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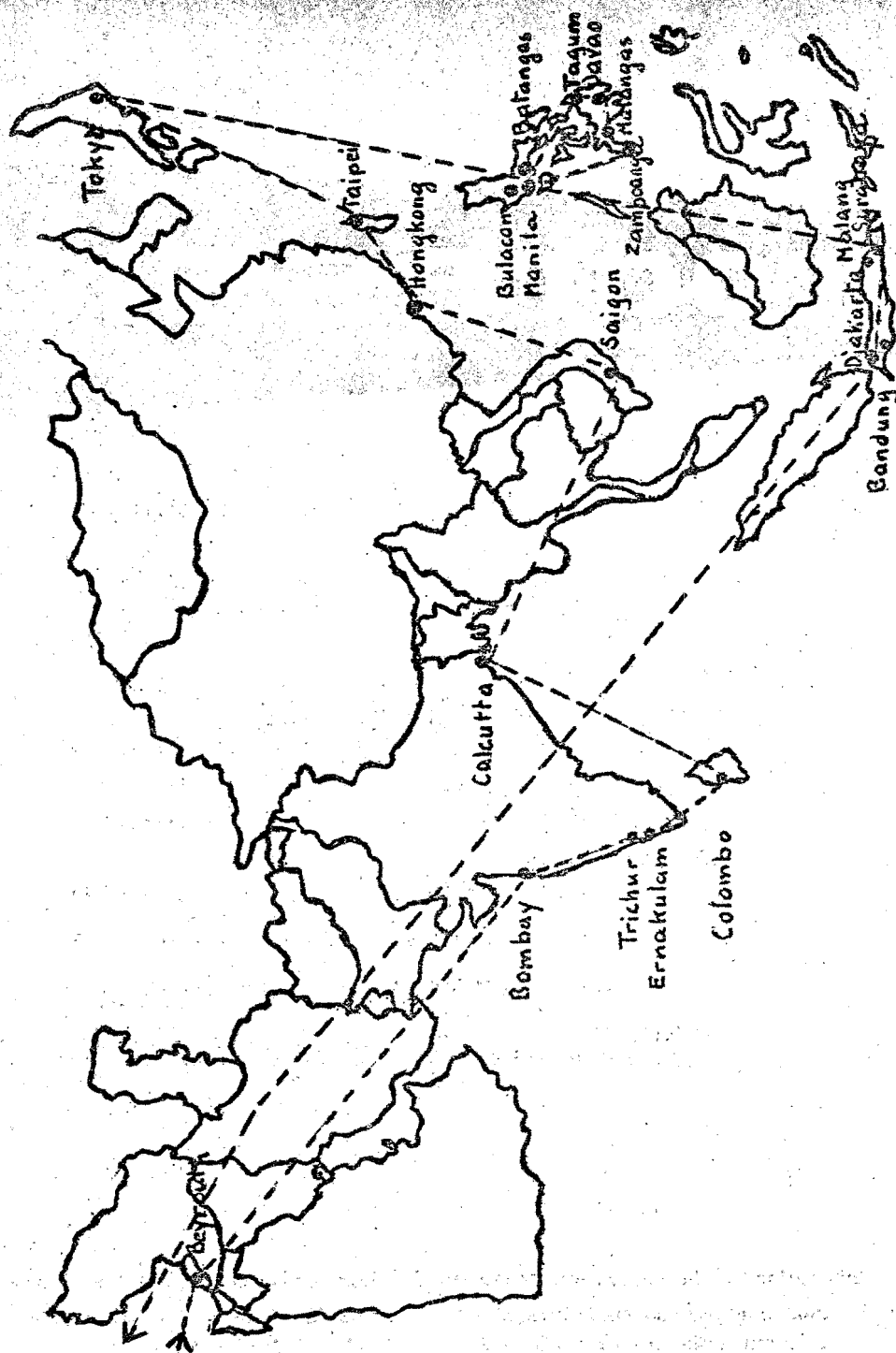
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THE CHRISTIAN LIFE COMMUNITIES OF ASIA

As We Saw Them

by José GSELL

If anyone doubts the chances of renewal and the future possibilities of the Christian Life Communities, I would be tempted to suggest a trip through the countries of the Middle and the Far East such as the one we are finishing at the moment when I write these lines. If anyone is surprised that there could be a common basis and common outlook among Communities spread so widely--and, what is more --among the others across the world, I should say very frankly that that is just what we discovered: different levels of evolution, certainly, but a common basis and outlook that was real, recognized as such, and lived out. It should be added that this journey struck a deep chord in those who had the privilege of making it, shedding on their path a new light in which the unique contribution of each country was mingled in the overall effect.

Doubtless the most that can be done here is to sketch in broad strokes the observations and general impressions of a journey that lasted six weeks, consisted of seventeen stages in nine different countries, included seventy meetings, numerous contacts, and five full days of participation in the national congresses of Sri Lanka and Japan. Still, in spite of the general and incomplete nature of this kind of account, it is striking to note with what clarity the points in common stand out and impose themselves in the course of such a trip.

A family-style welcome and an experience of sharing

Father Rieman and I left Rome June 21, following the itinerary indicated on the attached map. We were joined by Fred Leone (USA) during our stop at Tokyo. At each stage, the same brotherly welcome: sixty-odd persons are waiting for us at the airport at Beirut when we arrive two hours late; a dozen members from Ranchi in Bihar come 400 miles to meet us at Calcutta, and at Bombay national and diocesan leaders wait two hours for us in the middle of the night; the leaders of the Vietnamese groups pass a whole day uncertain whether we will arrive after a flight gets cancelled, and yet there they are, at the airport to greet us, in spite of the complications caused by our late arrival. One could go on... all the welcomes received, the delicacy of so many small gestures. Everywhere friends, yesterday unknown, who from the first moment, seem to be members of your own family; and who know how, by the cordiality of their welcome, to make you feel "at home".

Each stage afforded the opportunity for many working sessions: with the national councils, with local communities, with regional and diocesan leaders, with the assistants, with groups

information, etc... These gatherings reflect the true situation of the CLCs. They make it possible first to become acquainted, then to trace essential lines, to pose concrete problems, to discuss possible solutions, to outline the next step, to inform, to explain the work done in other countries. These exchanges are extremely fruitful because they are very lively, very concrete and very warm. It is a search in common where we come to know each other, where all, lay persons and moderators alike, feel ourselves responsible for the future and the service of CLC. Not the least of the reasons why we remember this trip with such affection is that it had and kept a simplicity in our exchanges and a depth in our sharing.

A movement young, and of the young

A first fact becomes clear. The renewal resulting from the putting into effect of the General Principles is giving to the CLCs a dynamic character. This renewal is in process in practically all the countries, and the impression one gets is of an extraordinary vitality. This feeling is reinforced by the considerable number of young people among the active members. The age bracket between 20 and 30 years seems to be the most numerous. The Congress of Sri Lanka brings together 240 people, of whom 200 are youth; at that of Tokyo, the 75 delegates coming from different regions (some have come 600 miles) are divided between 2 delegates from secondary school, some university students and a majority of young professionals; in the Philippines our circuit of 12 days through the different regions puts us in contact almost exclusively with groups of young or young adults; the same phenomenon at Hong Kong and at Taiwan, without taking into account the fact that in countries like Lebanon, India, Vietnam and Indonesia, we find alongside the older members (older than 35 years!) a great number of young people. It is a fact: the Communities in Asia are young, and this seems to be a thing full of promise for the future. The problem in one or two countries that remains is to create groups of young professionals after they have finished school.

A national and cultural identity

Anyone who confuses the Christian Life Communities with a movement that is standardized or imported or colorless would be quickly set straight by observing how much the CLCs express the values, the culture and the problems of each nation. As we will try to underline later on, it is clear that a common root gives them a common orientation. But their groups take flesh in a context, in a milieu, in a history, in a situation which conveys their own riches and translates their own particular needs. It is fascinating to see how the different CLCs not only live out these differences but seek to emphasize them. One could cite, by way of example, the means of formation and the liturgy, which illustrate in an unusually striking way how rooted these groups are in the culture of each. If sometime you can be present at a program pre-

sented by young Indians or Ceylonese, expressing in dance a biblical excerpt, do not miss it. If you pass by the Calcutta area, stop, for example, at Kaurapukur..., listen..., you will hear Tagore in the chants and choirs of the young Bengalis. And when you feel like relaxing, learn the bamboo dance at Batangas (Philippines), or again, reflect on the need for punctuality at meetings as you enjoy the humorous skit on this at Surabaya (Indonesia). Eloquent too are the different versions of the General Principles translated into the native languages and matched by apt commentaries.

A deepening of the international dimension

Father Paulussen made a first trip to Asia in 1958. Many people recalled it for us, and it seems to have been the first link, the first discovery of the international dimension. This was the living bond which made its mark. After that, the national CLC groupings pursued their growth and their various experiences, and it is no exaggeration to say that this latest journey came at a propitious time. For it occurred at a time when there was a desire for mutual help, when the need was felt for comparing one's own experience with that of others, when there had taken place a discovery of one's own specific contribution and that which others might bring, when a universal solidarity between the CLCs seemed to be full of promise... Already five countries spoke to us of the possibility in the near future of a first gathering of CLCs of the Asian continent.

A concern for authentic formation

Questions regarding the formation of members and of their growth in CLC were the most numerous, and the meetings where this question was not raised were very few. Clearly it is a concern of the leaders, who know and have understood that the effectiveness of CLC service depends on the quality of their membership. On this subject, some observations. First of all, a very large number of the countries visited make the Spiritual Exercises the basis of the entire CLC formation. They are its "source and instrument". For certain groups, taking account of their stage of evolution and of their age (this is especially true of youth groups) preparatory forms are necessary. For them, summer camps or other sessions appear as steps leading to the maturity needed to make the personal experience of the Spiritual Exercises. Many methods of formation being used struck us by their realistic and energetic approach. Starting from where the people are, they set in motion all their talents, looking to their unified and total formation, orienting them to service, making a wise use of certain elements of group dynamics, relating the formation given to the local and national situation. In an article like this it is impossible to detail the programs being attempted in different countries. We will have occasion to come back to this subject. But we would like to call attention especially to the "Training Institute", tried last April in the Philippines for the first time

on a national level. This experience of 3 weeks (1 week of the Spiritual Exercises, 1 week of study, 1 week of national and regional planning) is, in its internal coherence and the methods it employs, one of the most complete and concrete means of formation that we are aware of in the CICs anywhere in the world.

Progress and approach "in community"

The community appears as a key factor in the growth of CIC members and in their apostolic service. Various experiments are being made in community life. These attempts run the gamut all the way from first beginnings (where communication and sharing are practiced) to the regular exercise of community discernment. But whatever the depth of these experiences or the length of time they have been going on, community life is being strengthened and extended through them. This strengthening and extension is more true the more it goes parallel with a personal formation resting on the Exercises. It goes beyond the limits of the local or the parish community and is found also at the regional and diocesan level, and finds expression in the national community. This enlargement or rather this growth of community is illustrated by the national congress of Tokyo: after a preparation stretching over many weeks, they engaged for two days in a discernment about their personal and community Christianity, in a climate of recollection where personal prayer alternated with listening groups and with discussions, the whole culminating at the close of the day in a Eucharistic celebration. Numerous questions were posed in many countries about the practice of discernment in common, and the elements of community life. We are on the way...

A profound commitment to liberation and development

The majority of the countries visited belong to the Third World and the terms of liberation and of development carry here a deep meaning and the need for all the Communities to bear real Christian witness. Even if the actions undertaken take different forms, looking now to the evils themselves, now to their causes, they all seem to agree in their vision of a world in which man, all men, will be able to exercise "their own capacity for knowledge and love". One really should give details here of the activity undertaken or planned in the different countries. We do not have place to do so, and this article does not replace the detailed report of the trip which we will publish some weeks later. What we would like to emphasize here is that we found in every country an anxious concern to be of service to others and to live in solidarity with them. This concern shows itself in different ways. One might recall here the two accounts of Asian activity published in our special issue on development and liberation. Such action is not found only in India or the Philippines. We discovered in other countries achievements somewhat similar or different, but real.

Through these contacts and these visits to various social action projects, it appeared to us obvious that effective action

for justice and development is directly linked to, and dependent on, the seriousness of our personal and community Christian life, in other words, to the quality of our CLCs. But on the other hand, we could see how solid action, putting one in contact with the real situation, brings with it a deepening, a growth in selflessness and in our personal and community Christianity, and so in our communities. There too, we learned much.

In closing this first account, I am tempted to ask pardon of our friends of Asia for not having been able to communicate all the life and the richness of each stage, and not having been able to list all our discoveries. Every country is for us now a flood of images, a flood of memories, as well as a shared experience. In the plane that took us back from Djakarta to Munich, as the three of us recalled together, in a final evaluation, all the graces received in the course of this journey, Father Rieman was able to say, "Yes, this trip was indeed a spiritual experience".

by Jacques SOMMET s.j.

The Gospel, reread in the light of the questions and the strong points of the Spiritual Exercises, is a marvelous light to help us to live in a positive way, without fear or pride, the demands of the modern world. We have tried already to situate ourselves at the convergence of the Gospel, the Exercises and the world of today by going through the steps of the Foundation and of the Kingdom. We have viewed this last subject by means of the meditation on the Sermon on the Mount, from the point of view of the relationship between the tasks of development and liberating conversion. I propose to take up again today this meditation on the Kingdom, but in its dynamic orientation toward that of the Two Standards, that is, toward the determining of apostolic tasks, and especially, doing this within a collective perspective. And this will touch very much on questions of development.

1 - THE KINGDOM AS EVANGELICAL SOLIDARITY WITH PEOPLE

John 4: 4-30. This deals with the meeting between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. With the light from this we will pass from the personal call which runs all through the Gospel, and regards our moral conduct (the last article), to the mystery of the meeting of Jesus with each one. In this we will learn not only by what kind of meeting everything began for us, but also how we must approach THE WHOLE MAN AND ALL MEN, to use the expression of Paul VI.

The Gospel is a certain way of living human solidarity, the solidarity of persons and of groups that Jesus Christ teaches us. He passes through Samaria; he did not come there on purpose. So many encounters begin this way, the ones that one finds very often at the origin of the founding of a family, or of the start of a great enterprise. Ignatius passed by Paris... Faber and Xavier were there. But here, everything makes for separation: Samaria is the country that is separated from Jerusalem, a more serious thing than the distance that separates pagans and Jews. Jesus is tired. And this woman is a sinner, which means that her usual concerns have nothing to do with the search of the Master. She is not disturbed, at least apparently; as Peggy said, a "habitual" sinner. The worst kind.

But Jesus is Jesus, persons are persons: sacred. If Jesus, for that reason, wishes to take the initiative, he has everything in his favor: the sovereign power of clairvoyance, and an initiative without fear... But that is not the way he chooses. For to call someone means first of all to respect his freedom, to give him the desire to do something.

So, a divine ruse and yet a human simplicity, Jesus "tired out" - God tired out! - seated on the edge of the well, HAS NEED of this woman. He makes an appeal, in a way, to the competence of the woman: give me a drink. Gestures of invitation before the use of sovereign power... After that, the discussion as it unrolls, which the reader should take up. Here we only want to mark out the main lines.

The dialogue continues: the woman finds the man from Jerusalem; she brings up the difficulties that separate them. Jesus does not defend the opposing party. On the contrary Christ chooses to single out the COMMON PROMISE that unites them: "the hour is coming when you will adore the Father neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem" (21). He does not present his own proposal but that of the Father for Him and for the woman. A marvelous enlargement of perspective.

But neither respect for liberty nor the stress on a common promise are allowed to degenerate into weakness or demagoguery. Freedom, called by God, ought to show itself in action. It is at this moment that his courageous intervention invites her, by means of the truth, however rude, to a practical conversion. He breaks the conversation, and her humility shows in her acknowledgement. "Go call your husband... I have no husband... You have had five husbands" (16-18) and what follows. The personal call is not only a respect for her freedom, and a reminder of promises to be looked forward to, but also a CRITICISM, an invitation to a reversal in practice.

And from this comes the liberating and creative result of this meeting, in fact: the woman calls the people of the village to listen to the Voice. Ready to accept for once to lose her reputation and to begin to live the Gospel.

Such is the solidarity that should unite every Christian to every man he meets on the road of life: Not first of all economic or political or affective solidarity, but in and through different situations, a solidarity of beings in a worth that is affirmed in practice, a solidarity in the freedom of each one, in the Call that is given, in the actions that must follow it. Such is the Kingdom as it is lived out in the relationship between Jesus and men: let us recall the prelude to the Kingdom contemplation --Jesus going about the towns and villages... Such is the Kingdom to be lived out between each Christian and each man, whether sinner, hardened pagan or person of good will who is waiting, without knowing it, for this meeting. All that is ever mingled; the good seed and the weeds, in the deep soil of each heart.

2. PEOPLE ENGAGED IN COLLECTIVE TASKS THAT INVOLVE GROUP SOLIDARITY

This personal encounter is not only an individual one. It is a meeting not just with A SAMARITAN but with THE SAMARITANS. One sees this well through the eventual outcome of the meeting. It can be important to follow the development of the Gospel light in the sense of the group tasks that follow from and that manifest the encounter of God and of ALL men. It is well then to ask how Jesus meets with GROUPS OF PEOPLE, those of his time, his place, his country. Let us sketch several introductory thoughts, ready to come back to them another day.

Right at the start one thing is clear. Jesus reaches out first to groups of those for whom life is in a special way a BURDEN. It is an irresistible penchant, and one which amazes and sometimes scandalizes those belonging to these groups themselves. Jesus loves and cares for the POOR and the SICK. It is by his

gestures of help to these latter that he begins his apostolic journey. And always he goes all the way to the heart. He notices at once the qualities of STRANGERS, and does not fail to reveal them to those who do not recognize them. Finally and above all He has a predilection for SINNERS. "He eats with them..." When we think that every meal is a preparation for the Eucharist, that makes sense. And all of these groups are quite scandalized. Let us remark, finally, that Jesus, in all this, does not come only to help and to take care of. He reveals to these people their entire dignity as sons of God.

And then there are those who have responsibility and power, with the capacity to use them. Here one can distinguish also, though in a different way, three different groups. First of all, those with political power, the Sanhedrin, Pilate. Then the masters of the Law, these Pharisees who interpret it in a hard way. And finally, the RICH: "It is more difficult for a camel..." At this juncture, a remark must be made about the attitude of Jesus. Christ is very demanding, even severe, with these categories of persons. But this severity never closes the doors. The condemnations addressed to the Pharisees or to the rich have often been translated, "Woe to you...", as if they were already condemned. There is only one case where the meaning is such, and that is in the pronouncement of the Last Judgment, the separation of the sheep and the goats; and in that instance it is an eschatological word: history is already finished. Apart from that, Christ only says: "Miserable is your condition...". To those who are in positions of responsibility, one must at one and the same time recall to them how great is their responsibility, but also from whom they hold it.

Let us add that the encounter is very different when Jesus speaks with the individuals who belong to these categories. For then they are not only representatives of groups. Then one finds a gentleness and a special approach to each one. There is the welcome to Nicodemus during the night, along with painful remarks about the limitations of his wisdom. There is the call to Zachaeus, perched in his tree, already stripped of his complacency. And, how many others...

THE CONCRETE DIRECTION OF THE GOSPEL

Such is the meeting, the solidarity, between Christ and men, each one and all of them, and each one as part of his group. It is up to us to reflect on this, to apply the meditation to our country, our situation. How many different tasks that must lead us to: I think of the countries of old Europe and of the difficulty that is found in welcoming fittingly the migrant workers and the poor who come there to perform the lowest kind of work. Each one must apply it to the situation of his own continent. But be sure of this, that while these collective examinations of conscience are a necessary work, they will come to nothing if we do not begin each day by meeting every person as Jesus met the Samaritan woman: in respect for their freedom, in revealing the call to the dignity of sons, in action taken up. For that, we must begin each morning of each of those days by listening to Jesus in the Gospel. This is the place for the "gospel contemplations" of the Exercises, which are the support of the great pivotal meditations on the Kingdom and the Two Standards.

SCRIPTURAL PRAYER

Some Reminders to Help Us

by Sister Margaret BAKER H.V.M.

In Progressio for January, 1972 the article "But Are We Praying" stressed that personal prayer is necessary for every CLC member, and high priority must be given to it in the many demands of daily life. I would like to develop here one statement in that article regarding CLC daily prayer : "Scripture should be its chief source, and above all the life of Christ."

One way of looking at prayer is as a response to the Person of Jesus : an attentive listening to Him on our part, and a response appropriate to myself as an individual. But I can only listen and respond to someone I know, someone who is deeply and personally present to me. Someone recently said, in remarking on the relationship between prayer and Scripture : "if prayer is a dialogue, then let the other person speak!"

Jesus Himself, and Mary, in their recorded scriptural prayers reveal their deep reflections on the Old Testament. From earliest times Christians have made Scripture the source of their prayer; and today, this exhortation is one of the most insistent in the documents of Vatican II. Ignatius Loyola's conversion and subsequent Spiritual Exercises were born and nourished by his meditations on the life of Christ in the Gospels.

Thus scriptural prayer seems the obvious answer for CLC members who desire growth and deepening of their prayer life. However my experience with adults struggling to pray scripturally shows it does not happen easily. Many don't know where or how to begin, and if they do begin, often become discouraged and give up in a short time.

From my experience in this area, I would like to offer a few suggestions which may help. First of all, parallel with efforts to make Scripture the basis of one's prayer, I feel it is necessary to grow in a general knowledge of the Bible. We must realistically face the challenge that Scripture is difficult to read and understand. It is literature written in ancient languages from two to five thousand years ago, reflecting a vastly different culture and mentality than our own. In order to grasp the Biblical message one must be ready to take time for study,

and be willing to stick at it. This calls for real commitment and setting of priorities on our part.

Today there are excellent books and tapes available on Scripture, which can be very helpful for personal knowledge and growth. A few of these are suggested at the end of this article. Some of these are especially helpful to gain an overview of the biblical message. Although designed for adult discussion groups, they can also be fruitfully used by an individual. In studying the Bible you should also make use of some of the fine commentaries now available. Some come in separate paperback pamphlets for each book of the Bible.

In the Church as a whole there is a real Biblical renewal, so that today one can often locate excellent presentations on Scripture in near-by areas. Many colleges and universities offer a variety of adult education courses on the Bible. Often there are valuable short-term presentations of one day, a week-end, or a summer institute on Scripture. In the Bible there are certain images, key words, and unifying themes which occur again and again. Thus, each lecture, article, or book you read will throw light and meaning on other parts of Scripture.

Along with learning about the Bible, be sure to actually read Scripture itself. Here it is essential to have your own Bible; today you can select one of the very fine modern translations available. The introduction and foot-notes in many Bibles are also valuable study aids.

Although difficult to read it is important to realize that the Bible is different from other books in its charism of inspiration. It truly is the word of God to us, God's own revelation of His love in the person of His Son. God does speak to us in Scripture if we approach the Bible with the right attitude: that of openness, attentive listening (involving quiet and silence), faith, and reverence.

As you read Scripture in this reflective way, you are in the first stages of scriptural prayer. Granting that you are making on-going efforts to study and read the Bible, I would now like to suggest some ways CLC members might make Scripture the source of their daily prayer. Suggestions here might cover where to begin, and method of procedure.

Since the Bible is a whole library of books a first step is wise selection of passages suitable for prayer. For those beginning in this area, the Gospels are often the best starting place. The Gospel of Mark, or possibly that of Luke, may be the better choices here. For those who have been meditating on the Gospels, another fruitful selection are the Epistles of Paul. Here some find First Corinthians, Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians especially helpful.

The Sunday Scripture readings in the new three year cycle Lectionary are another excellent source for prayer. The theme of these readings is a regular feature of different magazines in var

ious languages. One CLC group I know makes the Sunday readings the source of their mental prayer for the week, and then begin each meeting with shared reflections and prayer on these readings.

How should you proceed in scriptural prayer? An essential step is to prepare the passage you select before your prayer. Try to grasp the general context and background by reading sections just before and after; the foot-notes; and perhaps the Introduction to this Book of the Bible. It is often helpful to look up other Scriptural references indicated in your Bible which relate to this passage. Look up difficult or unusual words or sentences in a biblical commentary. The first question always should be: what is the author trying to say? What is the message of the text itself? What does this passage tell me about Jesus, the apostles, or whoever else is present?

Only then should you go on to ask: what meaning does this passage have for me in my life now? For the actual method of prayer Ignatius' suggestions in the Spiritual Exercises are excellent. If your passage is a mystery of Christ's life, you can follow the suggestions for a contemplation: § 101-109. For Jesus' words and discourses, or passages from the Epistles, Ignatius' suggestions on the Second Method of Prayer may prove helpful: § 249-257.

As you pray and meditate on Scripture be sure to follow one of the most fruitful suggestions of Ignatius in the Exercises. He is continually urging the retreatant to apply all this to himself! e.g. see § 53.

It is important to realize that God also speaks to me through the people, events, and situations of daily life: these are also God's "word" to me. It is the unique and essential role of Scripture to focus and enlighten our daily "word" through this prayerful meeting with the mind and heart of Christ.

Scripture actually grew out of the early Christians' group reflections and meditations on the Christian mystery as they lived it. Individual study and prayer based on Scripture needs the support and motivation of a group; it seems to carry within itself a demand for a faith community with whom to share this rich treasure. What greater challenge is there for local CLCs than to become a group which initiates and fosters study and prayer based on Scripture?

SUGGESTED READINGS
LECTURES PROPOSEES
LECTURAS PROPUESTAS

in ENGLISH

- Jerome Biblical Commentary. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. : Prentice-Hall, 1968
- Ahern, Barnabas. The Formation of Scripture. Chicago, Argus, 1968
- BRF Notes (excellent commentary on daily liturgical readings); Bible Reading Fellowship, 148 Buckingham Palace Rd., London
- Maertens, Thierry. The Spirit of God in Scripture. Dublin, Helicon Press, 1965
- Humitz, Robert. Man Meets God (fine for Bible study Groups). New York, Benziger, 1970

in FRENCH

- De Fraine, Jan. Prier avec la Bible. Les antécédents bibliques de grandes prières chrétiennes. Bruges, Beyaert, 1961
- Raguin, Yves. Les chemins de la contemplation. Paris, Desclée De Brouwer, Collection Christus, 1969
- Dans la collection Vie Chrétienne, 14 rue de la Tombe-Issoire, 75014-Paris:
 - * Guillet, Jacques. Textes bibliques pour prier. 1964
 - * Lyonnet, Stanislas. Initiation à la doctrine spirituelle de S. Paul. 1963
 - * Mollat, Donatien. Initiation à la lecture spirituelle de S. Jean. 1964
 - * Rimaud, Didier. Des mots de Dieu pour la prière. 1969
 - * Pautrel, Raymond. Vers toi ils ont crié. 1971
- Aujourd'hui la Bible. Revue mensuelle. 17 rue de la Trémoille, Paris 8

in SPANISH

- Secretariado Nacional de Liturgia. Comentarios biblicos al Lecionario Dominical. Madrid
- Hilsdale, Paul. Oraciones de San Pablo. Madrid, Editorial Apostolado de la Prensa, 1966
- En la colección Biblia y Vida, Ediciones Paulinas:
 - * Bligh, John. Los relatos de la Infancia.
 - * Bligh, John. El maestro divino.
 - * Bligh, John. Carta a los Filipenses.
 - * Bligh, John. Carta a los Colosenses.

CLC EXECUTIVE COUNCIL ITEMS

The Executive Council of the World Federation of Christian Life Communities met at Augsburg, Germany, August 3-6.

Most of the session was given to planning for the World Federation Assembly, which will be August 4-10, 1973 at Augsburg, Germany. Taking into account suggestions coming from the national federations, the THEME of the Assembly will be:

CLC: A COMMUNITY AT THE SERVICE OF HUMAN LIBERATION

The program and work methods for the gathering were discussed thoroughly and their broad lines settled. It will be a serious working assembly of delegates, operating in a general climate of discernment, and with a considerable part of the sessions being in small multi-national groups. A serious preparation by delegates was viewed as important, and so national federations will be asked to choose their representatives by December 1 of this year. Before long a secretariat to handle details of preparation and correspondence on the subject will be set up in Augsburg.

Much time was given too to problems of finances, in regard both to the ordinary expenses of the World Federation and its secretariat, as well as the need for some mutual aid arrangement to facilitate the participation of Third World delegates in next year's assembly. Communications on this subject will be sent to national federations soon.

Some time was given to discussion of youth and young CLCs. Already the Executive Council has been having two youth CLC members from the country where it meets take part in its sessions; and now they will be integrated more fully into the meetings. Also, steps were taken to encourage correspondence and exchanges between young CLC members in different countries. The Philippines CLC Center will coordinate them. The Council plans to go into this whole question more deeply at a future meeting.

Various aspects of Progressio were discussed. In time collections of the review's articles on related topics (for example, formation or discernment) will be made available to subscribers. And the number of subscribers receiving the magazine as part of the Mutual Aid Fund of the review will be doubled in 1973, since clearly there is need of this.

And, of course, there was a report to the Council on the Asia trip by the members who made it.

New Communities for Christians

By Francis K. Drolet S.J.

An important new book on the Christian Life Communities has just been published in the United States. It is entitled New Communities for Christians, and its author is an internationally known leader in the movement, Father Francis K. Drolet, S.J.

American CLCs felt a need to substantiate the General Principles, with a more complete body of supportive literature. Mature adults now coming to CLCs wanted the rich theological and ascetical foundations behind these Principles that reflect Vatican II's teaching on the priesthood of the laity, the co-responsible roles of laity and clergy, the Christian secular task of laymen, the universal call to holiness, the Paschal Mystery, Mary in the modern Church, and the relationship of responsible lay witness to hierarchical witness.

It is a large book, 350 pages, with an extensive bibliography. Certain chapters are outstanding: the Spiritual Exercises as the CLC Charism, Personal and Communal Prayer, Liturgy, Commitment, Mary the First Christian in the Community of Christians, and We Christians and Our Church. The chapters on the apostolate open up vast horizons for individual and corporate forms of lay Christian service and witness. Eminently pragmatic and creative are the chapters outlining new types of communities for CLCs.

Moderators and lay leaders will find this book a goldmine of information and inspiration. CLC members will use it to deepen an understanding and love for their CLC way of life. The movement is richer because of this book.

New Communities for Christians (available only in English) can be obtained from:

National Federation of Christian Life Communities
3109 S. Grand Blvd. - ST LOUIS, Mo. - USA

Price: \$ 3,95, paperback edition. Add \$ 0,36 postage for foreign mail.

"CHANTILLY II"

A European CLC Community Deliberation

by Nicholas RIEMAN, s.j.

Community discernment is a key element in CLC life. And perhaps the most serious, most difficult and - on those occasions when it is an apt tool - most fruitful kind of communal discernment is a community deliberation. The European CLC Community Deliberation held August 27 - September 2, 1972, near Paris, and known as "Chantilly II" (Deliberation "Chantilly I" was held there in 1969) was all of these: serious, difficult, highly fruitful.

The question to be decided was, "Should we unite our efforts with this purpose in view: the formation of persons who will be qualified to give the Spiritual Exercises, to help people to live them, and to spread them, in and through the CLC? - If yes, by what means?". Only if the first question was decided affirmatively was the question of means to be discerned.

Participating in the process were 37 CLC leaders (13 of them assistants) from 11 European nations. Also, 8 other CLC members from Asia, America and Africa participated fully but did not vote, since the question concerned Europe. Two experts were present as observers. Three persons helped with staffing and translations.

A team of 3 animators aided the deliberation: Hildegard Ehardt, secretary of the World Federation, team leader; Father Ludwig Bertsch of Germany, "spiritual" animator, presenting the context of discernment, topics of meditation, etc.; and Father Horacio de la Costa of the Philippines, "apostolic" animator, presenting the needs of the world today. The work of this team of animators was excellent in every way.

The event had been carefully prepared by a Work-Group on the Exercises of 7 CLC members (4 lay persons, 3 assistants), appointed by the European Equipe (Team), a CLC service group, at the request of the European CLC presidents and assistants. First, criteria for participation were set: those taking part were to be national CLC leaders in Europe, able to speak either French or English, having personal experience of the Exercises, convinced of their validity for our times, and with some experience of community process. Each participant received, at 6-week intervals, 4 different mailings, each containing material in 4 different categories: points for meditation drawn from the Gospels, material on the needs of the world (including papal and synodal documents on justice), some items on discernment (including the account of the deliberation of the first Jesuit companions, and articles by Putrell and Toner), and questionnaires for personal research on the present state of the Exercises in one's own country.

At Chantilly, each day began the night before with an evaluation of the day past, followed by points for morning prayer. A climate of silence was observed till noon of the following day. In the morning, after meditation, there was a conference on the needs of the world and then personal reflection on this, after which the participants shared the fruits of their reflections in small "listening-groups" (not discussions) of 6 to 8 persons each, all speaking one language, but from a variety of countries. Then the liturgy, always well integrated with the deliberation process. After lunch and dinner there was time for relaxing and exchanges between the participants.

In the afternoon the same units met as discernment groups, in which people discussed, depending on the day, the pros, the cons, or their tentative decision. Each one then wrote out his own personal opinion on the matter, and gave it orally in the general assembly following. In the early evenings, in optional sessions, members of different continents recounted the Exercises efforts of CLCs in their countries. Twice each day the 6 leaders of the small groups met with the deliberation animators to give feedback as to what had taken place and what the next step might be.

The first day of the deliberation might perhaps be called get-acquainted day. Getting acquainted with each other (some were already good friends), getting acquainted with each others' experiences and attitudes as regards the Exercises, getting acquainted with the precise meaning of the question. A Penance Service, with opportunity for private confessions after it, was also part of the first day.

The second day, while continuing - as was done throughout the week - reflection on the life of Christ and the needs of modern man, the day was spent searching out, individually and in groups, and then presenting in a general assembly, all the reasons that could be found AGAINST the proposal. All, regardless of

their own personal leanings, took part in this search, just as the next day all looked for the reasons in favor.

The third day the process was reversed, with each person and each group searching out the reasons FOR. The aim of the discernment in small groups was not to arrive at a group consensus, but to aid each person to make his own decision. Then, in the general assembly, each of the 45 people stated orally the 5 reasons pro that he judged to be strongest.

On the fourth day, each one had in hand copies of all reasons pro and con of all participants (a formidable secretarial feat was needed to achieve this) and spent the day weighing prayerfully all reasons on both sides and discussing these in his group. In the evening all voted on whether they were now ready for a definitive vote. Almost all were, and so the vote was set for the morning of the fifth day, to allow another period yet the next morning for prayerful reflection.

The vote in the general assembly was overwhelmingly in favor, with 35 persons voting YES and 2 voting NO. Each person also voiced his chief reason for voting as he did. Main reasons given for voting yes were: the Exercises are a powerful means for growth in the full Christian life, they can contribute effectively to furthering human liberation and justice (the contributions of Third World representatives, especially Father de la Costa, had done much to sensitize participants to problems of justice), they are the source of CLC life and spirit, and they can be promoted more effectively by a united effort. Even the two persons voting negatively showed readiness to cooperate in working out means to implement the proposal, contributing at the same time their own specific insights.

The rest of the last day was given to arriving at a decision as to what means should be used. A brainstorming session, done by countries, brought to the surface a wide spectrum of possible means. There was no time to sift these carefully, and so a decision was made that the Work-Group which had prepared the deliberation should continue for the present, with its membership possibly enlarged or modified, and begin to implement the decision, this and other related questions to be reviewed at the meeting next May of European CLC presidents and assistants.

How successful was the deliberation? Not, how correct was the decision; for, while the near-unanimity of the vote and the community's strong sense of peace in the decision were good indicators of this, a definitive judgment that this was indeed a decision inspired by the Spirit should await further confirmation in the results as they appear. Rather, how well and truly was it a deliberation process?

There was some dissatisfaction with the final portion of the meeting, dealing with means, and a feeling that the climate of this portion seemed to be less truly a climate of discernment.

But for the deliberation taken as a whole, there was overwhelming agreement of the participants that it was a most moving and fruitful experience, and indeed an important CLC achievement. The atmosphere of prayer, of listening to one another, of openness to wherever the truth might lead, was indeed remarkable. One person remarked that while on the second day he found it hard to come up with NO reasons (this being against his natural views), on the third day he found it hard to discover YES reasons (so fully had he entered into the process).

Community Deliberation "Chantilly II" was at once a decision and an experience. Those taking part were unanimously in agreement that the experience was a profoundly Christian one, involving a great deepening of their CLC vocation. Please God, the decision taken will also do much to further the effective use in CLC of the Exercises, and so to build and strengthen the Christian Life Communities, not only in Europe, but everywhere.