

70/20

Rome, June 12, 1970

To all Superiors General  
 To their delegates for SEDOS  
 To all members of the SEDOS group

This week:

Page

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS: The missing background documents are included for reference; please note that the Assembly substituted the term "fire brigade" by "mobil team" and that the Institutes were unanimously accepted as members. 451

CALENDRIER: This list of coming events could be useful for the French speaking world. It was kindly supplied by Fr. Haramburu omi. The Secretariat would welcome additions. 455

DEVELOPMENT: The report of the meeting of May 22, 1970 shows how naturally missionaries fit into development process -- now recognized as the central challenge of contemporary man. 459

FORMATION: This statement of policy on the training of young missionaries prepared by the White Fathers, confirms the orientations taken by the Working Group. 463

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: Agenda for the next meeting. 472

NEW DOCUMENTS: An interesting series of "fact sheets" about each of 150 countries. 473

DIARY. 475

PLEASE REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING DATES:

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE;	17 - 6 - 70	09.00	Secretariat
DEVELOPMENT ;	19 - 6 - 70	16.00	Generalate CFX

Sincerely yours,

Benjamin Tonna

Executive Secretary.

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS:

Working paper for (Item 5b).

Possible cooperation SEDOS - CMC:

1. Stock tacking:

- a) SEDOS is able to support the Executive Secretariate of the "Catholic Media Council" in setting up archives of all Catholic communications activities, especially of those which have been realized by the missionary congregations.
- b) The "Catholic Media Council" is able to inform SEDOS-members permanently about the future tendencies in media planning on world level; about communication projects in special developing areas endowed by non-Catholic-institutions and agencies; about the engineering progress of new communication facilities and developments such as e.g. satellite communication and cassette television.

2. Exchange of experts and experiences:

It would be very useful to inform all SEDOS members round the world who are engaged in mass media work about the tasks and aims of the "Catholic Media Council" and to make them available for co-operative work.

- a) SEDOS is able to set up lists with the names of communication specialists and mass media experts of their member congregations in developing countries. In one form or another the "Catholic Media Council" would contact these persons for the evaluation of concrete media projects funded by Catholic voluntary agencies in special developing areas.
- b) The "Catholic Media Council" would be able to give advice for communication projects of SEDOS-members in the Third World; to procure the experiences of non Catholic agencies in establishing communication facilities in single regions; to give background data on the wider surroundings of the communication field in which projects are inserted; to make available the opinion of experts on priorities and technical implications.

3. Training:

In contact with the "Catholic Media Council" and the international Catholic Media Organizations (OCIC, UNDA, UCIP) SEDOS should work out detailed plans for training competent members of their communities in mass media and in communications research as soon as possible. That

means co-operative endeavour, but massed concentration in the different societies on certain media sections. It should be the purpose of this effort in the near future to have at the Church's disposal a team of experienced and independent multi media -, press -, broadcasting -, television -, film- and public relations experts for practical and theoretical employment in the developing countries. In this connection the main proposal is the realizable dream of a

4. Mass media fire-brigade:

This idea first was outlined by Dr. Otto Kaspar one of the members of the Executive board of the "Catholic Media Council". He reported on it to SEDOS and perceived a good resonance but the follow-up got stuck.

Mass media fire-brigade means a small team of communications experts with high professional standard. Each of them is deployed\* but they all-specialized in different media - are in their team to assign to exceptional operations. More and more such a flying fire-brigade is needed in Church-related communications work for research and establishment of new media facilities in the starting phase. It will not be a big problem to fund the training and the different employment. The problem are competent and independent men with quick mobility. Only the SEDOS-members are able to make such a team available to the Churches urgent need today.

K. Holler.

\* in the frame of the missionary work of his/her own congregation.

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS

May 30, 1970

Dear Father Tonna,

We would like to make application to join the organization SEDOS. During the past year, a few members of our Congregation have attended SEDOS meetings held here in Rome and we were convinced that it would be advantageous for us to ask for membership.

We are an international congregation of about 11,000 Sisters with missions located in the following areas:

Europe:	Germany, Austria, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, Roumania, East Berlin
North America:	Canada, United States, Puerto Rico
Central America:	Guatemala, Honduras
South America:	Brazil, Argentina, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Peru
Asia:	Japan, Ryukyu Islands, Guam and Rota
Africa:	Liberia (We will open our first foundation in October this year.)

Recently Brother Vincent Gottwald, FSC, addressed our General Council and Brother José Pablo, FSC, spoke to our General Chapter of the missionary activities of their congregation and both of them stressed the great work being done by SEDOS. Hence we are keenly interested in joining this organization. We hope to receive a favorable reply to our request for admission.

Very sincerely yours,

Mother M. Georgianne, SSND  
General Superior

The Generalate  
School Sisters of Notre Dame  
Via della Stazione Aurelia 95  
00165 Roma, Italia  
Tel.: 6.222.002

ASSEMBLY OF GENERALS

30 Mai 1970

Mon Révérend Père,

Après avoir pris connaissance des diverses activités, des buts et des méthodes du SEDOS, ainsi que des obligations auxquelles sont tenus ses membres, appréciant tous les services rendus par cette Association, et désireuses d'apporter la contribution, si modeste soit-elle, de notre Congrégation à cet organisme d'Eglise, nous avons bien l'honneur de vous demander officiellement l'adhésion au SEDOS de la Congrégation des Religieuses du Sacré-Coeur.

Dans l'attente d'une réponse favorable et en vous exprimant le souhait de notre Congrégation d'être un membre loyal et dévoué du SEDOS, nous vous prions de croire, mon Révérend Père, à toute notre religieuse gratitude.

B. Napier AsG.  
Secrétaire Générale

Casa del Sacro Cuore  
Via Nomentana 118  
00161 Roma  
Tel: 857.513-856.022

CALENDRIER DES SESSIONS, CONGRES ET RETRAITES. 1970

JUIN:

- 13 - 4 : Session de recyclage des missionnaires. CHARTRES.
- 15 - 19 : Retraite de quatre jours. Prêtres et Frères. CLAMART. Père Bertrand sj.
- 22 - 26 : Retraite de quatre jours. Prêtres et laïcs. HAUTMONT, 59-MOUVAUX. Père Rogè.
- 23 - 30 : Stage de pastorale organisé par le C.F.E.I. à Nogent - sur Marne - Eveil et soutien du laïc en mission.
- 24 - 3 : Retraite de huit jours, avec les prêtres des groupes "Evangile et Mission". CLAMART. Père Laplace sj.
- 28 - 4 : Session pour les missionnaires travaillant en milieu rural. Thème: "Evangélisation et développement" Séminaire de la Mission de France, 94 - FONTENAY sous BOIS.
- 29 - 1 : Session d'initiation audio-visuelle avec école de l'Image et école du Diaporama. RODEZ.
- 29 - 11 : Session de formation permanente OMI de plus de 45 ans SOLIGNAC.
- 29 - 18 : Session de trois semaines organisée à Paris par l'I.R.F.E.D. Thème: "Etude du développement"

JUILLET

- : 4° conférence régionale de l'O.I.E.C. Proche et Moyen-Orient, à Rome - Thème: "Apport de l'enseignement au développement des pays"
- ? : Séminaire organisé par l'AMAR (Association médico-psycholo-d'aide aux religieux)  
Thème: "La participation dans la vie Commune"
- 1 - 5 : SEMAINE SOCIALE (session internationale) à Dijon' (21)  
Thème: "Les pauvres de la société riche"
- 6 - 9 : 5° assemblée internationale des CATE CLUBS, à Lille (session de formation catéchétique audiovisuelle, 1° cycle)
- 13 - 16 : 5° assemblée internationale des Caté CLUBS à ANGERS (session de formation catéchétique audiovisuelle, 2° cycle)
- 4 - 9 : Session "Bible et Catéchèse": "Annoncer Jésus-Christ aujourd'hui" Paris. Animation: PP. Le DU, PIERRON et DENIS
- 5 - 4 : Retraite de trente jours pour prêtres et frères. CLAMART. Père Laplace sj.

- 6 - 26 : Session d'initiation linguistique "Afrique et langage à BIEVRES (91°)
- 2 - 24 : Session de formation à la pastorale liturgique; ANGERS.
- 6 - 9 : Session d'initiation audio-visuelle avec l'Ecole de l'Image et du Diaporama. PARIS.
- 9 - 14 : Session "Vie Nouvelle" pour jeunes pensant partir en coopération. Thème: le Développement; Région Parisienne.
- courant : Session "Vie Nouvelle" pour étudiants et stagiaires du Tiers-Monde
- 12 - 22 : Stage "Coopération" pour les jeunes en instance de départ dans un pays du Tiers-Monde, organisé par le C.F.E.I. à Nogent-Marne.
- 13 - 18 : Session pour catéchistes d'adolescents et jeunes adultes déficients mentaux profonds (17-25 ans) organisée par le service de Pédagogie Catéchétique Spécialisée.
- 19 - 26 : Université d'été du centre St Dominique. LA TOURETTE, EVREUX 69-L'ARB RESLE. Thème: "Pauvreté d'Evangile, combat pour l'homme"
- 20 - 10 : Rencontre internationale du MIDADE, à Monaco-1. Session de formation (20-30 juillet) - 2 Assemblée générale. Thème: "La révélation dans le Mouvement - les enfants non chrétiens et les chrétiens non catholiques-éducation des enfants à la paix"
- 25 - 4 : Route internationale PAX CHRISTI, à Fribourg (SUISSE). Thème: "Le pluralisme au service de la paix".
- 28 - 4 : Université d'été du Centre St Dominique. Thème: "l'homme, cet inconnu"
- 30 - 1° : Session organisée par le C.F.E.I. Thème: "Dialogue avec les autres religions"
- 30 - 8 : Retraite de huit jours, avec les prêtres du Coeur de Jésus 59-MOUVAUX; Père Hardy.
- 8 - 13 : Session d'initiation à l'Action Catholique pour les missionnaires au 17 rue de l'Assomption Paris 16°

#### AOÛT

- 4 - 9 : Congrès international des FOCOLARI (Mariapoli) à DIJON (21)
- 5 - 13 : Route internationale, grand pèlerinage des COMPAGNONS DE St FRANCOIS, à St-Jacques de Compostelle. Thème: "Foi et amour dans ma vie".
- 11 - 17 : PELERINAGE NATIONAL FRANCAIS, à Lourdes, organisé par l'Association de N.D. du Salut.
- 12 - 15 : Europe 70. Route internationale pour les aînés des mouvements SCOUTS ET GUIDES DE FRANCE, à Strasbourg.

- 6 - 13 : Université d'été du centre St Dominique. Thème: "Dieu est-il utile?"
- 12 - 17 : Session organisée par "Economie et Humanisme" I-LA SAULSAIE "Initiation Sociologique"
- 24 - 31 : Université d'été du centre St-Dominique. Thème: "Spiritualité pour notre temps"
- 24 - 29 : Session d'Ecriture Sainte O.M.I. à la Brosse Montceaux.
- 25 - 4 : Retraite de dix jours pour prêtres et Frères. CLAMART. Père LAPLACE sj.
- 31 - 19 : Session de trois semaines organisée à Paris par l'I.R.F.E.D. Thème: "Etude du développement"
- 31 - 3/10: Session d'initiation médicale à l'usage des missionnaires et de leurs collaborateurs, organisées par la Faculté libre de Médecine de Lille.
- 25 -25/9 : Session de ressourcement théologique suivi d'une retraite à OBOURG (Belgique)
- 24 - 29 : Session d'initiation à l'Action Catholique pour les missionnaires au 17 rue de l'Assomption Paris 16°

# SEPTEMBRE

Session nationale des futurs coopérants (et coopérants militaires organisée par INTERSERVICE, à Lyon

- 1 -18/12: Retraite de Mazenod. Rome.
- 1 - 5 : "Moraleen chrétientés nouvelles". Session organisée à LYON sous la direction du Père Martelet sj.
- 7 - 13 : Stage de pastorale organisé par le C.F.E.I. Eveil et soutien du laïcat en mission - Nogent - sur Marne.
- 13 - 19 : Session sur le "Catéchuménat, dimension de l'Eglise missionnaire sous la direction du Père Guillard. BIEVRES 91
- entre le Congrès des moralistes de langue française organisé par
- 13 et 20 l'A.T.E.M. (Association de Théologiens pour l'étude de la morale), à Dreux (28) - Thème: "Le Divorce"
- 28 - 4 : Session élémentaire pour catéchistes d'enfants ayant des troubles de la personnalité, organisée par le service de Pédagogie Catéchétique Spécialises
- 21 - 26 : Session de dynamique de groupe 91 BIEVRES.
- 28 - 7 : Retraite de huit jours avec les prêtres des groupes "Evangile et mission "CLAMART. Père Laurent sj.



OCTOBRE

- 1 - 9 : Réunion du CONSEIL DES LAICS, à Rome.  
12 - 16 : Retraite de quatre jours: "Evangile et Libération de l'homme"  
Mouvaux. Père Coisne.  
18 Journée MISSIONNAIRE UNIVERSELLE.  
5-19/12 : STAGE THEOLOGIQUE d'hiver organisé par le centre St-Dominique  
21 - 28 : Assemblée plénière de l'EPISCOPAT à Lourdes - Thème: "Les  
chemins de la foi et la croissance de l'Eglise dans les réalités  
humaines".  
26 - 29 : Congrès national des DIRECTEURS DE PELERINAGE DE FRANCE à  
Toulouse - Thème: "Pèlerinage - foi et vie"

NOVEMBRE

Vacances Etats généraux de l'AUMONERIE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT PUBLIC  
de la -Thème: "Le Langage total"

toussaint

- 9 - 13 : Retraite de quatre jours destinée aux prêtres. MOUVAUX. Michel  
QUOIST.  
15 : Quête annuelle du SECOURS CATHOLIQUE.  
23 - 27 : Retraite de quatre jours pour prêtres et frères. CLAMART.  
Père GERARD sj.  
30 : journée d'étude: "Le prêtre et l'actualité politique et sociale"  
MOUVAUX. Père Heckely.

DECEMBRE

- 14 - 18 : Retraite de quatre jours destinée aux prêtres. MOUVAUX. Père  
Ganivet.

- 27 - 31 : Retraite de quatre jours pour prêtres et frères. CLAMART.  
Père LAPLACE.

Vacances Session élémentaire pour catéchistes d'enfants aveugles et mal  
voyants, organisée par le service de pédagogie Catéchétique  
spécialisée.

4<sup>e</sup> trimestre: Session élémentaire pour catéchistes d'enfants en situation  
scolaire et sociale difficile organisée par le service de Pédagogie  
Catéchétique Spécialisée.

JANVIER

- 2 - 16 : Stage de recherche théologique, au Centre St-Dominique; "Jésus,  
sauveur des hommes".

# WG DEVELOPMENT

The Development Working Group met on Friday 22nd May, 1970 at 4 p.m. at the CIM Generalate. The following were present:-

Sr. Th. M. Barnett, som-t;	Fr. John McNulty, pa;
Bro. H. Doyle, cfx;	Sr. M. Panovska, scmm-m;
Fr. Joseph Brossard, omi;	Bro. G. Schnepp, sm;
Sr. Ancilla Dirkx, som-t;	Fr. J. Schotte, ciom;
Fr. A.A. Hubenig, omi;	Sr. G. Samson, sa.
Fr. A. McCormack, mhn (J.+ P.)	

From the Secretariat:

Fr. B. Tonna and Miss Capes.

The Chairman introduced the following visitor and new members of the group:-

1. Sr. Ancilla Dirkx, som-t, on leave from the Philippines.
2. Fr. J. Brossard, omi, who will be taking over his post of Executive Secretary of Agrimissio in November, 1970, and will be a member of the WGD.
3. Fr. J. McNulty, pa, who is a new member of our group. Fr. McNulty founded the first Credit Union in Africa.

## 1. DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CREDIT UNIONS SEMINAR (DCU)

Fr. Brossard suggested the names of three FAO Agricultural Coops and Credit Specialists who, he felt, should get invitations to the C.U. Seminar:

- a. Dr. G. Insfran Guerreros (Coops + Credit Specialist)
- b. Dr. Andrew Braid " " "
- c. Dr. Newiger (Coops Specialist)

It was agreed by the group that they should be suggested to Fr. van den Dries to be invited.

Fr. J. McNulty, pa., should also receive an invitation.

Reports of the WGD Task Force (DCU) meetings of 16 April and 15 May had been circulated to all members previously, bringing them up-to-date on the progress of the planning of the Seminar. It was agreed that an effort be made to find persons before the summer who could serve as moderators and as recorders during the DCUS. Regarding the need for experts on group dynamics for training of moderators of the working groups before the seminar takes place, names suggested were:

- 1) Fr. Andre Renaud, omi and 2) Fr. Michel, omi. Fr. Hubenig will contact both of them, and if they are unable to help us, perhaps they can refer us to someone who can.

The DCUS Task Force will meet with Fr. van den Dries on May 28.

## 2. F.A.O. Collaboration

Report of meeting of FAO Task Force on 13th May had been forwarded previously to all WGD members.

- a. Since the Executive Committee had approved the FAO-USG programme of information lists and periodical briefings, the WGD FAO Task Force agreed to ask the Sedos Secretariat to prepare information lists as specified in the WGD FAO Task Force Report of meeting on 13 May, 1970.
- b. Organization of briefing sessions: Three meetings to be organized during the last three months of this year. These would be held at FAO, to be arranged with Mr. P. Crane. Coordination with the panels of the "meetings by country" should be worked out.
- c. The proposed Agrimissio office will begin to function in November, 1970, and in a year's time they should be asked to take over from Sedos the logistics of the FAO-Missionary collaboration programme. The relationship FAO/SEDOS can then come under the semi-official umbrella of Agrimissio.
- d. WORLD FOOD CONGRESS AT THE HAGUE

Fr. B. Tonna had received an invitation to attend this Congress in June, 1970. This was referred to the Executive Committee, who agreed on 22 April that the WGD should decide on who "represents" Sedos at the Second World Food Congress, availing themselves of the invitation extended to Fr. Tonna. Sr. S. Samson was asked by the WGD if she would be willing to go. She is to let Fr. Schotte know as soon as possible if she is able to accept or not. The group was informed that hospitality is being arranged in the homes of Dutch families by the following centre in The Hague:

Inter-Church Centre Elizabeth,  
Stadhouderslaan 120,  
The Hague

Tel: (Code: 070) 55 27 25

Miss Groothuizen, of the office of the Permanent Observers of the Holy See at FAO, is at present doing this from FAO, and can be contacted at the above centre during the Congress.

3. SEDOS-MISEREOR Personnel Development Programme

The agreement has now been signed by MISEREOR, and a revised announcement, as agreed at the WGD meeting of 3 April, and covering letter prepared for Sedos Generalates, has been published in Bulletin No. 17 (SEDOS). Extra copies of the announcement and of the covering letter have been sent with the Bulletin to all Sedos Generalates, who are asked to contact the Sedos Secretariat for any further copies they may need, specifying in what language(s):- copies in English and French available now, translation in Spanish will be forthcoming.

It should be noted that the fund is now only for specialists, and that applications must be accompanied by a statement from the Superior General or the Bishop's Conference that the applicant will be "made available in that particular field of their training to the Bishops' Conference (or in special cases to a Bishop or group of Bishops) after the course".

The training of Generalists would come under separate projects to be forwarded directly to MISEREOR by the congregation concerned.

Two new scholarship applications have been received (one from Indonesia and one from the Philippines) and in the absence of Bro. Gottwald, Fr. Schotte is screening them.

An application has also been received for funds for a\*Seminar for Training in Community Development in the Philippines, and this will be recommended to MISEREOR as a special project.

It was suggested that when the WGD takes up its meetings again in September, it should have on its agenda "the training of people, and working with Bishops' Conferences" for discussion by the members.

4. SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

As agreed at the last WGD meeting, the chairmen of WGD and WGSC met to consider a type of newsletter or bulletin to be issued periodically, as needed, for internal (Sedos) and external circulation. If each working group produced its own "releases", as suggested by the WGSC chairman, it was felt by the WGD that there would have to be a coordinator and advice would be needed at the Sedos Secretariat as to what should and what should not go into this new type bulletin. It was decided that Gr. Panevska would contact Fr. Mills, acting chairman of the WGSC in the absence of Fr. Perigny, to ask if one or two members of the WGD could sit in at their next meeting.

4. (cont'd)

It was felt by the WGD that before this summer it is desirable that there should be some press releases, e.g.

- 1) Credit Union Seminar (it is planned to have a press release before June 10th).
- 2) Relations with FAO and The World Food Congress

The Task Force reports are not reaching the Generalates, and the point was raised as to whether resumés of these reports should go in the weekly bulletins?

The WGSC had given an assurance that they would cover the public relations and press releases for the DCU Seminar.

5. CONSULTATION ROUND TABLE AND CONTINUITY COMMITTEE

Fr. A. McCormack attended the April 20th meeting of the Continuity Committee of the Consultation Round-Table, and he reported that at this meeting greater collaboration between international organizations and missionary organizations was strongly recommended. The WGD group felt that the World Food Congress could be the starting point where the Generalates "cash in" on this offer of collaboration.

6. INTERNATIONAL STANDING CONFERENCE

The Executive Committee agreed that Sedos should apply for membership in the group of European non-profit service agencies, as recommended by the WGD. The application has now been filed. No news has yet been received on any forthcoming meetings, etc.

7. INODEP

The Executive Committee agreed to ask Fr. R. Haramburu, omi, to report on the implications of the INODEP request for Sedos representation, after attending its meetings as an observer. But this matter did not fall under the terms of reference of the Development WG.

8. Other items including date and agenda of next meeting

Sr. M. Panovska said she would be out of Rome from 31st May to 21st June, and from 31st July to 31st August. During her absence Fr. Schotte would be acting chairman and should be contacted for business concerning the WGD.

Next meeting to take place on Friday June 19th, 1970 at 4 p.m. at the cfx Generalate.

- Agenda:
1. Relationship Justice + Peace/Sedos
  2. FAO follow-up
  3. Credit Union Seminar follow-up
  4. MISEREOR

FORMATION

Letter from the General Council to all White Father Students

At the beginning of February the General Council sent a letter addressed to "All those training to become White Fathers".

The students in every centre have received a typed copy signed by all the members of the Council. The letter was sent in one of the two official languages of the Society to our international Centres and in the language of the country concerned to our National Centres.

Rome, 6-2-1970

Dear Friends,

You are preparing yourselves to serve the Mission of the Church in Africa, in the Society of the White Fathers. In this way you are committing your future by giving it completely to God and to his action in the history of mankind. And this future, which is the wealth of every young man, you have every right to know what it holds in store for you in committing yourselves in this way in missionary Society. At the end of the Madrid meeting, we had made up our mind to write this letter to you so as to give you as straightforward an answer as possible to this question that deep down, each one of you must be asking: "What is expected of me in order to serve in Africa tomorrow?".

You do not want us to beat about the bush. Nor do we intend to do so. Realism in face of the facts must be one of the first missionary qualities. Are we not the heirs of a man, an apostle who seldom minced his words in telling the future missionaries of his day the demands of their vocation? Far from discouraging people, experience has shown that the clear, objective and demanding language of Cardinal Lavignerie had on the contrary attracted many: "What I need now", he wrote to a Superior of a Major Seminary in 1869, "are men, men imbued with the apostolic spirit of courage, faith, and self-sacrifice, coming to join the workers of the first hour. As a matter of fact, I cannot promise them any of the things that the world offers, neither wealth, nor greatness, nor human delights: but quite the contrary, poverty, self-sacrifice, all the dangers of a country almost unknown and until now inaccessible and perhaps at the end of all that the death of a martyr. But, let me tell you it is precisely this that: gives me the confidence that my appeal will be heard."

In spite of the difference in the historical position, it is astonishing to record how much such an appeal is right up to date in its quality.

We must be able to hearken once more to such language, if we really are men, men at their best.

There can be no question of painting a definite portrait of the White Father of tomorrow. We must be realistic and modest enough to acknowledge that this is not possible. For, from the moment that we make the service of men, and of a people other than our own, the basic rule of our life, we are fully aware of the risk we accept: that of having to adapt continually to a reality that can change, and that we cannot always foresee. Besides, that is what must be the underlying note of our mentality, our spirituality, in a word our mystique: this welcoming realism facing the facts, this straightforward availability in the presence of concrete necessities, this manifest disinterestedness that all this demands of us. "It is not the anchor, but the sail that should be the symbol of fidelity. The sail adapts itself so perfectly to the wind". (J. Onimus).

We must first of all be profoundly realistic in facing the facts. It is no good trying to imagine what these facts could or should be in another context. The important thing for us in the first place is to consider things as they are. Now you are not unaware of the tremendous changes that have transformed Africa in the last ten years; political independence, the setting up almost everywhere of a strictly African hierarchy, the ever growing awareness of an African will for continental unity, even on the ecclesiastical plane, the desire for human improvement in all spheres.... If we add on as well the whole attitude adopted by the council with regard to non-Christian religions, and in particular with regard to Islam, it is clear that all this can modify, in many cases, the concrete way of answering the missionary call of the Church. The era which was above all a period of founding and of initiatives in a world setting, rendered artificial by the colonial presence since it often hid from view the African reality, is now ended. From now on the mission is the time for the manifestation of this African reality in all its depth and cultural originality. That is to say that for us White Fathers, it has become the time of dialogue, of service and of friendship, both with regard to the young Churches, as well as with regard to the cultural environments, as yet untouched by evangelisation. Only those who are absolutely convinced of this will feel at home in our Society. We must know how to draw dispassionately the inferences from this. Thus, we have no right to impose arbitrarily on Africa the questionable things of our native countries. Ecclesiastical structures which may be all right in Europe or America are not by that very fact alone suited to Africa. A way of living the priesthood which may be quite appropriate in certain European or American environments (workers-priests, part-time priests etc) is not by that very fact and of necessity appropriate in the Africa of today. We must be fully aware of this. Otherwise, we shall give rise to a sort of spiritual neocolonialism, which Africa does not want at any price! This is what Cardinal Zoungana asserted recently at the Bishops Symposium in Kampala: "Let us say it quite plainly: our own being must not be bestowed on us from outside".

And why not say it straight out, since it is true. A genuinely realistic missionary formation, and consequently one that is respectful of others, should lead you to live and work faithfully, sincerely and even readily, within structures that you would not perhaps take kindly to in your own country. Adaptation, and the forgetfulness of self that all adaptation implies, must go as far as that. Does that mean to say that we should have nothing to contribute, and that the only thing asked of us would be to be purely passive? Certainly not! To be mindful of others is to respect them as they are, but it is also to enrich them as far as lies in our power. But then, we have no right to impose from above the ideas that we think are good; we can only put them forward in a friendly way as servants of the African Church, while waiting for Africans themselves to make them their own - after all is said and done, they are the best judges of what is good for themselves. It is quite possible that the Africans may never adopt them; we must accept that, right from the start.

We have chosen to spend our lives in this realistic attitude in the face of the apostolic needs, both of the present day and of the foreseeable future, without limiting our activity to any definite area? It is a choice which has been made from the outset, and one to which we are determined to be faithful. Often in the past, founders of local Churches, we had to do practically everything. From now on, servants of local Churches, we mean to continue to offer our services in the multifarious spheres in which they may call upon our help.

There are in existence certain Societies, which specialize in teaching, in medical work, or in some other kind of definite field of apostolate. The primary specialisation of White Fathers is to face up to the multifarious activities demanded by dialogue with the non-Christian world, by an initial evangelisation, or by the service of a young Church, to the utmost of our ability. Quite simply to do what must be done in any given situation, that is our speciality. To have the strength of soul and the courage to accept in such a case, a complete change in our activity from the very moment this becomes necessary. To submit not to our own ideas or desires, nor even always to our own personal charisms, but rather to the pressing needs of the apostolate.

The missionary vocation, such as we mean to live it in our Society, must at the present time be an open and unconditional vocation. Those who for the sake of getting to Africa would surround their commitment with all sorts of more or less compulsory conditions, would do much better to stay at home. Because, in our case, putting into practice in reality and sincerely the "all things to all men" not only in space but also in time, prohibits us from holding a static view of our vocation, in community or as an individual, in a dynamic world constantly exposed to change, and in which we must serve day after day.



It is sure that this way of looking at our response to the missionary call of the Church imposes on us a stripping of self, that can take us very far, but today it must be the distinctive mark of our missionary vocation. We have nothing else to offer but certainty of being useful vis-à-vis the missionary needs of the Church -- these will never be lacking.

Within a vocation to a life solely or chiefly dedicated to personal sanctification, it can be considered as quite normal to desire to live and attain God in keeping with one's own charismata, and indeed to set up, to a certain extent, personally or in community, the conditions for this life and quest for God: monastic establishments are a typical example of this. In that sense, the response to such a vocation, can very largely be conditional, at times even right down to certain details foreseen in advance.

But it is quite a different thing for the missionary vocation, such as we mean to live it as White Fathers. Here in great part we do not create the conditions for our personal development, we meet them as facts that we must accept, apply ourselves to, and to which we must adapt ourselves. The missionary is a messenger, a man who goes out to meet people in a given context. He has not to adapt them to himself, but rather adapt himself to them. He is someone who lives for God in living for others. And it is through this meeting with others that he must develop himself. His personal development lies in other people, and other people for God's sake. Other people loved just as they are, and served for the sake of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, while respecting the culture and social, political or ecclesial structures which are theirs; but which are also in constant evolution; a respect which derives from the knowledge and clear-sighted love of that wonderful, unparalleled variety of humanity such as the Creator of this world intended it. An essential of the missionary charism is this forgetfulness of self, this boundless and friendly respect for things and people, this will to serve by witness and ministry, by simply modesty before realities and humility before facts; but with depth in faith and strength in hope.

This is just telling you that in the present circumstances, for a Society like ours and consequently the people in it, the important thing is to be available. And that must stand out deliberately in all our mentality. The mission today and in particular the service of young Churches requires this mystique of availability. It is moreover the attitude that God has always demanded in his servants right down through the History of Salvation. It was the attitude of the Patriarchs: "It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and he set out without knowing where he was going" (Heb. 11,8). Likewise of the Prophets: "Whom shall I send? Who will be our messenger? I answered: Here I am, send me" (Isaiah, 6,8). And of the Apostle: "What am I to do, Lord?" (St. Paul on the road to Damascus, Acts 22,10). And that of so many saints right down through the history of the Church. Now, we are, in the History of Salvation, the heirs and continuers of these great messengers. Like them, you must be available, if you really want to be, today and to-morrow, worthwhile apostles.

Anyone who is not ready to forget self in the face of God's call, who speaks to us through events and apostolic needs, anyone who is not ready to give the point of view of others priority over his own, such a one is not ready to serve in Africa today.

To the individual who, in entering the White Fathers, is looking for some sort of security for the future, we have only one sort to offer: that of knowing that he will always have a task to fulfil as servant of the Church and as witness of the risen Christ, provided that he is always available and disinterested; that this task will not always be easy, and will at times be very demanding; but to fulfil it, he will never be alone, and can count on the inventive and fraternal solidarity of the Society in which he dedicates himself.

This availability in face of the facts is an open programme. It is also a peculiarly demanding programme, and will require of you a human, apostolic and supernatural quality, that no one can get on the cheap.

First of all a deep and sound intellectual formation, able to give each one the maximum potential. A basic theological formation, which goes to the living sources (the Bible, the Councils, Fathers of the Church, the present Magisterium), capable of providing each one with the means to think out personally and correctly his apostolic action in the circumstances where he is. And these circumstances can be varied. Formation in the human science, allowing a serene and objective consideration of man and the environment where we have to work. Historical formation giving the sense of the relative in culture throughout time and space. That is perhaps one of the best intellectual preparations for the Mission. The sincere respect for and the sympathetic insight into another culture requires that we have this sense of the relative. Formation in an international environment -- and we insist on this more than ever -- helps us already in acquiring it. It is not sufficient to have a good fund of knowledge, we must above all know how to make use of it in a way adapted to each situation.

You realise to what extent the international character of our Society is a unique and fundamental aspect of our community life. But the desire to be truly international and at the same time deeply united and fraternal presupposes the means of contact and dialogue. The location of our missions in Africa has decided for us the choice of French and English as official languages of the Society. The ideal would be that every White Father should know both languages. In any case, those whose maternal language is either English or French should have a good knowledge of the other language. For those who have another mother tongue they should be able to use one of the official languages as perfectly as possible and be able to understand the other at least. We count on you to make serious efforts in this direction during the whole course of your formation.

So, it is your duty to do very earnestly the studies that you have to do.

Besides, these studies are not something final and complete, that you do once and for all, they can only be a serious preparation for that continuous formation, about which the Chapter spoke. In the preparatory studies we learn how to learn, and we fit ourselves to be able to benefit from the school of life.

And if all must fit themselves for services in Africa, in the situation such as it is, that means that information is part of your formation. There are a certain number of news papers and African periodicals with information, African pastoral reviews, etc... It would be quite normal for you to take out a community subscription, or if possible a personal one..... this would be much better. This would be one way of taking seriously this realistic preparation for Africa. We must take the means. Information in print is one of them.

It is obvious that all this holds good not only for those of you who are preparing for the priesthood, but it also holds good, in the same sense, for Brothers who must get a sound professional and doctrinal formation.

In the extension of that intellectual formation, you must be ready to undertake any specialisation which might prove to be useful or necessary. But if such a specialisation ought to correspond to certain tastes — and that must be the place for dialogue — it is clearly understood that, in the White Fathers, we do not specialize just for the one and only reason that we have a mind to do so. Each specialisation must be undertaken in view of an African need, or a need within the Society, either present or foreseeable; and this is one of the roles of responsible authority to seek out, define and express these needs. It must remain within the scope of our missionary vocation, nor must it prevent the one who has got it from being available for other apostolic work if circumstances require it, or if the need for such a specialisation no longer exists, whole man, which from Vatican II, this specialisation may urge us into areas, not directly connected with the ministerial priesthood; such as, for example, the widespread and varied field of development. And there, we must be ready to do, not what pleases us, but what is useful, and anything and everything that is useful. In all these cases, our service, responding to definite and objective needs, must bear a pastoral meaning. It would not do at all for such a service to cause to vanish into thin air our primary role as witnesses of the glad tidings of Salvation, which has come to us through Jesus Christ, or that the pursuit of a secular specialisation should be in the last resort but a flight from priestly obligations. To restrict missionary activity solely to the sacramental ministry, or to make a job in aid of development void of all strictly missionary witness, would reveal, both one and the other, a too short-sighted view of the salvation of man. In fact, for a missionary, and particularly for a priest, any involvement in the world can only be an involvement in the ecclesial and apostolic sense, i.e. as Sacrament of Christ in the world. We are and we continue to be witnesses, sent to proclaim and to bring the Salvation of God to men, no matter how it is done: by presence, by service, by witness, by ministry.

An intellectual formation, no matter how adapted it may be, would finally have little value for an apostle if it was not accompanied by a sound, human, moral, and spiritual formation. Having to be by definition men-for-others, you must mould yourselves in all those virtues of sociability which make of a suitable man a likeable apostle: openness, a minute thoughtfulness for others, patience, serenity, a sense of responsibility, optimism.

We can tell you quite frankly: every time we come back from Africa, we are more and more convinced of the irreplaceable value of these qualities of character and sociability. In a world where human relations are of such importance, and "where one thinks easily with the heart" the manner of giving is often as important as what is given. It is striking to see how the men who "succeed" and who exert an influence in Africa, are not always the most intellectually endowed, but almost always those who are called good characters: the sociable ones, the calm, the patient, the smiling ones. This is verified by all of us. We cannot help thinking of the Gospel beatitude: "Happy the gentle, they shall have the earth for their heritage". (Matt. 5,4). There then is one of the essential aims of your formation: do all you can to acquire these basic qualities of a missionary. Then through this broad and deep vision of the salvation of the you will really be men-for-others. You will be happy, and you will make others happy. Your evangelical activity will be efficacious, and your witness will be accepted.

To be sure, all this does not come about in a day. But it is here that our community life must come fully into play: The community has as its aim the growth of each member through a particular type of relationship which is concerned with persons as such, whatever their qualities or their defects. It thus fosters genuine human relations among its members, and this in itself is the best guarantee of a worthwhile impact on other people". (DOC. 414).

Dialogue with the non-Christian world, like the service of a young Church, requires this genuineness in human relations, this real impact on others. Community life is a choice means for learning how to succeed in this.

That is why, in every centre of formation, this community life must be lived in depth. At that stage, it certainly has an educative aspect. It must be an essential path in your personal formation. You must learn to live in community, and you must know how to discern its apostolic meaning for your life tomorrow. Now, this is not something done once and for all. It is this discovery in depth that you must already make among yourselves. In this respect, living in teams, interchanges, are excellent means. But you must also do it with the help of those who are precisely placed at your disposal in order to be of assistance in this task. If there are things that one discovers quickly on one's own -- and at times one must make the discovery on one's own -- there are others that would take a long time to discover if one did not know how to profit from the experience of others. It is a wise thing therefore not just to accept the advice of those who help you, but also to solicit their advice.

That is the reason why they are there. Learning to live in community is also learning to be and to remain yourself in the company of others no matter who they may be. It means that you will be able to shoulder your responsibilities in any community. It is learning to be a realist before others. It means that you will have sufficient community sense not to feel frustrated in a community where the difference of age or outlook or the demands of apostolic work make things somewhat difficult. Although those responsible at all levels in the Society strive to create the best possible conditions for community life no one should expect to find the ideal community wherever he goes. Here again one must be a realist before the facts. And it is only by being realist that you will be able to bring to your fellow missionaries what they are expecting from you, the youngsters, at the community level.... and they are expecting much.

Form your character. Have your individual personality, but the genuine personality of an apostle. Then you will be free men, and will know that you will make an impact no matter where or within what structure you find yourself.

Availability in presence of events, a humble, attentive approach to cultures different from our own, and all that is required in the formation of a personality open to others; all this presupposes a very sound, spiritual formation. In conclusion, we want to stress this point strongly. Whatever his personal and intellectual qualities, a man cannot be a real apostle if he is not first and foremost a man of prayer; an authentic believer. This was true yesterday. It is still true today. And it will still be true to-morrow. No doubt, the way to envisage and live out the apostolic, spiritual life can vary from age to age and from generation to generation, but the fact remains. As White Fathers we must have a sound, deep, spiritual life. It is a condition of our very existence as apostles of Jesus Christ. Consequently we must take the means. And each one of you must be able to take up this challenge and show that it is possible to be fully a man of his time, and at the same time a holy man according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

There is no question of considering spiritual life as a separate compartment in one's life. It is a way of doing one's work as a convinced and conscious apostle, a way of living each day before God and men, with God and men, for God and men. The last Chapter stated it clearly enough. You might read over and meditate on this document on "The Apostolic Spiritual Life of a White Father" (DOC. 615-638). This spiritual life does not come about all by itself, without any effort. It is the fruit of a grace which requires our connivance. It can only be the result of a courageous and steadfast formation: "Train yourself spiritually", said Paul to Timothy (I.Tim.4,7). You yourselves must put this advice into practice.

Now, according to information coming from some of you, it seems that during last year, more than one remained hungry in this sphere.

It would be absurd to acquire systematically an intellectual formation, and leave spiritual formation to the haphazard possibilities of chancy encounters. It is certain, on this point, that you must not expect everything from theological studies. If each one of you must be able to achieve that Christian synthesis in his life, so as not only to know his faith but also to live it and bear witness to it, that means that formation in the spiritual life must be acquired in a systematic manner during your year of formation. It is for that above all, that the priests are there in your centres. But since no formation, especially in such a deep-seated area, can merely be imposed from the outside, their rôle, in order to be efficacious, must correspond to an openness of conviction and desire on your part. Do not be afraid to ask a lot from them. Be afraid, rather, of not asking enough from them.

This formation to an apostolic, spiritual life must begin seriously during the first cycle. It is precisely because it is not a separate compartment in our lives, that it must permeate all our formation right from the start. The Spiritual Year is a salient time in this formation, and the first cycle must prepare for it. A realistic deepening, on the personal as well as the community plane, will continue during the second cycle, so as to prepare you honestly for a genuinely adult missionary commitment; the conscious commitment of a free man.

It has often been said that the early days of the Mission were the heroic times. This was true enough on the material side and in expatriation. But those who have been working for a long time in Africa, will readily tell you that on the psychological plane, the plane of adaptation and ability, the heroic time for the Mission is now! It cannot stand mediocrities, who only give themselves half-heartedly. It is terribly exacting in the purity of the motives which prompt us to answer its call. More than ever it needs men, as Cardinal Lavigerie used to say: "Men imbued with an apostolic spirit of courage, faith and self-sacrifice". For all that, then, you must prepare yourselves.

Develop your intelligence. Broaden your culture. Form your character and your personality. Be men, free and strong available and unselfish. Have a lively, lucid faith. A charity brimming over with joy and serenity. An ineradicable hope. Be optimistic, in other words, people who are not afraid of the future.

Then you will be ready to serve the Mission of the Church in Africa.

Yours fraternally in Christ.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

A meeting of the Executive Committee will be held on Wednesday June 13, 1970 at 09.00, at the Secretariat with the following Agenda:

1. Minutes of the meeting of May 13, 1970.
2. Follow up of the conclusions of the Assembly of June 9, 1970.
3. Meetings by Country and the PWG programme. A report on the first two months is being distributed to the member of the Executive Committee.
4. Report on INODEP.
5. Other matters.

Benjamin Tonna  
Executive Secretary.

NEW DOCUMENTS

Background notes in the Countries of the World.

The Secretariat now has the full set of these factual pamphlets about each of 150 countries and territories written by officers in the US Department of State's geographic bureaux.

Each includes information on the country's land, history, people, government, political conditions, economy and foreign relations, a map and a brief bibliography. Each is periodically brought up to date by the Bureau of Public Affairs of the same Department of State.

A. S.V.D. Personnel Survey

Launched within the framework of the SVD Self-Study, this 20 pages booklet (last two pages blank for write-in information) asks for information on 31 points covering personal history, education, qualification, work experience, people served by one's work, and desires for future assignments if any. Intended for planning as well as for administration, the questionnaire was designed for computer processing and hence is accompanied by a coded "list of fields" which are supposed to cover any work an SVD might be doing. An extra sheet is furnished for "supplemental information" on any major problems or opportunities confronting the Society in one's home.

The questionnaire booklet measures 8 and a half by 11 and a half inches and comes in three languages, English, German and Spanish, distinguished by 3 different color patches setting off titles.

SEDOS Documentation received two English copies on 8 June 1970.

B. FECHER, "The age of SVD Priests"

Offprint from VERBUM SVD 11 (2) 1970.

An eight-pages article reporting on a statistical study of the aging trend in the Society of the Divine Word.

The title explicitly mentions only age of SVD priests in the years 1938, 48, 58, 68; but results are compared with earlier study done on SVD Brothers in the same years.



SEDOS 70/474

C. The Divine Word Missionary in a time of change. (No. 3)

Letter by Fr. Superior General John Musinsky SVD to all members of Society, on 1 May 1970.

Theme : The SVD Self-Study.

Content: Genesis and need; role of the Self-Study; Description; Team.

Printed; 13 x 18.5 cm; 23 pp.

Two English copies furnished to SEDOS Documentation. Exists also in German and Spanish.

DIARY

- 1 - 6 - 70      The Secretariat starts printing the documents of the September Planning Session on Credit Union.
- 2 - 6 - 70      Holiday.
- 3 - 6 - 70      Sr. Genevieve sa, accepted by FAO as the SEDOS representative at the Second World Food Council.
- 4 - 6 - 70      Bro. Schnepf checks the accounts at the Secretariat.
- 8 - 6 - 70      Mr. Holler of the Catholic Media Council arrives from Germany to lead a discussion group at the Assembly.
- 9 - 6 - 70      Assembly of Superiors General -- 2 new members join SEDOS: the School Sisters of Notre Dame and the Religious of the Sacred Heart. Fr. Moschetta fscj visits the Secretariat before leaving for La Paz, Mexico. Sr. Bellosu, drops in to exchange experiences in Thailand.
- 10 - 6 - 70      Fr. Tonna celebrates a mass at Marymount and meet the Commission on Consecrated Life.
- Social Communication Group meets. It announced that Fr. Eilers, member of the group is now Assistant Secretary for Communications to CODEPAX.
- 11 - 6 - 70      Visits from St. Coluba Missionaries.
- 12 - 6 - 70      Study Session on Health Care.