



progressio

Publication of the World **Christian Life Community**



PHOTOS

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- CLC Asia-Pacific Meeting;
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PROGRESSIO is published in English, French and Spanish.

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ABOUT OUR LOGO

We did not go too far to find inspiration for the logo of the Christian Life Community (CLC). Countless books have been written about the Salvation history of CLC and its beginning in year 1563. From that came the Marian Congregations and its symbol (shown on the top right), having the “P” over the “X” (for the Greek Christus) and the inserted “M” illustrates that the Congregations were put under the patronage of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The blue curved line illustrates a movement forward to **one World Community in 1967**; hence the globe. From this new beginning came a new name: Communauté de Vie Chrétienne (CVX) in French; Comunidad de Vida Cristiana (CVX) in Spanish; Christian Life Community (CLC) in English.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

14th CLC General Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya july 30 - august 8, 2003

SENT BY CHRIST, MEMBERS OF ONE BODY

*"For just as the body is one and has many members,
and all the members of the body, though many, are one body,
so it is with Christ." (1 Cor 12:12)*

October 9 th 2002	✠	Isaac M. Oigo Pres. of CLC Kenya (Deceased)
February 21 st to March 2 nd 2003		World Executive Council Meeting in Rome
March 25 th 2003		CLC World Day of Prayer
July 30 th to August 8 th 2003		14th CLC General Assembly

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From the Editor...

Dear *PROGRESSIO* Readers,

We are pleased to have finally taken a giant step in presenting a whole new look to our CLC *PROGRESSIO* publication. We know that this will be a welcome change as many of you have been encouraging a reformation for a number of years. Thank you all for your patience and continued support by way of your subscriptions and endorsement of this means of communication from and to the World Community. While the *PROGRESSIO*, published twice yearly, will now be printed in a magazine form, the *PROGRESSIO SUPPLEMENT* will continue to be printed once a year in its usual form.

We also thank those who submitted articles and photos for this edition. To our surprise, we received more than what could be accommodated with the result that the surplus articles will be included in the next publication. The selection at this time was determined by length and by an attempt to present a varied sampling of viewpoints from a number of CLC members and others who work in partnership with CLC.

In Itaici, the rich field of CLC mission was acknowledged in “Our Common Mission” document. Since then, stories (both personal and communal) have been gathered to reflect the concrete and creative ways and means that CLC has been active in these areas of mission. As in the previous *PROGRESSIO*, this edition continues with a focus on culture: **“Working in word and deed as prophets who foster the growth of all that is good and transform all that is harmful in the cultures in the world where we live”... “Incarnating Gospel values in every situation so that every culture can realize its potential to bring humans fully alive.”**

Since this year is a time of preparing for the 14th CLC General Assembly in Nairobi, we draw attention to the grace of the Assembly, **“Sent by Christ, Members of One Body”**. To assist us in getting ready for this major event we will, in our next edition of *PROGRESSIO*, also include an article from the Coordinating Team of CLC Nairobi, Kenya.

We hope that you enjoy reading about the World CLC and we look forward to hearing from you about the contents and new design for *PROGRESSIO*. Sending photos and a short identifying write-up of your community events to the Secretariat would also be most welcomed and could serve as practical way to “identify” the world community.

May Christ’s peace reign in our hearts!

Gilles Michaud

The INCULTURATION of FAITH, a consequence of Mission

Christendom's center of gravity has changed radically

For close to two millennia, Christianity appeared inseparable from the western world. However, today we are assisting at a little noticed mutation. The Church's geographical center of gravity has changed radically: western countries now represent no more than 34% or 35% of Catholics, by the simple fact of the extraordinary demographic growth in some "southern countries". Thus, in less than ten years, two Catholics in three will come from non-western Churches, and the progression will continue as time goes on. The demographic process is not even close to reversing itself.

At the beginning of the century, Africa counted perhaps a million baptized persons. A hundred years later, the number is close to 125 million. The Asian community also is growing rapidly: it has practically doubled between 1978 and 1996, i.e. in 18 years it counts more than a hundred

million members. As for so-called "Latin" America, which alone represents more than 40% of the Catholic community, we know that today it has difficulty recognizing the legitimate claims of its Aboriginal faithful or those of African origin and must defend itself against the proselytism that Pentecostalism exercises on the poorest populations.

Regardless, the expression of the Christian faith is still essentially western. During the Asian Synod held in Rome in April-May 1998, we heard the general reporter of this Synod, Cardinal Paul Shan [Kwo] Kwo-hsi of Taiwan, affirm that the churches of the Extreme Orient have a serious need to inculturate the faith into the Asian cultures and to stop being carbon copies of the western churches. This is so true that these churches still appear to be culturally foreign in Asia. Yet they have been there since the 16th century. Some Japanese bishops were not less stern. Bishop Toshio Oshikawa, Bishop of Naha stated: "In spite of frequent exhortations in favor of inculturation, it seems to me that the norm for the Christian life, ecclesiastical discipline, liturgical expression and theological orthodoxy remains that of the western Church. This effectively blocks all pastoral efforts aiming to create a process of growth in faith, spirituality and the moral life for our young, minority churches." For the Italian historian Giuseppe Alberigo, specialist in the history of the contemporary Church, "... going beyond the monolithic nature of western Christianity is the main problem of the faith at the beginning of the third millennium. An essential problem which challenges the very creativity of the faith."

Emergence of a new worldwide culture

When faced with the geographical plurality of cultures, the first challenge

By **Jacques Fédry S.J.**
Cameroon

"Inculturation: the word appears underlined in red on the computer screen. Who doesn't know this barbaric word? Yet it is used more and more in the Church. What does it mean? What focus does it regain today?"

put to the Church is to incarnate the faith into other cultures than the one which has transmitted it until now. But there is a second challenge just as important regarding the historic mutation that the West is living through in its own culture with the new world of modernism. The French bishops admit: "Today, we are in the process of changing the world and society. One world is disappearing and another is about to emerge; there is no pre-established pattern that exists for its construction. The appearance of the world that is being constructed eludes us." Therefore, it is not only in the African, Aboriginal or Chinese cultures that the Christian faith is called to be incarnated today, but also, at the same time, in this new worldwide culture which has appeared, impregnating and deeply modifying the different cultures of the planet. We can often ask if the proclamation of the faith as given in our homilies and religious talks are not made in an archaic language which is no longer comprehensible to the majority of our contemporaries.

It is important to become aware of the double cultural adherence of some people today, clearly noted by Amin Maalouf: "Each of us is the depository of two inheritances, one 'vertical' which comes from our ancestors, the traditions of our people and of our religious community, and the other 'horizontal' which comes from our era, from our contemporaries. It seems to me that it is this latter which is the most determining and becomes a little more so every day. Yet, this reality isn't reflected in our perception of ourselves. It is not the horizontal inheritance that we seek, but the other." Moreover the same author notes: "We are all infinitely closer to our contemporaries than to our ancestors. Would I be exaggerating if I said that I

have more in common with a passer-by chosen at random in the streets of Prague, of Seoul, or of San Francisco than with my own great-grandfather? Not only in appearance, clothes, way of walking, not only in the way of living, working and in the home and instruments which surround us, but also in the moral concepts, in the way of thinking." In fact, a young Cameroonaise of today willingly recognizes that he is more deeply marked in his way of living and thinking by the "fashions" of the world that he lives in than by the more and more vague traditions of his ethnic group. This is not to be forgotten when one speaks of the inculturation of the faith today. It is at the crossroads of these two cultural inheritances, the vertical and the horizontal, that the work must be done.

Inculturation, what is it?

This definition, the best that we know, has been taken from a 1978 letter of the Superior General of the Jesuits on inculturation. Let's attempt to discover all its richness.

Inculturation: *incarnation of the faith in a culture*. The concept is theological, and not sociological like that of acculturation with which it is sometimes confused.

For *acculturation*, the Robert's dictionary gives two meanings:

1. The process by which a human group assimilates all or some cultural values of another human group.
2. Adaptation of an individual to a foreign culture with which he is in contact.

But *culture* you will ask? It is given

“Inculturation is the incarnation of the Christian life and message in a concrete cultural area, so that the Christian experience expresses not only its own elements to the culture in question, but also that this same experience becomes a principle of inspiration. It must become both a strength and a norm of unification which transfigures and recreates this culture thus bringing about a new creation.”

many definitions. In taking the one given by others, we will say: “an ensemble of ways of speaking and of communicating, of thinking, of feeling and of acting, with a view to living together in a particular and distinct community”. More briefly: the social matrix in which we arrive at our humanity, our personality. Always keeping in mind that the culture is in perpetual evolution: it is a history and not a static construction.

What is incarnated in the culture is the Christian *life and message*: in the image of Christ, Christianity is a manifestation of the strength of God transforming our world, inseparably acting word and talking act.

Therefore inculturation cannot be reduced to an intellectual operation, a doctrine to translate or a body of recipes to apply.

Inculturation is a *principle of inspiration, a new creation*. It is not the act of dressing up the faith with symbols of a new culture, of transposing what is meaningful: replacing an organ by a tambourine, or conferring on a bishop the titles or signs of a traditional African chieftain, etc. The profound meeting of faith with culture is meant to be a mutual fertilization: both come away transformed, renewed. On the one hand, faith is going to act like the leaven transforming the dough of the culture from within, judging it, revealing its lights and its shadows. On the other hand, the seed of the Gospel, burying itself in a new culture, is going to benefit from this meeting by revealing the potentialities that it carries within itself without knowing it.

Conversion: a subversion of religious language

In a certain number of people, a same term designates the atmospheric sky and the Supreme Being, source and foundation of all, whom we call in French “Dieu” [God]. This is the case of the Giziga, among many others. The Giziga are a population of mountain people of North Cameroon. Here is a myth, which originated in their tradition:

“In the beginning, the Sky was near the earth. Bumbulvung lived with the people. The Sky was so close that people had to walk bent over. On the other hand, no one had to worry about food: they only had to reach out to tear off some shreds of Sky and eat them.

“But one day a girl, a chief’s girl, a mukuwang (an evil person who does everything contrary to others) began to watch the earth and to choose the seeds that she found there. She made a mortar and a pestle in order to crush the seeds chosen on the soil. Kneeling on the ground, every time that she raised her pestle, she hit the face of Bumbulvung. Disturbed in her work, she said: ‘Bumbulvung, why don’t you move away a little?’ The Sky moved away a little, and the girl could stand up. She continued her work and as she crushed her seeds, she raised her pestle a little higher. She implored the Sky a second time; the Sky moved away a little again. Then she began to throw her pestle in the air. At her third request, the Sky, outraged, went far away where it remains today.

Since this time, no one has ever seen Bumbulvung again. Men walk upright. They no longer eat shreds of

the sky: they became eaters of millet. Moreover, God no longer appears to men, like previously where every evening, he came to settle their endless discussions. Now the men are alone, alone with their endless discussions: it is war."

When a Giziga welcomes the good news of Jesus Christ, and discovers a God who draws near to us, who even goes so far as to kneel before us washing our feet and dying for us on a cross, this Giziga will continue calling God by the name that he received in his tradition, Bumbulung. But the personal experience that he is going to live in prayer will modify radically the meaning of this term, fill it with a new sense. It wasn't any different for our ancestors in the faith who took the pagan term of Deus in order to designate the Father of Christ. It is the same for us each time we enter into a vibrant and ever-new relationship with the one who is called God and who said: "I am not the one that you thought."

As the Gospel illuminates and judges the behavior of each one of us, it also judges all culture, the horizontal as well as the vertical! Christ calls into question certain forms of exercising power in certain traditional societies as well as the frenzy of consumerism or the mechanisms of exclusion in our modern societies. All culture is also called to a passage from death to resurrection in Christ. The theologian Henri de Lubac said it vigorously in his *Paradoxes*: "Incarnation, death and resurrection: it is taking root, being detached and being transfigured. Christian spirituality always includes this rhythm of three stages. We have to allow Christianity to plumb the depths of human realities, but this is not for allowing it to be lost and distorted. It is not to empty it of its

spiritual substance. It is rather so that it acts in the soul and in society like yeast raising all the dough, in order to make all supernatural. It is in order to place a new principle at the heart of everything so that everyone can hear the requirements and the urgency of the call from on high. (...) Death and resurrection do not destroy the work of the incarnation. They consummate it."

The inculturation of faith in church history

The word "inculturation" is a recent one starting around the 70s, but the reality of it is as old as the Church. The life of God revealed in Jesus Christ didn't quit being incarnated in different cultures, beginning with the Jewish culture and the history of Israel, its birthplace, the first place where the evangelical seed began to take root. A decisive turn was taken with Paul the apostle and the council of Jerusalem (toward the year 48-49; Acts 15.5 [ff.]), when the disciples of Christ realized that faith in Him could validly express itself in another culture than the one of its original milieu. It was the meeting of Christianity with the Greek and Roman culture, in a reciprocal interaction modifying both. Then came the meeting with the "barbarian" world around the fifth century, then that of the European pagans that the monks evangelized as well as the world of the Far East and that of the Americas of the 16th century. Finally in the last two centuries the meeting with the smallest villages around the world, arriving today at the double challenge mentioned above: the geographical displacement of Christianity's center of gravity, and the emergence of the new worldwide culture which combines with the different local cultures, dominating them more and more.

Inculturation, a work of grace we allow to work in us

More conscious than in the past of the fact that culture is the matrix in which each of us achieves humanity, we have a better understanding today that the incarnation of the Son of God is not only a phenomenon of biological order. The entrance of God into our humanity is not only an entrance into human flesh, but also into a history, a culture: that of the people of Israel. He came not to abolish but to accomplish. The thirty years of Jesus in Nazareth, was a time of patient inculturation of the Son of God as it was defined above.

Today, the energy of the Resurrected One - word and act of salvation - must continue to put down roots in the same way in the culture of a

society, not in an abstract and intellectual manner, but by the patient work of transformation that it operates in the heart of every Christian, like the leaven in the dough. What Claude Pairault said of a pastor applies to all Christians: “**The good news of Christ must first be inculturated in him**”, if he hopes to work for the inculturation of the faith there wherever he is sent.

Everywhere today, the disciples of Jesus Christ are urged to bring about in themselves this evangelism of the double culture which shapes their daily existence: the “vertical” inherited from their ancestors, and the “horizontal” which includes all of us. It is something to which we probably submit, yet at the same time we contribute to it, shaping an eminently personal work but one that can only be done together. ■

After ITAICI, looking towards NAIROBI; experiences and reflections regarding culture

Madrid is a great city in central Spain, in southern Europe and north of Africa. It is our social and cultural milieu and, therefore, the source of the reflections and activities that I want to share with these few lines. Our cultural milieu is not at all irrelevant. Our Community is made up of university, and secondary school professors, primary school teachers, and teachers of religion, other educators and some scientists. Some of us work in the field of communications related to culture and participate in various political, social, scientific and cultural organizations.

The importance of culture is evident, although at times we postpone acting in this area because there are others that might seem more urgent. Or perhaps we simply ignore it considering it elitist or the exclusive right of limited community action and therefore not very far-reaching. Nothing could be further from the truth. In Spanish, as well as in other European languages emanating from Latin, we define culture as the ensemble of a way of life, beliefs, knowledge and degree of development of a human community. In other words, culture determines the way we move, breathe, eat, grow or decline, the

way we act and work. We are at the same time both child and parents of the culture in which we are immersed. Thus the centrality of the culture makes it clear that culture *“embraces all the activity of the people: their intelligence and their affectivity, their search for feeling, their customs and their ethical resources”*.

From culture, this non-genetic inheritance, we get our oral and written language and the other countless means and forms of expressing and manifesting our feelings, assimilating intangible criteria to discover what is comely and beautiful. We learn to administer the passing of time: culture accompanies us in the birth of our children and in the death of our dear ones. It provides an explanation about our position in the world and in the universe and it justifies our way of relating to nature. In the culture in which we live we find mechanisms, which cause us to face our desire for going beyond the brief and limited life that it offers us. We learn how to relate with those nearest to us, with older people, with our peers and with those far off. Culture influences the basic rules of a group and forms the behavior that enables life in society to be possible and profitable, at least for some. Culture is an approach to the mystery of God; it is the means through which we receive the Gospel message and through which we built the Reign of God, it impregnates our living of the faith. Moreover, from a complementary point of view *“a faith that isn’t converted into culture is a faith not welcomed in its fullness, not thought of in its entirety, not lived with fidelity”*. Such is the importance of culture that the Second Vatican Council finds it *“characteristic of human beings that they don’t arrive at their full and true humanity except through culture”*.

Culture is not foreign to sin. Each time culture fragments and becomes the

sum of “cultural products,” and as such is controlled by the laws of the market, it already no longer fulfills our desire to reach our full and true humanity, its dominating purpose. The consequences are disastrous. Sin becomes encrusted on our form of life, on our way of expressing ourselves and of relating to others. In the measure that it is penetrated by sin, culture prevents us from reaching our full humanity. It limits our reception of the Gospel message and our ability to bring it to life. The proclamation of the Good New causes a rupture, it *“denounces and corrects the presence of sin in cultures; it purifies and exorcizes what diminishes. As a result, it establishes a criticism of cultures...”*. The last World Assembly of CLC (Itaici 1998) recognized the urgency, universality and multiplying power that evangelizing a culture and inculturating the Gospel message implies. It calls us to work for the full presence of Christ in cultures, to bring about the growth of what is good and to transform all that is negative in the cultures in which we live.

Culture and politics

The first experience that I am going to relate refers to the reflection and work carried out to attain in those places where it does not exist, a political culture receptive to religious action, to the social analysis made with faith and the values that, according to faith, bring about the construction of a more just society. In our case, participation in politics was the fruit of God’s call matured after some years of reflection,

Tomás Gómez Álvarez-Arenas, born in Madrid, Spain in 1966, is married with three children.

Holding various responsibilities in CLC at the National level (1991-1999), he also participated in the Hong Kong and Itaici Assemblies. Except for a number of years lived in Glasgow, Tomás has belonged to CLC in Madrid since 1985. As a Doctor in Physical Sciences, his work is in scientific research with the Superior Council of Scientific Research, which is the major public organization of research in Spain.

which took place in CLC Spain. Multiple courses, seminars and other events organized around socio-political questions were carried out after the Assembly of Hong Kong. In concrete, this experience regards an initiative which arose when some militants and sympathizers - both Christians and socialists - of the Socialist Spanish Worker's Party (PSOE) wanted to break through the conflict that for historical reasons persisted in Spain between being Christian and being a socialist.

It was a great challenge to dismantle the barriers that separated the declaration of the Kingdom's values from the political behavior of a party like the PSOE. As a result of this initiative and of hard work on the part of many people (my local community actively participated in this), three meetings were called by the PSOE's executive council: "Christians and Socialism" (October 1998), "Against Exclusion. For Equality" (April 1999) and "Christians in European Socialist Parties" (December 1999). As a result, a group was formed called "Christians in the PSOE" which was able to be present, even on the web page of the party where one can read the document "Build bridges and open doors", a synthesis of what we want and are looking for. The last chapter of this history proposes the publication of the book *Build bridges between the PSOE and the Christian world* with contributions by José Luis Rodríguez Shoemaker (General Secretary of the PSOE) and Antonio Guterres (Prime Minister of Portugal and President of the International Socialist group) among others. Also there are important contributions from members of CLC! The same Rodríguez Shoemaker affirms: "... today in a decisive way we began something new; that is, the acceptance by the socialist party of religious beliefs and in particular of Christianity as a

positive factor for a project of the left. This is the pending task: substitute the negation of religious values or an attitude of indifference with a recognition and positive evaluation of the same."

In the beginning, the participation of my local CLC was the sum of the participation of several of us. The Community accompanied us, supported us, and helped us to discern. It is important to note that at a given moment, we questioned whether we should give this task a certain priority among the many tasks which occupied us and whether we should establish any type of concrete and effective means to successfully accomplish the work that continued to grow (maintenance of the web page, coordination of groups, organization of seminars etc). We understood that this task was increasing and urgent, and that if we didn't do it nobody else would. We understood that this was a call from God and we decided to get involved in the task as a Community. The result has been irregular; it was the first time that we embarked upon a common task of this type. It is important to note that little by little, in the light of the task that we wanted to carry out, we have reconsidered the organization of our own Community.

Culture and means of communication

Reason and Faith is a monthly magazine of culture founded in 1901 and published by the Society of Jesus. At the moment, the Editorial Staff is made up of seven people: three Jesuits and four lay persons; two are members of CLC and companions in my Community. I should mention that we are not on this Editorial Staff simply because we are members of CLC but because we are professionals although, no doubt, when the Society of Jesus invited us to collaborate with them

they knew that they could find in us not only qualified professional people but also people who could identify with their objectives and methods of acting (at least that's what I believe). It is necessary to add that, on our part, it is unlikely that we would have accepted this invitation if we were not members of CLC. Our responsibility is focused exclusively on short term planification, and restricted fundamentally to writing the editorials, determining the topics to deal with, then writing about them. The topics that are within our area of competency regard sociology, National and European politics, science and society, political science, the environment etc.

To measure the degree of our participation, aside from the signed contributions which appear with a certain regularity, we can give an example of the eleven editorials published in the period January-June 2002: four were entrusted directly to us. This was a positive experience in our collaboration with the Society of Jesus in this "cultural task" and in what we consider being receptive to the reality that surrounds us, making efforts to come up with reflections that can illuminate and generate criteria. That is our intention! We know very well that what *Reason and Faith* says and publishes has much less impact than we would like or hope for. However, it also is true that on some occasions it has a certain influence in ecclesial sectors or even socially significant areas.

Community and culture

Recognizing the countless defects and sins of our culture, it is, however, absolutely impossible (and completely inadvisable) to exclude the cultural environment in which we live. In Community, we are surprised again and

again to see how our way of life, our behavior at work, our family life, etc, seems absolutely strange to the world in which we live and to the values that we pursue. The local CLC is the first milieu in which we have brought about a subculture born from the rupture and the criticism that living the Gospel causes with our urban, Spanish, European and well-to-do culture. Thus the local Community is the contra-cultural seed which allows us to act as agents of change, each in our fundamental circumstances transforming the world from within while at the same time the Community itself manifests itself to the world and tries to make public our ways of acting, proceeding and being Church. Seeing how every year there are a number of people who come to the Community confirms us in this road. We are glad to see how God calls some to live the CLC way: the Community grows; the group multiplies.

Conclusion: criteria for realization

There are many experiences that remain in the inkwell: education, family, youth, science, immigrants and the clash of cultures that affect us. But it seemed more opportune to center on some concrete aspects. As we go on living these experiences we continue deepening criteria, which help us to discern:

- If we want to affect and transform culture, with all the multipliers that this task includes, we must act in a significant and public form. Although valuable in other milieu, actions that take place exclusively in the area of what is personal, i.e. linked to my circumstances, my work environment, my family [etc], are not generators of a new culture. It is necessary that our

behavior is significant perhaps not so much in volume as in depth and also that it be public, open so that all may see it.

- Our behavior should be “convincing”; it should enlighten the culture of being fully human as the Gospel teaches us, and therefore be attractive, enviable; convincing in the sense that living this way as we desire is worth the effort.

- Lastly, it is necessary to act in the places where the culture extends: centers of education, universities, means of communication, political, social and cultural associations, and participate actively in the generation of new cultural elements by means of the arts, the sciences.

Only in this way will we be generators of a new culture of love and not of small alternative subcultures.■

JESUS and Counter culture

A “COMPOSITION” OF OUR TIME AND PLACE

Ignatius of Loyola begins many meditations in his Spiritual Exercises with “a composition of place,” an exercise of the imagination to situate prayerful contemplation in concrete human circumstances. Since this world is the arena of God’s presence and activity, Ignatius believes that we can find God if we approach the world with generous faith and a discerning spirit.

Kottar diocese is in Tamil Nadu State, situated on the southern tip of India, near Kanyakumari, where the three oceans, the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal meet. It was here that St. Francis Xavier came and preached and sowed the seeds of Christianity. It is mainly a fishing community and a struggling people for survival, beating the storms of the seas and of the large trawler industry wanting to exploit the

simple fishing community. Compared to other parts of India, the Kottar diocese has a high percentage of Christians, and politically the Church is quite a power to be reckoned with. In the recent local elections, the Christians’ vote got divided and hence the third party came up. Mrs. Antoniammal, one of the CLC members, was a candidate at the local elections. In her own words, “Even though I knew I was going to lose, I was able to speak about the facts of the issues facing the people and create awareness among the masses. This was important.”

Kottar diocese has a dynamic CLC Bishop who attended the National CLC Formation Program in Bombay just 6 months before he was appointed Bishop. The Basic Christian Communities (BCC) form the basis of the Kottar Church and the CLC, over the years, has been the key lay organization in Formation and Apostolic Leadership.

Education is the apostolic thrust of the Kottar CLC. The Youth CLCers are now speaking up and beginning to take

By **Fr. Paul Vaz, S.J.**
(Bombay)

Fr. Selva Raj L. (Kottar)

“Incarnating Gospel values in every situation so that every culture can realize its potential to bring humans fully alive.”

part in the reform of their culture. The CLC meetings usually bring the reality around in the members' reflections. It is interesting to note how the Christians here, have in language, dress and occupation identified with the other communities and into the national mainstream. You do not see the Western Padroada Church, like Bombay, Goa or Mangalore. The empowerment of women has also been a major CLC mission, and the senior CLC women had the courage to demand the closure of the liquor shops.

CLC Kottar is very mission focussed, and mission is the outflow of their CLC formation and spirituality.

THEIR INSPIRATION - THE KINGDOM

Jesus' Project for a New Society remains the motivating force of the CLCers. When the revelation of God's love (the kingdom) encounters its appropriate response in one's trusting acceptance of that love (repentance) there begins a great movement of liberation, which sweeps through a person's individual and societal history. The movement liberates the individual (brings **FREEDOM**); enables him/her to exercise concern for others in community (fosters **FELLOWSHIP**) and compels the community to change societal structures, which make genuine freedom and fellowship impossible (urges **JUSTICE**). Freedom, Fellowship and Justice are thus three parameters of the kingdom's thrust towards liberation, and together they define the true dimensions of the kingdom.

- a) **FREEDOM:** The Kingdom brings freedom to the individual, that is, it liberates the person from the internal compulsions

and the external pressures that constrain him/her. These compulsions and pressures have their roots in deep needs and fears - both of which, psychologists tell us, are ultimately caused by an absence of love. It is the unloved persons whose emptiness drives them to fill the gaping void in their life (St. Augustine's: "We were made for Thee O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee!") by grasping compulsively at possessions, position or power. An experience of God's unconditional love (the Kingdom) remedies this. It so fills the heart with love and the joy that love brings, that they no longer need (and so is no longer dependent on) the ephemeral satisfaction that "things" can give. Further, it gives so great a sense of loveableness that one is no longer dependent on (and so at the mercy of) the approval of others. The person is truly 'free'. Jesus is of course the supreme example of such freedom.

- b) **FELLOWSHIP:** The fellowship of the Kingdom leads inevitably to a fellowship of mutual concern. Born of an experience of unconditional love, Christian freedom empowers and impels the free person to surrender his/her freedom in love. Paul has expressed this well, "Christ has set us free in order that we might remain free." he tells the Galatians (5:1). He then goes on to say, "You were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but

through love be slaves of one another.” (5; 13)

The fellowship of the Kingdom is strongly urged by Jesus who both practices and preaches radical and universal concern for every one in need (Lk.3: 32-36; 10: 30-37); and who proposed the love commandment as the ultimate norm of all Christian behaviour.

- c) **JUSTICE:** Where there is fellowship, justice will inevitably follow. The radical concern of the Kingdom will not tolerate passivity in the face of social, economic and political structures, which oppress people and dehumanize humanity. In a post-Marxian age, which has begun to realize just how oppressive social structures are, Christian concern cannot be content with merely rescuing the victims of these structures, or attempting (with dubious success) to convert the exploiters who maintain them. It is the vast dehumanizing structures themselves, of which both oppressor and oppressed are victims that must be challenged and changed.

The **Kingdom** proclaimed by Jesus thus leads to freedom, fellowship and justice - that is to new liberating relationships with God and neighbour, and to new liberating structures in society. The Kingdom, calls for change of heart and a change of structures. Both are necessary. It is the community, which Jesus inaugurated as the New Israel and of which the Church has been set up to be the sacramental sign to show the world that such a **Community** can indeed be built.

CLC KOTTAR - STRIVING TO BE THE KINGDOM COMMUNITY

“ We shall incarnate ourselves in our own culture while still having the strength to be counter - cultural in our criticism and witness.”

“We attend especially to those who are searching that they may find meaning and to those who are hopeless that they may find a way.”

“We search for better forms of education so that true values may be appropriated and lived.”

(from Our Common Mission Statement)

The counter-cultural movement of the Kottar CLC has been at two levels: the structural level and the *attitudinal* level.

At the Structural Level

In the earlier days there used to be the ‘Committee System’ that was exercised in the administration of the Parish. There would be a group of four or five members and they were “all in all’. All the power centered on them. These members were usually the economically well off, the politically influential, the socially established, and the muscle power people. At times they also happened to be all from the same family. So naturally, the whole village was in their hands and at their mercy.

Today we have a “Participatory System” through the introduction of the Parish Council. How strange this should come in the 21st Century. The Parish Council takes care of the needs of the Parish through a shared responsibility. There are different committees: the Finance Committee, the Peace Committee, the Development Committee and so on. Responsibility is shared and a lot of participation takes place. The Parish

council representatives are covering the whole Parish. About 30 to 40 families come together and democratically elect their representatives.

CLC plays a key role in forming these Parish Councils and in their training. The Diocesan Lay Commission conducts the Parish Council election. CLC has an important part to play in the Diocesan Lay Commission. It has therefore taken an active role in establishing the new structures.

There is also the formation of BCC's. Before the initiation of BCC's, everything centered on the Parish Priest. Now with the BCC's the people themselves discuss and reflect on their own problems and take initiative to solve them. BCC is a special mission entrusted to the CLC of Kottar by our own Diocesan Bishop.

Administrative Level

The people's role in the transformation of the society at the administrative level is also acknowledged by the larger Society. Their involvement in the process is accepted and their strength is recognized in all the villages. CLC gives formation on various topics such as: social awareness, human rights, social analysis, personality development, leadership and spirituality. We see the fruits of all this in the actions taken. "Love must be seen in deeds, not only in words," says St. Ignatius and this is CLC Spirituality in Mission.

Mrs. Josephine Mary is now Union Councillor, of Nagercoil Town Panchayat. Ms. Anthoniammal from Kahivilai CLC Community was a candidate for the Panchayat Presidential Elections.

All of these CLCers will openly

share that they are able to do all this because of the CLC formation.

At the Attitudinal Level - Women's Liberation

Our formation includes seminars and various training activities constantly given to the CLC local communities. The women are thus empowered. They no longer close themselves up in their houses but are out on the streets raising their voices for social justice. Some examples:

- 1) The Mel-Midalan Community met the transport department and regularized the bus service for Midalan village.
- 2) The Kadiminai Community members met the Panchayat President (the "local self-government" of the Village) in the 'Gram Sabha' meeting and demanded clean drinking water and streetlights.
- 3) The Kathirilai Community conducts free tuition for the school-going students.
- 4) The fight against alcoholism and destroying the liquor booths required courage and guts.

"This we see as counter-culture against the indifference towards social problems and needs," says Celine Mary of the local CLC.

THE COUNTER-CULTURAL GIFT OF CHRIST

Jesus and counter-culture has been a struggle of the peoples of Kottar for the last twenty years or more. CLC has been the backbone of the peoples' struggle and a true witness to the Kingdom values. In the context of centuries of Ignatian spirituality, "the service of faith" cannot mean anything other than to bring the counter-cultural gift of Christ to our world. ■

The Mission of HOLY INNOCENTS

14

By
Giovanna Battistini
Pennizzotto
Pedro Arrupe CLC
in Bologna, Italy

Our group began to meet in the second half of the 1980s. From the beginning we were faced with painful “trials.” In 1990, a CLC member’s fiancé, Andrew, himself a member of the group, died of leukemia (the bone marrow transplant failed). In 1992, Sofia, daughter of two of us, died of meningitis, and two married women from the group suffered repeated involuntary abortions. One of them came close to dying herself because of a failed pregnancy. Finally Angelo, second-born of two of us, was diagnosed in uterus with a serious malformation. Although some physicians recommended an abortion, his mom and dad decided to bring the child to birth. The child died a few hours later. For all these motives, our group’s name is the “Holy Innocents Group”.

In connection with these events, although before some of them, our Ecclesiastical Assistant suggested that we become involved with our children’s religious education. We started on two levels: reading brief texts together and reconstructing the religious education we had received as children. Some of us went into the subject more deeply, reading various publications about it. We then suggested simple workshops to the children during important times of the year, each time choosing which messages to emphasize according to the children’s ages. As a natural evolution, some of us began to make up brief theatrical plays (about 20) from the biblical texts. The

whole group worked together putting on plays both with live actors and puppets (none of us are ‘professionals’). Our way of narrating, in rapport with the children who were almost all elementary school age, was what we ourselves had absorbed in our many years of participation in the biblical groups of the Association To Serve the Good News. Even today we put on about ten shows.

A high point in this journey were two retreats for the children that we carried out one year apart. During the first one we worked together on the book of Jonah and in the second (guided by Mara), we led them in a search for the treasures represented by the stages of the Mass.

On the occasion of the CLC Italy Conference, for the first time we involved the children in the recitation of the actual texts and, judging from the enthusiasm with which they insisted on punctuality for the tryouts, we suspect that they couldn’t wait to do it. I intended to rewrite this report in the light of the stimuli furnished by Don Anthony Torresin at the Conference. There are two passages of Fr. Anthony’s report that I would like to consider: the first takes us back to the “traditio” of the Church, the transmission of the faith to whoever comes after. The second is the idea of giving birth to a child that is of introducing him or her to something luminous. Both are crucial in regard to our experience. Naturally the only reason we are interested in transmitting our

faith to the children is precisely because it is Good News for us: something worth experiencing. When we began to work on the religious education of the children, one of our first steps was that of remembering our own first contacts: those who had transmitted the faith to us.

A few of us had received this transmission of faith from parents, many from grandparents, some from people outside the family. We perceived that Fr. Paul had pointed us in the right direction when he suggested we take on this theme as a community. Perhaps we foresaw that one sows and the other reaps or perhaps that *working together enables us to optimize efforts and bring about more effective results.*

Thus we started by using the methods mentioned in the introduction; since then there has been continuous growth. I don't believe that we have yet arrived at the end of this experience, which maintains a certain simplicity of achievement, even though there is much work behind it.

There are some points that I want to bring out here regarding this experience. They seem to me to be rather "Ignatian" i.e. in line with the type of kerygmatic proclamation that we have received.

In this operation we have "savoured":

- relationships among us that in precedence, functioning on a non-operational level, were a bit formal;
- relationships with our children: sitting on the ground with them cutting out cribs or designing

posters and above all discussing the plays with them after they had seen them again and again. Their questions were and are the point of departure for an ordinary catechesis rich with the density of a daily perfume. It can be carried out in the car, before going to sleep or between one spoon and another of soup;

- finally, we have savoured a quality that goes beyond the ordinary in our relationship with the Lord. Being that I am the one writing the texts, I'll use the first person here, but I am convinced that what I am about to say has also happened to others. While I pondered the Word of God to prepare theatrical texts, even with the guidance of others, I felt as if the Word indeed became animated and dialogued with me. This is the most vibrant way of praying that I have ever experienced.



I want to conclude by praising the Lord with you for His creative power and I want to confirm each of you by stating that the Lord will certainly find amazing ways to weave relationships with us and to teach us to do the same with our children and our companions. ■

At the CLC conference

A Place of MISSION

W

hen they asked me if I would write something for this number of PROGRESSIO I was both pleased and, at the same time, challenged. Pleased because as a delegate from Argentina, I participated in the workshop “Christ and Culture” at the General Assembly in Itaici. This proposal brought back to me the work shared in the group, the strong consolations and desolations, the conversations with the coordinators of the other groups: delegates from Malta, France, the Philippines, as well as the accompaniment of Paul Vaz S.J., of India. Pleased also because the Lord allows me to recognize and share His grace. There was also the challenge of trying to organize my thoughts on the experience lived recently in the light of our Common Mission, in order to share it with the World Community.

The perspective from which I am going to address “culture” is one of systematic education (or in a broader sense, the processes of formation), because this is the area in which I work and with which I have been involved in for so many years in one form or another: catechesis for First Communion or Confirmation, formation of catechists and of community guides in CLC, teaching on different levels of the educational system.

A bit of my history

I chose a university career because I

felt called to teach others. While I studied, and for a certain period even later, this call became a reality through the catechesis of children and adolescents, and the formation of catechists. When I began to collaborate in the National Council of CLC Argentina, I felt the call of the Community for this task. I had already begun to work in the public university - where I was formed - in the area of research and teaching. Within a short time, a new area of work opened up for me: the formation of teachers in the Faculty of “Ciencias Exactas y Naturales” at the same university. All these were professional activities in which I enjoyed working, but at that time I felt that my mission was to focus my greatest efforts on the growth of CLC.

In 2001, we had our National Assembly and, as I had already been discerning for some months, I felt that with all that the Lord had given me it was necessary to discover new roads, to construct a new way of serving.

I saw that work in the public university was a challenging place of mission. This implied:

- Preferring the crossroads to the sure road, the critical situations to the comfortable ones.
- Preferring actions and services that participants could organize in turn. Working with educated people, able to generate new alternatives.

- Forming multipliers.

I asked myself, where should I start? From the governmental structures of the university without participating in a political group? I had the opportunity to participate as a representative for the graduates in the Council of the Center on which the Faculties depend (the Center of Formation and Research in the Teaching of the Sciences) and in December of 2000, I began this work. However, after almost two years it didn't seem to be the place where I could best serve. My concern was (and continues to be) how to link "the university with the poor": how to integrate my professional work with the conviction that "the main service CLC is called to offer today is the promotion of justice in the light of the preferential option for the poor (GP 4, 8)".

In 2001, I carried out the same activity in the university with my students and former students of the faculties, those who became visible signs of the way of the Lord. I mention some of them who were highly significant: a junior of the "Esclavas" of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was a student of mine in two subjects. Upon finishing the first subject of a socio-political character, with its questions on the meaning of education in such a complex world (one that from a critical viewpoint looks "pessimistically" at school, having little power to bring about social transformation), we began a dialogue in which we both grew during that year. Sharing the same faith and the same spirituality (she, working in school support in a village and I, in the university forming professors) we began to meditate and to share a dream. How it is possible to give a "quality" education to those who have so many disadvantages? How can so many interesting pedagogical theories become reality and generate alternative proposals? How

could we not be naive and, yet, have hope? We shared these and other questions and tried to respond to them together, each from our own position.

At the beginning of this year, in the corridor of the Faculty I bumped into a former student, a member of a student group with representation in the Administrative Council of the Faculty and on the Council of the Department of his profession: Computer Science. During our talk we came to one of his concerns: the necessity of having a university extension, putting his knowledge at the service of the most needy. His request was concrete: that we help them construct good proposals for formation, with foundations.

Some elements to consider regarding the topic

Jerome Bruner, an important cognitive psychologist says: "Culture gives form to the mind, it gives us the box of tools through which we build not only our worlds but our very concepts of ourselves" (*La educación: puerta de la cultura*). Education is a part of culture and, at the same time, it is one of the tools needed to reach it. It is this that enables us to think in a critical and transforming way about our own culture and on the other hand to create "different worlds". In matters, which for many of us are basic and "natural" like reading and writing, there are possibilities for making abstractions, for thinking, imagining, dreaming, or "desiring" (as St. Ignatius



**María
Laura**

Eder, born in Buenos Aires, Argentina, 35 years ago, holds a degree in Education, a Masters in Pedagogy and is a student of the Doctorate program in the teaching of sciences at the University of Buenos Aires. She works as an educator and researcher in the same university and as a pedagogical advisor in the School of Medicine at the University Institute of the Italian Hospital. A member of CLC since 1982, Laura served as a member of the National Council from 1994 until 2001, first as consultant and then as president. Presently she collaborates in various courses or formation meetings.

would say). Education is a fundamental instrument on which many of our brothers and sisters cannot count on. How can we think of a just society, how to recognize in our own culture that which makes us a people and that which alienates us if we don't have the tools to do it? We affirm in our CLC Common Mission: We support the rich symbolism that enables us to dream and to continue to create even as we recognize that the symbolism can be used to degrade and destroy. We commit ourselves, then, to helping others understand these "symbols".

When we think about education today, in a pedagogical sense, we qualify it as "good," not already "successful". We restore the ethical sense of this social and human practice. When we explain this concept to our students (future teachers), a question arises, the question of the why and the wherefore of the task. It is not only a matter of teaching mathematics or biology, it is a matter of questioning ourselves about the value of what do we do for those who will see "the world" in a different way through us. In this way we blend *Ignatian spirituality* and academic formation, the magis and university formation. Always looking for the greater glory of God, we try to find better ways of helping others. A good teacher is one who obtains a good formation, never definitive. Those are the ones who don't wait to serve, but who evaluate and reflect on what is necessary in order to find better and better ways to bring about the Gospel values especially among the poorest of the poor.

Education turns out to be an essential instrument for those who live without hope, because it is a visible sign that "to be" and "to have" are different.

When students point out that what we explained to them is a utopia, that it is very difficult to think of the possibility of transformation because of the limitations of the work, we can do no more than to propose that they work in groups, with others. This is a clear answer for today when faced with the individualism of a hegemonic culture. We try then to form teachers who are fully conscious of the important task that they are carrying out while at the same time aware of the limitations that they will encounter.

"Christ and culture" today

In the framework of the Common Mission and as a point of development in our community, we have given the following advice to young volunteers who go weekly to give scholastic support to the many who lack, among other things, the qualified help necessary to resolve the problems that school gives them. It is in this concrete task where some of the previous reflections begin to become reality. It is a matter of trying to help the volunteers discover the value of their mission, showing them the necessity of formation so that the service they carry out answers those who today are part of the ever growing group of people excluded from our society.

Another step along these lines has been the approach to a director who believes in and is committed to the "education of the poor": the director of a public school in one of the many villages of our city of Buenos Aires, who knows that with the effort of different sectors it is possible to bring about some of the most basic human rights. A project is planned to generate combined activities with the students of the university, creating meeting places for those who

reach levels of excellency in their formation with those who are poor in this area.

In the “today” of a mission that is in process of becoming reality, there exists the challenge and the richness of working with those who don’t share the faith, but who are convinced of the importance of the task and of the necessity of giving our best.

I constantly remember the words of Elena, a Cuban, with whom we shared the work in Itaici and from whom I learned a great deal in those days of the Assembly: *“Many of those who want to receive this ‘letter’ don’t know how to read. It is our mission to enable them, especially them, to receive the message.”*

A challenge for all CLC; a commitment with the Lord of History. ■

For a Culture of HOPE

A significant presence in the world belongs to our CLC vocation, building Good where Evil predominates, bringing to it Truth, Justice and Love where their contraries exist. As lay people, we want to bring peace, joy and happiness into our environment. Discerning God’s will has been our daily task and care. As CLC members, we feel called to serve God in the world. As we read in CLC Charism, “we recognize that the whole world is our meeting place with God” and it is where He calls us to make a difference. This has been a challenge for us. Sometimes it is very hard to testify to God’s love in the midst of so much suffering, in a world that changes so quickly and of contradictory values.

Within our limits, we do our best to awaken around us the consciousness of Jesus Christ alive in His resurrection. For instance, in our Parish where we participate in daily Mass, we have tried to enhance the activities of its members through a research of availabilities. According to the orientations from the CNBB (National Conference of Brazilian Bishops), we have supported a weekly meeting to study the Acts of the Apostles. Thereafter, almost two hundred people became ready to

cooperate with parish activities. As well, we guided the Spiritual Exercises on some weekends. From these experiences two groups of Ignatian Spirituality began. Maybe new members will join CLC from these groups. Some of them undertook doing the Exercises in Daily Life and are amazed with the depth they can attain in this new way of praying. Without any prejudice towards other kinds of spirituality, they are discovering how important and pleasant it is to meet and discern God’s will.

In our diocese of Santos, São Paulo State, we have helped in the pastoral work of children with presentations to its leaders and coordinators. These people, mostly women of modest means, show an immense desire of becoming skilled so as to help other mothers and their children.

This pastoral work, developed in Brazil and spread through many countries, works with the orientation of mothers about all kinds of care for their little ones. It teaches families about children’s



Milton and Catarina

Catarina Augusta de Oliveira Pasin de Lacerda,

born in Bauru, São Paulo State, Brazil, graduated in Arts, Education and Clinical Psychology.

Milton Paulo de Lacerda,

born in Santos, São Paulo State, Brazil, graduated in Classical Arts, Education, Philosophy, Theology and Clinical Psychology.

Working together in their professional lives, they also collaborated in writing **“Adolescence, Problem, Myth or Challenge?”** a book addressed to

adolescents, their parents and teachers. Milton has written and published about thirty books on Youth, Spirituality and Psychology. Members of CLC since 1996, both are guides of the Spiritual Exercises and accompany groups of retreatants. Catarina has served as Secretary of the Regional CLC in São Paulo State and during the World CLC Assembly in Itaici, both she and Milton were members of the Support Team.

nutrition and other topics to improve health and every form of well-being. The outcome of this effort is a better understanding and harmony inside the family itself.

As professional psychologists dealing with people's problems, we try to improve their lives and to offer them hope. Even while distinguishing in our practice the difference between Psychology and Religion, many clients come to us just because we are Catholics and overtly religious. It is not uncommon that they bring questions of faith into the therapy session. In due course, we are conscious that our role is to testify that we are competent professionals because we are Christians. We attend a Catholic Association of Psychologists and Psychiatrists in our town. In this way, we attempt to share our Ignatian Spirituality with other colleagues. As a suggestion of ours, the meetings start with some moments of meditation and sharing of a biblical text following the steps of Ignatian prayer. On the last weekend in September, we will guide a special group of Exercises for Psychologists in Itaici.

As far as the Regional CLC is concerned, we

participate in the Executive Committee and contribute by guiding several groups making the Spiritual Exercises every year. In order to deepen formation, Milton offered some courses such as “Human Promotion and Growth in Faith”, “Personal and Communal Discernment” and “A Transactional Analysis of the Historical Jesus”. After a long and serious discernment, we made our CLC Temporary Commitment last July 20 in the presence of several members of the Brazilian Community.

Book writing has been a way to help people to achieve hope. Milton has written several of them in the area of Youth Formation, Practical Psychology and Spirituality. Some have been translated into Spanish so that they will be available in all Latin America countries. Among them is a collection about “Virtues” that deserves to be remembered. Each of the seven booklets (Humility, Confidence, Patience, Dialogue, Joy, Detachment and Courage) is about thirty pages long and contains short comments on the quotations of well-known personalities.

We know that God's calling has nothing to do with a romantic ideal. He calls us to deal with real life. In a Godless era, although it may sound odd, the pull of God is very strong. People are seeking a meaning for their lives. We assume that as we are called to CLC, we are first of all called to participate in the Paschal Mystery and also to help people find the way to the real meaning of life. We deeply wish to be led by the Lord and ask for the grace to pay attention to the movements of the Spirit. ■

Meeting a New Culture... and CLC KOREA

Living in Luxembourg, the smallest state member of the European Union with 440,000 inhabitants, means that we live daily in a multicultural environment. The country is situated between Belgium, France and Germany and our compatriots live with the traditions and language of Luxembourg at the confluence of two big European cultures: German and French. Beyond the geographical situation and the restrictions of access because of territorial confines, the multicultural characteristic also is imposed by another phenomenon: considerable immigration. In 2002, foreign residents represent about 37% of the total population. The Portuguese community (13%) is the principal immigrant group. The Italians and people originating from the three neighbouring countries (French, Belgians and Germans) represent respectively between 2.5% and 5% of the resident population. Next to these immigrants of European origin, there are people originating from a large range of countries - including some Asian countries - but their total number is modest.

We acquired the interest and taste for Asian cultures and for the Korean culture in particular 18 years ago when, after have adopted our eldest child in Luxembourg, we decided to adopt our second child from South Korea. We wanted to know about his country of origin so that we could speak to him about it and give him the desire to go there one day.

This project was realized a year ago. Guy was contacted by a Korean colleague living in Paris hoping to collaborate on a presentation for the international symposium of statistics in Seoul in August 2001. We chose to benefit from this opportunity to organize a trip to South Korea, one we had always considered making "one day" as a family in order to visit our son, Yves, country of origin. That's how in December 2000, we spent a beautiful evening in Paris with the family of this colleague around a delicious Korean meal, letting ourselves be introduced to Korea and to become enthusiastic about the history, traditions and present culture of this "country of quiet mornings".

With the aid of the Luxembourg Adoption Association, we brought together a group of adoptive families from Luxembourg who would participate in the proposed journey organized by "Holt," the Korean Adoption Organization. This group of 16 people was our first group to be welcomed by "Holt." We were well accompanied by a Korean guide, a professor of French at the Seoul University who had lived in France for 10 years.

During the first six months of the year 2001, we had already gathered much information, but the best preparation was offered us by a quite

Edith and Guy Schuller, members of CLC Luxembourg since 1987, have been married for 24 years and have two adopted children (born in 1982 and 1984).

Guy is economist to the National Institute of Statistical of Luxembourg and Edith is a committed volunteer in pastoral work (on the parochial and regional level) and in CLC.

unexpected event. In July, we replied positively to the request of the National Youth Service in Luxembourg who were looking for families to welcome six young Korean and Japanese youth enrolled at an international camp of art, and who wanted to discover the country and the Luxembourgish culture by living in a family. We received a young 17-year-old Korean boy and a 19-year-old Korean girl (the ages corresponded to those of our children) for one week at the end of July. With a lot of patience (especially for communications in English and in French), imagination and a spirit of creativity, we succeeded in creating ties of friendship, which enabled us to meet again with our friends and their families at the end of our stay in Seoul. These privileged contacts allowed us to enter Korea not as a foreign country, but as a country already “known” since we had friends there.

Our journey consisted of a tour of South Korea with 5 stages of 3 to 4 days in important cities. Certainly we visited marvellously restored palaces dating from different eras, Buddhist temples, the cathedral of Seoul, museums, a folk village, the island of Cheju with its volcanic stones, some markets etc. But it was the meetings with the Koreans themselves, which marked us the most. A very touching moment was undoubtedly the visit to the center of the adoption organization “Holt” in Seoul where we received explanations on the cultural, social and political reasons, which brought about the abandonment of children in Korea and how they are adopted. (During the last 18 years, more than 500 Korean children were adopted in Luxembourg.) We also met foster mothers and some babies waiting to be adopted in the locale where Yves had been 17 years earlier.

Another rich experience was the

welcome by a Protestant Korean family (very fervent) for an evening around a typical Korean meal eaten around a low table while seated on the ground. We shared about our commitments in the Church, our respective traditions, Korean and Luxembourgish songs and sang “Stille Nacht” (“Silent Night”) together in German since it was the only song we all knew.

In addition, we had the good fortune to meet about a dozen members of the Korean CLC. A short time before our departure for Korea, we had sought to get in touch with the CLC of Korea. Thanks to an article that appeared in *PROGRESSIO* 1-2, 2001, we knew that they had their Secretariat at the Sogang University in Seoul. The very dynamic and competent Veronica Kim wished to meet us alone first in order to prepare a presentation of the CLC Luxembourg in Korean. She typed her notes on her laptop directly into Korean, except for some explanations that we gave in English on the history, the present situation and the orientations of our community. How surprised we were the following day, when we discovered that our explanations had been typed in English in order to be projected on “transparencies” whereas we gave a presentation on our community directly to those present. After answering questions raised by our presentation, we were then able to understand the presentation of the Korean CLC accompanied by a power point projection in English. We were stunned by the professionalism of this young community.

I don’t intend to give an exhaustive description of CLC Korea here, but I recommend to any reader interested in knowing more about the development, the present situation and the vision for the future of the CLC Korea to read the

article in *PROGRESSIO* (1-2, 2001) on its history (very short, since their community was only born in 1985!). We want to limit ourselves to the aspects which - in this personal meeting with such a different community from ours - have the most affected and challenged us.

The CLC of Korea is very young in the sense of its “seniority” in the worldwide CLC but also because of a large presence of young adults. This might explain the energy, the dynamism, the technical expertise, the enormous appetite for formation (already characteristic of the Korean culture in general!), the capacity for work and the efficiency of its members. In the minuscule Secretariat (about 14 m²) that we visited, there are three regular workers paid by the community, whose members have the custom of giving a tenth of their salary to the CLC.

Formation holds a privileged place and demands a considerable commitment on the part of the members:

- group meetings once a week;
- a course of theology of Thursday evenings (for three years);
- “Zacchaeus” program: a program of personal conversion and commitment for the poor (6 months);
- academy of the NGO Catholics (every Wednesday for 3 months);
- basic Spiritual Exercises in daily life for 10 weeks, where one learns to see the world as it is (politics, economy, social) and to discover his/her vocation;
- apostolic engagement: once a week (or one week a year for the students): work in the poor districts, in leprosariums, structural and administrative aid

to the poor, school aid, protection of the environment.

“Commitment is not an act of good will, but is based on prayer and reflection,” we repeat time and again. We see that! Moreover, the CLC Korea doesn’t work alone: it collaborates in many projects with civil NGOs or with religious.

This young community of laity in the Church is autonomous; the only Jesuit aid is that of the National Ecclesiastical Assistant and the collaboration in courses of theology. The meeting room and the Secretariat are also put at their disposal by the Jesuits on the site of the Jesuit University “Sogang”. For all the other tasks of formation, of accompaniment of groups and retreats, the laity are trained (in the beginning by gathering together documents from the Worldwide CLC which they adapted and translated into their language); thus they became teachers in their turn.

Another fact we noticed is the importance that the members of CLC Korean give to their CLC commitment. For example: the General Assembly is constituted only of members who have pronounced a temporary (20 people) or a definitive (3) commitment. Temporarily committed members renew their commitment each year on the feast of St. Ignatius.

This experience of discovering a very different culture from ours through personal privileged meetings was very precious for us, and we were happy to live it as a family. We note that the openness

CLC Korea



on both sides as well as the mutual confidence having as its basis a “favourable presupposition” were important factors enabling us to dare to discover, meet and love others in their differences and their uniqueness. It is

always necessary, however, to add that the exchanges with other Christians (the CLC members and the Protestant family) were also facilitated and made more intense by the fact that the same spirit animates us and a same faith unites us. ■

CLC as an NGO at the UN

With the impressive testimony of the CLC UN representatives Dan Fitzpatrick S.J. and the late Henry Volken

S.J. in Itaici still in our hearts, the CLC World Secretariat kept contact with members of the ExCo, the Support Group in Geneva and the CLC representative in New York. In the process of searching out how to best serve as a World Community in this field, the need for an international working group became evident. Importance was given to include representation of CLC members from different continents; due to financial questions this was not possible as yet. Roswitha Cooper, Françoise Dubosson, Daniela Frank, Leah Michaud, Brigitte Minier, Anni Rickenbacher and Fernando Salas S.J. began to explore the best possible steps forward, always in close contact with the World ExCo.

The working group meets twice a year in Geneva. The main purpose of the group is twofold:

- a) to support the representative and to give him/her CLC grassroots contact
- b) to offer the world community a formation:
 - towards the personal integration

of the dimensions of faith and justice (GP 4 and 8) and out of the Spiritual Exercises

- towards an empowerment of CLCers: to make them aware of the possibility we have to live out this integration and also to take a public stand.

Among the countless issues in the Human Rights field, the decision to concentrate on a specific area was taken. Racism and Forced Migration affect most CLC in their countries, and here are opportunities for service rooted in our Ignatian Spirituality both on a local and worldwide level. The European CLC, coordinated by the Euroteam, decided to focus on Forced Migration. At a meeting of the newly formed Forced Migrants Network in Malta in June 2001, the reality in different countries was looked at and a next session is planned in Switzerland in January 2003. The NGO Working Group is invited to attend.

In the chosen area of Refugee/Migrants, the decision to focus even more specifically on **Racism** resulted from a collective brainstorming and assessment of the most critical and concrete option for this time. Racism has many faces and expressions depending on political, social, cultural, religious biases and so touches everyone. The option to work against racism was expressed in a hopeful and positive statement: **multi-cultural respect and dialogue**.

CLC is an accredited Non Governmental Organisation (NGO) at the United Nations (UN).

We have a representative in Geneva and in New York. Very valuable work is being done through direct interventions and collaboration with other NGOs. In New York, various CLC members worked with Daniel Fitzpatrick S.J. over the years. In Geneva, a support group started in 1993 with Henry Volken S.J.; members of it take part in the Working Group introduced here.

Keeping in mind the fruitful collaboration of CLC with the Jesuit Refugee Service, Christine Bloch the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) UN representative was asked to represent not only JRS, but also CLC at the UN in Geneva. Christine, married and mother of two, visits refugee camps all over the world and fervently lobbies at the UN in behalf of the poor and migrants.

For CLC, the focus on Forced Migration and Racism can become a significant aspect of following Christ's invitation to join Him in preparing the world to become the complete reign of God. This takes up the three areas of mission discovered in Itaiici:

- First, we want to bring the freeing power of Christ to our social reality.
- Secondly, we want to find Christ in all our varied cultures and to let His grace illuminate all that needs transformation.
- Thirdly, we want to live Christ so as to bring Him to every aspect of our daily life in the world. (Our Common Mission)

The aim of the NGO Working Group is not to produce more paper, but to encourage CLCers to continue in their process of growth leading to service, to practice individual and communal discernment in view of Racism, and to make use of the possibilities our NGO status offers us. There is need to coordinate our grassroots experiences and to bring them in contact with our representatives. There is also need to pass on information about initiatives and conferences concerning our focus to CLCers. Concurrently, the formation of a similar Working Group is being proposed for the UN in New York.

In our worldwide community there are countless experiences arising from

the “new migratory society”. CLC is challenged to build on these experiences in the service for peace and justice in the world.

Questions for reflection and group sharing

1. What is meant by racism?
2. Where is there racism in my own heart?
3. How do we face xenophobia in our present context?
4. What negative experiences do we have?
5. What positive responses have we given, or are aware of?
6. In what way are we confronted with “forced migration” in our country?
 - Are people forced to leave their homes? If yes, why?
 - Are we living in a place where people look for refuge? What do we know about their reality? How do we react to them?
7. What questions, experiences and fears do we have?
8. How did we feel enriched by people from other cultures and religious backgrounds?
9. What does Scripture have to say?
10. How do we feel called to share the mission of Jesus in today's world for multi-cultural respect and dialogue?
11. What concrete actions are called for by our CLC group, the regional, national or world community?

For the NGO Working Group to act on behalf of the World CLC, it necessitates hearing your experiences. Your responses or comments are welcome. Please email to CLC NGO WG at: mcvx.wclc@agora.it ■

Finding God in All Things even the World Summit on Sustainable Development

There is so much to say about the experiences and growth that came from attending the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa. Here we can only hope to give a brief overview and some snapshots.

The Main Summit, where the United Nations staff, major group delegates, 'lobbyists' and media (like ourselves) and state representatives gathered in the plenary sessions (also on the 'fringe' and behind closed doors at times), was held in one of the most opulent suburbs in South Africa i.e. Sandton. Only about 10 kilometers away

is the overcrowded Alexandra Township, where people attempt to make shanty homes extending onto pavements with no water or sewerage system. The mere location reflected the 'global apartheid', unjust disparity and causes of suffering in our world. Even our CLC representation, three white South African women, the only people available for a

dedicated 2 - weeks due to family, community and employer support, location, education, knowledge and other circumstances, highlighted the effect of this reality. The Jesuits and friends, too, were mostly from American and European origin, yet now predominately located in the poorer world.

The theme and slogan of this UN summit in Johannesburg was: People, Planet, Prosperity.

People, planet and prosperity are inextricably intertwined. The relationships and dialogue between those influencing the social and environmental sectors have improved over the years. In fact, among the workshops, arranged by the International Jesuit Network for Development and introduced by the Jesuit and CLC group (Poverty and the Environment: A false Dichotomy), more sharing than debate was stimulated. However, there is much suspicion and animosity between these aforementioned sectors and those that significantly affect the economy i.e. business, politicians, and those generally with power and the 'purse-strings'. Perhaps one source of the apparent failure of the summit was an inability or lack of openness to hear each other as a result of the distrust in this relationship. Very few tangible and practical solutions were found that could be implemented in a sustainable fashion - a dream expressed by prominent UN and political speakers.

Who are the people?

Although many were marginalised at the Main Summit, the spectrum of people that were the source of its major group representatives was from the various non-governmental organisations (NGO's). There were men and women, children/youth, rich and poor, privileged and marginalised, all races, religions, scientists, technologists, local

By

Alex Larkin

(our passionate 'greeny' teacher)

Barbara Gearing

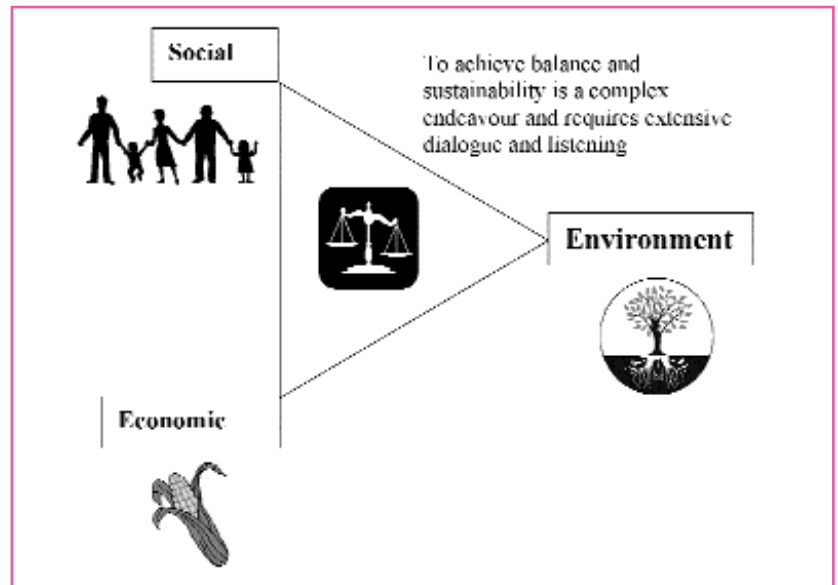
('mom' to more than her children)

Maryeen Maynard

('enemy' as engineer with electricity utility)

governments, labour and, a new and not very popular participant – business. All were demonstrating something about themselves at the Global People's Forum at Nasrec (National Sports and Recreation Centre) and elsewhere around Johannesburg, such as at the more 'up-market' and well organised Ubuntu Village (featuring the innovative green technologies of big business) and the Water Dome (where big water providers rubbed shoulders with small-scale rural water pump designers, wetland organisations, and water treatment groups). It was a great consolation to meet such dedicated and passionate people (often overzealous and, like ourselves, sometimes ignorant of the complexity of issues) committed to improving the world for all. It was a privilege to see and be part of the power and work of the Spirit often anonymously touching hearts all around the world in many different ways and raising up committed people for justice.

Sadly, there was a very small Christian presence that was visible – the South African Catholic Bishop's Conference, and the Jesuits with ourselves (CLC), alone had stands at Nasrec. However, there were interchanges between different religious and other groups resulting in 'de-programming' and wholesome re-forming of minds with the information, dialogue and sharing around our world's problems and the solution. At one of the stands two Israelis and three Palestinians began discussing the peace process in the Middle East. Their exchange was of such intensity and quality that in no time a small crowd had gathered to listen. When it was over, a Kenyan woman spoke up as if to conclude a remarkable impromptu summit: "The Israelis, like the Palestinians, all have a need of peace. Let's cultivate values of



tolerance, justice and love, let's be men and women of peace."

Jesuits and friends!

Our party, the Jesuits (and friends) and CLC, had Mass each morning with almost 20 Jesuit priests taking turns. We, too, were a kaleidoscope of characters, nationalities, strengths and weaknesses (often visible due to the heavy schedule, little sleep and stress from media commitments). We met each evening to relate the highs, lows, learnings, events at the summit and logistics of our day, to prepare interviews and articles and connect with each other and God again. The fulfillment of the Father-General's wish that we have a truly community experience further enriched and ensured "Finding God in All Things". Oh! What friends have been made!

The stand at Nasrec that the Jesuits generously shared with us was our main meeting place during the day. We had an interactive computer presentation, which flipped through photos of various Jesuit activities (it had to 'compete' with the Tibetan Monks nearby making a coloured Sand Mandala). This was all accompanied by lots of pamphlets, and posters on the walls showing Jesuit involvement with

refugees, human rights concerns and sustainable farming. It was also decorated with CLC photos from World Assemblies and a huge board, which declaimed “Finding God in All Things” next to two pictures of the earth. Many people visited the stall and expressed delight at finding out that the Jesuits are not only involved in education. It was also a nice opportunity for us to tell people about CLC.

Further - the planet and prosperity

There were many workshops and talks offered regarding our planet. It became very clear at a series of lectures arranged during the WSSD by St Augustan’s Catholic University, that as people we are the conscience of the universe, and that we carry a great responsibility in caring for our planet. Only if we do so, respecting ALL of creation, will we prosper.

With the bombardment of statistics and information, one thing became abundantly clear: that the damage that mass production and excessive consumerism does to humanity and our planet has its source in most ‘developed’ countries. This is especially the case with respect to the production, access and use of energy e.g.

electricity, vehicle fuels and gas. If we live on a planet with a finite set of resources, surely alleviation of poverty only makes sense if it is accompanied by ‘wealth alleviation’?

Things went comparatively well at the Main Summit with respect to targets and timelines of implementation for

water and sanitation; it was recognised as a fundamental human right and not a “commodity”. Energy, Health, Biodiversity and Agriculture did not fare as well.

Though the politicians, benefactors, business, science and technology will play an important and needed role in the healing of our planet and its people (or not), the small innovative projects generated from within the poor communities offer the pockets of hope. Here lie the solutions for the sustainable eradication of poverty and the protection of the environment, but more importantly, are examples of the channels through which God dignifies humanity.

Perhaps the average CLCer consumes far more than the earth is able to give of its natural resources to each human being and then replenish. If most start living a life of simplicity, and those in positions of influence and power grow in an awareness of being instruments of an Almighty God, then the summit would have served God’s purpose of us becoming more fully His co-creators.

A few final comments:

As the Main Summit at Sandton drew towards its climax, there was a general lowness of spirit. Government negotiations behind closed doors until 3 a.m. left everyone else in the dark, powerless to offer input and rightly worried about concessions and regression. The NGO tone seemed heavier and more strident, caucus meetings more harried and strategising more desperate. Meeting after meeting pulled the Summit along in its, all too mundane progression, and the hearts, of those who longed for more, were left disappointed, worried and tempted to rebel. Most major groups had expressed sadness and disappointment at the outcomes of the Summit, feeling that the



Jesuits and CLC

interests of Big Business and the World Trade Organisation had prevailed - the money to finance sustainable development largely coming from these sectors.

At the same time, Nasrec was being influenced by the optimism of the youth, filling with music and dance, rather than with discourse, and many spontaneous interactions across barriers of language, culture and nationality took place. "Don't you get discouraged?" a young delegate was asked. She replied: "Until the midnight when the Summit is over, I'll be knocking on doors."

What we took away was more than an understanding of world issues, an

empathy and a greater ability to think for ourselves in our normal everyday lives. The false sense of our entitlement that we submit to from time to time has been eroded further. We have a willingness and passion to become involved in action for people, the planet and prosperity. We have a desire to say 'YES' to the 'magis', the 'more' option, in living out our companionship with and the mission of Jesus.

A sustainable world *is* possible, and if it is, it includes all of us! ■



An evening meeting

Meet the Exco

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A Piece of the MASTER

It's September 11. How I wish I could put off the writing of this article until after my six-day retreat which begins on September 22. I expect that during my retreat God would polish up His 55-year old masterpiece. I expect that He would close the retreat with the reassurance that I am indeed a piece of the Master. But further delay is out of the question. There's a deadline to beat.

This "piece-of-the-Master mindset" may have been congenital, but it was switched on only about twenty years after my birth. I was born into a middle class family. My father and mother loved each other faithfully and immeasurably. In like manner, they loved their eldest daughter and me and their youngest, one-and-only son.

My childhood was happy and major-trauma-free. Life was good and beautiful, and I took that for granted as normal. In my mind there was a pervading awareness of a Divine Provider - thanks to the faith of my parents and the generation before them, and to the teachings of the Benedictine nuns in school. But during the first two decades of my existence, the personal connection to the Divine was non-existent. God was perceived as a transcendent, omnipotent presence. I conceded Him His role as my Creator. But I denied Him access to my personal affairs.

Then CLC invaded my life in November 1967. In the six years that followed, a barrage of CLC seminars and

By Veronica Villegas
(Philippines)



Ignatian Spiritual Exercises effected a paradigm shift. The principle and foundation of my existence flashed bright and clear. I saw that the transcendent Presence is (wow!) personally in love with me warts and all: that He has a microscopic grasp of my wretchedness yet forgives me and even wants me to be His “business partner”. More over, He made it plain that He is IN all things including the humblest realities my life, and that he calls the shots. I liked what I saw! I got hooked on His love and got logged in to a desire to love Him back. My life took on a new format.

The altered relationship with God resulted in a non-conventional decision regarding my civil status. I was bent on getting married – as is normal in Filipino culture. But during my thirty-day retreat in 1973 in Augsburg, what I shunned became embraceable: celibate, lay life. Revealed as God’s choice, it was enough for me.

Back in the Philippines in 1974 after two years of CLC formation in Germany (for which I am eternally grateful), I was questioned by puzzled relatives and friends. Entering the nunnery would have been comprehensible to them, but not a deliberate decision to remain single and to pursue a full time “CLC career” that made no (monetary) sense at all. It struck them as weird.

Nonetheless, my single-hearted, passionate plunge into the deep of CLC work was unstoppable. Serving as Executive Secretary and doing formation work were my actualization of Christ’s call to follow Him in His Mission. For CLC Philippines, mission was seen as participation – through the CLC way of life – in the liberation and development of

our country languishing under an oppressive dictatorship. In that context, I considered my CLC commitment as a service of love to God, to Church, to Country all rolled into one. I was happy.

But after about three years I deserted CLC. A consuming love for a man was given outright priority and pigheaded preference. The relationship blazed for four years; then fizzled out, leaving me devastated. Self-extermination loomed as a desirable, instant, permanent pain-reliever. However, Ignatian retreat-memories came to the rescue. Reminded that I am precious, honored, loved, forgiven, called and chosen by a faithful, merciful, prodigal Father, I regained my senses and changed course. I went back home.

Re-entry to CLC took place in 1982 through my local community - the unsinkable *April Fools*. In 1986, I was re-hired to do fulltime CLC work.

The past two decades have been a time of ever-deepening entrenchment in the CLC way of life. Slowly, steadily, not painlessly, I re-learned the ropes of CLC spirituality, community life and mission. All in all, my life has taken on an irreversible definition of being a privileged participation in Christ’s mission. Through day-to-day lessons that are not error-free, I strive to make Christ’s passion for the Kingdom and His options my own. Not easy at all, but “to whom else shall I go?”

Concretely, service took mainly the form of fulltime CLC work. Other gratuitously added involvements are my responsibility as Parish Council President (since 1997), my role as member of the World CLC ExCo (since 1998) and a bit of editing services for the

Far East Province of the Order of St. Camillus (since 2001).

In May 2001, I “retired” from fulltime CLC work but the Leadership Community continues to enlist my services in retreat work and in the training of group and retreat guides. For this I am immensely grateful! If my gift of self can still help multiply CLC labourers in the vineyard – then here I am.

In February 2003, my term as Parish Council President ends. But preparations for a new field of pastoral ministry are underway. The council has decided to form basic ecclesial communities, with the youth and family as priority sectors. My proposal that the CLC/Ignatian process be used as an instrument of formation was accepted. So was I, as volunteer formator. And I am deeply thankful!

My Camillian connection is still there, happily extending my family beyond the Ignatian circle. This link has wonderfully brought me into a redeeming contact with an amazing dimension of God’s love – that which He lavishes on the poor sick. Another *Deo gratias!*

What serves, as a stabilizing base, is my biological family. Life shared with my widowed mother, my mentally handicapped sister, my adopted son and our household help constitutes what I cherish as *home sweet home*. The next-door household comes as a bonus of blessings in the persons of two nephews, two nieces and their parents. For these gifts, I cannot be thankful enough!

God has graced me with more than half a century of earthly life. Taking stock of my history, I see how the whole of my existence comprises a non-stop series of “Magnificat” moments. I wouldn’t mind if God prolongs the series to 25 more years.

There is still so much “unfinished business” in God’s Kingdom. There is so much that CLC can give to help this business prosper. Certainly, I wouldn’t mind staking the rest of my life for this business. I wouldn’t mind being continually sent – in, with, through CLC – to proclaim in our diabolically terrorized world the marvellous news that there is a MASTER and that each of us, in this still good earth, is His many-splendored PIECE.

