

MISSIONARI COMBONIANI DEL CUORE DI GESÙ

# ASSEMBLEA INTERCAPITOLARE 2006

*Ciudad de Mexico, 3-24 settembre 2006*



## REPORTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIATS AND OFFICES *in English*

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# REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL TO THE INTERCAPITULAR ASSEMBLY 2006

## 1. INTRODUCTION

**1.1.** I started my work as Secretary General on the **1<sup>st</sup> of July 1999**. I am grateful to the Lord who during these past years has supported me, kept me in good health and given me patience and perseverance. I also thank Fr. Manuel Augusto Lopes Ferreira and Fr. Teresino Serra, Superiors General, and their Councils who have given me the opportunity to serve the Institute in this job.

**1.2.** The guidelines for the **appointment of personnel to the General Secretariat, its aim, structure and activities** are described in numbers 142 and 145 of the Rule of Life and in numbers 37 to 47 of the “Direttorio della Direzione Generale”.

## 2. WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SINCE THE XVI GENERAL CHAPTER

### 2.1. Personnel of the General Secretariat

2.1.1. In 2004 *Fr. Sardella Michele Pio* was appointed Secretary of the Superior General, substituting *Fr. Frigerio Giuseppe*, who in 2005, with *Bro. Cariolato Domenico*, was appointed to help the Secretariat General and responsible of the copy machines office, taking the place of the sorely missed *Bro. Beltrami Duilio*.

2.1.2. In 2005 *Bro. Lagattolla Giuseppe* has taken over from *Bro. Arpini Gianfranco* as the one in charge of the mail.

2.1.3. At the beginning of February 2006 *Fr. Prandina Piergiorgio* arrived to help the General Secretariat, especially for Familia Comboniana, the MCCJ Bulletin and the Intercapitular Assembly.

## 3. THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASPECT OF THE INSTITUTE'S GOVERNMENT

### 3.1. Meaning of the government structures and rules

3.1.1. The Institute is a community of persons who are members of the human and Church community and aim to witness the gospel by their missionary and pastoral activities. Therefore, the Institute needs structures and rules to guarantee an orderly and effective implementation of its gospel and apostolic project. The structures of government are to serve the Institute in line with its charism and its specific mission, which is inspired by the Holy Spirit, through the Founder, St. Daniel Comboni. ***Juridical and practical community rules are indispensable for a well functioning administration***, but must be seen in a spiritual perspective, since they help fulfil a pastoral mission.

3.1.2. Community structures and rules for our Institute are given in the *Rule of Life*, in the *Chapter Acts*, in *Provincial* and *Delegations Directories*, in the *Ratio Studiorum*, in the *Direttorio della Direzione Generale*, in the *Vademecum del Superiore Provinciale e del suo Consiglio* (Vademecun) e the *Six Years Plans*.

### 3.2. Community structures and rules: the challenges

3.2.1. The first challenge is to ***know community structures and rules***. All the members of the Institute, but especially all the superiors and those responsible for different offices (secretaries, formators, etc.) must know them well, because they define the nature and aim of each office and how it must work. It is important, then, to have always at hand the documents mentioned above (and also the Code of Canon Law), to know them, to study them individually or in groups and to consult them regularly. Not knowing them, not giving them the right importance or ignoring them, makes governing and the administration of the Institute difficult.

3.2.2. The second challenge is ***to set up, nurture and make proper use of the community structures and rules***. The documents mentioned above establish, among others, how to form the General

Council (GC) and the Provincial Councils, they specify their competence, establish when there is need of a deliberative or consultative vote and how these are related to the other structures of the Institute. The same documents require in each province or delegation the presence of a provincial or delegation treasurer and call for someone who can guarantee a constant communication with the General Administration, update the provincial or delegation archives, write the minutes of the meeting of the Province or Delegation Council, namely a Provincial or Delegation Secretary. Such set up is not present in a number of provinces and delegations.

3.2.3. **Faithfulness** to community rules is the third challenge. The above mentioned documents are the results of time consuming processes of consultation, discussion and evaluation at community, province/delegation and Institute level. They have been approved by the Institute's authorities. The Rule of Life has been officially approved by the Church. The rules in these documents are not simple guidelines which the members of the Institute can freely ignore, change or substitute. It seems to me that the vow of obedience imposes the duty to keep them with respect and precision. I was amazed to discover that superiors and other confreres do not know or ignore numbers of the Rule of Life such as those about Holy Mass intentions for deceased confreres (42.5.) and for the Superior General (53.2.), the establishment and suppression of communities (109, 109.1, 109.2) and many others. Some difficulties between provincials/delegates and the GC are caused when the rules of subsidiarity are ignored. Quite a few times provincials/delegates ask the GC to deal with matters which can and should be dealt by them or their Councils, while they make decision by themselves on matters about which the Rule of Life or the Provincial or Delegation Directories require the deliberative intervention of the GC. It seems to me that too often the GS and his Council must apply the "sanatio in radice".

3.2.4. The last challenge is that of **updating and improving community structures and rules and even substitute them**. The General Chapters, the Chapter Acts, the periodical revision of Provincial and Delegation Directories, of the Six Years Plans and of other documents assure that improvements and changes are the result of community discernment approved by the established authorities. Individualism, spontaneity and improvisation in this regard may cause confusion, incomprehension, misunderstandings and undermine community spirit.

## 4. DOCUMENTS

### 4.1. Minutes

4.1.1. Provincial and delegation secretaries and their provincials and delegates have the duty to write the **minutes of the meetings of the province/delegation councils** according to the established guidelines (Vademecum, Allegato 2).

4.1.2. In order to safeguard their juridical and historical value, the minutes must include **exact dates** (day, month, year) **of assignments, appointments, trips** (also for vacations) **to and from the province/delegation, full names of confreres mentioned and exact results of voting and decisions taken**. Besides the copy of the minutes sent by e-mail, the original, duly signed by the secretary and the provincial or delegate, must be sent by post to the Secretary General.

### 4.2. Letters

4.2.1. **Letters and other official documents**, such as those approving the renewal of temporary vows, the application for perpetual vows and other letters addressed to the Superior General and his Council, must be written properly (exact dates, full names of the people mentioned) and duly signed. They can be sent first by e-mail and fax; the original must then be sent by post.

4.2.2. **A copy of each document which is important and meaningful for the province/delegation or for a confrere, must be kept under the proper file in the archives of the province or delegation**. The archives' rules require that a document or a letter deals with one single matter or confrere. The General Secretariat often receives letters dealing with different matters in the same text, making filing impossible.

4.2.3. **Requests to the general secretariat for testimonials, invitations to Italy, school certificates, etc.** must be sent in good time and include all the necessary details.

4.2.4. *The original death certificate* of a deceased confrere should be kept in the province/delegation's archives. One copy should be sent to the Secretary General and another to the province of origin.

## 5. PERIODICALS

5.1. During the last three years the General Secretariat has published **Familia Comboniana** (11 issues yearly), the **MCCJ Bulletin** (4 issues yearly), the **Prayer Intentions of the Comboni Family** and **In Pace Christi** (yearly) and the **Annuario Comboniano 2005**. A copy of the **Annuario Comboniano** was sent two times by **e-mail** to provincials, delegates and other confreres.

### 5.2. Familia Comboniana (FC)

5.2.1. In each province/delegation there should be a *confrere* (the Provincial/Delegate or another confrere) *appointed to send to the Secretary General news for FC*. The news should concern Comboni matters and give exact dates and full names of the people mentioned. While some provinces/delegations send news regularly, others send them rarely and some never.

5.2.2. Considering the queries some confreres address to the General Secretariat, it seems that *FC is not always read with the required attention*, especially the section entitled "General Administration" and the one entitled "Update of the Annuario Comboniano", under which important updates are published.

5.2.3. *Editing, publishing and sending out* the FC in *Italian, English, French* and *Spanish* is done by the General Secretariat. The *translation of FC into Portuguese* is done by the province of *Portugal* that sends it to its communities and to the provinces of *BNE, BS* and *MO*. The *translation of FC into German* is done by the *DSP* that sends it to its communities.

5.2.4. FC is sent only by e-mail *in French* to the *provinces of CA, CN, T, TC* and to the community of *Paris* (France); *in English* to the delegation of *A* and to the provinces of *KE, KH, NAP, U* and to the communities of *Accra* (Ghana); *in Spanish* to the province of *Perù-Chile*. I propose once again that the General Secretariat sends FC to all the provinces/delegations only by e-mail.

### 5.3 MCCJ Bulletin

5.3.1. *The MCCJ Bulletin is published 4 times a year*: in January, April, July and October. The Superior General's Letter and the GC's official documents for the whole Institute are published in three languages (Italian, English and Spanish), other documents in their original language with a brief summary in English or in a Neo-Latin language. The obituaries (*In Memoriam*) of deceased confreres are published as a supplement to the MCCJ Bulletin of April and October (twice a year).

5.3.2. *Not many confreres send articles*. When publishing, we try to retain the original text: changes are introduced only for editing purposes. In 2002 it was decided to publish in the MCCJ Bulletin, once every two or three years, *a brief report* (3 or 4 pages long) *on the situation of each province/delegation*. This has remained wishful thinking, since the provinces and delegations have shown no interest in it.

5.3.3. *Copies of the MCCJ Bulletin* are posted to the provincials/delegates and to some communities as agreed with each province/delegation.

### 5.4 Annuario Comboniano

5.4.1. *The Annuario Comboniano* was published the last time in 2005. It should be published again in 2007.

5.4.2. The provincial/delegate must send to the Secretary General *the full names, the dates and the places of priestly ordinations, first professions, perpetual professions, changes of community and office), death of confreres, of their parents, brothers and sisters*. This is done very seldom.

5.4.3. The provincials/delegates must notify the Secretary General of *corrections, changes* and *additions* to *addresses, telephone numbers*, etc. of *communities* and *confreres' families*.

5.4.4. For over two years now the General Secretariat has been asking *a colour photograph of each confrere* and also photographs of our houses. These were to be inserted in the computer programme

of the personnel and then in the photo archives. There are still some two hundred photos of confreres missing and almost all those of our houses.

## **6. COMMUNICATION BY E-MAIL AND FAX**

**6.1.** When the provincial/delegate is away from his residence, **there should be another confrere** (provincial or delegation secretary) **who can receive the e-mail messages and faxes** sent by the members of the GC and by the General Secretariat, since at times they require an immediate answer.

**6.2.** I once again ask that **e-mail messages received from the General Secretariat be always acknowledged** (automatically or manually). Many times there is no acknowledgment coming, even when it is clearly requested.

**6.3. Communication between the General Administration, the provinces, the delegations and the confreres can still be improved.** There is a need to keep priorities right and not overburden the e-mail exclusively with personal messages.

## **7. OTHER DOCUMENTS AND COMMITMENTS**

**7.1.** The General Secretariat is also involved in translating, printing and posting all the **official documents published by the GC**. It also offers technical assistance for the preparation of the **General Chapter, the Intercapitular Assembly** and to other **Institute's meetings, committees and commissions**.

**7.2.** At the beginning of each year the Secretary General sends to the **“Segretaria di Stato (Vatican) the statistics of the Institute**. Some of these statistics are published every January in the MCCJ Bulletin.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

**8.1.** In the near future it would be good to organize **a continental or regional meeting or workshop for all the provincial/delegations secretaries**.

**8.2.** I like to thank all those who help full time or part time with the work of the General Secretariat, and especially **Fr. Redaelli Enrico, Fr. Sardella Michele Pio, Fr. Frigerio Giuseppe, Bro. Lagattola Giuseppe, Fr. Prandina Piergiorgio, Fr. Ravasio Pietro, Fr. Gaiga Lorenzo, Mrs. Di Paolo Giannina** and all our translators.

**8.3.** I hope that what has been done by the former General Secretaries and myself will help my successor to serve even better the General Administration, the whole Institute and, consequently, God and the Mission.

Rome 20.05.2006

*Fr. Giuseppe Sandri MCCJ*  
(Secretary General)

**GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR EVANGELISATION AND JPIC**  
**REPORT FOR THE INTERCAPITULAR 2006**

In the light of what the GC has proposed in its “Guide to the implementation of the XVI General Chapter” (July 2004), the Secretary General for Evangelisation and JPIC has endeavoured to implement what follows.

**1. The process of the *Ratio Missionis* (CA '03, 49)**

The XVI General Chapter has asked to revise the concept of mission in the light of the new emergencies of a society in an ever evolving environment (CA '03, 30.1) and to take Ongoing Formation as a priority (CA '03, 57), because the quality of our missionary service undoubtedly depends on the quality of our life.

The General Chapter has also encouraged us to prepare the *Ratio Missionis* and invited us to prepare a first draft for the Intercapitular of 2006 (CA '03, 49).

From the very beginning, the Secretary General for Evangelisation, in the light of what the General Chapter had underlined, namely that for us it is more important “to give emphasis to *being missionaries* than to *doing mission*” (CA '03, 52.1), and in tune with the GC and the other general secretariats, especially that for ongoing formation, has stressed the need and urgency to get the whole Institute involved and to adopt a working method that would help all the confreres to slow down in order to get involved and to share one’s missionary life experience, as we are convinced that the document of the *Ratio Missionis* has to be the outcome of a process of listening, conversion and progressive renewal, by putting into focus the missiological parameters, the field choices and the quality of our life as consecrated Comboni Missionaries.

As a consequence of this methodological choice, the following events were planned and carried out:

The Intercontinental Assembly for Evangelisation (Rome, 24-30 May 2004).

The appointment of a core and enlarged commissions for the preparation of the *Ratio Missionis* (letter of the GC - 1 July 2005). The appointment of Fr. Enrique Javier Rosich Vargas as assistant of the Secretary General of the General Secretariat for Evangelisation (15/03/2006).

The workshops for provincial animators of the *Ratio Missionis* (Kinshasa, 18-23/05/2005 – Nairobi, 25-30/07/2006 – Mexico, 3-7/10/2005 – Quito, 10-14/10/2005 – Fortaleza 24-29/10/2005).

The continental assemblies (Pesaro, 27-31/03/2006; Gulu, 1-6/05/2006; Bangui, 22-27/05/2006; Lima, 12-17/06/2006).

Various meetings of the core and enlarged commissions to finalise the programme, the preparation of the “inserts” that have appeared in *Familia Comboniana*, the workshops and other initiatives for particular groups.

The outcome of all this work, carried out at various levels: personal, community, provincial and continental, will be presented later on to this assembly.

In general the work was favourably accepted by the vast majority of our provinces and delegations.

We have to underline that in those provinces/delegations where the provincials and delegates have personally committed themselves as animators and supporters of the process, things have proceeded much faster and efficiently.

A positive perception from all is that the Institute, by the process of the Ratio Missionis, seems to have again found the enthusiasm and willingness to draw up a common programme, the hope in the future and in the fruitfulness of a mission in line with the Comboni charism and the desire to question itself for an effective mission at the beginning of the Third Millennium.

We are still left with the challenge of not disappointing the expectations of many confreres, of keeping this renewal process going for the next years and of motivating also those who are still sceptical and find it hard to get involved.

## **2. The formation of the “Group of Reflection” in Africa to provide pastoral directives in the Islamic world (CA '03, 30.5; 45)**

To prepare the formation of this group of reflection to provide pastoral directives in the Islamic world we have organised a meeting in Cairo (October 2005). Representatives of the following provinces and delegations were present: Egypt, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Khartoum, South Sudan, Malawi/Zambia, Mozambique, Central Africa, Chad, Italy, the members of the DAR Comboni and the secretary general for evangelisation.

The topics discussed in the meeting were the inter-religious dialogue and concrete proposals for pastoral directives in the Islamic world.

The reflection has helped us to become aware that Islam is not a phenomenon geographically circumscribed and exclusive to a few African nations, like Sudan and Egypt. We have to recognise that Islam has a continental and intercontinental dimension, that it is a challenge obliging us to widen our knowledge of it and to look for strategies and means of greater global quality.

In the meeting it was asked to gather a data bank, coordinated by the DAR Comboni in Cairo and the secretary general for evangelisation.

The next meeting will be organised in N'Djamena in 2007. We hope that all the African provinces and delegations will be represented.

## **3. The commitment in JPIC and the work accomplished with other organisations and Religious Institutes (CA '03, 47-47)**

The General Secretariat has provided a service by sending articles and topics to keep alive our commitment in JPIC in the field of Evangelisation and Mission Promotion which is done through our magazines.

The continents have organised themselves in various ways.

The European continent and that of French-speaking Africa have organised meetings and planned meaningful initiatives, like the one about setting up courses of ongoing formation for the animators of JPIC.

In French-speaking Africa the initiative about JPIC, in its last preparatory phase, was taken up also by the following Religious Institutes: Missionaries for Africa (White Fathers), Missionaries of the I. H. of Mary (Scheut), Divine Word Missionaries, Servants of the Paraclete (Spiritani), Comboni Missionaries, White Sisters, Sisters of the Holy Union, Notre Dame Sisters of the Apostles, Dominican Missionaries Sisters.

This initiative will be implemented for French-speaking countries in 2007 at two venues: one for countries of Christian majority and one for countries of Islamic majority.

This inter-religious Institutes' initiative will later be proposed also to English-speaking countries and Mozambique.

The European continent has organised continental meetings and is preparing a meeting for the formation of provincial animators. The initiative is being studied by the provincials.

The American and Asian continent have not organised particular initiatives at continental level.

The sub-continent of English-speaking Africa has not organised particular initiatives at continental level.



At the Institute's level, the General Secretariat has strengthened its links with AEFJN, the organisation made up of 44 Institutes which have communities present in Europe and Africa. The aim of this inter-religious organisation is to encourage justice in the field of economics within the European Community and on behalf of the populations of the South of the world, especially of Africa, through lobbying activities as well as through animation of Churches and civil societies of Europe for political and economic choices that are fair to the peoples of Africa.

The Institute has also started a process of linking up with VIVAT, an NGO organised by the Divine Word Missionaries and recognized by the ONU, whose main aim is the eradication of poverty, the struggle for Human Rights and an increased awareness of a culture that values Justice and Peace.

#### **4. The accompaniment of the Groups of theological and missionary reflection**

The groups of theological and missionary reflection, recommended by the General Chapter (CA '03, 139.4) along with the needs of the Continents, have been satisfactorily working in the European continent and in the sub-continent of French-speaking Africa.

The American group and that of "Missionary Reflection" have not been regular.

The Group is taking up a role that is very much concerned with the problems of mission and of ongoing formation of the missionaries. The existing groups have also committed themselves to deal with the problems that have emerged from the process of the Ratio Missionis.

It is more and more evident that one of the reasons of our superficiality, impulsiveness in the choosing of fields of work that are convenient to our charism and the little attention to the signs of the times must undoubtedly be linked to the lack of serious and methodical reflection within the Institute. It is not that we have no capable people for this... but their voices are, unfortunately, scattered and disorganized. It seems that the Institute has for some time renounced to a methodical theology of mission and to a return to our charism.

It is commendable, therefore, the initiative started by the Italian Province and the European Group to try to organise periodical meetings of inter-continental character at Limone sul Garda, a place so dear and symbolic for our missionary vocation, in order to deepen the challenges of the Mission today by reappraising Comboni.

#### **The journey must go on and the following are the perspectives for the next three years:**

##### **1. To bring to its conclusion the process of the Ratio Missionis (discernment – listening - acceptance)**

The Commission for the Ratio Missionis has for some time been asking itself how to respond to the challenge of sustaining the ongoing process of the Ratio Missionis. We very strongly feel the need of adapting our language: from the "Ratio" Missionis we have to arrive at the "Passio" Missionis.

The discerning process will find us still committed to a dynamic of listening. If in this phase of "putting into focus" we have encouraged an attitude of listening from within and among ourselves who share the joys and sufferings of the journey and the missionary commitment of the Institute, in the next phase of "discernment" we wish to listen also to the local Churches, to laypeople, to other members of the Comboni Family and to Institutes that have undertaken the same journey as ours.

We wish, above all, to face up to the challenge of the signs of the times - in the light of the Word of God and that of our Comboni tradition - the Rule of Life and the Charism of Daniel Comboni reinterpreted and inculturated into today's situation.

##### **2. To give priority to the dimension of JPIC in the Continents we work**

The General Secretariat proposes to put greater emphasis on this basic dimension of the mission of the Church and the service of evangelisation (CA '03, 46) in the Continents we work.

In particular, in the two Continents or areas of English-speaking Africa and America/Asia, where the continental work has not yet started.

The *Social Forum*, planned from 20 to 25 January 2007 in Nairobi, could be an opportunity for English-speaking Africa. For this event, it would be advisable to organize a continental meeting for putting into focus our common commitments, to outline the priorities of the sub-continent and to open ourselves up to the global movement represented by the *Social Forum*.

For the American and Asia Continent, there are interesting proposals through our joining VIVAT.

It is our intention to decentralise some commitments, like for instance to get the European Provinces better involved in the AEFJN (which resides in Brussels) and the American Continent more active in the VIVAT NGO (which resides in New York).

For French and English speaking Africa, the aim remains that of increasing their awareness in the field of JPIC and DDHH, through sessions of ongoing formation (CA '03, 47.2), in order to make an impact by joining organisations and structures in loco and by getting African people involved.

### **3. To support and have all the groups of reflection working**

Being in contact with the continental assemblies of provincials/delegates, the General Secretariat hopes that the groups are organised and functioning in the continents we work. It wishes to point out the importance of having representatives from all the provinces and delegations, as the role of the groups is to reflect and propose to the provincial councils pathways of animation and of ongoing formation for confreres.

### **4. Human Promotion, Finances and Mission**

It is becoming ever clearer that the effort must be made in synergy with all the secretariats. Probably the *Ratio Missionis* will ask us to evaluate the structural organisation of the Institute and the composition of the sectors of research, animation and coordination. In our present way of living and getting organised locally and globally, where we insist on a compartmental organisation, we run the risk, besides the scattering of personnel and means, of also making partial and undiscerning interventions. It is becoming important to work as a team, with a broad vision that pays attention to the various aspects of our Comboni charism (Evangelisation - Mission Promotion - Formation), all of which also deal with finances and the promotion of human values. In this sense, we believe that the Brothers' commitment has to be more and more integrated into an integral plan (CA '03, from 50 to 50.6).

A first step in this direction would be to directly relate to mission all our reflections, financial choices and projects of human promotion.

The Secretariats for Evangelisation and for Finances have already started to dialogue on these lines and intend to present concrete proposals before the next General Chapter.

### **Conclusion**

I thank wholeheartedly all those who have collaborated with the General Secretariat for Evangelisation, especially the animators for the process of the *Ratio Missionis*, the members of the commission, the provincial coordinators and the animators for JPIC.

I renew my willingness to make myself available to work for the good of the mission by assisting the Institute in this process of renewal through a desire to make myself useful in this endeavour.

*Fr. Fernando Zolli*  
General Secretary for Evangelisation and JPIC

# **REPORT OF MISSION PROMOTION TO THE INTERCAPITULAR ASSEMBLY 2006**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Just after the middle of these three years there was a change of guards at the Secretariat of Mission Promotion: on 1 October 2005 Fr. Umberto Pescantini was asked to replace Fr. Jaime Calvera Pi as General Secretary of Mission Promotion. The transition was gradual, but it has made it difficult to prepare an accurate report on the whole period.

The *XVI General Chapter (2003)*, centred on the mission of the Comboni Missionaries in the third millennium, stated once again that Mission Promotion (or Missionary Animation):

- is an integral part of their identity
- is a pastoral activity inserted in the catechetical programme of the local church,
- is part of the tradition handed over to us by the Founder, who proved to be a convinced and zealous mission promoter.

In Chapter Acts n. 105,1-8; 125-126; 129,1-4; 133.2 the Chapter has, moreover, indicated the constitutive and methodological Elements Mission Promotion.

In the above passages the Chapter underlines above all the following points:

1. the need to contextualise our Mission Promotion while keeping it open to a global vision. To achieve this, the Chapter recommends the regular use of the Continental Councils;
2. that for our prophetic service of justice and peace we need to learn the use of all the means of social communication that modern technology puts at our disposal;
3. the desire of living our missionary activity in strict collaboration with all the institutions of the church;
4. the good will of promoting the collaboration of all lay people, but especially of the Comboni Lay Missionaries.

The “*Guide to the implementation of the XVI General Chapter*” (July 2004) at n. 5.1 makes a list of the points of the programme for MP. At n. 5.3.4 it highlights two of them:

- Promote centres of MA with trained personnel and adequate means (n.131)
- Along with the General Secretariat of the sector, animate and coordinate continental councils of MA (n.129).

As regards the Lay Missionaries, at n. 5.3.3 it says:

- In dialogue with the CLM Central Committee, try to launch two pilot projects, one in Africa and the other in America, over the next six years (n.126).
- Call the fourth General Assembly (n.126).

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **2.1 MISSION PROMOTION**

#### **A. What we have done**

##### **1. *Comboni's Canonisation***

This was a unique historical event, which in 2003-4 was celebrated by Comboni Missionaries with numerous initiatives that involved many people both at the centre and in every province. Commemorative items were produced in many places: new or rewritten biographies of Comboni, books, radio programmes, special issues of our magazines, videos, recitals, celebrations, medals, etc. All helped to make Comboni better known, together with his charisma and the mission of his family all over the world.

## **2. MP at Institute level**

- a. The new web site [www.comboni.org](http://www.comboni.org) was officially launched on 24 January 2005 with a double aim: as a channel of information and of sharing within the Institute, and as a means to present to the world the spirit and the activities of the Institute. In a limited way it is already fulfilling its purpose; it will be much better managed when the man in charge of Comboni Press will arrive.
- b. At least a dozen provinces have produced a (new or revised) Charter of MP.
- c. All Continental Councils and Assemblies foreseen by the programme contained in the “Guide for the Implementation of the XVI General Chapter” were successfully held.

## **3. in EUROPE**

### **a. Basic Mission Promotion**

It is done in all provinces at grassroots level (parishes, schools, youth groups, marches, demonstrations, stands/shows). In every province there is a good number of confreres engaged in this work. They are also learning to make good use of the media. Generally speaking, there is collaboration with diocesan offices regarding programming and sharing.

- Annual Assemblies of MP we held in most provinces. Some provinces have a very detailed Charter of MP.
- The Continental Council of MP met in London in May 2004.
- In September 2005 the Continental Assembly and the Course of Formation for Mission Promoters took place in Palencia. The participation of sisters and confreres was very encouraging.

### **b. Mass Media**

- 10 magazines are printed; their standard is rather high, but their market is losing ground
- there are MP bulletins in every province
- FATMO and Mundo Negro TV produce radio and TV programmes
- Web sites: all provinces and magazines have their web site
- They have drafted an “Operational Directory of Mass Media in Europe”

## **4. in ASIA**

### **a. Basic Mission Promotion:**

There is a person in charge. The Secretariat of MP was recently reshuffled. Their activities are linked especially to the spread of the magazine.

### **b. Mass Media:**

- 1 magazine (World Mission); unfortunately the director was changed twice in a short time. The magazine has a web site.
- bulletin: Friends of the Mission

## **5. in AMERICA**

### **a. Basic Mission Promotion:**

It is done in various ways in all provinces; in some of them the sector involves a good number of confreres.

- Almost all provinces held the annual Assembly of MP
- The Continental Council of MP was held in Quito in October 2004.
- The Continental Assembly and the Formation Course for Mission Promoters were held in San José de Costa Rica in July 2005.

### **a. Mass Media**

- there are 5 magazines (Sin Fronteras and Aguiluchos are printed in PE, CO and EC). The magazine Sem Fronteiras (BS) was downgraded to a bulletin in 2004.
- there are numerous bulletins of MP (especially in NAP)
- web sites: all magazines and some provinces have their site.

## **6. in French Speaking AFRICA**

### **a. Basic Mission Promotion:**

All four provinces have a Secretary in charge of the sector; they do mission appeals, most of which are in connection with the marketing of the magazines (Afriquespoir and New People). They strive to create groups of friends of the mission.

- The annual Assembly of MP was held by some provinces. The Charter of MP is in the making.
- The Sub-Continental Council of MP was held at N'djamena in September 2004
- The Sub-Continental Assembly and Course of Formation for MP was held in Kinshasa in August 2005.

### **b. Mass Media:**

- 1 magazine (Afriquespoir) which has a web site. Afriquespoir CAM has also published some books and videos.
- bulletin in local language in CN (Libota Iya Comboni)

## **7. in English Speaking AFRICA and Mozambique**

### **a. Basic Mission Promotion:**

In a few provinces (Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Egypt, Ethiopia) there is a programme, while in others there are sporadic attempts regarding parish animation and publications. This is a field of missionary work, however, to which some provinces manage to assign very few or no personnel at all.

- Some provinces held the Assembly of MP (irregular)
- The Sub-Continental Council of MP was held in Nairobi in November 2005
- The Sub-Continental Assembly and the Formation Course for MP took place in Durban in June 2006.

### **a. Mass Media:**

- 3 magazines (New People, World Wide, Leadership), (+1: till 2006 Zikomo).

The New People Media Centre runs also a Radio Service (cassettes) and has produced some videos, besides holding formation courses for young people who want to learn the use of the media.

- there are some bulletins in English and one in Arabic

## **B. Notes and Problems**

01. We have, first of all, a problem of mentality: too many Comboni Missionaries still hold that Mission Promotion is a makeshift activity and do not see it as a running wheel of the mission's vehicle. Consequently, when time comes for operational decisions, it always slides back to the last position of priorities.
02. Many confreres engaged in this sector have felt for a long time that they are unprepared for the task. For this reason, during the week previous to the Continental Assemblies, we have organised a course of formation for missionary animators. In a few instances these had a follow up in similar courses at provincial level. Where this has not happened we feel that we have set up a programme only for the benefit a few privileged ones.
03. A number of confreres feel rather uneasy towards the European church because it speaks a lot about mission, but it seems to drift away from missionary institutes and to close itself in its own world.
04. Our magazines: are in general of excellent quality, but they are not always appreciated and supported by confreres, even by those who work in the sector of Mission Promotion who are

expected to be the natural propagators of our press. Directors often lament the lack of personnel for administration and marketing. But on their side they often don't appear open enough to dialogue regarding the content of our magazines, leaving the impression that magazines are run like a personal kingdom that belongs only to experts.

05. The worrying decrease in subscriptions of all our magazines and the cut (Misiós sin Fronteras) or the closing down of some of them (Sem Fronteiras, Zikomo) is a red light of alarm that all have noticed. It is not simply a problem of marketing, which today is shared by all the press, but also a sign of our lack of well organised commitment. Those magazines that have enjoyed true team work and collaboration with the "ground troops" have seen instead a notable increase in production.
06. Mission Promotion today has to make use of mass media (radio, internet, TV) which are becoming more and more complicated and therefore require a specific training. The good running of our Media Centres is linked to a continuous dialogue between the provinces and the General Administration regarding the assignment of trained personnel. The number of confreres that presently hold a qualification for directing a magazine is insufficient for a healthy rotation, especially when one keeps in mind that our magazines are published in five different languages. A few provinces have taken laudable steps in this field by assigning some radical members to study for a qualification in the sector of mass media. In this area we look forward to a much greater spirit of collaboration and co-responsibility at continental level. The General Administration has had to struggle a lot even just to find a person to put in charge of Comboni Press, a post that is vacant since 2004.
07. Some confreres feel that it is high time to launch on the web a missionary magazine in English (it is said to be the language most used by internet users); a magazine written specifically for the web, even by using existing articles from our magazines. It is however not yet clear who should take up this task.
08. The sharing of responsibility between the centre and the provincials in charge of MP at continental level did not always run smoothly.
09. The majority of the provinces in Africa do not yet seem to have found the right path of basic Mission Promotion in their churches. Moreover, too few confreres do something positive for the spread of our magazines.
10. Some of our confreres are in charge of radio stations. This is usually considered more an evangelising task rather than one of mission promotion.

### **C. Visions/Proposals**

1. It is necessary to promote collaboration at continental level. Many provinces have a rich tradition in this field and they can share it with others. Sharing helps to avoid wastage of time in producing material that already exists elsewhere. During the next three years we shall have to hold the 4 Continental Councils and to programme for 4 more Continental Assemblies. Hopefully, we shall be able to continue combining the Formation Courses with the Assemblies.
2. The Provinces (especially in Africa) must take a serious commitment in training and assigning personnel for this sector. Too few are so far the provinces that have managed to lay out a project of MP with the relative Charter.
3. It is urgent that magazines published in the same continent grow to a greater level of collaboration. Europe already offers a good example of growth in this direction.

## 2.2. COMBONI LAY MISSIONARIES

### A. Introduction

1. From 1969 all General Chapters and Intercapitular Assemblies have spoken of the Lay Missionaries. The topic has even entered our RL at n. 77.6
2. During the '90s there have been many attempts at setting up groups of CLM, fruit of great enthusiasm over the subject in various provinces.
3. The 1997 General Chapter asked to clarify three fundamental points: the lay character, - the missionary dimension, - the Comboni slant
4. There followed the Third General Assembly in Mellatz on 6-12 December 1998. The following topics were discussed: -the three dimensions of the CLM, -relations between sending and receiving provinces, -proposals of cooperation between the CLM centres, -what do CLM expect of the Mccj, -the election of a Central Committee.
5. In its first meeting (September 1999), the Central Committee decided to launch an international bulletin of communication (Juntos/Together) which appeared only twice (in 1999 and in 2000).
6. In preparation for the new Chapter in November 2001 there was in Palencia the meeting of the Coordinators of the CLM Centres. In this meeting they clarified some of the topics already seen in Mellatz.
7. In November 2002 Coimbra saw the meeting of the CLM and their Coordinators at European level. They felt the need to set up a Continental Committee. This is the only one really functioning so far.
8. The XVI General Chapter(2003) confirms the validity of the path and endorses the two proposals of the Central Committee: -to set up two pilot projects during the coming six years (Africa and America), -to call the Fourth General Assembly in 2004.

### B. Implementation

1. The European Committee continued its meetings: at Ellwangen in May 2005 and in Granada in May 2006.
2. The General Secretary of MP/in charge of the sector of CLM first pursued a rather ambitious project of compiling a General Catalogue of CLM which was never completed. The new Secretary started with a humbler approach and, after gathering updated information from the provinces, went on to call the General Assembly, which had in the meantime been postponed to 2005 and is now scheduled for November 2006.
3. At the level of some provinces, people have continued to do good work. Provincial Assemblies of the Coordinators Committees, CLM Charters, bulletins published by the various provincial groups and web sites of the CLM are a sign of missionary vitality. We take particular note of the efforts made by some African Provinces (Uganda, Congo) and of Latin America (Peru) to foster the birth of local groups of lay people who are inspired by the Comboni charism. They have not yet reached the stage of sending their members in mission abroad. At times now people even ask whether this will have to be an essential element of their charism.
4. The two pilot projects: the Italian group and the NAP CLM have made an effort to set up a first "international" project in Nairobi, linked with the activities of Korogocho: from 2005 there are on the spot two CLM, Luca Clochiatti and Susan Coopersmith. There are a few examples of collaboration in Latin America, but I think that none of them was taken up as pilot project.

## **B. Difficulties**

1. The Central Committee did not meet for a long time. The situation stalled. Perhaps people were deceived by the hope of getting an Mccj assigned full-time for this sector.
2. The distribution of CLM was done along the lines of bilateral agreements between the sending and the receiving provinces. There has been little concern about a central coordination.
3. A number of provinces still offer good CLM candidates, but the crisis of vocations to missionary life (both to the one for life and the one for a limited number of years) is felt among the laity too.
4. The Italian Province has reached a clear distinction between the LC (Lay Comboni) who share in the Comboni charism serving as animators in their own country, and the CLM who are sent to other nations. Other Provinces do not seem to have made such distinction. I believe that this is an aspect that has to be clarified in the next General Assembly.
5. The common bulletin (Juntos/Together) has dropped into lethargy. The central coordination has been difficult. While the bulletins of various Provinces are prospering, the centre lacks material of common interest. Times have changed and perhaps people don't feel the need for it any longer. Some CLM groups have set up their own web site and so everyone can access the material of other groups directly on the web, according to his needs and his knowledge of other languages.

## **C. Proposals**

1. Regarding the international connection of the various groups, I think that the way forward is the promotion of contacts via internet.
2. I believe that the missionary service of the lay people needs its own identity and greater freedom of action than that of consecrated persons. But it is up to the lay people themselves to indicate the way forward of their growth according to their own experience of work.
3. The basic animation and the initial selection and preparation are of great importance. The Provinces that are serious about this aspect of our charism must therefore offer for it personnel that is truly useful to the programme.
4. The commitment to the pilot projects must be given renewed attention.

*Fr. Umberto Pescantini*  
*Secretary Gen. MP*



# GENERAL SECRETARIAT FOR FORMATION

## *INTERCAPITULAR ASSEMBLY 2006*

The Report of the Secretariat for Formation will present:

1. What has been achieved so far since the General Chapter 2003
2. The present challenges and future prospective

The first session, *what has been achieved*, takes into consideration the General Chapter 2003 (CA '03), the Guide to the Implementation of the XVI General Chapter and Planning of the General Council of July 2004 (GIGC '04).

The second session, *challenges and prospective*, is the work of the commission that evaluates formation and whose report you have already had the opportunity to read and reflect about: it will be the text for discussion in this assembly.

### FIRST SESSION

#### WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED SINCE THE GENERAL CHAPTER 2003

*CA '03 n. 51-68; GIGC '04: pp 12-16.*

#### **1. CA '03, 62.1; GIGC '04, 3.1.4: Ongoing Formation of Formators and Vocation Promoters**

The General Chapter has asked the GC to appoint a commission for the coordination of ongoing formation (OGF) of promoters and formators.

In the Consulta of June 2004 the GC has appointed as members of the commission: Fr. Girolamo Míante, secretary general for vocation promotion and basic formation; Fr. Danilo Cimitan, central coordinator of ongoing formation; Fr. Siro Stocchetti, member of the CAFP team; Fr. José de Jesús Villaseñor Gálvez, associate master of novices in Venegono; Fr. Tesfamariam Ghebrecristos Woldeghebriel, assistant general.

The commission's members have met on several occasions, also with the participation of Fr. Odelir José Magri, the assistant general responsible for formation, to discuss about what to do and to coordinate the initiatives, in constant and open dialogue with the provincial and delegation superiors as well as the secretaries of VP and BF.

We arrived at the following programme:

- To organize at continental level a course of four weeks, giving priority to the theme of vocation accompaniment and discernment.
- The priority theme does not exclude working on and paying attention also to other areas of particular concern: knowledge of youth reality, Comboni aspects like charism and spirituality, as already proposed by various provincial/delegation councils and secretariats.
- The theme of Mission, as suggested from various quarters, was considered by the commission to be a priority for the entire Institute through the process of the Ratio Missionis (RM).
- The contents and the dynamics of the work for the course will be presented and facilitated by a team of Comboni experts: Fr. Siro Stocchetti, Fr. Vincenzo Percassi, Fr. José de Jesús Villaseñor Gálvez, (Fr. Joseph Mumbere Musanga will help when coming to French-speaking Africa).
- The course is open to all vocation promoters and formators in any stage, without distinction.

#### *Dates*

- American Continent: São Paulo, from 9 July to 6 August 2006
- English-speaking Africa: Uganda, from 1 to 29 July 2007

- French-speaking Africa: Togo, from 5 August to 3 September 2007
- For Europe there is no date yet, but it will be finalized in the next months during a meeting of the European secretaries of VP and BF.

## **2. CA '03, 63; GIGC '04, 3.2.2: Co-responsibility in the Formation of Candidates**

The General Chapter underlines the co-responsibility of the whole Institute in the formation of candidates “especially” by the witness of our personal and community life.

I think it is important to arrive at a better awareness of this challenge which concerns everyone. In Cairo, February 2005, where the GC met with the provincial and delegate superiors, we spoke of the “Institute that is forming”, exactly to indicate the need of every confrere’s commitment for the birth and growth of vocations.

It calls for a commitment for the provinces and delegations to favour a “vocations culture” where all feel more involved in vocations, through various initiatives coordinated by the provincial and delegation secretariats of VP and BF.

For me, the journey of the RM (CA '03, 49) is the first answer to the “vocation challenge” of the Institute: we will be authentic witnesses of one’s vocation, for which it is worthwhile to be loyal to the point of giving one’s life, only in the measure that we live our Comboni identity in a new way and feel a true sense of belonging.

## **3. CA '03, 64; GIGC '04, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4: To encourage continuity in Formation**

### **3.1 Meetings of Vocation Promoters and Formators to compare Mission and Formation (64.1)**

*In 2004 four continental assemblies were held* with a large participation of vocation promoters and formators (in minor seminaries, pre-postulancies and postulancies). The participation of provincial and delegation superiors, who were the coordinators of the sector, and of members of the GC has proved very useful.

Europe: Venegono, 29 June – 5 July

America/Asia: Lima 18-27 July

English-speaking Africa: Lusaka, 5-15 August

French-speaking Africa: Lomé, 23-31 August

The first point taken into consideration was what the General Chapter 2003 had underlined concerning Mission, comparing it to the formation journey in a concrete way. The conclusions are well known to all. We list these in the second session of the paper in the way they were prepared, after discussion, by the formation commission.

*From 10 to 30 July 2005 was held, in Palencia, an assembly* of all the formators of Novitiates, Scholasticates and Comboni Brothers Centres (CBC). The theme of the assembly was: “Formation - a journey of challenges and hopes”.

The conclusions of this meeting are also well known and have been included in the agenda of this assembly.

The assembly was preceded by a questionnaire sent to all novices, scholastics and Brothers. More than 50% answered it. There was also a request from a scholasticate community (Pietermaritzburg), later supported by other scholasticates and CBC, to have a representation of scholastics and Brothers in the assembly. In our reply to them we attempted to explain why it was not possible to accede to their request.

- In 2006 a core commission and an enlarged commission, named by the GC for a global reflection on our formation system, have tried, starting from the last assemblies, to outline a new formation journey, which we have presented to you, in order to respond to the challenges and expectations of today’s situation (64.1).
- Concerning continuity, in the past three years we have held meetings with the continental councils of the sector (CA '03, 141): a precious time of evaluation to become aware of the present situation and difficulties and to prepare for the continental assemblies.

**3.2** The planning of concrete experiences of missionary life among the poor from the start of formation has always been a choice that is being implemented in various provinces and delegations both by a formation process of insertion and by long periods of experience (64.2).

**3.3** New experiences, closer to concrete missionary life, especially for Scholasticates and CBC (64.3), have been proposed and will be discussed in this assembly.

#### **4. CA '03, 65; GIGC '04, 3.2.3: The preparation of Promoters and Formators in the Postulancy**

The selection and preparation of formators in the Postulancy, as well as the preparation of vocation promoters, is still a priority that is not always easy to resolve.

It has not always been possible at the central level, by the secretariat general first and the GC afterwards, to find a satisfactory solution to the requests coming from provinces and delegations.

An initiative proposed to the sector secretaries to get the provincial and delegation councils to spell out their concrete situation and to suggest plans for the future concerning new promoters and formators in view of a better coordination did not give the expected results. It was not helpful because of lack of clear indications.

Again, the Six-Year Plans did not always make clear what personnel could be made available for this sector. I understand the difficulties in making such a projection; for this reason, here I am making a statement, not a judgement.

On the other hand, in spite of the difficulty, the secretariat general and the GC have tried to coordinate and encourage the proposals about the preparation of confreres both at continental level and at central level (in the Consulta of March 2006, the GC has planned for the next three years to prepare a number of confreres to serve in all the stages as formators. Starting already from October, five confreres will attend the Course for Formators at the Gregorian University in Rome. The GC has opted for this possibility in order to offer a common journey and times of preparation specifically Comboni in character).

Generally speaking, the weakest sector, as far as preparation is concerned, remains that of vocation promotion: I believe that the planned courses of ongoing formation will contribute to the formation of confreres who work in this area.

#### **5. CA '03, 66; GIGC 3.2.3: Professional Formation of Brothers**

What was indicated by the General Chapter 2003 is presented again for discussion in this assembly by the formation commission (see CA '03, 66). It is the outcome of reflections made in the assemblies of 2004 and 2005.

The proposal of establishing inter-provincial postulancies for Brothers (66.1) did not materialize for the difficulty in finding a venue and its implementation. The continental assemblies of 2004 were in favour of a preparation carried out at the local level, without moving to other provinces at this initial stage of formation.

Presently there are only two possible venues for inter-provincial postulancies for Brothers: Layibi in Uganda and Lomé in Togo (which has just reopened this year).

#### **6. CA '03 67 e GIGC '04, 3.2.3: Preparation of Brothers to Perpetual Vows (PV)**

Up to now there have been three periods of preparation (positive as a whole) for Brothers to PV:

2005, January-April: five Brothers made their preparation in the CBC in Nairobi.

2006, January-April: two Brothers made their preparation in the CBC in Nairobi

2006, January-April: two Brothers made their preparation in the Novitiate at Kimwenza (CN).

This time of preparation included:

- experience of community life;
- important time-periods of personal and community prayer;

- courses of missionary, theological and biblical deepening (Tangaza College in Nairobi, Mazenod Institute in Kinshasa);
- personal accompaniment and spiritual direction;
- Ignatian month.

In Nairobi the Brothers were followed in a particular way by Fr. Francesco Pierli and in Kinshasa by the novice masters. This will carry on also in 2007.

### **7. CA '03, 68; GIGC '04, 3.2.3: Scholasticates**

Concerning the venues, opening and closing of Scholasticates: This will be discussed in this assembly according to the proposals of the formation commission.

- The GC, as you know, in the March Consulta of this year has decided to move the scholasticate community of Rome to Naples. A choice whose motivations are particularly important for formation. I wish to underline that such a decision does not prevent or is in contradiction with the overall reflection on the scholasticates we shall be making during this assembly.
- For the new formation year 2006/2007 no new scholastic has been asked to go to Chicago: we have received no indications about this Scholasticate from Provincial and Delegation Councils. We have written a letter to the formators of the Scholasticate and to the PC of the NAP to explain the situation. The scholastics presently in Chicago are eight. The future of this Scholasticate is part of the global evaluation on formation.
- The GC in the June Consulta 2006 has approved the experience of the Scholasticate of Pietermaritzburg: it will carry on with a small group of scholastics (about 12). The work of adding 4 extra rooms (for new scholastics and for visitors) and two halls (one for meetings/library and one as a praying-room) was approved.
- In June 2006 we closed the experience of the Elstree Scholasticate.

### **8. Novitiates**

- In December 2005 the GC approved ad experimentum for four years the proposal for the Novitiates of English-speaking Africa: one year all the novices of the first year will begin in one place, the following year will move to another place. This year we begin in Namugongo, next year in Lusaka.
- The reasons are mainly about the possibility of offering the group a better continuity and gradualness in the formation journey and a more attentive personalisation of the novice accompaniment.
- In the Consulta of March 2005 the Novitiate of Contagem in BS was temporarily suspended. For the Provinces and Delegations of America there are two inter-provincial Novitiates: Sahuayo for Mexico, DCA and Nap, Huánuco for PE, CO, EC, BS and BNE.
- French-speaking Africa: In the Consulta of June 2006 the GC has temporarily suspended the Novitiate of Kimwenza/Kinshasa. The novices of the four French-speaking provinces will all go to Cotonou starting already from this year. The Congolese novices of the second year will finish their novitiate in Kinshasa.

The reasons for such decisions (America and French-speaking Africa) is first of all the novices' decrease in number. The choices were the outcome of a reflection, dialogue and discernment among the interested provinces and between the provincial superiors/their councils and the General Administration.

### **9. (CA '03, 49) Participation in the reflection on the Ratio Missionis**

Various scholasticates and novitiates committed themselves to reflect on the Ratio Missionis by taking part to what had been organised in the provinces as well as by reflecting on their own, within the formation community, on the themes proposed by the ad hoc commission. I believe it is important to underline this positive involvement in the Institute's journey.

## **10. (CA '03, 64.4) Reflection on the integral formator**

The General Charter has invited us to continue “the reflection on the role of the integral formator.” I quote from the assembly in Palencia.

“The document “Revision of Formation” (n. 63) rather than of an “integral formator” speaks of a formator who is capable of integrating and unifying the different formative dimensions present in the process of growth of the individual. The formator has the responsibility of expressing a judgement on the candidate, one that is a synthesis of all the contributions of those who have taken part, in one way or another, in the candidate’s formative journey.

We give preference to a Comboni spiritual director, especially where this is possible. If not, we should make sure that that spiritual direction is made use of and applied in a way that is in harmony with the formative aims of the Institute” (Conclusions n. 22).

## **11. The Secretariat’s work**

The secretariat’s work has been intense at the central level with the GC, the other secretariats and, above all, the process of the Ratio Missionis, but also at the level of coordinating, contacting and dialoguing with the provinces and delegations.

The secretary general has visited all the scholasticates and CBC, some more than once, as well as the novitiates and, as far as possible, the other houses of formation: minor seminaries, prepostulancies and postulancies.

Collaboration and dialogue, generally speaking, are good with everyone. Various secretariats regularly send the minutes of their meetings. There is an effort in many provinces to update the Educative Charts and that of VP and to get all the confreres to become involved in the pastoral work of vocation.

I would like to underline the importance of continuity and of the necessary mediation to make this collaboration really efficacious. I refer to the service of the provincial/delegation superiors and of the secretariats: the choices and decisions we take must have a follow up so that things may truly carry on.

In this sense, I think that it is important to stress the need of a greater commitment so that there may be a common line of action and effective adherence to the same Comboni formation process. In other words, it is not possible to plan the formation journey in a personal manner.

I wish to underline some points for continuity of service:

- commitment in personnel planning;
- serious discernment for the admission of candidates to first profession and renewal of vows, in line with the criteria and values of the Institute;
- effective adhesion to a single Comboni formation programme;
- better accompaniment by provincial and delegation superiors of Scholastics and of Brothers in the CBC, by following them up closely during their formation journey;
- to follow the indications of the new system when deciding to which scholasticate to send the newly professed;
- more regular communication between the provincial secretariats and the secretary general for formation.

## **SECOND SESSION OPEN CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PROSPECTIVE**

This second session is the work of both the core commission and the enlarged commission, appointed by the GC to reflect on the present situation concerning vocation and formation in the Institute. After the Consulta of June 2006, the paper with the work to be discussed during these days was sent to you all.

Rome, 8 June 2006

*Fr. Girolamo Miante*  
Secretary General for Formation

*Here I wish to add, in a schematic and summary way, some more points that may help us to have a greater number of factors for a wider vision of the situation.*

#### **A. VOCATION PROMOTION: OPEN CHALLENGES**

- need of vocation promoters identified with their vocation and with a positive missionary experience
- generally speaking, there is a lack of preparation in confreres working in VP
- not all the provinces and delegations have a VP Chart
- difficulty in presenting the vocation to the Brotherhood
- lack of constant accompaniment for candidates and for its subsequent discernment: too many young people with deep personal problems
- often there is too little knowledge of the social, ecclesial and family environment of the candidate
- need to better understand the motivations
- difficulty in correlating and developing activities of youth pastoral work and activities more specifically of vocational nature
- we must have the courage to propose the missionary vocation ad vitam
- many initiatives, a lot of work... little results
- need to review the vocation teams: personnel, age, experience...

#### **B. VOCATION PROMOTION: ANSWERS**

- commitment in the preparation and in the ongoing formation of vocation promoters (local and continental courses)
- a more practical planning concerning the personnel in the provinces and delegations included in the six-year plans, just recently approved
- more initiatives for proposing the vocation to the Comboni Brotherhood
- to insist more on the quality of the candidates
- the choice of propaedeutics as a time for a better preparation to the postulancy
- evaluation and commitment in the European provinces in spite of the not easy social, ecclesial and youth situation.

#### **C. POSTULANCIES: OPEN CHALLENGES**

- a number of provinces and delegations find it difficult to select personnel for formation
- need of formators identified with their vocation and a positive missionary experience
- difficulty in the preparation and ongoing formation of formators
- difficulty in the formation journey, to keep in mind the holistic growth of the person
- for the Brothers candidates: often we have no reference model to identify with. Difficulties in providing an academic and professional formation
- values and criteria are not always perceived in the same way when discerning and when moving from one formation stage to the next
- generally speaking, the youth's reality is fragile, presenting often gaps and wounds
- the motivations are poor and do not improve
- the need to rethink the experience of the postulancies, especially for communities of small numbers of candidates. What kind of community experience is possible?

#### **D. POSTULANCIES: ANSWERS**

- the formators' willingness to agree to the preparation and the ongoing formation
- collaboration between the provinces/delegations and the GC/SGF when selecting the formators
- commitment to grow as persons : emphasis on human maturity
- greater effort in discernment
- selection of a core of basic values to which to refer for vocation discernment
- a better and deeper encounter with Comboni
- some more demanding initiatives for the Brothers candidates: high school diploma (BCA) for a better academic quality and a professional preparation
- the experience of propaedeutics is helping the postulants' journey
- effort in reviewing the educative chart, so as to decide every year the community project
- willingness to make use of the available skills: psycho-diagnostic test, autobiography, life project, personal profile...
- attention to simple and sober lifestyle
- importance of a formation that is linked to a missionary experience (various apostolic initiatives...).

#### **E. OPEN CHALLENGES**

- a. how to develop the motivations for a life commitment and the use of structures
- b. identity and a sense of belonging
- c. vocations geography today: challenge of communion
- d. the richness of our charism and the new cultural spaces for its incarnation and realization
- e. authority, leadership, services in VP and BF: continental responsibility
- f. Ratio Fundamentalis and continental characteristic
- g. how to live the choice of Mission: as a typically Comboni radical aspect
- h. the service of formators, so ever more difficult: is it a "rarity"?
- i. vocation promotion: the courage of a commitment ad vitam
- j. vocation to the Brotherhood: a challenge of primary importance for which we have to commit ourselves.

#### **F. VOCATION PROMOTION/BASIC FORMATION AND THE COMBONI INSTITUTE**

- need to create in every province and delegation a vocation culture
- "it is the Institute that forms": to grow in identity and life witness; to develop jointly the sense of belonging and the passion for Mission
- our communities as places of communion, growth and formation
- the Gospel and the Rule of Life, at the core of the Comboni journey
- the new vocations are the new expression of Comboni mission today: need of conversion, of communion and of welcoming attitude
- need of evangelical witness of poverty and of financial management from the level of the community to that of the province and of the Institute: to form a new attitude
- availability and internationality at the service of VP and BF in the Institute
- to organise a meeting of the young people in formation (Scholastics and Brothers) in order to listen to what they have to say concerning Formation and Mission.

NB. As for Noviciates, Scholasticates and CBC, the assembly held in Palencia (2005) has already presented enough points about open challenges and future prospective.





# **Commission for Reflection on Formation**

## ***PROPOSALS FOR THE INTECAPITULAR ASSEMBLY 2006***

### **Introduction**

The General Council (GC), during the October/November Consulta 2005, has appointed a commission of reflection on the formation system in the Institute in view of redesigning the formative project and of proposing it for discernment to the Intercapitular Assembly 2006.

The commission met the first time from 13 to 18 February 2006 in Rome, at the General Curia.

Starting from the Assemblies on formation (2004 and 2005) and the indications of the General Council and of the Secretariats, it has prepared a first draft of proposals that were sent to the confreres appointed as continental consultants by the GC.

In their second meeting (29 May - 2 June 2006), the commission evaluated the various contributions and elaborated a new text which we now present to you in view of the next Intercapitular discernment so that the GC may take the decisions that will be considered more appropriate.

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The work of the commission is divided into four parts:

- A- A reading of the present situation
  - B- Based on the meeting in Palencia and on previous meetings
  - C- Proposal of alternative models in basic formation
  - D- Attachment
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### ***A – A READING OF THE PRESENT SITUATION***

#### **1. Achille's heel**

In the Assembly in Palencia (July 2005) the formators have seen that the “**Achilles's heel**” of our Comboni formation is caused by the following situations:

- We are aware of the lack of the sense of “urgency” throughout the various stages of formation, accompaniment and discernment.
- The interiorisation of values does not reach heart and life.
- We are facing a dichotomy, a separation between language and life.
- The gradualness and continuity in the formative journey are not easy to be implemented and to make them bear fruit.
- The structures, and not just the material ones, the programmes, the moving on from one stage to the next, have to be thought over to provide new answers to our present situation.
- Formation and Mission do not express unity in people's life: we feel the need of a comprehensive journey, where the human, Christian and Comboni growth finds in mission his natural “place” in order to reach a precise and mature identity.
- We, the formators, feel also the need of being more deeply concerned about our own formation, so that our personal life may become the first witness and a sign of the gift of ourselves to our youth in their vocational journey.

## 2. Some causes for this state of affairs

1. **Youth situation.** We are faced with situations of fragility and fragmentariness. Today's youth carry within themselves many wounds. Society is undergoing an ever greater destruction of fundamental values, like family, commitment, sacrifice and the life of faith. Uncompromising attitudes and commitment ad vitam are hard and unfamiliar words in the contemporary language.
2. **Relativism.** The values we propose take root with great difficulty in the heart of the young people.
3. **Family knowledge.** We do not have sufficient knowledge of the family and background of the young person. This prevents us from walking together and from sharing about his history and life. Often the young people do not live in their own family environment. Going to College or being away for academic studies does not allow them to experience the ordinary and important influence of a peaceful and warm family life.
4. **Faith experience.** Their faith experience is very poor and at times too devotional. The young people are influenced by other religious denominations where outward show, music and dance are prevalent. There is no initial journey clear enough to make a choice in life and to have a vocational experience. There is not enough stress about contemplation in prayer and a journey of conversion that leads to steady adherence to Christ.
5. **The level of general and intellectual learning** is rather poor and inadequate.
6. **Missionary model.** The missionary model we incarnate, often based very much on efficiency, does not match up to today's young people's vision, who find it difficult to identify with it. An "easy" missionary type of model seems to be more common and attractive.  
In formation: there is the whole lot, with nothing missing. The structures are protective and offer no opportunity for making an experience. The message for a sober, simpler and poorer lifestyle is not easily recognized.
7. The formative experience does not appear as **an initiation rite**.
8. There is a **dichotomy** between what one would like to do (i.e. to accompany the young person through a deep faith experience...) and the immediacy of the objectives to be achieved (like, for instance, the academic aspect that becomes the priority).
9. It is difficult to properly harmonise the young men's journey and the **motivations** that should accompany their growth.
10. The transcultural **crossings** and the formation crossings, more than "crossings" are often "leaps" that do not help their gradualness and continuity.
11. It is hard to create a **sense of belonging** within the Institute and with regard to the young people's families. The young people have the feeling that they are not understood and accepted.
12. **Promoters and formators:** the provinces find it difficult to make confreres available for such services.
13. **A weak Comboni identity** with regard to passion for Christ and the Mission. Often there is lack of preparation and of ongoing formation, so that discernment and accompaniment of the candidates is inadequate, which has an impact on them. We lack courage when it is time to take decisions or we fall into a vocational pietism: "let him go ahead; let us wait and see..." We do not apply the same criteria when evaluating the growth process of the young person.
14. In general there is too much rotation of formators engaged in the formation process. Not always rotation is good for formation.
  - a. At this stage we ask ourselves:
15. After all, who really knows the young person when time to make an objective discernment?
16. What influence a formator has on the life of a young person? How does the young person see us?

## ***B - BASED ON THE MEETING IN PALENCIA AND ON PREVIOUS MEETINGS***

We are aware of the variety of the situations and experiences of the provinces and delegations: on the one hand, great abundance and potentiality as far as vocations are concerned and, on the other hand, challenges and difficulties accompany us in our daily formation service.

We have some very clear reference points in the documents that we have gradually drafted during these past years. The first remark we wish to make is that we should introduce and apply them. Taking into consideration the various reflections of the vocation promoters and formators, we wish to underline some suggestions that we consider very important.

### **VOCATION PROMOTION**

1. The preparation of vocation promoters: it is necessary to assure a serious and adequate vocational service for the journey of today's youth.  
We propose that, normally, the confrere appointed for this service has had a mission experience that becomes a personal testimony for the work he is called to do.  
Every confrere has to have a time of preparation of at least six months. This can be done in the province (or elsewhere) through courses ad hoc and other programmes. This period of preparation should become a condition sine qua non.
2. The accompaniment of the candidates has to be of a personalised kind. Besides meetings, life in common, and so on, the young person has to find in the vocation promoter someone who accompanies him personally. This will allow the vocation promoter to know him in his human situation, to know his family, the environment, his Christian experience, his ecclesial and pastoral experience.
3. To put into focus the aim of vocation promotion. There is a clear distinction between youth pastoral work and vocation promotion, where the priority is his journey towards encountering Christ and embracing a missionary life.
4. We would like to point out the importance of collaboration (among promoters, secretariat and provincial council) when doing an evaluation of what has been accomplished and the candidates' discernment (Evaluation of Formation, n. 35, last paragraph).

### **PROPAEDEUTICS**

1. We propose that in all the provinces and delegations there is a **year of propaedeutics** as a stage preceding the postulancy.  
In the past this experimentation was introduced especially for reasons of a better preparation and improvement in the academic field, continuing, nevertheless, in making the discernment that was begun during vocation promotion.
2. We would like also to point out and focus on the dimension of the "**catechumenate**", where the young man is initiated to experience a deeper personal encounter with Christ, to better motivate his choice, to share his life with others, to get to know himself better and to make himself better known.
3. Practical models are already being applied: the propaedeutical year is done in a community of its own, which has one formator and propaedeutics and postulancy are placed together in the same house, it is a small community where young people live and manage their life together, accompanied also by the vocation promoter... There are other experiences that were started during the last few months.
4. The proposal is to stress the importance, for everyone, of the need of a journey for one year before entering the postulancy, leaving, naturally, to each province and delegation the freedom to organise it according to their own possibility.

## POSTULANCY

1. The period of the postulancy is characteristically “demanding”, to ensure the continuity of the journey undertaken during the time of vocation promotion and propaedeutics.

This demanding attitude, in the first place, is not one stresses discipline, but the values that one in truth proposes to live. The priority is about the individual’s journey and the integration of all the dimensions of his growth.

Let this be a time when we show a sober lifestyle, without employing workers and other personnel for the services needed; the young man is to be faced with situations of practical life so that he may appear for what he truly is, without securities or protections. In this way it will be possible to make a journey with him and help him grow.

If at the end of the period of postulancy the criteria proposed in the Evaluation of Formation (EofF) have not been achieved, the young man is to be invited in clear terms to choose another life course for him.

2. We should have the courage to begin some kind of insertion experience for small groups of young postulants: to place them in a community that carries out a missionary ministry in its daily routine. A confrere is to be directly responsible for the formation of the postulants.
3. It is important to care for the postulants’ preparation before they enter the novitiate, helping them to desire and enjoy this time as an important phase of their vocational and missionary journey.

## NOVITIATE

As the journey has to be marked by continuity also during the Novitiate, for the English-speaking Africa and Mozambique we have decided to start this year (2006) a new experience: all the new novices, alternating on a yearly basis, will go this year to Namugongo and next year to Lusaka.

This proposal has been accepted by the GC and approved ad experimentum for four years.

Also the novices and the provinces of French-speaking Africa are taking into consideration the possibility of following a similar system.

2. We propose that the novice, before his first profession, is allowed to express not so much his option for a specific Scholasticate, but to give an indication concerning his missionary service.
3. We propose that during the Novitiate is given the opportunity of participating in a directed retreat, which is to be deemed as a good opportunity to personalise one’s spiritual journey. We have to keep in mind the guideline mentioned in the RF (346): the personal encounter with the novice master has to take place at least fortnightly.

## SCOLASTICATES

### Continentality of the Scholasticates

#### ***1. The formators in Palencia have made the following proposal:***

*We affirm the value of interculturality in the formative experience and in the life of the Comboni Institute. For the past thirty years there have certainly been many positive aspects concerning the scholasticates’ intercontinental experience.*

*Faced with today’s situation, nevertheless, we give preference to the scholasticates’ continentality, which implements the value of internationality in the Institute.*

*Reasons for this option:*

- *to encourage the process of a deeper inculturation of the charism,*
- *to promote continuity and gradualness in the formative stages,*
- *to unify the energies and the interests of the candidates in their process of human and spiritual growth and pastoral maturity for better perseverance,*
- *to support a formation that is more personalised and based on a common continental denominator,*

- to save on bureaucratic and logistic expenses when changing continent and avoiding also a too frequent change of language,
- to keep contact with the province of origin, as the presence on the same continent makes it easier for the accompaniment of the respective provincial,
- to encourage a more contextualised theological reflection.

## **2. Evaluation and criticism about the proposal**

1. It appears that the proposal refers to the Scholasticates in the North: the attraction to go to the North of the world is alluring, the motivations in the young scholastics are not always authentic, thus the possibility of abandoning the life project one has undertaken.
2. What is important is not so much the geographical place, but how one lives. Formation, in any case, has to be more demanding. It often appears too “soft” and in the Scholasticate one does not feel sufficiently the “impatience” for the mission.
3. We have to take into account the options and the style of Mission that we intend to live and instil these into the heart of the young people during their formation. This includes the economic choices which inspire or condition us.
4. The value of inter-continentiality seems to lose importance or to be sided over... as if it were like questioning an essential aspect of the Institute.
5. Our choice for continentality may appear to be an “easy” way out to explain the difficulties which often the formators find hard to face. Perhaps it is also used to explain away the difficulties that are connected with interculturality.

## **3. Reference criteria**

1. Faced with the difficulties of the youth situation today, which are reflected also in the Comboni formation journey, we believe that the criteria to be emphasised in the experience of the scholasticate has to be the Mission.
2. We tend to move, generally speaking, towards choosing one’s own continent for the missionary and theological preparation, leaving though open the possibility to allow some scholastics to go to other continents.
3. Among the reasons already mentioned, we underline in particular the gradualness and continuity of the formation journey. We wish to encourage a growth that is in better harmony with one’s own continental history and to put into focus the motivations of the Comboni choice: the Mission.

## **Apostolic period during the scholasticate**

### **1. The formators in Palencia have made the following proposals**

*Besides the intellectual preparation, we wish to underline the value of the pastoral dimension in formation. We propose, therefore, that we introduce, as part of the scholasticate’s journey, a formative programme aimed at an apostolic service of two years after the first two years of theology, and, preferably, to be done in the province of origin. This period will help to deepen the missionary experience of the candidate, facilitate the strict relationship between formation and mission and stimulate the purification of vocational motivations. It should also strengthen on the whole the ties with the province of origin.*

*This apostolic period has to include the planning of holidays.*

*The academic programme of the Scholasticate is completed with the attainment of the bachelor’s degree (baccalaureate) in theology.*

### **2. Evaluation and criticism about the proposal**

1. The proposal raises the problem of the fragmentariness of the experience and it extends its duration.
2. The community accepting the young man is not always in a position to accompany him.

3. The impression is that we delegate to others the situation and the difficulties of the young people in formation.
4. The knowledge of the young people in one's own province is relative, seeing the constant personnel changes and the fact of rotation.

### **3. Reference criteria**

1. For the missionary preparation during the stage of the Scholasticate, we wish to underline the experiential dimension as a practical answer to the problems already mentioned.
2. We emphasise the universal agreement found in Palencia about the "apostolic period" as an integral part of the scholasticate, in view of a missionary growth.

### **Small formation communities inserted in an apostolic community**

#### **1. The formators in Palencia have expressed the following proposal:**

*In answer to Chapter Acts '03 n. 64.3, we ask to begin the process by which we get rid of large structures. We believe that it is possible, even in a relatively short period of time, to start a number of realistic projects consisting of small formative communities set up in the following manner: one formator to accompany about ten scholastics inserted in an apostolic Comboni community.*

*This arrangement has to guarantee the priority for their studies and, at the same time, nearness to mission work.*

#### **2. Reference criteria**

We accept that small communities strengthen the interaction of the formation dynamics and make possible a more personalised approach. This is the option we propose to be gradually implemented.

## **FORMATION OF THE BROTHERS CANDIDATES**

The Brothers' formation is going through a phase that is characterised by a drastic reduction of candidates in the formation stages, as a very high percentage of young Brothers leave the CIF and even more leave during their first mission experience. To this we should add the uncertain reliability of a number of those who persevere. All this is bound to make us reflect and to ask us to reflect on the quality of our work of "caring" about the Brothers' vocation in VP, BF and first missionary commitment.

The Brothers' vocation and "new" formation need to be understood from the very beginning in a unified, global and gradual context. The fact that the Brothers are called to harmoniously integrate missionary consecration with professionalism, to become minister of social evangelisation (Evaluation of Formation 46), we need candidates who possess good human and Christian qualities, while, from the Institute's side, we need confreres who are prepared to accompany them and a kind of flexibility in the understanding of their formation journey.

Formators and provincials should pay special attention to ensure that the aims of their formation are effectively attained.

If we fail to formulate an overall and clear objective, we should not even begin the Brothers' formation.

### **1. Vocation promotion**

The provinces should have a vocation promotion charter that takes into account the Brothers' vocation in accordance with the Institute's guidelines.

In particular, attention should be given to the following aspects:

**1.1** Concerning the human and Christian qualities of the candidates, we have to follow the same criteria as those applied in VP for priests candidates.

**1.2** Completed university degrees (useful for the mission, according to the aims of the Institute) or professional diplomas adequate to begin such studies (Evaluation of Formation 47).

To encourage university studies before the postulancy, even with a financial contribution of the

province if necessary (after careful evaluation). Those who have finished the university for some time should have had a positive working experience.

As there is no Brother ministry that does not require a professional competence adequate for the need, we require from the Brothers candidates a positive approach to his profession. We have to assess his approach to it, in a wider sense (i.e. not just technical), his effective capability to learn it, his interest and passion to work in the social field.

The choice of professional skills has to be decided together with the General Administration.

Professional formation has to be that of a university's level, i.e. to be from three to five years (Evaluation of Formation 52, CA '03 n. 62.5).

**1.3** A confrere present in the province is to be responsible for the accompaniment of Brothers candidates.

## **2. Postulancy**

1. In the educative charter of the Postulancy there has to be a clear reference to the Brothers in line with the Institute's documents.
2. Where there are Brothers candidates, we have to make sure that a Brother, suitably prepared, is part of the formation team or at least lives in the formation community (RF 314), conscious that the identification happens through reference models.
3. In collaboration with the Brother Assistant General and the General Secretariat for Formation, from the very beginning it has to be programmed and clarified the complete formation route of each candidate and the evaluation; if it is not possible for a Brother to do his professional preparation before or within the period of the postulancy, it has to be specified when this will be done or completed.
4. We stress that it is better to have the professional formation of the candidates done before the postulancy, even through financial assistance if necessary (Evaluation of Formation 48).
5. It is important that the provinces enter into the global plan of the Institute and keep in mind that they are forming the Brothers for the demanding mission of the Institute, not for the provinces or their own needs.
6. The last year of postulancy has to be free from academic deadlines and devoted to the specific objectives of the postulancy (Evaluation of Formation 49b).

## **3. Novitiate**

1. In presenting to the novices the Comboni spirituality, which is a spirituality of communion and participation in the plurality of ministries (RL 10, 11.2; CA '03 n. 122), we must stress the link that exists between evangelisation and human promotion to which the Brother is called to give a particular contribution (RL 60, 61).
2. The novice master is to pay special attention to the specific spirituality of the Brothers in order to ensure a better identification with his lay ministerial service and consecration, inspired by the Social Doctrine of the Church and the Institute's tradition, and developing a mystical vision of the consecration in such a way that he may integrate the role of professional skills with the ministerial service towards a just and more fraternal world (CA '03 n. 91b, 98).
3. The novice master has to be interested in the wholeness of Brother candidate's formation. If a Brother has not completed his professional preparation and there are no plans for him to do it (unfortunately it does happen), let the novice master refer back to the Provincial Superior, the Secretary of Formation and the Brother Assistant General for clarification of the terms of the Brother's future preparation.
4. To help in their formative journey and identification, we have to keep in mind the guidelines of the Ratio, where it states that there should be a Brother in the novitiate community.

#### **4. CIF**

1. We reiterate that the CIF is to form for a ministerial service and the immediate preparation for the mission, not for a professional achievement (CA '03 n. 66.2).
2. We shall keep the two CIFs we have at present, modifying their physical structure and opting for small formation communities situated into apostolic Comboni communities, with the possibility of implementing the academic and educative programmes.

#### **5. First assignment**

This stage appears to be the most delicate and hazardous for the young Brothers. They have, therefore, to be accompanied very closely. Great attention must be given to their welcoming and responsible insertion into the community and the missionary services (CA '03, 73.5 and 75; Evaluation of Formation 44).

### ***C - PROPOSAL OF ALTERNATIVE MODELS IN BASIC FORMATION***

#### **Introduction**

The commission submits to the Intercapitular Assembly two models as an alternative to the present formation system of the Institute.

The two models are the outcome of the work of reflection of the commission, of the suggestions received by the continental Consultors and by the assemblies on Basic Formation 2004 and 2005.

The presentation of the models follows the methodology of Christian initiation, confirming thus the journey already tentatively outlined during the past years in the Institute. This initiation system involves tests, scrutinies, phases and requires an important condition: the involvement and the participation of the Comboni community.

We are deeply convinced that there can be no renewal in formation without a process of renewal in the Institute. It is the Institute as a whole that forms: if there is no community journey, there is no formation.

We need confreres who believe in the involvement for an authentic witnessing, who encourage the candidates by their word and example.

We need formators who believe in the young people, who know the formation journey of the Institute, who assimilate it and are not afraid to put it forward and to take decisions.

The process of the Ratio Missionis, which has been undertaken, gives us hope and assurance to believe that we are on the road for a renewed Comboni Pentecost.

The main motivation on which the proposals are based is the conviction that we are trying to give an answer to the difficulties and weaknesses of the present formation system.

The fact that we underline the weaknesses is a methodological approach for making new proposals, without intending, for this, to undervalue the positive aspects and the commitment of many.

Both models, with different stresses, intend to provide an answer to common and important requirements:

1. To avoid the "automatic" passing from one phase to another.
2. To give more importance to the people, their journey and their motivations.
3. To experience the personal encounter with Christ in a way that leads to the giving of self to the Lord (RL 21.1).
4. To base the formation process on the centrality of consecration-community-mission, with its consequent vocational discernment as the general criteria that guides us in these proposals (RL 10-11).
5. To live our consecration to Christ and the poor with joy, in freedom and transparency, in service and co-responsibility.
6. To underline the diversities in the cultural and personal contexts (America, Africa, Europe and Asia) and the possibility of pluralism in the formation system.



## **FIRST MODEL**

This process includes three stages: Vocational Orientation, Pre-postulancy and Postulancy.

### **1. Vocational Orientation**

For Vocational Orientation we understand the widest possible research by the young person about his personal vocation and his vocation in the Church.

#### **1. We point out a few weaknesses**

1. Little knowledge of the person and of the environment where the young people come from (family, school, Christian community).
2. Little knowledge of the young men's personal history.
3. The young people who approach us often do not simply look for a Christian vocational discernment but also for a life project.
4. Poverty in the candidates regarding catechetical contents and knowledge of Christ.
5. Influence of the Western world: comfort, hedonism...

#### **6. Proposals**

1. To offer an initial vocational accompaniment, through formation meetings, personal encounters, group dynamics, etc.; this is done in order to know the person, family, and environment he comes from. There is the need of contacting the parish priest, the Christian community and the ecclesial group he belongs to.
2. We suggest a model similar to that of a "workshop" for knowing better the young men.
3. In our discernment we have to evaluate if the young man is able to arrive at self-sufficiency and is committed in his studies and work.
4. At the end of this process we need an evaluation of the personality and the level of Christian and vocational commitment reached by the candidates before they may be accepted in the pre-postulancy and continue the accompaniment and discernment.
5. We leave it to the discretion and discernment of the Province/Delegation for the possibility of continuing or introducing a period of propaedeutics, as it is done a present, asking again for the confreres' collaboration in accompanying the candidates.

### **2. Pre-postulancy and Postulancy**

#### **2.1 Present weaknesses**

1. Our structures are too comfortable and protective; this has a negative influence on the dimension of human maturity and responsibility.
2. Too often priority is given to studies, to the detriment of the endeavour to offer the candidates contents of human, Christian and Comboni growth.
3. Inadequate self-knowledge.
4. The present structure encourages one to easily adapt to the requirements of the structures rather than to the assimilation of values.

## **2.2 We propose a journey divided into two stages**

### **a. Pre-Postulancy**

- 1a. **The pre-postulancy** corresponds to the first part of the formation period that precedes the Novitiate.
- 2a. In a structure, as simple as possible and challenging, integrated in a missionary community (or even in a community of their own according to the guidelines given by the Educative Charter), the young people begin a formation experience which, by following either the philosophical studies (for priests candidates) or the professional preparation (for Brothers candidates), will help them to gradually grow in self-knowledge, live an experience of deeper faith, understand better their vocation motivation and begin to concretely love the Mission.  
This period is to last, normally, three years. The guidelines given in the RF and in the Evaluation of Formation concerning the journey's programme are to be taken into account.
- 3a. This first part should help towards greater self-knowledge and in taking the first steps towards the giving of self to Christ and to the Mission.

### **b. Postulancy**

- 1b. At the end of their studies, the young men, with the approval of their Provincial/Delegation Council, will enter the Postulancy, which is the second stage of the formation period before the Novitiate. This period will last one year.
- 2b. This period will have the character of an initiation rite, following the model of the catechumenate. There will be no pursuing of academic studies, as its purpose is for a serious vocational discernment, centred on human and Christian maturity, knowledge of the Comboni missionary charism and it introduces to community life. The guidelines of the RF 271-276 shall be the inspiration and basis for such a year's journey, when the various dimensions should find their proper space and time: prayer and liturgy, knowledge of self and of cultural environment, service and work, passion for missionary and pastoral work, growth in human maturity and its values.
- 3b. It is a time for strengthening the candidate's motivations and to prepare him for the Novitiate, where he becomes evermore responsible for his journey: this is to be the feature at this formation stage.
- 4b. The postulancy year will end with an evaluation for deciding whether or not to admit the candidate to the novitiate.
- 5b. **The members of the formation team that is to accompany the postulants through these two parts of the stage before the Novitiate, should be the same the whole time.**

## **3. Novitiate**

### **3.1 Present weaknesses**

1. It seems that the Novitiate life finds it difficult to touch the hearth of the young man and, therefore, one has the impression that the basic values are not taken up and interiorised. It is as if the Novitiate becomes a "perfunctory" stage before moving on to the next one.
2. A life style where everything is more or less foreseen or planned, only helps those who follow the system of "getting to the end", without truly undertaking a journey of growth and conversion.
3. It seems that the personal encounter with the Lord is not sufficiently deepened.

### **3.2 Proposals**

1. To continue with the present time-period of Novitiate (alternating the period of the desert with apostolic activities) where the journey's aim is the consecration to the Lord for the Mission, favouring the methodology of initiation (Evaluation of Formation 29,1-2; 38-42).
2. Consecration to the Mission will find its realisation in a first mission service experience, once the novitiate is completed, becoming also a deeper motivation for the next ministerial

preparation: Scholasticate and CIF (see the scholasticate proposals: 4.3).

3. The entire duration would be 3 years: 18 months for the Novitiate and 18 for the mission service experience.
4. An alternative, suggested by some confreres, would be: the canonical year of the Novitiate, followed by two years of mission service experience.

#### **4. Scholasticates/CIF**

##### **4.1 Present weaknesses**

1. It is too much tied up with academic deadlines, making the passing from one stage to the next an automatic step.
2. We find a vast cultural leap.
3. There are too many nationalities in the same community.
4. There is a kind of resistance to the difficult mission.
5. Too many possibilities in the choosing of the Scholasticate' venue.
6. The lifestyle is far from the real situations of the people among whom we are.
7. Difficulty in accepting a particular catechetical programme within the community and of assuming attitudes and values appropriate to our specific commitments.
8. Some communities are too numerous.

##### **4.2 Proposals**

1. We accept the proposal of continentality as suggested in the assembly in Palencia, without excluding the possibility of an inter-exchange between continents.
2. We are in favour of having the Scholasticates/CIF in the South.
  - Two English-speaking scholasticates: Nairobi and Pietermaritzburg
  - One Spanish-speaking scholasticate: Lima
  - One French-speaking scholasticate: Kinshasa
  - One Portuguese-speaking scholasticate: São Paulo
  - One Spanish-speaking CIF: Bogotá, and one English-speaking CIF: Nairobi, in small communities integrated into a missionary community.
3. To encourage a personalized formation, we propose to have smaller communities (made up of about 14 confreres), in simple structures, closer to a mission situation.
4. The choice of an initiation methodology will mark the various stages leading to the final consecration and/or the sacred orders.
5. Rome, Innsbruck and Chicago will remain as possible places for specializations.

##### **4.3 Mission service**

1. The newly professed will begin the time of his consecration to the Mission with a period of mission service in a community of his province of origin or, alternatively, in a community of the province that has the Scholasticate/CIF the newly professed will be sent to, beginning with the study of the language and then the mission service (1½ year). The ministerial preparation will follow later. mmmm

For the personal accompaniment one can ask for the collaboration of those confreres who have already served in formation and who now work in a missionary pastoral activity.

##### **2. Other possibilities:**

- 2a. At the end of his studies, the Scholastic or Brother will return to his province of origin for one year for a mission pastoral service. The formators, before the confreres in formation leave the Scholasticate/CIF, will prepare a final report - to be discussed in the community where the confreres have been staying – in order to present the Scholastics or Brothers for perpetual vows

and sacred orders. The scholastic will continue in the new community his ministry as a deacon for six months before his priestly ordination.

- 2b. See also what has been proposed in Palencia (namely to have the mission experience in the middle of the Scholasticate).

## **5. Evaluation of the initiation journey**

After the first three-year-period of mission experience, we propose that the young confreres, priests and Brothers, come together for a short period of three months. Assisted by a programme with specific contents and experiences, these three months are intended to help them towards sharing their first mission experiences and to deepen the concept of missiology and Comboni methodology.

## **6. Promoters and Formators**

- 6.1 The Promoters and Formators must be identified with their own Comboni vocation, to have had a mission experience, to have the knowledge and capability to understand in a concrete way and trust today's youth situation.
- 6.2 All of them must have had a preparation (with the opportunity of evaluating their personal attitudes), followed by ongoing formation, with a section dealing with topics of a Comboni context.
- 6.3 For continuity in this service, there must be an exchange of useful material, especially with regard to formation contents, to be periodically updated.

## **SECOND MODEL**

For the second model, the assertions and weaknesses underlined in the various formation stages above are also relevant.

The main motivation on which this proposal is based is that of putting into focus, from this very first part of the journey, the missionary vocation discernment and the maturity development of the person, free from academic pressures.

### **Vocational orientation**

**1.1** It is his first approach and encounter with the mission reality: knowledge and compassion for the many situations of today's world, commitment for the poor... He is on a journey to search for his personal vocation.

### **2. Vocational discernment**

- 2.1** To those young men who are interested in a Comboni missionary vocation proposal, we must offer a vocation accompaniment through formation meetings, personal encounters, group dynamics, etc., in order to get to know the person, the family and the environment he comes from.
- 2.2** We suggest the method of the "workshop" to get to know the young men better.
- 2.3** During this time the young people carry on with their life in their own environment, following their studies (university or professional) or their work. They must show that they are able to be responsible, in a human and Christian mature way, for their life in view of a vocation project.

At the conclusion of this process, which can vary in length from person to person, there must be an evaluation of his personality and level of Christian commitment before one is accepted into the postulancy to continue his journey.

### **3. Postulancy**

- 3.1** This period will have the characteristic of an initiation rite, following the model of the catechumenate: no academic studies, a serious vocational discernment centred on the human

and Christian maturity, knowledge of Comboni mission charism and initiation to community life. What outlined in RF 271-276 will be the inspiration and planning for the journey of such a year, when the various dimensions should find their space and time: prayer and liturgy, knowledge of self and of cultural environment, service and work, passion for mission and pastoral work, growth in human maturity and in its values.

**3.2** It is a time for strengthening his motivations before entering the Novitiate, where the young man will become evermore responsible for his journey: this is to be the main feature of this formation stage.

**3.3** The postulancy year will end with a discernment to see if the candidate can be admitted to the novitiate.

**3.4** The postulancy will normally last one year.

## **4. Novitiate**

### **Proposals**

To continue with the present length of time for the Novitiate (alternating period of the desert and apostolic activities) where the journey's aim is the consecration to the Lord for the Mission, favouring the methodology of initiation (Evaluation of Formation 29,1-2; 38-42).

Concluding the Novitiate, the young man will decide whether to live his missionary consecration as a priest candidate or a Brother candidate.

## **5. Philosophy and professional preparation**

The newly professed, after the Novitiate, will begin their philosophy studies or professional preparation (or specialisation), normally in their provinces of origin. There may also be the possibility of inter-provincial experiences.

## **6. Mission service**

At the end of this first study stage, the Institute offers to the young confreres a period of mission service (one year) in one of the communities of the province where the scholasticate/CIF is located. The ministerial preparation will follow later.

## **7. Scholasticates/CIF**

- We accept the proposal of continentality as suggested in the assembly in Palencia, without excluding the possibility of an inter-exchange among the continents.
- We are in favour of having the Scholasticates/CIF in the South.  
Two English-speaking scholasticates: Nairobi and Pietermaritzburg  
One Spanish-speaking scholasticate: Lima  
One French-speaking scholasticate: Kinshasa  
One Portuguese-speaking scholasticate: São Paulo  
One Spanish-speaking CIF: Bogotá, and one English-speaking CIF: Nairobi.
- To help in the personalized formation, we propose to have smaller communities (no more than 14 confreres), with simple structures and closer to a mission situation.
- Rome, Innsbruck and Chicago will remain as possible places for specializations.

## **ALTERNATIVE FOR THE AFTER NOVITIATE**

With his missionary consecration, the newly professed receives his first destination: it will be his first time-period in the mission service (one and a half year), preceded by the possible study of the language.

It will then pursue his ministerial preparation: philosophical studies and/or theology, in a house of formation where the same language is used.

## **D - ATTACHMENT**

### **STATISTICS FROM 1996 TO 2006**

#### **1. CANDIDATES**

##### ***First Professions***

1996: 38 S + 9 F	= 47 (15+3Africa, 11+2 America, 10+3, Europe, 2+1 Asia)
1997: 41 + 12	= 53 ( 17+6 Africa, 19+1 America, 6+3 Europe, 1 Asia)
1998: 45 + 15	= 60 (20+7 Africa, 22+3 America; 3+2 Europe; 2+1 Asia)
1999: 43 + 6	= 49 (17+4 Africa, 15 America, 10+2 Europe, 1 Asia)
2000: 48 + 7	= 55 (25+3 Africa, 11+2 America, 7+2 Europe, 5 Asia)
2001: 42 + 4	= 46 (21+1 Africa, 14+1 America, 6+2 Europe, 1 Asia)
2002: 35 + 9	= 44 (21+4 Africa, 10+3 America, 2+2 Europe, 2 Asia)
2003: 54 + 8	= 62 (23+ 2 America, 22+2 Africa, 7+3 Europe, 2+1 Asia)
2004: 43 + 5	= 48 (25+3 Africa, 11+2 America, 5 Europe, 2 Asia)
2005: 44 + 2	= 46 (24+1 Africa, 12+1 America, 7 Europe, 1 Asia)
2006: 35 + 2	= 37 (26+2 Africa, 6 America,3 Europe)

##### ***Priestly Ordinations***

1996: 23 (10 America, 7 Europe, 6 Africa)
1997: 30 (13 Africa, 10 Europe, 7 America)
1998: 23 (12 Africa, 9 America, 2 Europe)
1999: 28 (9 Africa, 8 America, 7 Europe, 4 Asia)
2000: 29 (11 America, 11 Africa, 6 Europe 1 Asia)
2001: 26 (11 America, 10 Africa, 4 Europe, 1 Asia)
2002: 19 (8 America, 8 Africa, 3 Europe)
2003: 33 (16 America, 8 Europe, 7 Africa, 2 Asia)
2004: 22 (13 Africa, 4 Asia, 3 America, 2 Europe)
2005: 22 (13 Africa, 4 America, 4 Europe, 1 Asia)
2006: 20 (12 Africa, 6 America, 2 Europe)

##### ***Perpetual Professions of Brothers***

1996: 4 (Europe)
1997: 9 (4 Europe, 4 America, 1 Africa)
1998: 6 (4 Europe, 1 Africa, 1 America)
1999: 6 (5 Europe, 1 America)
2000: 5 (2 Europe, 2 America, 1 Africa)
2001: 4 (3 Europe, 1 America)
2002: 4 (2 Africa, 1 America, 1 Europe)
2003: 7 (3 Africa, 3 America, 1 Europe)
2004: 3 (2 Europe, 1 Africa)
2005: 6 (3 Europe, 2 Africa, 1 Asia)
2006: 4 (2 Europe, 2 Africa)

##### ***Those who left***

1996: 20 + 5 = 25 (5+2 Africa, 10+2 America, 5+1 Europe)
1997: 17 + 5 = 22 (5 + 2 Africa, 5+1 America, 7 +2 Europe)
1998: 13 + 7 = 20 (5+3 Africa, 6+2 America, 2+2 Europe)
1999: 10 + 2 = 12 (8+1 Africa, 1+1 Europe, 1 America)
2000: 24 + 8 = 32 (10+7 Africa, 11 America, 3 Asia, 1 Brother Europe)
2001: 22 + 6 = 28 (9+2 America, 8+2 Africa, 5+2 Europe)

2002: 17 + 5 = 22 (9+3 Africa, 6+1 America, 2+1 Europe)  
 2003: 20 + 6 = 26 (12+4 Africa, 6+1 America, 1+1 Europe, 1 Asia)  
 2004: 25 + 8 = 33 (9+6 America, 12+1 Africa, 3+1 Europe, 1 Asia)  
 2005: 22 + 2 = 24 (11 America, 9+1 Africa, 1+1 Asia, 1 Europe)  
 2006: 30 + 5 = 35 (15+4 Africa, 8+1 America, 6 Europe, 1 Asia)

## 2. PERSONNEL

**1996:** VP 79 (52 full time and 27 part time). BF 93 (83 full time and 10 part time)

**2000:** VP 65 (45 full time and 20 part time). BF 101 (96 full time and 5 part time)

**2005:** VP 74 (46 full time and 28 part time)

Africa: 14 + 18 America: 13 + 5      Europe: 17 + 5 Asia: 2

**Formators in the Postulancies:** 41 (full time) and 6 (part time) = 47

Africa: 19 + 3      America: 15 + 2      Europe: 6 + 1      Asia: 1

**Novitiates:** 15 formators (7 Europe, 4 Africa, 4 America)

**Scholasticates/CIF:** 21 formators (16 Europe, 3 America, 2 Africa)

**2006:** VP 81 (47 full time and 34 part time)

Africa: 14 + 20 America: 17 + 8      Europe: 14 + 6      Asia: 2

**Formators in the Postulancies:** 46 (full time) 12 (part time) = 58

Africa: 22 + 7      America: 18 + 3      Europe: 5 + 1      Asia: 1 + 1

**Novitiates:** 14 formators (6 Europe, 4 Africa, 4 America)

**Scholasticates/CIF:** 21 (16 Europe, 3 America, 2 Africa)





# REPORT OF SECRETARY GENERAL FOR FINANCES TO THE INTERCAPITULAR 2006

## 1. Capitular guidelines

The implementation of the capitular guidelines (CA'03) have been discussed in the continental assemblies of provincial/delegation treasurers and also during visits to some provinces.

### *Continental Assemblies*

Europe: Coimbra (Portugal) 20-27 November 2004

French-speaking Africa: Paris 25-28 April 2005

America: Bogotá (Colombia) 19-27 August 2005

English-speaking Africa and Mozambique: Lilongwe (Malawi) 31 October-5 November 2005

Europe: Krakow (Poland) 6-8 June 2006

### *Visits*

Colombia: 17-18 August 2005

Ecuador: 29 August-04 September 2005

Ethiopia: 7-14 November 2005

Congo: 26 January-18 February 2006

Brazil Nordeste: 27 March-02 April 2006

Brazil South: 3-9 April 2006

Togo: 2-14 May 2006

The reflection, which started within the contest of the Ratio Missionis, has found the topic of economics in full harmony with this process and it has encouraged a listening attitude. Though actually it is an aspect that is often touched within the process of the Ratio Missionis, only rarely we dwell on the financial aspect of mission, or rather only when coming across community problems that come to the fore when talking about finances. when we attempt to place this sector in the context of the Institute we find that economics has its own proper place within this contest and that it is linked to mission, so much that one cannot talk about economics without talking also about mission. In particular, the Common Fund finds its proper context only if seen in a provincial context that refers to mission.

### *Points mentioned by the General Chapter and the Guide to its implementation*

Economics and Mission (CA '03 n. 101; Guide p. 21, n. 5.1)

Common Fund (CA '03 n. 102.2; Guide p. 22, n. 5.3.1)

Ethical behaviour and transparency (CA '03 n. 101; Guide p. 22, n. 5.3.1)

Formation of personnel (CA '03 n. 104; Guide p. 22, n. 5.3.1)

Fixed Patrimony (CA '03 n. 127; Guide p. 21, n. 5.1)

## 2. Economics and Mission

In all our meetings it has come out clearly that finances, if **communitarian**, truly refer to mission.

It would already be an achievement if it were communitarian at the local level, but the true objective – and possibly the missionary dimension – is achieved in a provincial communitarian vision, from which we develop our sense of belonging to the Institute.

I would like to make use of two comparisons. There are Comboni Missionaries who live the financial aspect (and the mission) in a personal and individualistic way, where the provincial bursar replaces the bank, which may not be trustworthy in the nation where we are, and the Institute is considered as a government-like function and from which one has to try to get as much advantage as possible and avoid paying taxes. This financial vision is liberal-minded: freedom of private initiative with the least obligation towards society.

We should, instead, become similar to an Association where everyone does his best to contribute so that the aim of the Statute is achieved, by respecting the norms and following the guidelines spelt out by those who have been given the mandate (they have juridical power) to establish them, protecting and managing the one single patrimony that has been placed in their hands solely for the purpose of achieving the aim of the Association. The risk of certain concrete situations is that someone makes use of the Association for personal or of other groups' aims and interests, by playing on a twofold of service: the juridical one on the one hand, and for life on the other hand: (Comboni juridically, but individual person in fact).

In an Association, the only way to have one's opinion triumph is through an assembly. Enriched by all the theological and charismatic perspectives proper to the Comboni Institute, it appears to me that the latter is the financial model to which to tend.

### **3. Provincial Common Fund (PCF)**

The Provincial Common Fund (PCF), promoted by the General Chapter of 1997, and proposed again in 2003, is put forward in the context of willingness to share.

Besides Malawi/Zambia, which as a province has adopted it from the very beginning, the Provincial Common Fund has now being adopted also by Central Africa, Congo, DSP, London Province (?), Spain, South Sudan and Chad.

It basically consists in putting in common from the very beginning all goods received, - whether these come from abroad, as in the case of the African provinces, or as the balance amount in hand at the closing of the financial report, as in the case of the European provinces -, by transferring to the provincial/delegation fund whatever is above the budget approved by the Council. It is, in practice, a procedure of self-restraint based on an authorised budget, whether it concerns ordinary expenses, mini projects or extraordinary expenses, whether financed from within or from without the province.

Other provinces are in the process of adopting the PCF, among them Central America, Colombia, Peru and Togo-Ghana-Benin.

The motivations which encourage this reflection are due to the imbalance that exists at community or provincial level among confreres and communities; we find confreres and communities that are rich next to confreres and communities that are poor and who no longer accept this situation. It is for this reason that we have problems in community life. The new vocation geography, furthermore, is putting a pressure on us to move in this direction, as there is a growing fear in some confreres that they will not be able to have access to the same financial means that are presently available.

I personally think that the heart of the problem lies in the understanding of mission: if we do not embrace a community mission, from its very beginning to its realization and assessment, the problems will always remain. The Common Fund is just the logical arrangement for a communitarian understanding of mission. Without a (provincial) Mission Plan, the Common Fund will remain an illusion, a managerial and technical exercise. Properly implemented, instead, the Common Fund becomes a means to accomplish the provincial community's mission.

The implementation of the Common Fund is not an easy and evident process: we need people convinced of it, ways of evaluating it and of reminding people about it; we need an agreed upon organizational methodology that goes hand in hand with its planning; we need superiors (local and provincial) who accept to slow down in order to sensitise the community

before imposing decisions, as good as these may be; we need treasurers, especially provincial treasurers, who are capable of playing the role of critical guides of the province and to support the local bursars.

Difficulties must not become obstacles, but challenges to be faced up. Without a common mission we will always have individualism among our ranks, sanctioned by the lack of interest to find different solutions. We would not be identified with the Institute as it will be considered by some just the framework and even the means to do one's own mission. The Common Fund, instead, becomes the concrete and organised arrangement to do mission whose proprietor is the Province.

We realise that it is neither possible nor expedient to implement the PCF in an abrupt and absolute way. We need first to evaluate the concrete situation we find ourselves in, to make an analysis of the positive elements (like if there already exist some forms of sharing), to map an innovative and progressive process. The PCF has, nevertheless, to be clearly and positively planned, that is with the possibility of evaluating, at fixed times, what steps have been achieved and what still remain to be implemented. Factors to be taken into consideration are: creating an awareness on the subject (ongoing formation), managerial preparation in order to achieve the aim, to establish norms with an almost unanimous consensus concerning the realisation of the projects and of the economic and mission initiatives.

#### **4. Ethical behaviour and Transparency**

Some incidents of huge financial losses due to bad administration, which took place in some provinces, compel us to look for ways of administrative control to prevent these from happening again. The Code of Conduct will try to provide guidelines. Generally, though, the Comboni Missionaries are allergic to bureaucratic formulations, are inclined to live in a reciprocal climate of trust, ready perhaps to underline the evidence of forms of control once disaster has struck, but no one accepts "to be limited" in his activity just because some have not measured up to the trust granted them. We always reckon that certain things only happen to others.

I think that a happy medium between trust and control can be found in the communitarian dimension of our service: no one is to be left alone, not for lack of trust, but out of a necessary co-responsibility of all in all.

Temptations may be even greater in the future: it is necessary to practice co-responsibility and transparency at all levels. The Treasurer General's visits to provinces need to be enhanced and improved. No one should feel offended if it becomes an occasion to "check" and to audit the accounts, a task that requires time, even a few days if necessary. It is not an affront to anyone, but a simple institutional duty.

In the meantime, the administration has to be taken seriously by the provinces, unifying the balance reports, the programmes used for accounting and requesting a report from the communities at short intervals, even on a monthly basis, where communications are easy. It might avoid shutting the stable door when the horse has bolted.

In particular, the first statement of Chapter Acts concerning ethical behaviour and transparency: "to make use of our financial resources for the benefit of the mission" (see CA '03 n. 101.1), draws our attention in a special way to the offerings given to the Comboni Missionaries in the North of the world for the Comboni Missionaries in the South of the world: a 20% of the world that lives on 80% of the world resources. The money collected for the Comboni Missionaries is implicitly for the benefit of the mission *ad gentes*, namely collected in the North of the world for the benefit of the South of the world. Reflecting on the way we criticise the International Organisations, which squander the collected funds for their own use and organisation rather than using them for the main purpose for which they were set up, we too should carry out an internal research on the percentage of the offerings used to run our structures. The European provincial treasurers, in their meeting in Cracow in June 2006, have

committed themselves to do such a research to find out what percentage of the offerings is used to maintain structures, communities and services in Europe. The challenge is that this percentage should not be over the 50%. Once such data will be available, it will also be possible to consider the possibility of committing ourselves to remain below the mark that will be set.

## 5. Training of Treasurers

We have to recognise that little has been done in the training of treasurers. The Chapter General 2003, like the other Chapters, has underlined the problem, but has not reached a practical solution. Some answers have been found during the past three years at the secretariat general level:

- We have noticed that the provinces, choosing their bursars, continue to rely on expedient makeshift solutions, looking for someone who is willing, perhaps for a limited time but without an adequate preparation. We realise also that the provinces have personnel problems, so that they cannot easily deprive themselves of a confrere for a prolonged time to give him the opportunity to prepare himself for this task.

The proposal would be that the province selects among the confreres of origin those it considers suitable for a definite specialisation. The GC would begin to dialogue with the people concerned before making decision in this regard. We would have, then, the advantage of preparing personnel from all provinces who could complete the course in their province of origin, even at university level.

- The GC should particularly consider the confreres who are completing the Comboni Year of Ongoing Formation for the selection of suitable people to go for specialisation.

## 6. Unalienable Assets

The request to have an Unalienable Assets (UA) was raised in the Assembly of the provincial treasurers in 2002, worried about the financial future of the provinces.

The General Chapter 2003 has decided that “the Institute must provide itself with a Patrimonial Fund so as to offer a certain financial guarantee” (CA '03 n. 127), maintaining a balance between the Comboni praxis of rejecting capitalisation as a rule and the new request (or fear) of safeguarding the financial future.

It has spelled out a number of basic norms:

- to follow the guidelines of the Code of Canon Law (§ 1285 and 1291);
- to apply at the Institute level as well as at provincial level;
- to consist of immovable goods;
- with the authorisation of the GC.

- a. The research made through consultation of various jurists in Rome and elsewhere (Europe and America) has clarified that the *Code of Canon Law* (CCL) says that the Stable Patrimony (Unalienable Assets) is to limit the power of alienation of ecclesial Institutions' assets, who are bound to refer to a higher authority when dealing with sums that are above a certain amount (by having to refer to the highest authority of the Institution or to the Holy See). Canon Law, nevertheless, does not give an explicit and clear definition of what constitutes a Stable Patrimony. We can only say that it consists of real and movable estate. One interpretation suggests that all goods belonging to ecclesial institutions are stable patrimony, because when the value is above a certain amount it is always necessary the authorisation of a higher authority for the alienation of such assets. Instead Mgr. Velasio de Paolis, a Missionary of St. Charles (Scalabriniano), a canon lawyer recently appointed bishop, an excellent Vatican jurist, is of the opinion that the Stable Patrimony consists only of that economic entity which has positively been recognised as such by the competent authority. Concerning this Stable Patrimony, the ordinary administrator can no longer

exercise his ordinary authority on it: it is placed, by its own definition, outside his power of administration.

- b. Simply, for us the Unalienable Assets are to be considered that *minimum amount of assets entrusted to a Province* and to its future members, so that it may allow the carrying on of our specific activity. As we have decided that it should consist of real estate, we may speak of a pied-à-terre, of some initial buildings from which to carry out our activity for evangelisation, mission promotion and formation of Comboni candidates. These activities will be carried out through the work patrimony, namely the normal income and expenses linked to our daily life. The Unalienable Assets, instead, guarantee a Comboni residence to the future confreres of origin.
- c. In the continental assemblies for treasurers we agreed that the content of the Unalienable Assets have to be chosen according to a number of criteria, like:
  - the assets have to be a property of the Comboni Missionaries; in places where the Comboni Missionaries may not have corporate franchise, the assets are acquired under the name of the diocese with a bilateral written document to certify that it is a Comboni Missionaries' property; it is advisable that a copy of the document be deposited with the Apostolic Nuncio;
  - the house is to be one used by a Comboni community;
  - there are other suggested criteria to be discussed and approved.
- d. To guarantee stability to a real estate it implicitly means to guarantee its value in spite of the passing of time and, therefore, the need of a periodic and regular maintenance, even the setting up of a *Renovation Fund* for the work that might be needed: in this way is guaranteed to the future generations an Unalienable Assets and its basic value.  
In the table below we have the various continental proposals about the guidelines of a constitution concerning the Renovation Fund:
  - estimate of real estate,
  - length of time,
  - rate of depreciation and revaluation.
- e. Every province is to build up the Renovation Fund to be utilised when the works of renovation are needed. In the meantime it has been suggested to put these amounts into one single *fund to be invested*, at continental or general level, to guarantee its stability and interest.
- f. It is appropriate to express one's opinions, so that the GC may be in a position to make a choice that is supported by a wider knowledge and consensus.

*Fr. Alessandro Guarda*