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# **SEMINAR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY REPORT**

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SPECIAL ISSUE

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REPORT OF THE SEDOS SEMINAR  
ON  
URBANISATION AND MISSION  
AND  
THE SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY, 1984.

<u>CONTENTS:</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. A Pastoral Experience in the city of Lusaka, Zambia: Andrew Edele, PA.	4
2. Ministry in Mathare Valley, Nairobi, Kenya: Marie Cloutier, SA.	9
3. Pastoral Problems and Opportunities in Supercities: Pierre Delooz	13
4. Mission and Urbanisation - Points from the Panel Discussion. Willie Jenkinson, CSSp.	17
5. SEDOS 1984 Annual General Assembly: Minutes	18
6. 1984 Report of the Executive Secretary to SEDOS Annual General Assembly	24
7. List of Participants - Annual General Assembly, 1984	34
8. 1984 SEDOS Bulletin Index - Appendix	I

COMING EVENTS:

SEDOS RESIDENTIAL SEMINAR  
Villa Cavalletti - Grotta Ferrata.  
JUSTICE AND EVANGELIZATION.

Tuesday, March 19, 18 hrs. - Saturday, March 23, 13.00 hrs.

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## A PASTORAL EXPERIENCE IN THE CITY OF LUSAKA

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Andrew Edele, WF

*(Andrew Edele describes his ministry in Zambia over a period of fourteen years. Of particular interest to the participants at the Seminar was his account of the time spent in two poor parishes and his experience of the growth of local small Christian Communities.)*

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The experience I am going to relate is spread over a little more than 14 years. You may not thus expect to get a detailed account of this experience. It is often, however, the details that make for success or failure and so I will point to certain details, and probably omit one or other of the broader aspects of my experience.

Lusaka has about 500.000 to 600.000 inhabitants, of whom roughly one quarter are Catholics. It is a probable estimate that about two thirds of the population are living in permanent housing, whereas one third lives in shanty towns that surround Lusaka. Lusaka being the capital city of Zambia, you will find there not only representatives of all the 72 tribes of that country, belonging to 6 main language groups, but also an important number of people from the surrounding countries, mainly Malawi and Zaire, not to mention a small number of Europeans.

In 1967 I was appointed to a parish in the centre of the town where up to 90% of the people lived in City Council houses of different sizes and qualities according to the income of the tenants. These ranged from unskilled labour to upper civil servants and included a considerable number of soldiers. At that time the parish had a population of about 45.000 to 50.000, with roughly 12.000 Catholics.

Urban apostolate was totally new to me at the time. Thus, for three years I practiced what my predecessor had introduced me to: family visits whenever time allowed for it. Being the only priest in the parish, and after four months of initiation by my predecessor, it took almost three years before I had visited all the Catholic families and many others who had invited me into their homes. The work was tedious but not without consolation. A good number resumed their Sunday duties after having been visited, hundreds of marriages were arranged and masses of children were brought for baptism. Still, the system proved very unsatisfactory. When I started my second round of visits, I realized that no progress was apparent. What surprised me most was the fact that within those three years about 25% of the population had changed, so that I was continually knocking on the wrong door. Those who were still there, very often had to be reminded again of their Sunday duties. However, what really started me worrying was the fact that the majority of the people could not tell me whether their next-door neighbours were Catholics or not. It was mainly this fact that made me look for alternatives.

Although I was the only priest in the parish I had a host of active Christians belonging mainly to 2 groups: The Legionaries of Mary and a group called "Aktio". They also were engaged in house visits, although far less systematically than I had done. With their help I hoped to be able to get the Christians to meet their neighbours so as to overcome the anonymity in which nearly all the Christians lived. I am not going into details because the fact is that after one year of great effort I had to concede defeat. Still, the problem remained, and I was not ready to give up.

Nearly two years later the parish received the help of a Sister who had been doing pastoral work in a rural area. I told her about my experience and together we evolved a pastoral plan which I will try to explain.

We started off by dividing the whole parish into geographical areas containing about sixty houses each, on the assumption that about fifteen of them would be houses of Catholic families. We chose one such area at a time and gave it all the attention it needed. First, we visited again each family. Knowing that it would take us about ten days to see them all, we chose a date beforehand and invited all of them to meet in one of the houses. In most cases we chose the house of a Legionary or "Aktio"-member. Generally speaking 80% of those we visited attended the meeting. After a short time for each one to introduce himself, we gave them the opportunity to discuss what was good and what was bad in being a Christian in the town. As most of them had already experienced village life, they easily came to the conclusion that it was the lack of social pressure from the neighbours that prevented them from going to Church on Sundays, from having their marriage blessed, and even from moral misconduct.

It was quite evident during the first meeting that it had done them good to be able to talk about their life as Christians. We had no difficulty in getting them to agree to meet again the following week. During that week we put ourselves at their disposal for discussing personal matters or family problems and to validate their marriage, if there was need for it.

The meetings of the following weeks, - we had planned a series of eight meetings, - were used for an adult catechesis on the central truths of our faith: the redemption, conversion, the Church, the sacraments, especially Baptism and Eucharist, etc. Although it would be beyond the scope of this report to give you details of this catechesis, I am convinced that it was the determining factor for the success of this pastoral venture. We were able to communicate to the Christians that belonging to the Church meant sharing of the faith, community in prayer as well as brotherly concern. Our concentrated efforts at renewal for the area culminated in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist in one of the houses as a visible sign that they now were a Christian community with Christ in their midst.

Once the community felt ready to choose their "elder", we encouraged them to do so. In the beginning we helped the one chosen in this task through individual coaching. But as the number of communities increased, we were able to call these leaders for monthly training sessions.

After those eight weeks of intensive renewal the group was asked to meet on their own at the time and place most convenient to them.

Most communities agreed to meet fortnightly at each of their houses in turn. In order to avoid aimless discussions or being side-tracked by trivialities, we prepared handouts for the "elders" as guidelines for each meeting, leaving, however, enough scope for them to do things at their own pace.

It was not always easy to decide when to start off a new community, or where to start it. Sometimes we managed to start a new one while we were still meeting with the previous one; sometimes the routine parish work made it advisable to take a break. Choosing the right places was also important, as we hoped that the areas around the community would get wind of it and the whole parish would become more and more open to this new pastoral approach. Thus, when I was asked to hand over the parish to a successor and to go somewhere else after two years in this work, about one quarter of the parish was already covered by these Christian communities.

The experience of those two years was a great help in my new appointment, although the conditions in this parish were quite different from the first one. I was appointed into a slum area, in which, although at the time of my arrival there were at least 10.000 Catholics, still was an occasionally visited out-station of a town parish. During the last year before my appointment they had only seen a priest very rarely and I first had to re-assemble the Christians because the most fervent ones had, meanwhile, looked for other parishes in which to worship. It is difficult to describe the pastoral situation of that parish. Lucky were those who had managed to receive First Communion before getting married. Some adults had been baptised by a busy priest, although they were in irregular marriage situations. I had, however, one big bonus to start work with: Everybody was rejoicing at the fact that finally they had "their" priest.

Although the majority of the people lived in near-destitution the population was generally more stable, because the huts in which they lived were theirs. As can be imagined, I did not inherit a "status animarum", not even a single sheet of paper, but I found a kind of "Church Council". Christians who presided over the Sunday Service, kept a couple of lay movements going and even had a voluntary catechist who instructed the catchumens. It was with them that I discussed the pastoral priorities, and it was inevitable that I mentioned the experience I had made in the previous parish.

About two months later a few of them surprised me with the news that they had started these neighbourhood communities in their areas. I did not want to discourage them, although I did not imagine that something very useful would come out of it, given my previous experience. In the meantime I was fully engaged in clearing up, somehow, the mess I had inherited: preparing for First Communion, arranging marriages, etc.

About eight months after my arrival the parish was fortunate to receive a community of three Sisters, each one qualified for work in a parish: catechesis, pastoral theology and social work. They agreed to visit those communities which had sprung up in the parish. After three months we were able to work out a pastoral programme that, so we felt, was geared to the priority needs of the parish.

The emphasis was clearly on forming the laity to share in the pastoral and social activities of the parish. For one year each of us had training sessions at fortnightly intervals in the fields that seemed most important: leadership in the neighbourhood communities, catechesis, marriage guidance and preparation, and, finally, leading of prayer services and community rites (e.g. at initiation ceremonies, burials, etc.). The formation sessions were designed in such a way that those participating could very soon put into practice what they had learned. Thus, gradually, we could hand over the greater part of our pastoral responsibilities into the hands of the laity, and become more and more free to train more people. Every year new training courses were worked out as the needs within the community became more apparent. Even training in social skills was reserved to those who were ready to hand on their knowledge to others within their community.

Three years after the beginning of the work the whole parish area was organized into these neighbourhood communities, and they had taken on, although still in various degrees, the care of the sick, the poor, the newcomers and the visitors. They collected and partly administered the tithe, were consulted about receiving people into the ranks of catechumens, about admitting people to baptism, about the marriage of people within their community.

About once every month the people with a special responsibility within their community met together at parish level in order to exchange their experience, to ask for advice and to look for help from other communities if within their own community certain skills were lacking.

I am aware that all this sounds too good to be true. It is, therefore, necessary to point out that not everything was plain sailing. Especially in the first parish, some of the communities died again after having worked for a few months. Two main reasons were responsible for this: the work in the community demanded a kind of leadership that was very different from the authoritative leadership existing in the lay apostolate groups, or among the catechists. These people lost their influence within a community if they were not able to adapt, but they were often still influential enough to divide the community. In other instances people with leadership qualities were lacking or when they emerged were being transferred before they were able to share their leadership with others.

We never forced the people to undertake these community meetings when they were not ready to accept the new concept, but they usually became convinced of its advantage after seeing that the neighbouring area was very active.

This pastoral concept can only be realized if the pastoral team is ready to hand over responsibilities, even at a certain risk. It is obvious that people need a long and continued training before being competent in their tasks. Giving them responsibility, only after they have reached that stage, would discourage most of them.

The second condition for its workability is to accept the fact that each community progresses at its own pace. Quite a few communities which took a long time getting off the ground, were the most lively ones later on. It takes, therefore, a certain subtleness to adapt

oneself to the different circumstances that influence a community. May I mention just one example: in a few communities it seemed impossible to find a time for the meeting suitable to both men and women. Grudgingly we agreed that men and women would meet at different times. It proved to be a blessing in disguise, because usually women kept quiet when their husbands were around. Being by themselves they spoke up freely and thus developed their own convictions, which they were not afraid to verbalize later on even when men were present at certain meetings.

To conclude this account I want to point out a fact that may escape someone who has not lived in a country like Zambia for a long time. I am convinced that this pastoral concept of neighbourhood communities or "Small Ecclesial Communities", as they are often called, succeeded so well in a town, because they managed to satisfy a need of which we were not even aware in the beginning, namely, the need for an alternative to their life in the extended family which they had left behind in the villages, and without which they felt insecure. The small ecclesial community created a substitute for their extended family.

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MINISTRY IN MATHARE VALLEY, NAIROBI, KENYA

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Sr. Marie Cloutier, SA

*(This is the text of the address given at the SEDOS Seminar on Urbanisation and Mission on December 11, 1984. Mathare Valley is the poorest and most neglected of the peripheral areas in the city of Nairobi, Kenya).*

I will begin with a few general facts about Kenya. The population is 17 million of which 60 to 65% are Christians and 20% Catholics. It is one of the fastest growing populations in the world. The capital city, Nairobi, has a population of one million, of many tribes, tongues and nations, including thousands of refugees from eight neighbouring countries.

A major feature of the capital city is the Mathare Valley slum, with a population of about 120,000 people, living in an area no bigger than one mile by 3 miles. This amounts to 50,000 people per sq. km. whereas in Nairobi City, there is an average of 500 people per sq. km.

Mathare Valley is a visible result of rapid urbanisation and also, a painful symptom of deep social evils, the main one being the growing gap between the rich and the poor.

But, whatever the causes may be and whatever the responsibility which the civil authorities should assume, we are faced there with an immense mission field. In 1977-78, we made an evaluation of what our apostolic activities and priorities should be at our Congregation level. Concerning Kenya, our Major Superiors encouraged us to invest more in the suburbs of Nairobi, because that is where the "populus" is, that is where one finds the greatest, the deepest material, psychological and moral misery.

(Prior to that, I myself had spent two years in a remote rural mission. I received praise for this, for there was no electricity, no running water, roads and bridges were dangerous in the rainy seasons, etc. But what peace! It was a very healthy kind of life, no pollution... But were I to be offered the choice today, I would choose an urban mission).

We then began forming a pastoral team which, today, is made up of three White Sisters and three White Fathers, the Fathers being in charge of the large parish of St. Theresa's, Eastleigh, which includes the Mathare Valley slum.

The Valley is divided up into natural villages and the pastoral team respects these natural divisions in the building up of small christian communities. Building up of Small Christian Communities has been the pastoral priority of the AMECEA Episcopal Conference over



the past few years and I have witnessed that it develops more quickly in the slums than in the midst of the tall modern buildings of the capital city...

It is beautiful, even moving, to witness the growth and the life of these basic christian communities. There is such openness, such good soil in which the Word of God can grow and bear fruit; there is such a sense of hospitality, such freedom in people who have nothing to lose; volunteer helpers are numerous; catechists too, and they help the people to reflect on their local problems and needs, on their human rights; they encourage mutual help, reconciliation, inter-tribal and inter-denominational living. The regular prayer meetings and the occasional Eucharistic Celebrations under a shelter or in a family's shack have something of the first Christmas in Bethlehem about them.

The pastoral team does a lot of home visiting and systematic teaching in the small communities specially during Advent and Lent, but lots of catechising is done informally, "as you go", like Jesus says in the Gospel, talking with the people or rather showing through loving presence that the Kingdom is at hand. Lots of evangelizing is also done through christian witness, e.g. a poor woman, who has children and a jobless husband, rescues a new-born baby from a dustbin and brings it up as her own... The whole village loves the child and looks up to that woman; or Alexis, a casual worker who teaches children catechism after his work; he does it gratuitously, while he himself is not always sure of his meals. And a group of women to whom one of our Sisters was to teach sewing... When asked to express their most pressing needs: "Sister, teach us to read, so that we may read the Word of God!!" The Kingdom is at hand! The poor hear the Good News and often from the poor themselves! And there we are, helping at the building of these christian communities... The poor do evangelize us, and we have so much to learn, to receive from them!

I add a few words about our Sisters' work: needless to say that both planning and choosing what to do are difficult because everything has to be done!.. The Sisters are guided in their choices by their personal charisms: one is very good with the youth, another at identifying potential leaders and training them; one has a gift particularly needed in that type of mission-the gift of "losing time", simply "being-with" people, not needing to put her finger on some concrete achievement at the end of a day... The poor just love her; she makes them feel good, she makes them feel important, more dignified.

Now, as you may know, we are not the only ones working in Mathare Valley; there are lay volunteers from abroad (of different christian denominations), there are other religious congregations; some local congregations have their novices do their apostolic training in the Valley. And there are other examples of social and pastoral care besides the specific one of building small christian communities. I'll mention two examples which have an impact on both Mathare Valley and on the whole city.

-Twenty five years ago, a young Englishman, born in Kenya, founded Starehe Boys' Centre to cater for needy boys (Primary, Secondary and Technical School levels). Down the years, Starehe has picked up thousands of young boys from the slums and the streets and has managed to make good, dignified citizens out of them.

One of Starehe's policies is to mix those youngsters with children from middle-class homes and with sons of professional people, even government ministers, thus providing for each child a more normal environment. Two of our Sisters teach at Starehe, as part of our commitment to urban apostolate. (At the moment, there is also a White Father and a Jesuit Priest at the Centre).

-More recently, in 1973, Father A. Grol, a Dutch White Father, founded the Undugu Society of Kenya. ("Undugu" is a Kiswahili word for brotherhood/solidarity). This is a welfare organization which has made possible several expressions of God's caring for his people, specially the poorest; for instance, it has three informal schools, right in the Valley, for destitute children; it has farming projects, music and sports clubs; it has a club for town prostitutes, a club that one of our Sisters has helped over the last few years; and it has the famous "Parking Boys' Project" to get destitute children off the streets. The Undugu Society of Kenya has done a lot, both in Kenya and abroad, to draw people's attention to the problems caused mostly to children and youths by rapid population growth and rapid urbanisation.

In conclusion, I mention a few questions or difficulties that we came across and for which, I feel, there are no ready-made solutions:

(1) Dechristianisation is creeping into Nairobi... while, down in the valley, we are witnesses of very beautiful christian events. So, where is our presence most urgently needed?  
Besides, where do the influential people live?

-where do they live, - the owners of the hundreds and hundreds of slum dwellings who exploit the poor by asking excessive rent?

-and where are those who decide that one Monday morning, such and such an agglomeration of slum dwellings should be bulldozed or set on fire?

Where are they?

Who reaches them?

Who is poorest in the end?

(2) And when it comes to our life-style, particularly when it comes to choosing a place of residence? What does identifying with the poor mean? What do the poor expect of us? How close can we be in identification with them?

(3) My third point is the question of both acculturation and inculturation in an urban milieu where there is such a mixture of cultures. What do we do about-

- children who do not know any tribal language, only English?
- young people who do not have the slightest interest in the traditional ways and values?
- missionaries who learn a "passe-partout" (master-key type) language like Kiswahili, in order to reach as many people as possible? For most of the people who know Kiswahili, it is still not their mother tongue...

I could go on but I am sure you sense the complexities of the situation with which we are involved.

And a last concluding comment: the next International Eucharistic Congress will take place in Nairobi in August '85. It will take place ten minutes' walk from the slums... "Will the poor be reached?" was one of the first questions asked. There is an intense faith-deepening programme going on as a preparation for the Congress and I have just heard that the Nairobi preparations began first in Mathare. The poor of the Valley are being reached!

Thank you.

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PASTORAL PROBLEMS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN SUPERCITIES

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Pierre Delooz

*(Pierre Delooz was responsible for the 1984, No. 4 Bulletin of PRO MUNDI VITA entitled 'Megalopolis'. In his address to the SEDOS Seminar he singled out some of the major themes dealt with in that Bulletin and asked the question whether the questions really are pastoral ?)*

I cannot summarize the P.M.V. Bulletin in this short address. I recommend you read it. The French translation appeared this week. It has already appeared in English and like all the P.M.V. Bulletins will be published also in Spanish and German. What I can try to do is to propose two or three themes for your meditation and discussion.

When you arrive by plane in Mexico City on a Mexican Airline you hear a little voice saying "You are welcome to Mexico City, the largest city in the world". It has over 15,000.000 inhabitants - almost the same as the whole population of Kenya; there are 2,600 more inhabitants each day; by the year 2000 AD it will have over 30.000.000.

There are at least two unique problems in the world today:

- i) Peace and War
- ii) Overpopulation - specially in the poor countries

Are these problems really pastoral ones ?

When in the nineteenth and at the beginning of the twentieth century Western missionaries - a lot of them still living today - went out to the four corners of the world, they went out to serve people in rural areas, for one-tenth of the people in non-western countries lived in towns. Today, however, the situation has changed completely and, between now and the end of the century, two-thirds of these people will be living in cities. The whole way in which Christianity is presented will require to take account of this.

But why ? How can the Church, the Churches, make manifest the divine initiative of the Gospel in the concrete situation of urban growth ? Pope Paul the Sixth responded modestly, in a message to a Congress on Urbanization and Pastoral care; "the situation is so unprecedented that it calls for a new way of being Christian and of proclaiming the Gospel, consequently "let us seek together". I cannot be less modest than the Pope and thus I have to say "let us seek together". But in what direction ?

The situation of the supercities is a chaotic collection of vast problems and of daily changing problems. All solutions are desperate, complex, uncertain. Can we do more than to identify some of the principal problems from a pastoral point of view ?

But a pastoral point of view supports a specifically Christian vision of the city from a theological point of view. Is there a theology of the City ?

Unfortunately for my speech there are many theological points of view and like everybody I have to make a choice. But on what criterion ? The people to whom the Church seeks to bring the Gospel is increasingly concentrated in large urban centres. Such a transformation has never been seen before and the Church, like everyone else, lacks experience in dealing with the problem. She has to look beyond the ready-made solutions which the past has provided. But once more in what direction?

Have we to praise the city as the providential place of a possible human liberation, choosing the point of view of a careful, positive, non marxist liberation theology ? Or have we, following a particular but well founded reading of the Bible, to condemn the monstrous supercity as a place of human arrogance, and choose to proclaim salvation as did Peter and Paul in the Rome of their day, where they made no attempt to solve the overcrowding, educational, housing and public health problems, and where they did not concern themselves with urbanization. They spoke of Jesus and Jesus dead and risen ?

But is it not too late for choice ? And the situations are so different ! In the developed countries, the old supercities such as London or New York, are declining. The Churches remain major institutions but compartmentalized. Each church cares for its own declining number of members in a context of general dechristianization.

In the developing countries at least two situations are very different. The emerging supercities such as Mexico City, Manila or Sao Paulo are, in principle, christian cities, where the Catholic Church is present with bishops, priests, nuns, lay people, basic communities and parishes. The Church plays a role of social integration. But on the contrary, in other developing countries, the emerging supercities as Cairo, Tokyo, Bombay, Jakarta are not at all christian. The Churches there are only tiny minorities, unable to play a role of social integration, unable to influence the urban problems. What kind of pastoral care - and pastoral theology - could be common to such different situations ? None at all. And that could be our first modest conclusion: no general pastoral guide could be adapted to fit all these different situations.

Each Christian community has to start from scratch, interpreting the signs of its own time, being responsible for its own answer, knowing that it is not building the celestial Jerusalem on earth which God will give, will build one-day before mankind.

This negative conclusion could be extremely useful if it provides us with peace, initiative, a sense of humour, and if it leads to a variety of pastoral programmes emerging as a result of a dialogue between the needs of the people in the urban area and the talents of pastoral team members.

But maybe we have also to pursue our reflection, our meditation in another direction. In most of the Christian centres affected by the growing urbanization it seems that secularism, indifference, indifference erodes the Christian life and even the religious capacities of many migrants to the supercities, - Britons in Paris, Irishmen in London, and Italians in New York. But not so in the Hindu and Muslim centres. The urban lifestyle, it seems, is not on the fringe of the Islamic system, it is the system.

For Muslims, cities often possess a special sanctity and are regarded as the sole places in which a full and truly Muslim life may be lived as if Islam's religious goals and rituals were more easily achieved in an urban context. But why does the Muslim not suffer the same culture shock in moving from the town to the city or from the rural to the urban area? The usual urban problems, - over-population, housing, education, unemployment, family planning, health, transportation, etc. - remain problems also in Muslim supercities such as Cairo, Bagdad, Damascus, Teheran, Karachi or Dacca. Their growth is also parasitic and creates severe needs for the poor, but seems more manageable in the framework of the Islamic Faith.

What does all this mean for us? Does Christianity really make people more vulnerable in the supercities? For India, the Harvard - Bhubaneshwar Project, for instance, had studied for twelve years (between 1961 and 1973) the transformation of an old sacred town in a modern city founded to be the capital of the State of Orissa, a situation which seemed the ideal context for studying this part of our problem. The results are clear. "Religion is neither disintegrating nor secularizing ... new expressions of religion have developed that creatively utilize traditional elements" (1).

Have we something to learn from the Islamic experience of the supercities? Is it maybe possible, or at least not entirely utopic, in Islamic countries, to have experiential christian communities which are unafraid to affirm the validity of their Muslim cultural roots and yet who, at the same time are unafraid to affirm Jesus as the final prophet of God in the very middle of the Megalapolis? (2).

Can the same be relatively true for Hinduism? It is extremely hard to answer these questions. Almost no Christian scholarship exists that has even begun to study the Muslim and the Hindu city as a field of experience for us.

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(1) See Seymaour (ed), *The Transformation of a Sacred Town: Bhubaneshwar, India*, Boulder (Col.), Westview Press, 1980.

(2) See the Westminster Theological Seminary, *Urban Mission Programme*, September, 1984.

Finally I would express a personal conclusion after a careful study of the problems of pastoral programmes for the supercities: the plausible answers given by the Churches confronting the problems of the supercities are at the one and the same time so generous and so different, not to say so contradictory. I cite some examples which show that many contradictory propositions seem equally true:

- Pastoral care has to be centralized;  
or pastoral care has to be decentralized.
- The number of parishes should be increased;  
or, the parishes are outdated and should be replaced by basic communities.
- Schools and hospitals are desperately needed;  
or, schools and hospitals are obstacles to true evangelical mission.
- The Churches should avoid political implications;  
or, the poor are totally alienated by political oppression and the Churches have to be revolutionary.
- The most needed services in supercities are family ones, including birth control assistance, thus, the churches have to be involved in this;  
or, Jesus has a restrictive attitude vis-à-vis the family, thus etc. etc.

Maybe the Churches do not see the true question because they are too deeply implicated in the Western way of thinking. They think in terms of efficiency. They believe that the human vocation is to be efficient and that the Christian vocation duplicates, in the religious field, the human vocation.

The rapid growth of the cities is changing the world daily in such a way that we experience the limits of "Western" efficiency. Is it perhaps a providential invitation to us, to become aware of the fact that a new measure of our vocation as human beings is necessary, and also a new form of our Christian vocation.

Exploding supercities call us to perspicacity and to magnanimity but also to humanity and to readiness to listen to new designs of God, new designs which we are enabled to perceive only when, after much intelligent and courageous efforts, we come to see ourselves, without losing heart, as unprofitable servants, 'servi inutiles'.

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MISSION AND URBANISATION  
POINTS FROM THE PANEL DISCUSSION

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The discussion centred mainly on points raised in Pierre Delooz's paper. The preceding papers provided insights into two urban situations both located in East Africa, Andrew Edele's paper describing the evolution of a pastoral programme based on the growth of neighbourhood communities in a Lusaka parish and Marie Cloutier's, describing how their pastoral team "accompanied" the building up of basic christian communities in the notorious Mathare Valley of Nairobi city. Pierre's opening remark that the population of Mexico City alone is today as great as the population of the whole of Kenya startled us. And he widened our horizons out to the Islamic, Hindu and other supercities of the world in many of which the Christian community is but a tiny minority.

Speakers in the discussion quickly identified two areas that had not received specific attention, - the phenomenal growth of communications as witnessed, for example, by the mass availability of video equipment and films, and the problem of drug-addiction now world wide in its pervasiveness. Both these have particular relevance to pastoral initiatives in the supercities. A third factor which emerged was the overriding problem of poverty as a key element in any or all supercity pastoral programmes.

There was much questioning around Pierre Delooz's treatment of Muslim or Hindu adaptation to the supercities, where these religions appeared to thrive and even find their fuller development. In contrast there was the loss of religious identity by Christians who gravitated to the cities, "Britons in Paris, Irish in London, Italians in New York". While some questioned his claim that Islam and Hinduism survived well in the pressures of the supercity many sought rather for reasons to explain this phenomenon.

"Western" Christianity is largely the prisoner of its own cultural and historical heritage and has not really been free to incarnate itself in alien soil. "Efficiency" is indeed one of its main hallmarks everywhere and tends to be the touchstone for judging Church organisations, expressions of faith, relationships with politics, etc. How does the criterion of "efficiency" apply to the large urban sprawls, the Latin American favellae, the peripheries of a Calcutta or a Sao Paulo? How can people be contacted? How do they relate to one another within their Christian heritage or with their neighbours, Islamic or Hindu or of other religions?

The relationship between religion and culture is fundamental in attempting any initiative. Someone remarked that where ten Hindus were together there was found "Hinduism" while a similar group of Christians necessitated sacraments, a relationship with priesthood, observances, structures. What is the essence of being a Christian in the supercity? When considering the gap between gospel and culture the difficulty should not always be laid on the side of culture.

Islam exercises considerable social pressures while Christianity has emphasized individual values and rights. Perhaps this emphasis needs

Continued on page 33



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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SEDOS  
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11th, 1984.

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The meeting was chaired by Fr. Henry Heekeren, SVD, President of SEDOS. There were fifty-eight participants of whom thirty-two had voting rights as representatives of member societies.

Minute 84/1 Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held on December 11th, 1984, as proposed by Sr. Betty Ann Maheu, MM, seconded by Fr. Francis George, OMI, and approved unanimously.

84/2. Election of Vice President and two Executive Committee Members: On a first ballot the following were elected:

vice President - Sr. Helen McLaughlin, RSCJ, Superior General (Society of the Sacred Heart of Jesus);  
Committee Members - Fr. Michael Fitzgerald, PA, (Missionaries of Africa), and  
- Sr. Margaret Loftus, SMDN, (Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur).

The President congratulated the new members of the Committee and thanked the outgoing Vice President, Sr. Marciana O'Keefe, NDA, and Sr. Christine Middelhoff for their devoted service to SEDOS on the Committee.

83/3. Financial Report December 1, 1984 to Nov. 30, 1985: The Treasurer Fr. Leo Paul Nobert, OMI, presented the Statement of Income and Expenditure which showed a net deficit of ITL.22.059.014. Over the past few years there had been an important increase of expenses due to adjustment of salaries and the inscription of our lay employees in Social Security. Also the change from religious to lay staff was very expensive but it was now complete. Expenses will increase less dramatically in the future, in step with inflation:

For the year 1985, an increase of 10% is foreseen and would give the following expenses:

Operating expenses:	ITL. 20.750.000
Bulletin:	10.500.000
Personnel:	66.000.000
<u>TOTAL OF EXPENSES</u>	<u>97.250.000</u>

The income to cover the expenses could be budgeted as follows:

Bank Interest:	9.000.000
Royalties:	400.000
Refunds (mostly for bulletin)	4.000.000
<u>Contributions needed</u>	<u>83.850.000</u>
<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>97.250.000</u>

To obtain such an amount, the membership fees have to be:

47 members	x	ITL 1.612.500	=	75.787.500
10	"	x	806.250	= 8.062.500
				<u>83.850.000</u>

The Treasurer pointed out that membership fees have remained stationery for three years at ITL 750.000. In 1982 this was the equivalent of US\$630; now, it is the equivalent of US\$ 402.

He then examined possible ways to curtail expenditure but any one of these would seem to result in a significant change in SEDOS.

Finally he suggested three possible solutions by an increase in membership fees, one a minimal change, one a compromise and a third - which he considered the best. This latter would mean an increase in Annual Membership fees to US\$ 865 - the equivalent of ITL 1.612.500 - and acceptance of the principle of an increase every year thereafter according to the rate of inflation.

In the discussion following the Treasurer's presentation the following points were made:

- (1) Circulate the Financial Report in advance of the Annual Meeting to enable the General Councils of Member Societies to discuss it.  
(AGREED)  
The Treasurer will base future financial reports on a financial year ending on October 31 and will circulate the Report before the Annual Meeting.
- (2) Divide the Treasurer's proposed solution into two separate propositions:
  - (a) the proposed increase in 1985;
  - (b) the further annual increase in accordance with inflation.
 (AGREED)
- (3) Consider the possibility of increasing membership by having a Spanish and Italian version of SEDOS Bulletin. This however would mean a considerable increase in staff and other expenses and would need thorough examination. A translation of parts of the Bulletin could be investigated initially.
- (4) Consider publishing the SEDOS Bulletin once a month instead of every two weeks and possibly increasing the size of this one monthly issue. Also consider mailing by ordinary mail rather than air-mail.

The Executive Secretary agreed to carry out a poll of the Bulletin readership early in 1985 regarding these and other points.

84/4 The President then put the first part of the Treasurer's proposal to the Meeting.

PROPOSAL: THAT IN 1985 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP FEES BE ITL 1.612.500 (US\$ 865) FOR MEMBERS WHOSE GENERALATES ARE IN ROME AND ITL 806.250 FOR MEMBERS WHOSE GENERALATES ARE OVERSEAS.

The proposition was agreed by an absolute majority of 17. Some delegates abstained as they had not been able to contact their General Councils.

84/5 The second part of the proposal: "acceptation of the principle of increasing fees each year according to the rate of inflation", was withdrawn by the Treasurer.

84/6 Approval of the Financial Report 1984 and Budget 1985

In the discussion prior to this proposal the following points were made:

- (1) It was suggested that there should be a drive for increased membership especially among non-English Institutes. (AGREED)
- (2) In this connection it was suggested that circular letters and information, for example, about SEDOS meetings should not be in English only. (AGREED)
- (3) The President then moved the approval of the Financial Report and the Budget.

PROPOSAL: THAT THE 1984 FINANCIAL REPORT AND THE 1985 BUDGET BE APPROVED.

Proposed: Sr. Christine Middelhoff. Seconded: Fr. William Halliden

Approved unanimously.

84/7 Vote of Thanks to the Treasurer: The President thanked Fr. Leo Paul Nobert, sincerely for caring so efficiently for the SEDOS finances which he did generously as a voluntary service to SEDOS. The members of the Assembly recorded their appreciation with applause.

84/8 Executive Secretary's Annual Report, 1984: The Report had been circulated prior to the meeting. The Secretary referred to the various sections of the Report: increase in SEDOS membership during the year; the various Seminars which were held and a review of the programme of Seminars over the three-year period since the 1981 Research Seminar; informal up-dating meetings; SEDOS Bulletin and Documentation Centre; collaboration with other organisations; review of 1983 General Assembly; the present Secretariate; future plans for SEDOS Seminars; world refugees; liberation theology; inculturation. The Assembly then went on to discuss some matters arising from the Report:

1) SEDOS Informal Meetings: The three such meetings held in 1984 were valuable and of considerable service to interested members. More should be held. SEDOS members should take more initiatives, informing the Secretariate or one another of the visits to, or presence in Rome, of members in their Societies who could share valuable information about particular places or situations of mission. There is unique wealth of information available among SEDOS members in Rome and we should do more to share it and reflect upon it together. Such practical sharing at the personal level has great potential for SEDOS. The President supported strongly this comment of Fr. Mike Fitzgerald and drew attention to the newly published SEDOS STATISTICS 1984. This valuable source of information on the numbers of SEDOS members present

in different countries could be used for contacts between the different Institutes. It could facilitate initiatives for collaboration between the various members at the present time when many Missionary Institutes are moving into new areas of work.

Sr. Margaret Loftus (SNDN) also supported this idea of "being sharers". She was grateful for the Statistics being now available and hoped that members would contact each other, for example, when going to visit areas of concern (e.g. Central American countries) from where it was difficult to get information.

Sr. Monica Meehan (RGS) remarked that a valuable source of information and exchange was available during the Plenary Sessions of Councilors held by the different Institutes once or twice a year here in Rome. These were times when sharing between SEDOS members could be very profitable.

AGREED - that members take initiatives in helping the Secretariate to arrange informal meetings for sharing information and reflecting on it together.

2) Refugees: Arising from the SEDOS Seminar on Refugees, Fr. Herman Wijtten, SVD, drew attention to a valuable service which SEDOS members could offer. The SVD had contacted their members living in USA and Canada requesting them to meet refugees who were arriving from Rome. Even though the refugees had been sponsored in these countries, the sponsors were not legally bound to take responsibility for the refugees. It sometimes happened that refugees were placed in very difficult situations in ghettos or slum areas of large cities. A letter to one's own fellow members or to members of another Institute could help greatly to ease the problem of entry into strange new situations.

3) Liberation Theology: The meeting discussed what action SEDOS could take in the wake of the Declaration of the Congregation for Doctrine and Faith on Liberation Theology. The President suggested the possibility of forming a Sub-Committee of about six members to draft a statement about this document. It would aim at emphasizing the positive elements of the document and be a source of affirmation to SEDOS members working in situations where theologies of liberation were of particular concern. The draft statement would be circulated to members for endorsement at the Villa Cavalletti meeting in March. Fr. Amaladoss, SJ, felt that further reaction to the Declaration was perhaps unnecessary. Parts of it were already the subject of questioning from other Curial offices here in Rome itself. Better, therefore, to build reflection on the document into the preparatory meetings which would be held before the March '84 Seminar on Justice and Evangelization at Villa Cavalletti, where it would be part of the Seminar discussions.

Fr. Louis Brennan, OFM, emphasized the seriousness of the debate around liberation theologies today and deplored the polarisation which threatened to emerge. There was a real danger that polarisation would drive further apart, people who had sincere and valuable contributions to make to the debate from both sides. SEDOS should work to overcome this polarisation and should consider initiatives which would facilitate serious theologians of both sides reflecting and studying together - sharing their insights rather than being dismissive of each other. A common effort to reflect opinions from both sides in so far as possible is needed.

AGREED - that the topic of liberation theologies would be part of the SEDOS preparatory groups' work before the Villa Cavalletti Seminar on Justice and Evangelisation. Also that SEDOS consider ways of facilitating theologians to study and reflect together.

The President then put the Executive Secretary's Annual Report to the Assembly which approved it with applause.

84/9. SEDOS Seminars already planned: The Executive Secretary noted:

- a) Justice and Evangelisation would be the theme of the Villa Cavalletti residential Seminar from 19th - 23rd March, 1984.
- b) Women and Men in Ministry. This two day Seminar which had been discussed at the March, 1983 SEDOS Seminar will now be conducted by the Justice and Peace Office of the Major Superior's Conferences in Rome. The venue and other information will be circulated in the December 15 issue of SEDOS Bulletin. SEDOS will cooperate fully with the Justice and Peace Office in organising the Seminar.

84/10. Proposals for Future SEDOS Seminar Topics. Participants were requested to complete the forms circulated at this meeting and to return them to the Secretariate.

84/11. Refugees: Follow up to SEDOS Seminar. The Executive Secretary reported there had been a number of practical initiatives following the Seminar. Brother Joe Jansen, liaison for the Ethiopian refugees had been unable to attend today's meeting, but had conveyed some suggestions to the Secretary, who agreed to circulate these as an appendix to the minutes.

84/12. Inculturation Programme. The demands of inculturation are being acknowledged and discovered only slowly and with difficulty.  
AGREED: that SEDOS initiate informal meetings in the coming year to facilitate sharing and reflecting among members on their experiences and experiments in inculturation.

84/13. Date of the next Annual General Meeting:

Second Tuesday of December: December 10, 1985.

The meeting closed at 18.15 hrs. with a prayer by the Vice-President, Sr. Helen McLaughlin, RSCJ.

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Appendix to the Minutes: Brother Joe Jansen's Proposals  
(See Minute 84/11):-

- a) Try to contact, and work in close collaboration with Diocesan and Parish organisations in those areas where your houses are situated. The poor are found to be the most generous in helping refugees. There is a message here for SEDOS members.
- b) Cooperate in self-help programmes for refugees. This is a long-term programme requiring patience and demanding respect for the human dignity of the refugees.
- c) Contact your Canadian and USA Confrères asking them to help in every possible way, the newly arriving refugees who have been successful in obtaining visas.
- d) Try to influence the Government through your Italian contacts, to grant recognition and status to Ethiopian refugees who at present are in constant danger of expulsion. They have nowhere to go.

- end -

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
to  
SEDOS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11th 1984

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This report covers the period December 1st 1983 to  
November 30th, 1984.

1. THE SEDOS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE is presently constituted as follows:  
(Elected)

President	:	Fr. Henry Heekeren, SVD	December 1982
Vice President:		Sr. Marciana O'Keefe, NDA	December 1982.
Treasurer	:	Fr. Leo Paul Nobert, OMI	December 1982.
			(2nd Term)
Members	:	Sr. Christine Middelhoff, SA	May 1981.
		Fr. Michael Fitzgerald, PA	December 1981.
		Sr. Giuseppina Tresoldi, MSC	December 1982.
		Fr. Michael Amaladoss, SJ	December 1983.
Executive			(Appointed)
Secretary	:	Fr. Willie Jenkinson, CSSp.	July 1983
			(2nd Term)

The Committee met on eight occasions during the year. Two members, Sr. Christine Middelhoff, SA, and Fr. Mike Fitzgerald, PA, have completed a first term of three years. Fr. Fitzgerald is eligible for re-election but Sr. Christine will not be available. Sr. Marciana O'Keefe, NDA the Vice President is resigning as from December 1984 due to many commitments entailing her absence from Rome.

2. MEMBERSHIP OF SEDOS

Membership continued to increase during the course of the past year during which five new members joined. They are:

- i) Sacred Heart Priests (SSCC): Superior General, Fr. Patrick Bradley, Via Rivarone 85, 00166, Roma;  
Executive Committee Meeting, January 13, 1984.
- ii) Our Lady of the Missions (RWDM): Superior General, Sr. Claire Himbault, via Ferruccio 23; 00185 Roma.  
Executive Committee Meeting, January 13, 1984.

- iii) Fratelli di San Gabriele (FSG): Superior General, Bro. Jean Bulteau, via Trionfale, 12.840; 00135 Roma.  
Executive Committee Meeting, March 25, 1984.
  - iv) Order of Hospitalers (Fate Bene Fratelli) (OH): Superior General, Fr. Pierluigi Marchesi, Isola Tiberina 39; 00186 Roma.  
Executive Committee Meeting, March 25, 1984.
  - v) Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM): Superior General, Sr. Jude Walsh, Greenbank Mell, Drogheda, Ireland.  
Executive Committee Meeting, September 27th, 1984.
- The total number of members is now 57, 22 Societies of women and 35 of men.

### 3. SEDOS SEMINARS

SEDOS continues to organise the series of Seminars undertaken as a follow-up to the Research Seminar on Mission held in March 1981. A cycle of three years will have been completed with the coming seminar at Villa Cavalletti in March 1985. The 1984 series was as follows:

- i) Spirituality for Conflict: Thomas Cullinan, OSB, was the speaker at this Seminar held in December 1984, at which there were 70 participants. Fr. Cullinan's address was widely referred to following the Seminar and copied by members of some Congregations. Although he lives in Liverpool in the north of England, Fr. Cullinan's address was found relevant and helpful for SEDOS members as far away as in conflictual situations in Brazil.
- ii) Ministries in a Dynamic Local Church was the topic of the Residential Seminar held at Villa Cavalletti from March 20-24, 1984. SEDOS members met in neighbourhood group meetings in preparation for this Seminar which gathered 80 participants and was assessed as one of the most successful of the residential Seminars of the present series. A competent team of resource persons made a serious contribution to the Seminar process of reflection on ministries - old and new. They were Fr. Michael Amaladoss, SJ, India & Rome; Ms. Pearl Drego, India; Ms. Catharina Halkes, Nijmegen University, Holland; Fr. Carlos Pape, SVD, Chile & Rome; Fr. David Power, OMI, Catholic University Washington and Fr. Bob Schreiter, CPPS, Chicago Theological Union. Five other resource persons spoke of their personal experiences of ministry: Patrick Aruna Abdulai, Sierra Leone; Sr. Garciella Estrade, Ecuador; Peter Kungha, Papua New Guinea; Sr. Sara Casanova Lozada, Guatemala; and Faustino Luiz Teixeiras, Brazil.

The Seminar drew up a "Synthesis" of its evaluation of the present situation regarding Ministries today. It contains four main sections:



A New Reality of Ministry;  
 Questions Being Raised;  
 Unresolved Tensions in this New Reality;  
 Tasks Ahead for Missionary Institutes.

The Secretariate received many requests for additional copies of the full Seminar Report, which can be found in the Special Issue of SEDOS Bulletin 84/No. 9 and 10 of 1st June, 1984.

iii) Refugees and Mission: This Seminar, held on October 31, 1984, attended by about eighty persons, was moderated by Fr. Dietar Scholtz, SJ, assisted by Sr. Patricia Frost, SSND, and Brother Joe Jansen, SM. The Seminar began with a showing of the WCC film SANCTUARY, a rich source of information and inspiration on the world wide dimension of the refugee problem today. The film has since been projected by a number of member Institutes here in Rome. The Seminar was very favourably assessed. It is hoped that one of its results will be a greater involvement on the part of SEDOS members in the problems of refugees here in Rome. A number of initiatives have been taken to use the international character of our institutes for sponsoring refugees and contacting them after their arrival in the US or Canada. Information about this can be found in the SEDOS Bulletin Nos. 18 and 19 which followed the Seminar.

The Executive Committee chose the topics of these Seminars following consultation with members at the March, 1983, meeting in Cavalletti. The Committee decided unanimously to continue these annual residential Seminars at Villa Cavalletti.

Review of SEDOS Seminar Programme - 1981 - 1984: The topics dealt with in the three year period are as follows:

<u>Title of Seminar</u>		
1981 June	: An Assessment of the Research Seminar 1981 and a Setting of Priorities for further Planning, Study and Research in Mission:	(one day)
1982 March	: Preparation and Formation for Future Mission.	(5 days)
October	: Marxism and Mission in Africa.	(2 days)
December	: Ecumenical Approaches to Mission.	(one day)
1983 March	: Dialogue in Mission.	(5 days)
September	: Dialogue with Buddhists.	(one day)
November	: Dialogue with Post-Christians.	(one day)
December	: Spirituality for Conflict.	(one day)

### Title of Seminar

1984 March	:	New Ministries in a Dynamic Local Church.	(5 days)
October	:	Mission and Refugees.	(one day)
December	:	Mission and Urbanisation.	(one day)
1985 March	:	Justice and Evangelisation (Planned)	(5 days)

### 4. INFORMAL MEETINGS

In addition to its Seminar Programme SEDOS organises informal meetings to give up-to-date information on mission situations. This is part of a service of facilitating collaboration and mutual support. During the past year the following meetings took place:

- i). Guatemala 'Up-date': SEDOS collaborated with the Justice and Peace Secretariate of the Conferences of Religious in Rome to sponsor a meeting with members of the Justice and Peace group of Guatemala. Our visitors spoke of increasing harassment of the indigenous population due to more and more sophisticated methods of police control and the use of computer aided technology, which they attributed to Israeli government aid programmes. After a slight improvement in the situation following the removal of Rios Monte the situation is deteriorating and indigenous Guatemalans fear even more serious threats to their lives and well being.
- ii). Tchad 'Up-date': Sr. Giuseppina Tresoldi spoke to this informal meeting on June 14 following her return from her visit to Tchad. She also visited the Central African Republic and Southern Sudan. She shared valuable information about developments in these areas where sisters of her Comboniani Congregation and other Congregations in SEDOS live in very difficult circumstances.
- iii). Algeria 'Up-date': Mgr. Henri Teissier, Coadjutor to the Archbishop of Alger, Algeria, addressed a well attended informal meeting on developments in Christian-Islamic dialogue in Algeria and other countries of North Africa. His commitment to dialogue with Muslims is unshakable and his replies to specific questions about the current difficulties in dialogue were illuminating.

The present may not be a time for specifically religious dialogue between Christians and Muslims but the dialogue of life, the search for what can be done together at a purely human level, continues. Both Muslim and Christian recognise they are not the same kind of Christian or Muslim as a result of being together.

## 5. SEDOS BULLETIN

We receive a constant, if modest request for the Bulletin from new readers although it is not advertised. The circulation is now 850 per issue, up from 500 three years ago. Costs have also increased, particularly postage, and so the annual subscription, mainly to cover postage, has been increased to \$15 in Europe and \$20 Overseas. The mailing arrangements were adjudged excellent in the assessment of the Bulletin carried out in 1983.

As the Bulletin contains news of 'Coming Events' it is important that readers in Rome receive it regularly. At present it is delivered to the Borgo S. Spirito Jesuit house and the Brothers of the Christian Schools in via Aurelia on the 1st and 15th of each month. However, an increasing number of member Societies ask to have it delivered by mail in Rome as the postal facilities have greatly improved. Also there are complaints from the pick-up-points that Bulletins are not collected regularly. It might be worth deciding to deliver all Bulletins by mail and charging for postage.

Items from the Bulletin are fairly constantly reproduced in many other mission magazines. There is evidence also that it is used by members of General administrations and by readers in distant mission situations. At the beginning of 1983 an evaluation was carried out. We hope to repeat this in 1985.

The question has been raised whether a Spanish version, of at least parts of the Bulletin, could be produced, particularly for Latin American countries where the Churches are giving attention to developing a missionary dimension in the aftermath of Puebla. This would not be possible with present staff and facilities but the idea is worthy of further consideration.

The Bulletin aims to present the 'cutting edge' of mission situations reflecting both problems and opportunities and to reflect on the theology of mission today particularly in relation to the experiences of members. There is a wealth of material available in the various mission magazines and reviews we receive from members and although the Bulletin is issued every two-weeks it is not possible to share more than a fraction of the valuable insights coming into our Documentation Centre - the source of the Bulletin. The Bulletin also contains the Reports of the various SEDOS Seminars and, in most cases, the full texts of the talks delivered by the resource persons.

## 6. SEDOS DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

In 1984 we began a feasibility study on the use of a computer for the Centre. This study has not yet been completed. The Centre receives regularly, seventy-six 'internal' reviews of Magazines from members and eighty-eight 'external' reviews. In addition approximately 280 other items are received on an irregular basis. A bank of over five thousand reference cards provides a rich source of guidance to con-

temporary information and articles on mission topics. The Centre is confined to material covering the previous ten years.

The 'keyworded' cards are listed alphabetically and contain information indicating Author, Country, Subject and Institute where applicable. It has been frequently remarked that the Centre contains a wealth of resources of mission studies but that it is little known and little used.

## 7. STATISTICS

The 1983 General Assembly asked for a statistical analysis of SEDOS members. This analysis has now been published. It indicates the extraordinary spread of members throughout the world. There are frequent references to the international character of our mission Societies, and a quick glance at this very simple statistical analysis underlines the truth of this assertion. Can this multinational character be used by SEDOS or by individual members or groups of members for greater exchange of information, more forceful action, or collaboration in pooling personnel to staff specific projects in mission situations ?

## 8. COOPERATION

During the year there were two appointments to Curial Offices of particular interest to SEDOS. We welcomed Archbishop Dermot Ryan, Pro-Prefect of the Congregation for Evangelisation of Peoples and Archbishop Francis Arinze, Pro-President of the Vatican Secretariate for Non-Christian Religions. We wish them every blessing in their new posts of great responsibility and assure them of our collaboration.

SEDOS collaborates with the Vatican Secretariate for Promoting Christian Unity and with other organisations in Rome - The Council of XVIII which is the combined council of representatives from the Congregation for Evangelisation of Peoples and the Unions of Superior Generals of Missionary Institutes; Commission VI, the mission commission of the Unions of Superiors General of Men (USG) and of women (UISG); the two Unions of Religious men and women, USG and UISG; Multimedia; Agrimissio; the Italian Association of Missionary Editors, and other organisations in Rome having an interest in mission:

Outside Rome contact is maintained with organisations such as the International Association of Mission Studies (IAMS), the United States Catholic Mission Association, the World Council of Churches' Commission on World Mission and Evangelisation (CWME), Pro Mundi Vita, The Center for Concern in Washington, the Catholic Lectureship at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham, the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, etc.

In cooperation with the World Conference on Religion and Peace, SEDOS appointed two delegates from SEDOS members living in Kenya to attend the Fourth World Conference on Religion and Peace held in Nairobi in August, 1984, (See SEDOS Bulletin, 84/No.16).

During 1984 Sr. Christine Middelhoff of the Executive Council spoke to a group of the Sacred Heart Sisters at Villa Lante about SEDOS and its activities.

Two groups of the Society for African Mission, one English - the other French speaking visited the Documentation Centre during their renewal meeting in Rome.

The Executive Secretary addressed the Association of Italian Missionary Editors on Africa Today.

The 1984 SEDOS Brochure was published at the beginning of the year. There were many requests for information about SEDOS and about missions. However, there are also many indications that SEDOS is not well known outside its own membership and in many cases not known outside the Roman based personnel of its members !

#### 9. FINANCES

Annual subscriptions have remained unchanged during 1984 and in fact for the previous two years. It is inevitable that the fees will be increased for 1985. The treasurer, Fr. Leo Paul Nobert, will present proposals with the Budget for 1985.

#### 10. PRESENT CONSTITUTION OF THE SECRETARIATE

The staff at present is as follows: Ms. Antigone Lloyd, Bulletin; Ms. Jacintha Alagiah, Secretarial; Ms. Ingrid Besch, Documentation. Sr. Agnetta, SSPS, Ms. Philippa Wooldridge and Sr. Kathleen England, OSU, come to work at the Documentation Centre once a week. Sr. Ursula Stolz, CPPS, returned to the USA in July 1984. The post of Assistant to the Executive Secretary remains unfilled. Willie Jenkinson, CSSp, is Executive Secretary.

#### 11. 1983 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The Executive Committee considered this Assembly at their meeting of January 13th, 1984. Put briefly, their assessment was that "the business meeting was dull and poorly attended" ! Many left at the conclusion of the Seminar section of the day foreseeing the meeting would deal with business matters only and would interest only Superiors General or their delegates.

This is a loss as all members are entitled to take part in the discussion, reviewing the past year, proposing directions for the future and sharing their points of view. Voting alone, is confined to Superiors General or their mandated delegates.

In an effort to improve the quality of discussion at the Assembly the Executive Committee decided that the Annual Report of the Secretary should be circulated before the Assembly and that the Executive Secretary help to provide realistic items for the Agenda. The meeting

should also be held in a smaller hall.

## 12. THE FUTURE

I. Villa Cavalletti Seminar: Looking to the year ahead the most significant event in the SEDOS Calendar will be the residential SEDOS Seminar at Villa Cavalletti on the topic "Justice and Evangelisation". It is inevitable that Liberation Theologies will enter into the scope of the Seminar. We are inviting as resource persons people who live in situations of injustice together with some professional economists and a theologian who could help us in our reflection on the shared experiences concerning Justice and Evangelisation with which the Seminar will commence. We will also be holding preparatory group meetings to reflect on the evidence of what was achieved in practice through 'option for the poor' which many Societies of SEDOS incorporated in their new Constitutions.

II. Complementarity of Women and Men in Mission: Two days, March 25 and 26, have been set aside for the study of this topic. Catharine Halkes, Professor of Feminist Theology at the University of Nijmegen in Holland will be present for this Seminar which is now coming under the aegis of the USG/UISG Justice and Peace Office with which SEDOS will work in close collaboration.

III. Other Topics: There are many other topics which have been proposed for consideration by SEDOS. We list a few here:

- a) Sacred Scripture - the Soul of Evangelisation. The Office of WCFBA has kindly agreed to provide competent resource people for this topic should we agree to take it as a topic for a Seminar.
- b) Inculturation. What in practice is happening? This has particular relevance not only to African countries but also to countries of Asia and Latin America.
- c) Youth in Mission in 1985 - In view of the coming International Year of the Youth.
- d) Laity in Mission - In view of the topic of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops.

IV. We give for reference the first preferences for future Seminar topics proposed by the participants at the Villa Cavalletti Seminar in March 1984:

	<u>No. of Preferences</u>
1. Justice and Peace	(11)
2. Problems of Mission in Urbanisation	(07)
3. Primary Evangelization	(04)
4. Refugees (Displaced Persons)	(03)
5. Peace	(03)
6. Mutuality between Men and Women in the Church	(03)
7. Women in Mission	(02)
8. Islamic Renewal Movement and its growth	(02)

9.	Ecumenism	(02)
10.	Role of Women in Church and Society	(01)
11.	Role of Women in Evangelization, past and present	(01)
12.	Feminist Theology	(01)
13.	Feminism: Women in the Church as part of J & P and Human Rights	(01)
14.	Creative use of Mass Media	(01)
15.	Ordained Ministry	(01)
16.	Re-evangelization	(01)
17.	Justice and Peace focused on Refugees	(01)
18.	Qualities for leadership in the Church today	(01)

The General Assembly will be asked to give guidance on the final choice of topics. Some of the above could be the subject of informal meetings for sharing of information.

V. Refugees: Still looking to the year ahead SEDOS members might consider, individually or collectively undertaking specific projects. Following the recent Seminar on Refugees one of those concerned with the day to day problems remarked with some surprise that the proportion of SEDOS members actually involved in the Refugee programme was smaller than one would have expected.

VI. Documentation Centre: There are proposals for the more widespread use of the Centre. These will almost certainly entail a computer aided re-organisation and the possibility of close collaboration with other Centres. Would SEDOS members be prepared to help financially with a one-time only contribution ?

VII. Liberation Theology: While there are statements to the effect that it is only the aberrations and exaggerations of liberation theology which are the subject of warnings and documents from Vatican offices there is a feeling among many SEDOS members that these will be misused inevitably by those who are opposed to any theology of liberation.

Members of SEDOS might wish to consider the possibility of undertaking a common action concerning the recent declaration on liberation theology, emphasizing the need for positive reactions, avoiding misunderstandings, affirming and encouraging their members who are engaged in day to day evangelising among those who suffer the effects of structural injustice and violence.

VIII. Inculturation: In this area also the need has been expressed for a sharing of actual experiences among the SEDOS members, - efforts that have been made, successes, failures or mistakes registered, lessons that have been learned, proposals that could be made for experimentation. The growing international character of many member Societies is a rich resource which can be tapped.

The changing pattern of mission today is a challenge to us to examine the degree to which we should collaborate more and act more collectively. This challenge may well be a sign of the times in which we live. During the year the liturgical celebrations and

prayers at our Seminars reflected our conviction that little or nothing can be achieved without union in Christ the centre of our lives and our activities.

In conclusion I thank the members of the Executive Committee for their dedication and their constant support. There is always a generous response from them to requests for help and co-operation. I thank specially all those who collaborated with us in so many ways during the course of the year particularly in the organising of our Seminars. This collaboration is one of the hallmarks of the SEDOS membership and we in the Secretariate appreciate it deeply. It is this spirit of collaboration and search in common which is at the heart of SEDOS.

Fr. Willie Jenkinson, CSSp.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY - SEDOS

Points from the Panel Discussion -  
Continued from Page 17.

to be re-assessed today as the communal values of other cultures are recognised, for example in various African societies. Islamic social pressures, regarded critically or even negatively by Christians, seem to have preserved Islam against enormous political pressures in the Soviet Union or Turkey. But we must not generalize nor disregard the considerable variation within Islam or Hinduism.

We need to avoid presuppositions about the definition of Church in the context of the supercity. The aspects of organisation and power too often seem to be emphasized. A description of the young Churches as "a foreign, powerful minority, rich, well-organised, with good social and educational facilities and good overseas contacts, neither poor nor holy" may seem a travesty but is often heard.

As Pierre Delooz said there are few if any precedents. Each Christian community in these new situations has to start from scratch. There appears to be no pastoral theology or pastoral care common to the different situations. And so a number of speakers reiterated the importance and significance of the grass-roots, basic groups and Christian communities as one possible way to go. Marie Cloutier had described one such growth, Andrew Edele another. In the wider context have we not something to learn from the Islamic or Hindu experience?

The debate was worthwhile if it only raised these questions and possibilities even if it did not propound solutions.

Willie Jenkinson, CSSp.



## SEDOS ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1984

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 Sr. Marie Cloutier, SA.  
 Mr. Pierre Delooz

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1984 SEDOS BULLETIN INDEX

---

TITLE

AFRICA: Toward a new Model of Church, 78-79; New Ministries, 98-106; Basic Christian Communities African Style; a non-residential Summer School, 124; A new Era of Evangelization, 255-263, 275-279, 298-303; Theologiens africains et européens: La Rencontre Europe-Afrique au Cameroun, 267-268; Geography of Exile, 339; Estimated number of Refugees of Concern to UNHCR 1984, 340; Projected 1984 UNHCR Expenditures in ..., 341; Le problème des réfugiés en ..., un appel et un défi à l'Eglise, 347-348; The African Refugees problem is unique, 349-350; A Church on the Move with Peoples, Mission and Refugees, 351-352; La Mission aujourd'hui: Qu'est-ce que c'est ? 363-367, 387-392; Famine in ..., 423-424.

AMECEA RESEARCHPROJECT:

Priestly Ministry and Christian Community, 102-104.

ASIA: New Ministries, 98-106; What kind of Mission Workers for ... ? 320-321.

BANGLADESH: Mission To-Day, A Letter from ..., 404-405.

BASIC COMMUNITIES: ...Ecclesial ... in Burundi, 54-56; ... Christian ... in African Style, 124; A Synoptic View of the Structure of the ... Ecclesial ... in Brazil, 190-196.

BRAZIL: Socio-economic Conditions of the Workers, 82-83; A Synoptic View of the Structure of the Basic Ecclesial Communities in ..., 190-196.

## II

BURUNDI: Experiences and Results with Base Ecclesial Communities, 54-56.

CAMEROUN: Theologiens africains et européens: la Rencontre Europe-Afrique au ..., 267-268, 284-286.

CARITAS INTERNATIONALIS: 423-424.

CENTRAL AMERICA: Christ of the Americas, 270; Geography of Exile, 339.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: An attempt at Mission in the "Inner-City", 121-123; Marriage and Mission go hand in hand, 280-283.

CHURCH: Towards a New Model of ..., 78-79; The ... which civilizes by Evangelizing, 130-137; Dieu parle par les pauvres, 138-140; La Mission de l'Eglise aujourd'hui, 284-286; WCC - Vatican joint Statement, 295-297; A new Era of Evangelization, 298-303.

CONSTITUTIONS: Dominicans, 31; Oblates, 32-34; The New Age of Mission, 356-360.

CONVERSION: 156-162.

CUBA: L'Eglise de ... aujourd'hui, 117-120.

CULTURE: Goal: Evangelization of ..., 255-263; Extract from the Discourse of H.H. John Paul II to the Pontifical Council for ..., 307.

DEMOGRAPHY: 308; 396-398.

DEVELOPMENT: Advice on ... Projects, 269; Refugees in the developing World: a Challenge to the International Community, 342-346; Mission Project Service, 361-362.

DIALOGUE: SEDOS Seminars 1983, 19-20; Workshop, Summer 1984, 126;

DIALOGUE: WCC - Vatican joint Statement, 295-297; Trends in Mission: Areas of Concern, 368-371.

EAST ASIAN

PASTORAL INSTITUTE: Report, Summer 1980, 98-102.

ECUADOR: An Experience of Ministry, 184-185.

ECUMENICAL ASSOCIATION

OF AFRICAN THEOLOGIANS: Theologiens africains et européens: la Rencontre Europe-Afrique au Cameroun, 267-268.

EVANGELIZATION: 89-93; The Church which civilizes by Evangelizing, 130-137; A new Era of ... in Nigeria, 255-263, 275-279, 298-303; Trends in Mission: Areas of Concern, 368-371; The Gospel Challenges Us, 425-432.

FAITH: ... and Pluralism in Global Mission Experience, 71-72; Service of ... and Promotion of Justice: some Clarifications, 315-319; Justice and ... Workshop, 324.

FAMINE: ... in Africa, 423-424.

FISHERY: Excerpt from the address of Pope John Paul II to participants of the FAO World Conference on Fisheries Management and Development, 323-324; Some Background to Pope John Paul II's Address to the Fisherpeople of Canada, 330-332; Problems of Fisherfolk in Kerala, 383-384.

FORMATION: An attitude change, 94-97; Creative Reflection: An Experiential Approach: Methodology, 247-248.

FRANCISCANS (Plenary Council OFM) The Gospel Challenges Us, 425-432.

Garcia Marianella: Sorella Degli Oppressi, 53.

GUATEMALA: Pastoral Experience in a Rural Parish, 186-189.

INCULTURATION: Goal: Evangelization of Culture, 255-263; ... 304-307; Trends in Mission: Areas of Concern, 368-371.

#### IV

INDEX: SEDOS BULLETIN 1983, 40-42.

INDIA: Bombay: A Pigmy Church ? 325-326; An Experience of Ministry, 200-202; Problems of Fisherfolk in Kerala, 383-384.

INSTITUTES: Missio ... of Missiology, 309-310; Missionary ... London, 312.

#### INVESTMENT

POLICIES: Oblate Missionaries, 32-34.

IRELAND: An Attempt at Mission in the "Inner-City", 121-123.

JUSTICE ... and Peace. A selected Bibliography, 149-155; Statement of the Commission Justice and Peace UISG-USG, 264-266; Service of Faith and Promotion of ... Some Clarifications, 315-319; ... and Faith, Workshop 1985, 324.

KOREA: Shamanism and Healing, 143-144.

LAITY: New Ministries, Asia, Africa, North America, 98-102; Women in the Church, 129; Marriage and Mission go hand in hand, 280-283; Bombay: A Pigmy Church ? 325-326.

LATIN AMERICA: ... Context for a Church of new Ministries, 179-183; ... and What Kind of Person for ... ? 321-322.

#### LIBERATION

THEOLOGY: Twenty-five Years in ..., 415-417.

LOCAL CHURCH: Ministries in a Dynamic ..., 47-48, 87-88, 109-110; Ministry and the ..., 61-64, 79; Women in the Church, 129; La Mission Aujourd'hui, Qu'est-ce que c'est ? 363-367, 387-392; Trends in Mission: Areas of Concern, 368-371.

MARRIAGE ... and Mission go hand in hand, 280-283.

MEXICO: Conversion to the Poor, 328-329.

MINISTRIES: ... in a Dynamic Local Church - SEDOS Seminar, 47-48, 87-88, 109-110, 129, 169-178; Aware of our Position, 49-50; ... and the Local Church, 61-64, 79; Vatican II and Crisis in ..., 67-70; La Penurie de Prêtres, "Une benediction déguisée", 77; Dieu n'a pas de Couleur ! 80-81; Excerpts from the Report of the Summer Programme of the East Asian Pastoral Institute, 98-102; Priestly Ministry and Christian Community, 102-104; ... in the 80's, 105-106; SEDOS Seminar: Latin American Context, 179-183/ Personal Experiences in Ecuador, 184-185/ Guatemala, 186-189/ Brazil, 190-196/ Sierra-Leone, 197-199/ India, 200-202/ Papua New Guinea, 203-204/ Nijmegen, 205-208/ Reading List, 209-211; Theological Assessment of the Current Situation, 214-232; Development of ... in their Historical Context, 233-246; Reflection on ... from Scriptures, 212-213; Le Ministère du Prêtre, 327.

MISSION: Spirituality, 16-17; Dialogue, 19-20; Foreign, 27-29; Dominicans, 30-31; Jesuit, 35-37; SEDOS Seminars, 47-48, 87-88, 109-110, 129, 169-251, 375-382; The Scope of ... 57-60, 89-93, 111-116; Faith and Pluralism in Global ... Experience, 71-72; Dieu n'a pas de Couleur ! 80-81; Action for Peace, 141-142; National Seminar at Ibadan - A New Era of Evangelization, 255-268, 275-279, 298-303; A Church on the Move with Peoples: ... and Refugees, 351-352; The New Age of ..., 356-360; ... Project Service, 361-362; La ... Aujourd'hui, Qu'est - ce que c'est ? 363-367, 387-392; Trends in ...: Areas of Concern, 368-371; Problems of Fisherfolk in Kerala, 383-384; The New Era of ... and the Aims of Missionary Societies, 385-386; ... To-Day, A Letter from Bangladesh, 404-405.

MISSIONARIES: Foreign, 27-29; Aware of our Position, 49-50; Action for Peace, 141-142; Journeys into mission: Marriage and Mission go hand in hand, 280-283; Appeal to ..., 319; What Kind of Mission Worker for Asia ? 320-321; ... and what Kind of Person for Latin America ? 321-322; Trends in Mission: Areas of Concern, 368-371; The New Era of Mission and the Aims of Missionary Societies, 385-386.

MYTHOLOGY: World Christian Encyclopedia. A Demythologiser, 287-291.

NICARAGUA: .. un "Test-Case" pour l'Eglise et pour le Monde, 51-53.

NIGERIA: National Seminar - Ibadan. A New Era of Evangelization, 255-263, 275-279, 298-303..

NIJMEGEN: An experience of Ministry, 205-208.

NORTH AMERICA: New Ministries, 98-106; Geography of Exile, 339.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: An Experience of Ministry, 203-204.

PEACE: Religion and ..., 56; Action for ..., 141-142.

PHILIPPINES: Open Letter to Marcos, 38-39; Involvement with Urban Poor, 418-422.

POOR: Dieu parle par les pauvres, 138-140; Option for the ..., 271; Conversion to the ..., 328-329; Involvement with Urban ..., 418-422.

REFUGEES: Have Confidence in Yourselves and Hope in your Future, 336; Of all the Human Tragedies of our Day perhaps the greatest is that of ..., 337-338; Geography of Exile, 339; Estimated Number of ... of Concern to UNHCR 1984, 340; Projected 1984 UNHCR Expenditures in Africa, 341; ... in the Developing World, a Challenge to the International Community, 342-346; Le problème des ... en Afrique. Un appel et un défi à l'Eglise, 347-348; The Africa ... Problem is unique, 349-350; A Church on the Move with the Peoples: Mission and ..., 351-352; Sanctuary, 375-378; Your Community and the ..., 379-380; Proposals for Action, 406; The Churches and the World ... Crisis, 407-410; Source Material, 411.

ROMERO, Oscar: 116.

II VATICAN COUNCIL: The Church which civilizes by Evangelizing, 130-137.

SECTS: The Success of ... 74-76.

SEDOS SEMINARS: Seminar and Annual General Assembly Report 1983,  
1-23;

Seminar: Ministries in a Dynamic Local Church, 47-48,  
87-88, 109-110, 129, Special Issue 169-251,

Seminar: Mission and Refugees, 375-382, 406.

SIERRA-LEONE: An Experience of Ministry, 197-199.

SPIRITUALITY: For Conflict, 3-12; Mission, 16-17.

STATISTICS: Quelques Chiffres, 163-165.

URBANISATION: 395; Pastoral Care in Supercities, 399-403.

WOMEN. Vatican II and Crisis in Ministry, 67-70; Ministry in  
the 80's, 105-106; ... in the Church, 129; An Ex-  
perience of Ministry at Nijmegen, 205-208.



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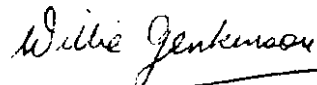
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