OUTLINE OF THE CHARTER OF EVANGELIZATION

I INTRODUCTION

- What is the charter and what is its purpose?

(to make clear the nature and function of the document. Example: it is the presentation of the missionary project of the Institute in a specific socio-ecclesial context, done with the cooperation of all the confreres. It is not a text of juridical nature but it rather indicates those points of reference which are necessary for each community and for each missionary in order to walk together in an organic and systematic manner within the framework of objectives and strategies which have been agreed upon by the community. In this sense it establishes on the one hand criteria and points of reference and on the other hand it leaves an open space for creativity on the side of each community and individual [= a Cenacle of Apostles]. In a particular way by means of this document the concrete way is expressed in which the style of life is translated into style of action).

II OUR PRESENCE IN THE LOCAL CHURCH AS COMBONI MISSIONARIES

- Historical notes
- Identity (who are we)
- Purposes (putting into action what is contained already in the RoL and in the Provincial Directory)
- Present commitments (in the essentials)

III THE REALITY (SOCIETY) IN WHICH WE LIVE

- To indicate the reasons for which this point is important

(a) The human reality

- Historical elements, anthropological (social, political, economic, cultural, religious)

(b) The ecclesial reality (Local Church)

- Historical elements, situation and present problems
- Main options, objectives, type of organization
- What is demanded of us

IV OUR PROJECT OF EVANGELIZATION

(a) Principles and basic criteria (vision of mission with reference to the documents of the Church and the Institute)

(b) Elements of the human and ecclesial reality that challenge us as missionaries

- (which challenges emerge from the analysis on the grounds of our identity and the purpose of our presence? E.g. the presence of non-christians; human situations of suffering; fields of church work not sufficiently consolidated).

(c) Life style and action

- Basic attitudes and values (e.g. cooperation, walking with the people; common cause with them; attitude of search and openness; provisional character)
- Spirituality (e.g. relationship faith-life-action)
- Organization (e.g. evangelizing community; relationship individual – community; local community – provincial community…)

(d) Objectives of our presence

- at the ecclesial level (e.g. first evangelization; supporting local Church…)
- at the social level (integral human development; JPIC..; overcoming divisions)
- opening to the universality of mission (e.g. proposing the Comboni charism)

(e) Types and fields of action

- Types of action: our cooperation in the realization of the objectives of the Church in Africa: proclamation, inculturation; dialogue; integral human development; Mass-Media.
- Fields of action: ecclesial community; catechumenate; family; formation of leaders; areas of social action; ecumenic and interreligious dialogue…

V RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ECCLESIAL EVENTS AND INSTITUTIONS

- Concrete forms and style of cooperation (e.g. diocesan organisms such as the *presbyterium*; gatherings of religious and missionaries…)

VI STRUCTURES OF DIALOGUE AND FORMATION

* Internal and external: competencies and functions (e.g. secretariat of evangelization; assemblies; diocesan organisms… introductory courses for newcomers etc…)

DYNAMICS – METHODOLOGY FOR A CHARTER OF EVANGELIZATION

- Process of elaborating the material;
- Outline of the charter;
- Redaction

PROCESS OF ELABORATION

Gathering the material

- Documents of the universal (EN, EiA) and local (Plans, Synods) Church
- Documents of the Institute (RoL, Chapter Acts, Continental Assemblies; Courses; Provincial Directories; Community Charts…)
- Inquiry on the evangelizing activities in our communities: what is being done and how, and which is the impact?

Analysis of the situation (= a reading of the signs of the time)

It is the matter of a process of clarification, of knowledge, interpretation and assessment of faith in the human context at all levels (social, political, economic, cultural and religious). The reading of reality pursues the aim of discerning the project of God in the concrete situation and ends with defining the imperatives which emerge with regard to our activity. The analysis comprises as well the description of the situation of the Church in which we work and of its project in whose implementation we, too, cooperate, eventhough in the specific frame of our charism. Analysis is not done for the sake of efficiency. The guiding reason is our desire to be faithful to God who is at work within history and to be in communion with the Church.

How to proceed?

- Critical description and interpretation of human, religious and ecclesial reality (making use of human sciences: e.g. sociology, anthropology, communication…).
- Research and elaboration of a vision of faith (doctrinal and basic references of the Church and the Institute that function as parameters or criteria of assessing reality from the missionary-evangelical point of view).[1]
- From a comparison of the situation analysed, of our present practice and the vision of faith it is possible to make a value statement in order to identify *what the Spirit says to the Church.* The final result are **imperatives** concerning evangelizing action. Faithfulness to such imperatives is the presupposition for the *pastoral fruitfulness.*

Definition of long term objectives

The long term objectives constitute the horizon within which our activity must be situated: keeping in mind the assessment of the reality and the framework of the imperatives which emerge a description is made how reality ought to be in order to correspond to God's plan: where would the world and society end should things carry on in that way?[2] Which are the great goals that the Church must pursue in order to impede it, by following the action of the Spirit?

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[1] The material is available through the research referred to above.

[2] E.g. *Ecclesia in Africa* states that without the pardon and reconciliation which Christ offers "the world will look more and more like a battle field, where only selfish interests count and the law of power prevails, the law which fatally distances humanity from the hoped for *civilization of love*" (EiA). In this line the building up of a civilization of love is the imperative of God for the humanity of the 3rd millennium, as an answer to the crisis with which it is confronted. At the level of goals this is realized in the building up of a world of justice and peace that is based on dialogue and solidarity. At the level of Church this goal is realized in the "building up of itself as the Family of God " (EiA 63, referring to LG 1).

If this is so, the great goals have already been defined to a large extent by the Magisterium. It may simply be a matter of rewriting them in a more concrete way in line with the situation in which one lives, taking into account the results of the previous analysis and the characteristics of our identity and finality. That means that also at this stage we must take into consideration some passages that answer to the following questions:

What things in the present situation (society, Church, Institute) must be changed or corrected? (in order to facilitate the free expression of each individual in an atmosphere of mutual understanding).

Of all this, what can be received and on the basis of which rational objective and practical-theological criteria?[3]

After having taken into consideration that which constitutes the problem and the pastoral imperatives, the long term general and sectorial objectives must be described and decided upon. These must be considered as the important binding choices that direct everyone's journey.[4]

Elaboration of a medium and short term strategy (= also commonly known as *plan of action*)

At the end of the preceding itinerary we ought to have at our disposal all the elements needed for elaborating the concrete ways to follow within a given time (e.g. six years plan).

Starting with the objectives we must define the subjects, the sectors of action, the fields of work, activities, modalities, resources, supporting actions, etc.

In the strategy there is the need to indicate modalities and times for verification which might call for a modification of a project. In this respect the supervision of the action whose modality must be defined is important.

The strategy, too, needs to be elaborated starting with rational and practical-theological criteria: *and over all this put on love, that is, the bond of perfection* (Col 3:14).

Redaction of the chart of evangelization

The simple transcription of what emerges gradually along the different phases of the process described above does not necessarily correspond to what you would expect from a chart neither with regard to its structure nor to the material shape of its redaction. Such a document should rather have a simple, complete and clear structure, apart from a succinct and essential exposition of its contents. This requires a redactional work that can be done in form of a draft, starting with the material which is made available through the reflection done in collaboration with all the members of the Province according to modalities in line with the circumstances of place and time. The draft will successively be presented for assessment, corrections, additions and final approval.

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[3] The last thing we should do is to take a majority vote without having discussed the criteria of evaluation and without having worked out a consensus on positions which are critically founded. The criteria derive from insights in the scientific field in relation to what is under discussion (e.g. if we are talking about catechesis, the definition of the objectives has to take into account what pedagogy, psychology and education sciences tell us. As far as the theological realm is concerned the points of reference are biblical, doctrinal and the results of the evaluation of reality as it is supplied by the preceding analysis). In order to be correct and efficient, the use of the criteria needs to be related to the present historical circumstances.

[4] E.g. In this divided society of ours we want to cooperate in the building up of a Church which is sign and instrument of fraternity, in which every baptized person be considered on the basis of human and baptismal dignity and in which any form of discrimination in the name ethnicity, human qualification, economic situation or different location and function within the ecclesial community is avoided.

Prospetto schematico per l'elaborazione di un progetto di evangelizzazione