



Link between the Executive Council and the World Christian Life Community



Our General Principles, specifically GP. 10, describes membership in CLC as an authentic, personal vocation. Membership is the result of a process of discernment and assumes a genuine, living commitment of the individual (from the small group and/or local community to the national and global community) and is understood, along with our lifestyle (GP. 12), to be complementary to the great Apostolic Body that CLC represents. On World CLC Day 2012, we invite all communities and close friends to contemplate what a genuine and full membership in CLC means. This will involve living a commitment within CLC, living our three pillars of spirituality (formation), community and mission (apostolic works), being financially co-responsible, and responding to all that we are called to live within our community.

Some problems understanding CLC “membership” today

Membership is understood and influenced by human structures (social, political and cultural) that prevail in the world today. In other words, in many cases, membership is understood as belonging to formal groups that can easily become isolated, discrete places, where we can assume our identity as distinct from “others”, or even getting to the point of excluding them.

From this perspective, membership often establishes a divide or set distances between people. Often, this separation is achieved by virtue of what is found at a material or relational level i.e. by membership of clubs or groups, or by associations of exclusive elites which are recognized as superior by some economic, intellectual or social indicator. On other occasions, membership of groups can be formed based on differences in culture, ethnic origin, beliefs or other reasons. For example, ethnic groups and/or immigrants may organize themselves based on place of origin, or certain religious affiliation and may isolate themselves to strengthen their identity. As a community, we are also partly a reflection of our context. Being under the influence of the structures surrounding us, it is important that we pause and ask ourselves how we understand and live out the meaning of membership in CLC in the midst of this reality.

We now invite the community to have a “first moment of reflection” with the following question:

How much have social, economic, political or cultural realities influenced my understanding of the concept of membership as a person, as a Christian and as a member of CLC?

Other perspectives

One view that can help us to understand the meaning of CLC membership is one that accepts us as human beings with our particularities and differences reflecting our social and cultural contexts, while at the same time recognizing ourselves as members of a single human family. As members of CLC, this is consistent with our conviction that we are sons and daughters of the same God who is above all an expression of profound love for his creation, especially for man and woman (Gen 2: 1-7). God desires for us human beings that we understand the meaning of our existence as fully as possible so that we are not alone and live communally and fully (Gen. 2: 18 – 23).

An example that can help us to understand “membership” in this sense is one that is lived among family. The family is the most important place and starting point of the true school of faith, dignity and the re-creation of God’s love among its members and for all of humanity, especially the most outcast and vulnerable (GP 4). The family should be seen as more than mere kinship, but rather defined as more of a living community, where as members, we feel a level of trust, supportive co-existence and companionship in daily life. The family becomes a place of intimacy that permits a deep encounter with love that is serious, profound and responsible. It is also a place for the procreation of life, and through sustenance and guidance also for building a committed society. It is the place where the need for personal, as well as economic fulfillment, exists and is attained in solidarity. And above all, the spiritual life is the integrating element of the entire family experience.

Keys for understanding membership in CLC within our faith

- a) ***Community membership animated by the Holy Spirit:*** “*All were filled with the Holy Spirit*” (Acts 2:1-11). Membership in CLC begins with certainty in the living strength of a God who fills our lives. In other words, we are aware that the loving presence of the Spirit enables us to affirm that God’s love is the transforming force which sustains us throughout our lives. Our identity is sustained by the certainty that God lives within us, in spite of our limitations, and it is out of His love that we are called to be part of this great community of men and women. We draw faith from this (GP. 2).
- b) ***Community membership and charity:*** Look how they love one another! “*All who believed were together and had all things in common ... and distributed them to all, as any had needs*”. (Acts 2: 44- 45). Our experience of God ... verifies that God himself has become one of us. The incarnation of Jesus is the key element of our vocation as Christians and as members of CLC. It is out of this reality that we acquire the sense of being a community. Membership in the community, beyond the formalities, is made visible by the deep love,

commitment, solidarity and companionship which is affirmed in our communal experience (GP. 7).

- c) ***Community membership on mission to the most needy:*** The Lord sent them two by two: *“The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few”* (Luke 10:1-5). Therefore, the meaning of our membership (a) is woven from the identity that confirms the presence of the Spirit of God within us, (b) is affirmed by the communal expression of solidarity and loving brotherhood/sisterhood, and (c) becomes real in the mission which leads us to the most urgent needs in our world. Our membership is a firm commitment to go out in search of the poorest of the poor. Christ sends us out in community to work for the building of His kingdom. So then, the need for structures, processes (eg induction procedures), all of our formation programs, explicit financial co-responsibility, and any other processes for our integration and growth in CLC should always aim towards “mission and commitment” with reality (GP. 8). Only in this way do we become full “members.”

At this time we invite the community to a “second moment of reflection” on the following questions:

- a) *What has been my experience in discovering a loving God and the force of His Spirit in my life as a Christian and as a member of CLC?*
- b) *What have been the most significant examples of community (eg. of solidarity and brotherhood/sisterhood) we have experienced within CLC?*
- c) *As members of CLC sent on the mission to build the kingdom, how have we responded through our apostolic commitment to the poor?*

In this way, we seek to understand the meaning of Membership from these three keys.

Post-reflection task – World CLC Day 2012

Following your reflections, and in the interests of building community and membership awareness, you are asked to:

- Gather any news and photos from your World Day CLC 2012 celebrations
- With the support of local communities, produce a summary document.
- send them to the EXCO (webmaster@cvx-clc.net) for the website (www.cvx-clc.net) and

In closing, we give thanks to Mary our Mother for her living testimony of the meaning of membership - courageous, free and loving. Her example allows us to live out gradually a full membership as members of CLC in its entirety. Her testimony gives us a clear horizon to see that this will allow us to live out more fully our commitment as a World Apostolic Body.

Mauricio López Oropeza
Consultant

Lois Campbell
Consultant