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INTRODUCTION

"There is no doubt that the effort to proclaim the Gospel to the people of today, who are buoyed up by hope but at the same time often oppressed by fear and distress, is a service rendered to the Christian community and also to the whole of humanity". (Evangelii Nuntiandi 1)

The first part of this issue offers two different aspects of "the effort to proclaim the Gospel" - which is evangelisation:

- an account of an experience of inculturation in Bihar, India
- the words of a man who preached the Gospel message in a situation of injustice and violence, which led to his martyrdom.

These are texts to meditate on and reflect over. They challenge us at the level

- of our sensitivity to the differences in peoples, in cultures, in ways of living;
- of our freedom and willingness to sacrifice what is secondary in favour of what is primary: that Jesus Christ be known and loved;
- of our sense of discernment and of generosity in responding.

In short, it is questions of this nature which lie at the heart of our examen, if we live out, in a consistent way, our CLC vocation... on the personal level, and as a world Community.

FAITH AND JUSTICE: AN EXPERIENCE

by Hans Hendriks*

* Hans Hendriks is an Australian Jesuit who for more than ten years led a team of some 20-30 people with a unique approach to social and religious work in the Hazaribagh district of Bihar State, northeast India. Hans and his team live among the Santals, a tribal group who number about 12 million in different parts of India and some 300,000 in Hazaribagh and who count for nothing economically and politically. Here he describes his team's work and why they see identification with the people at its heart.

We are just a group of people that want to live as the people here live - it is as simple as that. We serve a group of people, a tribe that has been neglected. No-body else has come out here at all, even though the Church has been in the area a long time. They are people who are on the lowest economic scale and politically they are no-body. But they are very rich in all sorts of deeply human ways.

At first we moved into their area to become part of their society as much as we could. We didn't want to come as a separate unit or institution or anything like that. Why we came is because we believe in someone and we think that is a good thing to share.

Within that context we are busy with practical service to the people. But once that gets so organized that we can not live like villagers, once we had to have a desk and an office, then we would want to think again because our priority is to live with the people and in their way.

Basically, what guides us is our belief in Jesus and a desire to live out the Gospel values, especially those which are of special relevance in the Santal context. And if there is a choice it is to be with the poorer ones. With

in that context of lifestyle and proclamation we will do any work that seems to be needed and helpful, any work of service.

Our daily work

Our group consists of about five sisters, two priests, a couple of Jesuit and diocesan seminarians and about ten lay people, catechists and social workers. Each month we gather for several days - one of prayer, one of instruction especially for those who are catechists, and one day for business and programming. Because we have no building centre, the business becomes quite heavy. The religious and clergy also have a day together to pray and reflect as a group.

The rest of the time we are off in one's and two's to our various jobs. Those that are teaching catechism will go wherever it is needed, for example to a family under instruction, and live with them. One or two in social work might chase up some court cases or see about wages disputes and such things.

We have a medical team. They are reconsidering their work to bring themselves closer to the villagers. They have developed as a separate unit. We have got a bug about having 'centres' and since that has grown into a centre now, they are trying to change the emphasis.

We have found, just by living there, that most of our people die of things that can be treated without resort to hospitals and to operations. Medical work at this level is perhaps more important than hospitals. That is also a fairly strong statement to make.

But I think that when we first started it was not realised and the need of the hospitals seemed greater. Yet many people more would die of cholera and malaria and things like that, from lack of very simple medicines.

The same thing applies to education. I think the step to literacy from illiteracy is a much more significant one than to getting a degree. Where we had total illiteracy, we are now getting kids who can read and write. And this may actually be doing a greater work. You don't need a big institution for that either. As I say, we do not need institutions, and here they are being very cooperative with our

approach, extremely cooperative. But anyhow back to why we are so strong on mobility.

As for my work as a priest, I am probably the one most organised. That is a pity, but it is the way it has grown. I have to say Mass in a different place each day. It is not what I would have liked but once you get a Community you have to be available.

I started with the idea that it's good just to be with people, that the Christian message is more important than food. Now this is a controversial statement which I think most missionaries will agree on ultimately. But in practice many will say first 'fill a person's stomach and then preach'. We started with another attitude.

However, in practice we have found that our way of living with people, close to them, has been a very effective way to social progress. When I look around now I think we are in a very good position to help, let's say agricultural development or in developing the situation of women precisely because we are right in the villages.

Our approach

There are many sociological reasons to believe that this is a very good approach: one from below rather than from on top. Still, we don't have any spectacular results to point to because we don't keep statistics and list off the increases in production or the number of degrees that people might have gained.

We think we've helped in less visible ways and I believe largely because we live among the Santals and haven't broken them off from their Santali roots - that is vital. Progress often means getting away from your roots and that is a big loss in human development.

Let me give you a practical example. Here in the Hazaribagh area there is a school for village girls teaching domestic science. These girls would be otherwise uneducated. The institution is made of concrete and cement, supplied with electricity, taps, a gas stove. We have sent a couple of girls there. For them, it was like a trip to New York. It's good, very good.

Then they came back and reverted to the way they were

before they started. Their attitude to the training was that "when you are in that sort of institution, you eat that way and when you are back here in the village, you eat this way". I reckon it's much more important to reach the girls where they have those things that they will have later: market gardens, watering by hand, etc.

The challenge is to say within that context how they can have better nutrition, health and improve their position as women. Being there on the spot in the village I think is a much better way to get across to those girls.

Being close to people doesn't just happen: you've got to work at it. Some of our learning from the Santals came the hard way. It actually started when we were just sitting here in one of our houses. In the very beginning, there was one Sister who had worked already with me in a rural parish, one Catechist and myself. Then one Brother and Scholastic came.

Since we were in a strange area and people were not used to us, even though we talked Santali and followed their customs, we were very isolated from the people. We would often go into one little house where the Mayor had given us a room.

And we would stay in there very frequently. We would be talking English and enjoying each other's company. The Sister would bring a tin of Swiss cheese and Nescafe and we would enjoy these by ourselves.

In the end the owner of the house, actually he became the first catholic in the area, said "You make me feel like a stranger in my own house." In fact he used a stronger word than stranger in Santali. I said to him: "Why do you say that? We could not regard ourselves closer to you". He said: "But that door is shut and I don't understand what you are saying. You are not eating what I eat".

That was exactly how he expressed it. Maybe I am reading into it now but it was a big shock to get that because we had only 3 weeks before moved away from institutions in Hazaribagh, precisely to be with people.

And here we were almost spontaneously setting up another separate unit which would after a while grow into a separate bit of land with fence around it, and a watchman, and become the sort of thing a mission station can sometimes become - like little islands, or even fortresses in extreme cases.

So then we got together and made a principle for ourselves that we would only live in other people's houses and we would try to keep to this very faithfully.

It has big disadvantages, but it's got tremendous advantages too, especially pastorally. I mean you don't have to have a plant to look after, you don't have to have staff to look after buildings, books and things.

You automatically live at a certain level of identity because you eat what they cook for you, you're at their services. You are even at their mercy a bit because you have to eat what they want to cook for you.

You get very close to people, you can't hide in a corner anywhere, there is not much privacy so they see you, warts and all.

The heart of our missionary work is evangelisation. What do I mean by that? It might be best if I give an example. I was in a train recently and talking to a Government Contractor, a very wealthy man, who was sitting next to me. He looked at me for a while and wondered what I was - I was dressed in the same way as I always am - in an Indian shirt to the thighs and what you might call pyjama pants.

I guess it looked unusual for someone with my nordic looks to be dressed this way. Anyhow, he said : "Who are you? where have you dropped from?" I gave him some sort of answer that basically we are people that have a Guru called Jesus and we follow him. When he found it was Jesus Christ he started to tell me a lot of his family problems. I replied by telling him that I don't know much about Hinduism or what the teaching of Hinduism was for such problems. But he still kept asking me to say something.

So I told him what my Guru says and I quoted bits of the Gospel - really obvious ones about the Father caring for us. I was struck by how much he was moved by these. In fact, by the time we reached our destination, he said "Really I believe in that man, Jesus". He will never get baptised or anything, but I believe that there is a message there in the Gospel which can help everybody.

Putting it more crudely, no matter how much development we do, we still have something to tell people about Jesus. Take every poor person around here. Let's say they get houses, good meals, adequate medicine and good educa-

tion. There is still going to be a lot of injustice, suffering and death. There's still going to be a need to hear the Gospel. It would be a pity to downplay the basic message which people seem to need everywhere.

What this means in practice is that when you meet a person, anyone in a bazaar for instance, you would open gently and listen for a long time to what he says. First of all, of course, he would talk about business, whatever business might be at hand. But after a while he'd start telling you about his life and what bugs him, what hopes he has, what he dislikes, what he loves and what he hates and what he looks forward to, the whole gamut.

I think as a Christian we would listen to all of that and accept it because he is a human being searching for some meaning, just as I am. Then I think, having accepted all that, Jesus would take a particular shape for him. If he is a Brahman, he will have to meet a Brahman Jesus; if he were Punjabi, he would have to meet a Punjabi Jesus, not a prepackaged Bombay Jesus, not a Keralese one, nor an Australian one, if you can talk in those terms.

It will be a Brahman Jesus because that is the only Jesus that a Brahman could recognize. After all, Jesus was totally a Jew and the Jews could fit him into their scene, seeing Him as their fulfilment.

In the Santal context, Jesus would be a perfect Santal. Santals are considered very low on the social scale. But all a Santal would hope for and love, Jesus fulfils. And he saves Santals from all they fear and dislike - from spirits and the helplessness they feel.

Conversion has got nothing to do with becoming somebody else or changing your cultural identity. Rather it means that all you are, gets to be fulfilled in Jesus. This is why we place such emphasis on being like and being among the people so much. It tells people that being Santal is good when the rest of the world is saying it is bad, that the less you are like a Santal, the more you have progressed. It's a heavy message.

The connection between human development and evangelization is an important one, though it can be fraught with problems in the Indian context. I haven't got any roundly worded theoretical explanations and solutions on the subject. It happens that there has always been a connection

between the two in the work of the Church in Ranchi, the part of Bihar where Australians came 30 years ago as an extension of an already existing mission district.

People here weren't presented with and didn't make a leap into the dark and take on Jesus. However, as it happened the spread of the Gospel did coincide with a tremendous stride in human development. Maybe it was because the people got an added dimension of hope and courage from the Gospel to break out of a pattern that was not a growing one. Maybe there was some kind of an indirect, slightly in visible factor at work there, perhaps coming with acknowledging your own dignity.

Taken from : "Asian Bureau Australia Newsletter"
(December 1983)

FAITH AND JUSTICE: A WITNESS*

"I like to be called a man of hope. I believe this is my mission. I have tried to sow hope, to maintain hope, among the people. There is a liberating Christ who has the strength to save us. I try to give my people this hope".

"MY COUNTRY..."

"I often stop to think the first cause of death in El Salvador is diarrhea from parasites and poor nutrition. And the second cause is violence, homicide".

"In El Salvador we all run the risk of death. I have to fulfill my duty of speaking up and saying the truth, as is my duty as bishop. Afraid? No, it's not exactly fear. But fear or not, I have my duty".

"Christ invites us not to fear persecution because, you must believe me, my friends, he that commits himself to the poor has to accept the same destiny as the poor. And in El Salvador we know the destiny of the poor: to disappear, to be tortured, to be captured, to reappear as cadavers".

"THE CHURCH..."

"We have already said that the Church for its part will always be willing to use the only power it possesses, that of the Gospel, to illuminate any type of activity that will lead to justice".

"...the Church does not seek to be in opposition and does not want to clash with anyone; she raises a great affirmation of God and His Kingdom; and she only clashes with those who oppose God and His kingdom."

"THE POOR..."

"The Church would betray her own love for God and her fidelity to the Gospel if she should cease to be 'the voice of those who do not have a voice'..."

*Quotations from Msgr. Oscar Romero, Archbishop of El Salvador, assassinated March 24, 1980.

"This demands from the Church a greater insertion among the poor, with whom she must identify herself even in their risks and in their destiny of persecution, ready to give the greatest testimony of love, to defend and promote those whom Jesus most loved".

"STRUCTURAL INJUSTICE..."

"The Church is forced by her evangelical mission to demand structural changes which favor the Kingdom of God and a more just and fraternal experience among man. The unjust structures of society are the roots of all violence and disturbances. How hard and conflicting are the results of this evangelical duty! Those who benefit from obsolete structures react selfishly against any kind of change. And those who advocate violent changes clash also impatiently with the Gospel of rationality and peace".

"I just think of what I have always preached! There shouldn't be first-class people and second-class people".

"PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY..."

"How easy it is to denounce structural injustice, institutionalized violence, social sin! And it is true, this sin is everywhere, but where are the roots of this social sin? In the heart of every human being. Present day society is a sort of anonymous world in which no one is willing to admit guilt and everyone is responsible. We are all sinners and we have all contributed to this massive crime and violence".

"IDOLATRY..."

"Principally, we have pointed out these three idolatries:

1. The idolatry of wealth and private property, which makes man's ideal that of "having more" and lessens the legitimate interest in "being more".
2. The idolatry of power, which under the new rubric of national security has contributed to strengthening, on many occasions, the totalitarian and despotic nature of repressive regimes, from which derive the abuse of power and the violations of human rights.

3. The idolatry of the political organization, which certain political groups fall into when they no longer seek the interest of the people who originally inspired them, but rather subordinate the people to the interest of ideologies and organizations."

"A VOICE CRYING..."

"We have continuously to repeat, although it is the voice that cries in the desert, 'No to violence, yes to peace'."

"I would like to appeal in a special way to the men of the army, and in particular to the troops of the National Guard, the Police and the garrisons. Brothers, you belong to our own people. You kill your own brother peasants! And in the face of an order to kill that is given by a man, the law of God should prevail that says: Do not kill! No soldier is obliged to obey an order counter to the law of God".

"DEATH..."

"I have often been threatened with death. But as a Christian, I do not believe in death without resurrection; if they kill me, I will rise in the Salvadoran people. I say so without any boasting, in all humility. As a shepherd, I am obliged by divine mandate to give my life for those I love-- that is, for those who may be going to murder me. If what they threaten should come to pass, from this moment I offer to God my blood for the redemption and resurrection of El Salvador. Martyrdom is a grace of God that I do not believe I deserve. But if God accepts the sacrifice of my life, let my blood be a seed of freedom and the sign that hope will soon be a reality. Let my death, if accepted by God, be for the liberation of my people and as a witness of hope for the future. You may say, if they should in fact kill me, that I pardon and bless those who do it. Would, indeed, that they might be convinced that they waste their time. A bishop will die, but the Church of God, which is the people, will never perish".

YOUTH-PROGRESSIO

REFLECTING ON GENERAL PRINCIPLE N.11 (2)

The Eucharist and Community

The first reality we encounter among those which lead to spiritual, apostolic and human growth - as presented by G.P.11 - is the Eucharist. Reflecting on this, and asking myself how I live it as a member of the CLC (looking at this on the level of experience, and not as a theological or scientific question), I have discovered and become aware of the centrality of the Eucharist in the whole course of my life.

When more than 9 years ago I joined my community, bringing with me a concern for justice and love, freedom and peace, the first thing that struck me was the liturgy of the Eucharist - people coming together to discuss the readings, giving one another the sign of peace, emphasising at different times some particular aspect of the liturgy, carrying out a real catechesis; in a word, people living the Eucharist. From that time, this was for me and my group the sign of being a christian - being a christian in a definite way, responsibly, from within.

Reflecting on all this, I have been struck by the considerable effect that the experience of the Eucharist, in community, has had on my spiritual formation. Right at the heart of our community celebrations I have learnt to listen to and read the word of God, to pray with others, to share my life, to place myself before the Lord in thanksgiving, in asking for pardon, in calling on Him, and in being His people.

The Eucharist is, as it were, a continuous lesson in life and faith, freedom and truth. And the most significant thing in my experience has been to live it, from within, at depth, as I am - by nature and formation, through my own history and by temperament - a person who is much more practical than 'spiritual'. And I have lived it enthusiastically and welcomed its grandeur even in periods of my life when the vision of being committed in the world and serving the world and people was something absolute, and drained my life and my own personal growth.

There have been moments when the Eucharist has been the only way for me to pray in a living way; other moments

when it nourished my personal prayer; and today I find I participate in my group through helping prepare the community liturgy. This gives me a sense of fulfillment, and also a profound experience of being close to my brothers and sisters and the Lord.

All this, which means a great deal to me, is tied up with the fact of being in a community for which the Eucharist is a celebration that is incapable of becoming a mere rite, or ritual or the repetition of a formula. In other words, involvement in preparing the Eucharist has become our focus of attention, and this sort of involvement speaks so much to people about living the Eucharist in a particular way. It is not by chance to have a group that is genuinely concerned to celebrate the Eucharist; to find gestures and signs that embody what life offers and what the Lord holds out to us, to rediscover continually the meaning of being a people who celebrate face to face with a Lord who gives Himself over and over again, each time in a new way, to make formulas and prayers their very own so as to avoid falling into a mere routine that no longer speaks to them.

Through the Eucharist I have learned, little by little, to be part of a people whom the Lord has called, has liberated from Egypt and has led into the promised land; part of a people which continually falls and each time gets up again; a people which suffers and rejoices, which loves and which brings suffering. In this regard, so many people have helped me, lay people and priests, who have come to celebrate with us, our small community in the heart of Rome - sometimes the cross-roads of the world and the place where lives and histories meet... Portuguese, French, Latin Americans, English, Chinese, Australians, North Americans - all with their own way of being, of serving the world and of loving the Lord.

With them, and with all those who are yet to come, we celebrate our Eucharist - our thanksgiving to the Lord of the world; the offering of what we understand, of all the changes in our lives, of what blocks us and holds us back; the hope of the Kingdom; the fruit of peace; the feeling of being sons and daughters, and of being a people.

Giovanna Chirri

NEWS ABOUT THE WORKING GROUP

„YOUNG PEOPLE, MISSION, AND CLC SERVICE.“

The aim of this report is to share with all of you the work we are doing in the group "Young people, Mission and CLC Service". As you will surely know, this group was instituted at the last meeting of the World Executive Council. Our job is to try to concretise the contribution of young people to the Mission and Service of the CLC, starting with the experience of the communities in their own setting.

The members of the group represent very different countries and situations. They are : Diego from Uruguay; Pedro from Chile; Mpho from Lesotho; Sampath from Sri Lanka; Toni from Ireland; Tobie from France; Patrick for Australia and Italy; and Paco from Spain. Our method of work is based on the coordination of the correspondence by one of our members, which increases the work a little and makes it more difficult.

The participation of each member aims at being communitarian in the sense that it is the result of a preliminary exchange in his/her normal group.

To come to the substance of our work, we began with the usual presentation of ourselves and our communities. The replies already reflected the diversity of our situations. This diversity flows from the different national situations in which each community finds itself immersed. Thus, for example, in Uruguay and Chile, what is in the foreground is the desire to find away out from the situations of political oppression, and the groups are marked by a preoccupation with social and political commitment. In Lesotho, it is a matter of constructing the CLC by starting, likewise, from particular political conditions and in a group which has had secondary education. In Europe the situation presents different challenges... What is really common to all the responses is the fact that there is a close link between the different communities and their milieu.

Bearing in mind these data, we made a list of subjects so that we could develop them one by one and put them in order so as to present them to the World Community. The subjects are the following:

1. How does a CLC group come to work for others, serve? What is our attitude, our personal evolution with regard to such service? What are our difficulties?

2. What are the priorities of our service?
3. How do young people contribute to the Mission and Service of the CLC? What is our role at the local, national and world levels?
4. What are the criteria for acting in the world today, in accordance with our spirituality and the teaching of the Church; faith and social involvement?
5. The CLC among the "poor sectors": experiences and objectives.
6. The communication of experiences through PROGRESSIO and the proposal to hold an International Meeting of CLC Young People.
7. Our participation in the International Catholic Organisations.

Certain points in this 'ambitious' programme have already been achieved. Summarising very briefly, we are going to try to show some of the conclusions we have arrived at:

- We confirm that the "service" dimension is present everywhere, and has been since the beginning, both in the groups and in each of the CLC members, although the experience shows a profound change which could be defined as a passage from pure 'activism' to the search for what the Lord wants us to do by carefully reading the social reality that surrounds us.
- The difficulties we meet with come, above all, from the little time we have available, and from the fact that almost all of us are students and the passing from school to university poses problems. However, this time of formation is also considered an important service.
- The priorities in the 'service' rendered depend on each community, because the reality that surrounds us requires us to be wide open to it. As examples of the field of action we can cite the work of teaching people to read and write, social help in working-class suburbs where marginalised people live, collaboration in pastoral work, through teaching catechism, the formation of new groups initiating people into CLC, active participation in the national federations...
- In the 'mixed' federations of adults and young people there is exchange which is advantageous to both: the young people put forward new ideas and new experiences; the adults show us a way already travelled which points out a direction for the future.

- The young people themselves take responsibility for the running of communities, in close collaboration with the ecclesiastical assistant.
- Although this point has not yet been sufficiently deepened, there is a good correspondence between the Church - 'Institution' and its objectives - on the one hand, and the life of the communities, and this is particularly noteworthy in the Latin America experience.
- By virtue of our christian identity, we see the need for dialogue with the cultural movements now present in the contemporary world.

In finishing, we must say that the little space available permits us to transmit only this brief summary of a very rich and very interesting reality. We promise to keep you informed in the coming issues of PROGRESSIO as the work goes on, and we ask you to help us by making us part of your experiences in these same pages. We are most grateful to Giovanna Chirri for her help in this regard. Until the next time.

Paco Sanz
Coordinator of the group

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA: AN EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

Knowing that it is necessary to take the Gospel to places where Christ is least known, our group of CLC young people from the parish of our Lady of Guadalupe in Buenos Aires takes part in mission work in the poor suburb of New Pompei in the Province of Santa Fe.

We knew that nobody can listen when his reasoning faculty is dependent upon his need for food and shelter. That is why, before announcing the Good News, we turned our attention to basic needs, making a collection of clothes and food and buying shoes for the children. Then we distributed these things in that district.

The work was concentrated on the children, the infirm and the families of the suburb. Work with the children began at 8 o'clock in the morning and finished with the meal we shared with them. The aim was to get to know their reality, to live their situation as closely as possible, and to show them that there too, in their humble place, God is to be found, so that they might learn to discover Him and to put their trust in Him. Each day we met about 130 children from 2 to 13 years of age.

We visited the lepers in a nearby hospital. They ask only to have someone to listen to them who can understand their pain, because they are abandoned by their families - someone who does not experience repulsion for their sores and who approaches them without fear in order to have a chat. With them we passed the most moving moments because we could see on their faces the joy of one who knows that he/she is loved and accepted by his/her brothers and sisters.

Through the loving visit of Mary to their homes we succeeded in entering into dialogue with the families of that place. About sixty families received her and learned to recite the rosary. Most of them were open to us and looked forward to our visit, either to express their worries and their problems, or simply to share a meal in a fraternal atmosphere in which nobody feels inferior because nobody is known to be superior. In this way we were able to see what was the situation of the place so as to then be able to put into practice a plan of evangelisation which would be effective.

It is very difficult to describe on paper those 15 days lived so intensely. We must, however, underline the fact that we received much more than we were able to give. Let us now summarise that experience in two words: SHARING and SERVING. That is the spirit we are trying to preserve, following the example of our Mother, the most holy Virgin Mary ... She has constantly accompanied us and it is to her that we offer in prayer the care of our brothers and sisters of Santa Fe.

Alejandra S. Fernandez

EQUADOR:

**ALBERTO BARBA, JESUIT NOVICE,
SPEAKS ABOUT A CLC IN BRASIL**

I had a conversation with Alberto by chance. We found ourselves together during a meal. Alberto is from Quito, an old boy of Saint Gabriel's College, but he studied medicine in Brasil and he had only one year's internship to do. But Christ met him on the way, and today he is a novice in the Society of Jesus at Cotacollao.

I do not know how the subject of the CLC came into our conversation but the fact is we were quickly immersed in it.

"I have been a member of the CLC in Brasil for two years", he told me. Right from the first sentences you noted that he had not been a member in name only, but was convinced.

I asked him how their meetings went. "Every month we spend a Saturday and Sunday together in the university groups. During those days we draw up the plan of work for the month and we pray. In addition, we get together on a Saturday evening. Also, each group holds its meetings one day a week and participation is very good".

In passing, Alberto mentioned university pastoral work. That led me to ask him about the apostolic activities. "University pastoral work is the main activity. For us it takes place in the State University. Each CLC member creates a group in his/her faculty. In these groups the Bible is studied under the guidance of a coordinator who is a member of the CLC. Clearly the groups are also a source of new members for the CLC's because the students ask themselves why their companions do these things. The outskirts of the city where marginalised people live are also a field of apostolate in which the students of the different faculties collaborate according to whatever knowledge they have".

We also touched on other points more or less connected with the CLC - the number of assistants, and so on. There are many other points to talk about, but I must leave space for others.

Juan Caballero S.J.

CLG DAY CELEBRATION: DIOCESE OF LERIBE (LESOTHO)

(23rd-25th March, 1984)

The CLG Day in the diocese of Leribe was celebrated at St. Charles R.C. Mission. Most of the groups came from high schools.

On Friday, the arrival day, a concert was held at night, starting at ten o'clock until at about two o'clock in the morning where we got about one hundred and nineteen Rands. The singing was wonderful indeed, and it was done by different groups. After the concert everyone went to bed to prepare for the next day which appeared to be very tough.

Early Saturday morning at about nine o'clock everyone went out to work. There were several things which had to be done: pulling and cutting of grass, preparation of the plots, repairing of a road, digging of two holes for toilets, building of a dam and helping old people at the village nearby. All these were done under heavy rain and we were surprised to see how much the CLG members present were determined to work. At one o'clock in the afternoon we had our lunch and prepared ourselves for the course which was to follow at three o'clock. The course was divided into four topics: Commitment, CLG way of life, Attitudes and Meetings. The students were divided according to the classes in which they are at their schools so that there were four groups altogether. The course went off well, with the celebration of the Eucharist at five o'clock by Fr. Mahloane. After Mass, everyone went for supper. At half-past seven we assembled together in our groups for more teaching which lasted until about eleven o'clock.

On Sunday, the day started with a general cleaning of the whole place and at half-past nine there was practice for Holy Mass which was celebrated at eleven o'clock. After this we had our lunch and then gathered near the Church where all the Christians of St. Charles were giving a Feast to welcome their new priest Father Moshoeshoe. It was with great pleasure that each group presented two songs as a form of thanksgiving to Father Moshoeshoe and also as a way of rejoicing with him on his feast.

Jeanette Moneoang Makoele

ONGOING ENCOUNTER TOWARDS COMMUNITY AND MISSION

European Meeting - Amersfoort '84 - The Netherlands

by Hans van Leeuwen S.J.

We thank Fr. Hans van Leeuwen S.J. for his very full report of the European meeting at Amersfoort. For reasons of space, we have had to shorten the report.

In Amersfoort from April 27 until May 1st, around 70 members of the CLC, from most countries in western Europe, came together to share on the theme "Ongoing encounter towards community and mission". The meeting started with some information about the Netherlands - its characteristics, its population and the connection between both, its history, and most of all the religious and ecclesial atmosphere. It was of course rather superficial, but it was something of a "setting", like we do in the Spiritual Exercises.

In the same way we tried to get to know each other better, by telling one another who we were and where we came from. During these days we wanted, by meeting each other, to look for what binds us through all our differences, what we have in common. Don't we all have the experience that God is to be found in daily life, that faith and life cannot be separated? Are not we busy trying everywhere, in all these countries with all these languages, to live together, to come together, to search a way - the CLC way - to unite us in all our differences? Also in these days we hoped to become close to one another and to God. Therefore, we set about this in three different stages.

1. My world, your world, our world: gift and challenge

Where else should we start than with ourselves? If we really want to try over and over again to bring together faith and life, to live them in unity, we have to start by realizing, ourselves, what our life in this world looks like, and to let that sink in. Therefore this initial stage was first of all a listening to oneself. Who am I? How do I live? How do I live with my world? What are my joys and my sorrows? What makes me hopeful and what makes me afraid? Where do I find my support and for whom am I a support? Whom do I feel close to, with my heart, with my interests?

Where do I feel aversion or resistance? To what or to whom do I surrender myself? What do I experience as the foundation of my life? It was something like looking in a mirror, to look and listen, to realise that the answer to all those questions could be a description of my world.

In this way everybody has his/her world and lives with his or her part of the world. In groups of five or six persons we put together all those parts very carefully and respectfully. We tried to listen to each other, not to discuss but to hear very attentively what the other saw in his or her mirror and heard in him/herself. What does somebody else want to tell me about his or her world? Do I understand it? All this led to moments of recognition and wonder, of sharing together and of complementarity, both in hopes and joys, and in anxiety and sorrows. Pieces of the world - my world and your world - were put together like a jigsaw puzzle, and we were allowed to enter into a larger experience: my world is not only mine, it is 'our world'.

A large meeting like this one is somewhat structured, and in the course of these days some cells are built that strengthen the whole, and give you the feeling that the meeting does not remain superficial, but grows in depth; however, you can only have this experience with a restricted number of people.

The second part of this first day we spent in trying to strengthen this notion of 'our world' in the small groups. What does it do to me to enlarge "my" world to "our" world? On a big piece of paper we wrote in the middle: 'our world'. Gathered around this piece of paper we sat in silence and then each one separately wrote or drew what he or she felt. There was great variety - symbolised in the language differences that are not only differences in speaking but also in thinking and living - which can and must remain, but in this variety many of us are searching for the unity that overcomes the differences.

Is not that what CLC is aiming at in the different countries of Europe? Our world became more concrete, when every national group tried to express for themselves and later on also for the others, through depicting a tree, how the CLC is present in every country. What are the roots,

the sources of life? What is the trunk, what gives body to the movement? What are the branches, what are the fruits? Is the tree young or old, blooming or just coming out of the ground? It was good for every national group to realize very concretely what 'our world' means in every country. This was not a step back, to reduce the world of Europe, or beyond, to one's national world, but to see one's own place in the larger space, without losing sight of the 'we' and the 'our'.

2. Our larger world, encounter towards community - Meeting CLC friends from the area

The second day was visitors' day. The group of participants was enlarged by members of the Dutch and German CLC, together approximately 30. In this second stage we wanted to see our world even more as a larger world and so the group-barriers were broken. The newcomers joined the small groups to be introduced and to introduce themselves - this time with the help of some questions concerning the influence of CLC upon our lives. What attracted me to come to Amersfoort? How does the way of life of CLC help me in daily life? How does it affect my personal life, my way of being in a group, in the Church? How have I changed since I got in touch with CLC?.

These 'stories' were most of all personal experiences, but immediately afterwards they were widened by three series of questions, meant to prepare us for the introduction of Claude Flipo, S.J. later that day. If we want to hear what God has to tell us in the world of today, we have to realise, ourselves, what is going on in that world. What values are important for us? Protection of the environment, world peace, defense, my religious faith, human rights? What developments seem signs of hope to us? Scientific and technological developments e.g., the unification of Europe, changes in the relations between East and West, quality of life? What developments worry or frighten us? More and more artificial things coming into the life we lead - the pollution of natural life and the countryside, increase in unemployment as a consequence of automation of jobs, a critical deterioration in international relations, rise in crime and terrorism? Because we were invited to make a choice out of these series (the list was much longer), we had to weigh and ponder these issues.

With all these questions still in head and heart we walked through the European orchard. In different rooms each national CLC presented its tree, and there appeared the CLC in all its variety, in every sense of the word: number, ages, work method, fruits, sources of inspiration and involvement. For some this was a consolation because also in one's own country often no two groups are alike. But for others it was a worry, because the CLC's own identity did not seem clear.

After this, Claude Flipo S.J. spoke to us, about the moral crisis by which western Europe is characterized. "We find that the real questions of our time are not technical, but spiritual, and that we are spiritually underdeveloped. We used to believe naively, with our geographical maps, that Europe was the center of the world and the judge of the nations, and we realize that it is rather the western peninsula of Asia, and that its influence on human destiny carries less and less weight. Finally, we used to think that we would remain the heirs of christianity and the center of the evangelisation of the nations, and yet now the faith is growing dim here, and religious practice concerns only a minority of the population, whereas they are expanding among other peoples, to the point that 40% of all baptized people are now latin-americans".

Therefore, values "become mad". We have forgotten the roots, the christian and spiritual roots. We have to search for them again, and to expose them. "Our responsibility with respect to the world, with respect to all past errors and faults, supposes an awareness, a remembrance of our common history, and of our common baptism in faith. Only a renewal of the christian understanding of men will allow the European people to confront the modern era... The Churches can and must be the spiritual memory of Europe, a memory without which its mission becomes a perverse desire for power, and its cohesion a set of rivalries".

It is our mission to open doors. "Our mission is simple, urgent and universal: to reconcile faith in Jesus Christ and the great values which have shaped Europe; to penetrate the life of our society with these Gospel-filled values... If Europe once again opens its doors to Christ... its future will not be dominated by uncertainty and fear, but rather it will be opened up to a new period of life". To open doors of our heart and our world. "One of today's great tasks is

to reconcile life as a christian and life in society, to refuse the fatal split between a faith reduced to a private affair and an anonymous social life".

In this way Claude Flipo S.J. put in a european context what we experienced during these days as our way of life.

3. Facing the challenge in community

The third stage had a more silent and sober character. Does it make you silent when the extent and the dimension of the challenge strike you? When you ask yourself how to face them? This is what happened when we tried to open our selves and to let ourselves be touched: what is an important challenge for me? Where do I feel resistance? What remains for me superficial and what touches me deeply, in my heart? We were invited to open the doors and to take in the challenge. First we were in silence, by ourselves, and afterwards we shared in the small groups, to help each other face the challenge in community and to help one another to open up to what is facing us. Again we heard very personal stories and the challenge was often nearby. This does not mean that the greater world challenges were forgotten, but again it became clear that we find no other starting-point than close to ourselves. "Change the world, but start with yourself".

We felt the need to continue the silence also during the meal that followed, not to drown the VOICE. This meant fasting, so that we could concentrate better. Out of this silence we wanted to understand, in the small groups, the words of the Scripture. There also we could hear a VOICE of our world.

Finally, we looked back : what did these days give to us? What were we taking home? What will we do with it all? How do I experience at this moment the European or world CLC? Many took home, most of all, the atmosphere of openness and confidence; the unity in variety; the call for commitment.

It is nice to know CLC exists in other countries, but it is heartwarming to be able to experience it. That is not only important for the official representatives of the national CLC's but even more for the grass-root member.

REFLECTIONS ON INTERNATIONAL FORMATION COURSE

One of the most perplexing problems that we, in the United States CLC leadership, have had to deal with lies in the area of formation. Whenever we have attempted to deal with formation, we have only touched parts of our dilemma but never reached its core. Examples of types of dilemmas are as follows: new communities will form and then as quickly dissolve; affiliated communities which are grounded in mission and community are totally resistant to the spirituality - specifically the Spiritual Exercises. Finally there are communities which have been together for thirty years or more. They have felt that their longevity is criteria enough to authenticate their formation. However now, they have members dying or retiring and moving away. So these communities wonder how to bring new people to their group. Each situation relates to formation and the way to find solutions has been difficult.

This diversity of communities brought our Federation to formulate a Program called Shared Reflections. This program enabled existing communities to revisit their Ignatian roots, redefine their language (we, at times, have different meanings for the same words), and to explore the way our communities work together. The end result was a shared understanding leading to developmental planning for each community.

Yet this did not solve the continual problem around newly forming communities and the different types of formation programs available. Nor did it answer the many leveled questions which dealt with how we start communities. How do we provide full balanced experience of CLC for formation of communities? And how do we call our formed communities to deeper growth?

One answer came when Anawim CLC, Detroit, took upon themselves the task of reviewing all existing formation material (including U.S., Canada and world) with a focus toward a uniform formation program for our federation. The second answer came at a meeting held in Wernersville, Pa. between Society of Jesus and CLC wherein Eileen Burke Sullivan gave a presentation of the World Federation Formation - Survey.

From this presentation insights began to form as to how we might move through the chaos and our questions. For it was in the Survey that we found a developmental process

for communities - one that followed the same flow as the Spiritual Exercises. Each stage built upon the previous one. However, the ways to determine readiness to transition in the stages was still unclear.

So when, a month later, José Gsell and Patrick O'Sullivan arrived in St. Louis for the International Guides' Formation Program, we were quite ready to explore the process.

The amazing aspect of the course was the simplicity of its design, and how we experienced the development of the community among ourselves. The schema was simple. We began each day with prayer. Questions were then given to us for reflection which were then shared in small groups. After lunch, we returned to our plenary group and shared the results of small group deliberations. One of the staff followed by commenting on and synthesizing the results of our work. The other staff person then moved us to the next stage by a talk which expanded our local and regional experience.

The course did lay out the stages of community development. It helped to clarify what happens in the group. It also helped the guides to gain clarity on their role as well as answer perturbing questions. I will focus at this point on specifically helpful insights.

Dispositions

Starting at the very beginning the question asked was "Who should be invited to join CLC?" (It is noted here that we either are so full of zeal that we invite everyone to be come a member of our communities; then experience a terrible sense of failure when CLC does not appeal to everyone. Or we go to the opposite extreme, becoming so selective that not even Jesus could qualify for membership).

Thus, Patrick O'Sullivan began to clearly identify the qualities which we seek in our potential CLC members. These qualities are similar to those qualities a spiritual director looks for in those desiring to make the Spiritual Exercises. Therefore, the people should be those with a sense of generosity, not just with their money and their gifts, but more with their time and their energy. People who have a sense of magis or a desire to go beyond where they are presently called. People who have a certain quality of perseverance (or perhaps steadfastness is a better word). People who are open to a world beyond their own. People who have an ability

to respect and reverence others. People who view "Life as a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved". Finally people who have an ability to acknowledge their own feelings. Through this identification we were enabled to make better judgments around potential CLC members.

Roles

A second important clarification came in the discussion around roles in a CLC community. For many of us it was the first time we had heard roles named and defined.

The first role dealt with was that of the leader. The Leader is a member of the community. He/she is responsible for the theme selections, meeting-plans, as well as scheduling dates and locations of the meetings. The leader sees to it that there is shared leadership and active participation on the part of members. The leader's role can rotate among the members.

The Assistant, according to the General Principles nos.14 & 21, is responsible for the christian development of the community. He is a visible witness of the Lord and a sign that the community is a cell of the Church. He is the link with the hierarchical Church. The Assistant takes part in the life of the community.

The Guide has the experience of lived knowledge of the CLC way of life. The guide's role is to listen to the community; to be aware of that they are experiencing and to help them live deeply the grace of the moment. The guide needs to be detached from personal viewpoints and is present to focus the group toward the CLC fullness. The guide, therefore, needs to keep a certain distance between him/herself, and the group, to be able to help it on its ongoing journey.

In naming and distinguishing these roles, many felt that their own role was made easier because they often had been functioning in two or more of these capacities without understanding the dilemmas they were in.

Evaluation

An obvious point should be the need to continuously evaluate our meetings. This seemed to be the most overlooked

tool which we have in formation. Simple evaluations at the end of each meeting should help clear the air of frustrations dealing with unclosed conversation; it could give a helpful suggestion as to where to begin the next meeting; it could give people a way to speak to the process in a positive or negative fashion. All these things are helpful to the success of the meeting. It also is helpful in the way long range planning is done.

Spiritual Freedom

Finally, as we followed the developmental process one necessary grace kept resurfacing. This was the constant need to be totally open - surrendering all to God. This is spiritual freedom.

Many people felt their own insecurity as guides. They found this insecurity manifested in their need to be in charge of or to have control of every situation taking place in their community development. Often anger and frustration emerged when their control was taken away from them.

A guide needs to release his/her own expectations and plans for the community in moments when the Lord seems to be bringing forth other types of movements. Thus, the guide's stance before God and the community is a willingness to be open and present to the workings of God's spirit in the moment. This stance involves risk-taking and vulnerability. It is the essence of freedom or disponibility. Thus, communities are able to follow a schema but also to be aware of the Spirit's individual rhythm for their communities.

Final Thoughts

We were enriched by both the course and the members of the Canadian CLC's who joined us for it. This combination broadened our vision and enriched the quality of all that we received. (The Canadians also added a lot more merriment to our staid lives - do they ever sing loud!).

The world presence given to us in José and Patrick turned our focus which normally would be on our own local and national concerns to an outward perspective. This perspective found us realising that our CLC vocation was not just our own but was a part of many such calls. We were a small part of many cells of Christ seeking to live out the

Ignatian spirituality in community. This focussed our responses on the needs of the poor, evangelization and the mission of justice and service in our world.

The course succeeded in answering questions and providing a vehicle upon which to base our decisions. It is hoped that the impact of this course will be experienced by CLC's in the U.S. and in Canada within the next two years.

Barbara Bedolla

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NEWS... NEWS...

From English-speaking Canada

The meeting of the Executive Council was held at the Spirituality Centre in Guelph, Ontario - a unique chance to meet the CLC members of the place! On Saturday evening, 28th April, about a hundred Canadian members from different groups in the region welcome us. It is a CLC evening.

We participate together in the celebration of the Eucharist. Assembled around Christ, the centre of our Community, we listen to Father John English S.J., national CLC assistant, who reminds us of the foundations of our Community. Towards the end of the mass, the members of a group who have just finished their cycle of formation make their commitment.

"I, (name), commit myself to you, (group name) Christian Life Community.

As a member of the Canadian English-speaking CLC, I commit myself to seek, with the help of our community, a continuing, personal development that is spiritual, apostolic and human. I understand that this involves the willingness to share my interior life with others so that by individual and communal discernment, I may with the community, in the spirit of the Spiritual Exercises be responsible for, and realize, the upbuilding of the kingdom of peace and justice in today's world. I choose to live according to the General Principles of Christian Life Communities.

As members of the English-speaking Canadian Federation of Christian Life Communities, approved by the international federation of the 1982 World Assembly, we realize a more global expression of our commitment; our responsibility to develop the bonds of communities does not stop with our own group but must extend to the national and world federation of CLC, our parishes and diocesan communities, the whole Church and all people of good will."

It is then the turn of the other CLC members to renew their commitment. The mass ends with thanksgiving.

After a fifteen minute break, Peter Peloso introduces the second part of the meeting with the roll-call of the groups present. I note the call of 5 Christian Life Communities (each having a name which identifies it) and 6 or 7 communities in formation. The cycle of formation in English-speaking Canada lasts for 3 or 4 years. Generally, it comprises a year (or more) of preparation for the experience of the Spiritual Exercises through one meeting per week. After this preparation the members enter into the experience of the 'Exercises in daily life', which lasts from 10 to 12 months. In the course of the following stage, in the third or fourth year, the programme of weekly meetings accentuates the opening to and the understanding of social problems, and emphasises discernment and decision, service and mission. The group makes its way toward being an apostolic community. The journey made during these years has allowed each one to experience and understand the CLC way of life, to see with the help of the Community whether or not that corresponds to the call of the Lord for him/her and to decide accordingly.

This time it is Jack Milan's turn to introduce the members of the Executive Council. He explains the work of the Council and its role in the worldwide Community. Tobie

Zakia and some members of the Council speak about this world-wide Community: what it is, what is required from each one of us to be faithful to the grace received. As the CLC's of other countries and continents are mentioned, our World Community becomes more alive. It is not unimportant - the informal exchanges will demonstrate that - to listen sometimes to what is lived inside our large Community and to let the echo of a common call resound inside oneself. The evening ends with a buffet, some songs and some Canadian folk dances.

If you pass by Toronto, stop at Guelph. It's worth the trouble!

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From New Zealand

Our readers will perhaps remember that it was in September, 1983, that the first CLC group was set up in New Zealand. We have just received some news and are happy to share it with our readers.

"Some members of our group are preparing to leave for Australia to take part in the CLC sessions. Next January we are going to have an eight day retreat. Several of our CLC members will be able to take part."