental policies must be harmonized with social development and with a more equitable economic model.

Today, not only financially extraordinary projects dealing with environmental protection but also physical instruments to bring about the prevention of pollution are being

discussed. It is correctly maintained that the attainment of these goals demands sacrifice not only by communities, but also by individuals. Indeed, every proposed solution, even that of sustainable development, presupposes that lifestyles must be changed and a new outlook must be developed toward everything that surrounds us - toward renewable and non-renewable resources, toward their use, and toward pollution itself.

A major investment has to be made to combat environmental illiteracy in order to obtain the necessary knowledge and understanding to achieve conservation of natural resources. New technologies are needed which, for example, improve soil and water management, allow abundant agricultural production and thus, guarantee nutrition security.

Personal and Community Formation

In a world in which unchecked consumerism of an active minority contrasts with the profound misery of large populations, it is necessary that everyday-lifestyles be re-examined. This is why a new kind of personal and community formation is needed that will favour solidarity with today's generation and with those which are to follow. We should not conceal from ourselves the fact that this will demand a new way of thinking, as well as a revolution in present economic and industrial structures, all of which will require great personal commitment on the part of everyone.

The environmental problem is so complex and its various components are so intricately intertwined that its successful solution requires the common, coordinated effort of everyone. This is a difficult, but not impossible task, if an awareness of humankind's responsibility for its future is awakened. Such an awareness can be assured, above all, through education and the diffusion of the environmental objectives to be reached. In this area, the mass media has an important role to fulfill. It needs to adopt a code of conduct so that its message is targeted towards promoting a model of sustainable development.

It is therefore indispensable that everyone, through correct and serious information offered without catastrophic scenarios, but just and clear in its presentation, become aware of the role that he or she can exercise in assuring the kind of development that respects, according to Saint Francis' "Canticle of All Creatures", the environment and its components - sun, energy, water, soil, air and living organisms. Even today, because of its universal and eternal values, the Saint's message can be accepted by all men and women.

Human, Scientific and Technological Resources

To ensure progress worldwide it is indispensable to be able to have recourse to human, scientific and technological resources. Today's world has been changed profoundly by the achievements of science, realized through the use of the most varied technologies so far invented. Although this has often led to disordered development which has not always been positive for humankind, it made notable progress possible. Imprudent and unwise management, however, has caused a senseless plundering of resources, often with increasing harm to the poorer and destitute populations of the globe.

The building of an adequate base of scientific and technical manpower throughout the world is a necessary condition for human progress, but very few scientists and engineers reside in developing countries. Consequently, training and proper support for the appropriate institution must be provided everywhere, so that national responses may be properly informed, and all may participate fully in the construction of a world characterized by ecological stability, peace, and justice.

Plight of the Poorer Populations

Rigid economic laws, climatic conditions, shortsighted management, provisional and reckless solutions of old problems, and large-scale migrations of peoples have created deteriorating conditions for the environment, and thus for the poorer populations in many parts of our Planet. The attention of married couples is drawn to responsible procreation which conforms to the ethical and religious principles of their particular culture.

In the search for solutions to environmental problems, characterized by many variable and poorly known factors, scientific research and technology are of utmost importance. It should also be pointed out that both can lead to economic benefits which, in turn, can bring about a more adequate management of natural resources.

By various means, many countries are reclaiming their local environments from the considerable damage caused by imprudent industrialization and poor agroforestry practices. On the other hand, it is difficult to improve the situation in some tropical regions where it is not easy to provide sufficient food resources. Here multidisciplinary research is essential. Biotechnologies, for example, could allow for abundant harvests especially with plants which

are less susceptible to atmospheric conditions and more resistant to harmful pests and diseases and through the improvement of animal husbandry.

Examples of Effective Projects

Effective projects are already being implemented through legislation and other norms at national and international levels. Examples are UNESCO's World Heritage Convention and Man and the Biosphere Programme; UNEP (United Nations Environment Programme) and the Scientific Committee of the Environment (SCOPE) of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU). They have initiated local actions which eventually will have positive global effects. Inasmuch as ecosystems are interdependent, these types of programs must be developed everywhere to be effective.

Call to Action

The disappearance of different species today is a problem which should be accepted unhesitatingly as

a global problem which must be faced by concrete initiatives at the global level. In the Spirit of St. Francis who loved the plants and animals that enrich our lives we should become more vividly aware of this irreversible loss which is taking place in our day - a loss without precedent. It is in effect a denial of our moral responsibility for it places a growing limit to our ability to assure a safe future for humankind. It is therefore necessary to persevere in clear and effective action, supported by the conscious consent of all men and women for the preservation of the environment.

Finally, we must admit to ourselves that none of the proposed scientific, technical or economic solutions can be initiated and brought to effective realization unless humankind, in the spirit of the brotherhood and sisterhood exemplified by Saint Francis, commits itself to simplicity, decisiveness, solidarity and moral action. To commit oneself in this manner is to work for peace and justice. John Paul II referred to this spirit of Francis when he called for peace with God the Creator and peace with all creation.

THE JURY FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SAINT FRANCIS PRIZE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AWARDED PRIZES AS FOLLOWS:

Section I: Education and Communication

The National Geographic Society

Section II: Scientific Research

Maurice Aubert, Professor of Marine Biology and Director of Research at the Centre d'Etude et de Recherche de Biologie et d'Océanographie Médicale (CERBOM) at the University of Nice.

Section III: Realized and Effective Action

Senator Amintore Fanfani. As Minister of Labour he established reforestation camps; as Minister of Agriculture succeeded in having the Italian government pass the "Mountain Law"; encouraged the United Nations to organise the great 1972 Stockholm International Conference on the Environment; as President of the Senate promoted the special senate Commission for Ecology; as Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs consistently promoted environmental initiatives in international Councils and Organisations and through the Ministry of the Environment in Italy.

MEMBERS OF THE JURY

President

**Giovanni Battista Marini-Bettolo
Marconi**

President of Pontifical Academy of
Sciences

Members

Alfonso Alessandrini

Director General of Forestry
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
(Italy)

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Federation of Institutes of Advanced
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Sciences UNESCO
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Department IFAD
International Fund for Agricultural
Development (Rome)

Mario Pavan

Director of the Institute of Entomol-
ogy University of Pavia (Italy)

Peter Raven

Director Missouri Botanical Garden
(USA)

Gian Tommaso Scarascia Mugnozza

President National Academy of
Sciences "XL" (Italy)

Monkumbo Swaminathan

President IUCN - World Conservation
Union (Switzerland)

Olof G. Tandberg

Foreign Secretary of The Royal
Swedish Academy of Sciences.

The Prize is promoted by the
Franciscan Center of Environmental
Studies and the General Custody of
the Sacred Convent of Saint Francis
in Assisi and realized with the
cooperation of ENEL, the National
Electricity Corporation of Italy un-
der the Patronage of the President of
Italy and under the sponsorship of:

- the Prime Minister
 - the Minister of Agriculture and
Forestry
 - the Minister of the Environment
 - the Minister of Culture and En-
vironment
 - the Minister of Public Instruction
 - the Italian Commission of the
European Communities
 - the National Italian Commission
for UNESCO
-



"Canticle of all Creatures" –

Most high, all-powerful, all good, Lord!
All praise is yours, all glory, all honor
And all blessing.

To you, alone, Most High, do they belong.
No mortal lips are worthy
To pronounce your name.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through all that you have made,
And first my lord Brother Sun,
Who brings the day; and light you give to us through him.

How beautiful is he, how radiant in all his splendor!
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Moon and Stars;
In the heavens you have made them, bright
And precious and fair.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,
And fair and stormy, all the weather's moods,
By which you cherish all that you have made.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Water,
So useful, lowly, precious and pure.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Brother Fire,
Through whom you brighten up the night.
How beautiful is he, how gay! Full of power and strength.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Earth, our mother,
Who feeds us in her sovereignty and produces
Various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.

Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

All praise be yours, my Lord, through Sister Death,
From whose embrace no mortal can escape.

Woe to those who die in mortal sin!
Happy those She finds doing your will!
The second death can do no harm to them.

Praise and bless my Lord, and give him thanks,
And serve him with great humility.



SEASONS OF MOTHERHOOD

June Johnston

(Seasons of Motherhood is a contextual theological reflection by June Johnston, mother of five children. We offer it as an Advent and Christmas reflection. It comes courtesy of Michel de Verteuil, CSSp, who published this in his Caribbean Bulletin).

ADVENT

Longing, expectancy, waiting.
 Sure, yet uncertain. Promise, pregnancy, patience.
 Stages of growth - seen/unseen; unfelt/painfully felt.
 Passivity, peace ... What will be ... will be?
 Activity, anxiety, intervention, preparation.

The seed of hope, of promise to be nurtured, protected, revered.

Patient waiting for the child to be born,
 patient waiting for the potential of each child to blossom into fruition, into what he/she was meant to be.
 Waiting, dreaming, longing, hoping.

Prayer

*God our Father, our Mother, our Creator, you who knew us before we were even conceived, teach us to wait for and with our children as you wait for us.
 Teach us your patience.
 Help us to reverence the promise that each child is. In our moments of anxiety and impatience both with our children and ourselves, still our fears and replace them with visions, dreams and joyful hope.*

CHRISTMAS

Season of joy, magic, wonder at life.
 The tiny perfection of the new-born babe.
 Celebration time.
 Celebration of first time events ... smiles, coos, first steps, first words, first days at school, first prizes won, first rides on trikes and bikes.

Celebration time.
 Birthdays, holidays - rolling together on bed and on sand, cooking pancakes and cookies in a crazy kitchen - flour, pots, pans, measuring spoons everywhere.
 Clean up time WILL come.
 For the moment joy.

Prayer

*God our Father, our Mother, our Redeemer, you sent your Son Jesus into the world as the son of a simple woman and her carpenter husband.
 The birth of your son was heralded with the joyful singing of angels, teach us to celebrate with joy the everyday moments of our lives.
 Help us to find Christmas magic and joy in the simple things of life as we mother our children.
 Give us a capacity to distil your joyful presence in the actions and achievements of our children.*

LENT

Desert time - long periods of hesitation, uncertainty, wilderness. In which direction does the oasis lie?

How long before thirsts will be quenched and hunger satisfied?

Which questions to voice?

What answers to proffer?

Endurance, perseverance, sacrifice. Night-time feeds, sick fevered moanings, petulant cries.

Watching the hours go by and listening for the sound of the key in the lock.

Wondering anxiously about appropriate friends, dates, exams, drugs ...

In search of the yellow poui standing tall against the cloudless sky, emerging from the sun-baked arid savannah.

Trusting and perceiving (almost imperceptibly) the signs of hope.

Prayer

God our Father, our Mother, our Protector, you led your Son Jesus into the desert where he stayed for forty days and forty nights.

Sometimes our role as mothers seems to lead us into the wilderness.

We feel lost and alone, unsure of where to turn, what decisions to make.

We sometimes experience a desolation that only a mother can know.

In these desert moments help us to endure and to trust, to resist the temptation to find the easiest way out, but rather to persevere in complete submission to your will.

EASTER

New life ... Infant emerging from the darkness of the womb streaked with the signs of pangs and pain of its birth, yet declaring in its first cry "I am here, I am alive".

A new day dawning, a new promise.

Emerging individuals coming out of their shells, contributing their uniqueness to the pattern of life. Fresh new ideas, enthusiasms, energy, spirits set free.

The stone of doubt, anxiety, disappointment, despair rolled away.

Darkness giving way to light ...

A quarrel patched up, toys neatly packed away after the bedlam of play, once dirty dishes gleaming on the draining board, once dirty faces sparkling clean, hair neatly brushed, once dirty washing, clean, folded ready to be put away.

Peace!

Prayer

God our Father, our Mother, our Saviour, you sent your Son Jesus to die on a cross and to be buried in a tomb, so that the power of life over death, of good over evil might be proclaimed.

Help us as mothers to have a vision beyond what we see and experience in the present moment.

Help us to look beyond the disorder, tumult, heartaches and disappointments that our children often bring, to see the promise of a new dawn, a new order, a new beginning.

ORDINARY TIME

The ordinary routine of life, long passages of the same scenery day in day out ...

Temper tantrums of a two year old, the claimed boredom of a seven year old, the crazy ideas, antics, arguments, squabbles of two pre-teens.

The Bread of Life, interlaced occasionally with sips of wine, anointed with the oil of salvation. Family - Communion of Saints and sinners.

Mother reconciling.

Prayer

God our Father, our Mother, our ever present Friend,
we often search for you in high places.

As mothers we often complain that we have no time to spend with you, no time to retreat and pray and we often long for a special time and place, forgetting that you are always there.

Help us to be comfortable with our everyday lives, to live each moment fully, ever thankful that we are where you call us to be.

NEWS**SEDOS NEW MEMBER**

SEDOS Executive Committee at its November meeting approved the application for membership of the MISSIONARY SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, (MSC). The Superior General is Sr. Klara Sietmann. Address: via Martini di via Fani, 22., 01015 Sutri (VT); Tel. 0761-608300. We welcome the sisters to membership of SEDOS - or rather to their return as they were one of the first Womens' Congregations to join SEDOS in its early days.

**MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE
LATIN AMERICAN CHURCH**

Dom Ivo Lorscheider opened his conference at this well-attended seminar with a surprising and lengthy affirmation of the religious charism of missionary institutes and congregations. The religious charism is to be an agent of renewal and of creativity and because of this it will often be uncomfortable. This is exactly what the Vatican document dealing with the relations between religious and bishops *Mutuae Relationes*, foresaw. Please, be faithful to it, the Bishop said. Religious must be the pioneers in discovering the pastoral and missionary needs of the Church.

The full text of the Bishop's Conference is in this Bulletin

"MISSION U.S.A."

This was the theme of the Annual Conference of the United States Catholic Mission Association (USCMA) held at Chicago in October. Michael Amaladoss, SJ., Ms. Edwina Gateley and Vincent Donovan, CSSp., the three main speakers dealt with different aspects of this mission. The challenge in its more global context is in Michael Amaladoss' keynote address

delivered at the SEDOS Silver Jubilee celebration in December 1989. "If one can read the signs of the times and discern priorities, I wonder whether the privileged place and the most challenging for mission today is not the First World".

A feature of this excellent meeting was the panel of three speakers, an African-American, (Sr. Jamie T. Phelps, O.P) a Mexican-American, (Fr. Virgilio Elizondo) and a Vietnamese (Monsignor Dominic M. Luong) who spoke of the cultural gifts of U.S. minorities to the U.S. Church and their influence on evangelization.

THE HAITI WORKING GROUP

The Haiti Working Group met on October 31 at the SVD Generalate. The group discussed the reply received to their letter sent in January 1989 to the Conference of Haitian Religious. The situation in Haiti is still extremely tense. The Group shared information on the upcoming elections and will remain in contact with the Haitian Conference. They will meet again in January 1991.

FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF MARY

Congratulations to Sr. Maura O'Connor, FMM on her re-election as Superior General at the recent General Chapter held at Grottaferatta

LIBERIA WORKING GROUP

There are now some 1.4 million displaced Liberians following the 10 month civil strife. Quite a few religious Congregations have been serving in Liberia and near-by countries and are exploring ways to be of service in this time of crisis and how to prepare for a role in reconstruction of the country. The

Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) has initiated a forum for exchange of information on this situation and for coordinating links to Caritas Internationalis, UNHCR and other agencies. They met three times already and expect to continue meeting monthly while the fighting goes on. Information will also be mailed to those concerned. Participation welcomed. Meetings take place at Borgo S. Spirito 3a.

Contact: JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE
Tel: (06) 686 9841; Fax: 39 6 687 9283

AGENCIAS PARA LA ASISTENCIA DE PROYECTOS (Pierre Aubin, MSC and George Cotter, MM. 1989. 340 pp).

This Spanish version of AGENCIES FOR PROJECT ASSISTANCE, 3rd ed., profiles 284 international agencies which support projects in developing nations and is now available. It offers a detailed "how-to" for project application and proposal-writing. 340 pp. Prepayment required. Send \$60.00 (sixty, US\$) per copy (postage airmail abroad incl.) to: MISSION PROJECT SERVICE, One Haven Plaza #25A, New York, NY 10009 212-533-6286.

COMING EVENTS

SEDOS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY AND SEMINAR:

MISSIONARY OUTREACH OF THE AFRICAN CHURCHES

Speaker: LEONARD KASANDA, CICM

December 12, 1990: 9.30 - 18.00 hrs.

at

Brothers of the Christian Schools, via Aurelia, 476

The Speaker will address many aspects of the theme:

What mission for missionaries from Africa Today?

Who sends them? Who invites them? And Why?

Their identity? - seeing they do not bring financial help or gifts?

Do they inculturate in Belgium, Germany or wherever? Fill gaps? Integrate? Join the consumerist society?

Their formation and preparation? At present it resembles that of traditional missionaries going from a Christian to a non-Christian society.

What means "The Local Church is missionary" if less than 10% of the population is Christian? These and many other questions.

CHRISTIAN - MUSLIM DIALOGUE GROUP

Next Meeting: November 16, 1990 at 16.30

at

SEDOS Secretariat

Contact: Bernard Maes, CICM., (6543240) or SEDOS Secretariat (5741350)

**ST. PETER'S APOSTLESHIP
IN THE JUDGMENT OF ST. PAUL
THE APOSTLE TO THE GENTILES**

Speaker: Professor Dr. Eduard Lohse

November, 20 at 18.00 hrs.

The Gregorian University, Aula delle Tesi (ATRIO, C012)

Dr. Lohse is Bishop of the Evangelical Church in Hanover. He is the elected President of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches - the highest representative of these Churches in Germany. He is an internationally known exegete and will be lecturing in The Gregorian University during this semester.

SEDOS CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 14, 1990; 18.00 - 21.00 hrs

NOTE: This year we will hold it in the SVD College Hall

by courtesy of the Society of the Divine World

HAITI GROUP

Next Meeting: January 14, 1991 at 15.30

at

SEDOS Secretariat