

COMBONI LAY MISSIONARIES

Agreements 4th GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Ellwangen 6-11 November 2006

Introduction

In a vision of church as communion the charism of Saint Daniel Comboni is a gift of the Spirit to the particular churches in which the CLM are springing up. They are developing a new dimension of living the combonian charism in autonomy and communion with the rest of the Comboni family. As a lay missionary movement they are an expression of the missionary dimension of the particular churches (both the sending and the receiving ones) and live the values of the Kingdom of God within the daily realities (economics, political, social, cultural).

We respect the rhythm of growth of each Province towards the common ideal.

We (the MCCJ) consider the CLM as a lay missionary movement originated as a vocation “Ad Gentes” and “Ad Vitam” according to the charism of St. Daniel Comboni.

Recognizing this vocation as a gift of the spirit and considering the Comboni charism as a universal church heritage, we feel called as Comboni Missionaries to accompany the CLM in their growth and specific fulfilment in the Comboni Family.

IDENTITY

a) Layperson

- Are men or women, single or married, and mature (older than 21 years?).
- Involved in the secular life (work, family...)
- Aware of the value of the cultural diversity, they are formed in a human, professional and Christian way.
- In the country of origin they support themselves by their own work.
- They work for the values of the Kingdom of God, promoting the evangelization and liberation of people.
- They have a Christian vocation and the sense of ecclesial fellowship
- They have a mature faith and clear motivation for the missions.
- They are motivated by their option to follow Jesus Christ in an ecclesial and community context.
 - a) By encouraging in a missionary way the local Church and the society in which they live.
 - b) By working at the service of human liberation, of justice and peace.

b) Missionary

- The CLM live the mission “Ad Gentes” in answer to their Christian vocation.
- They have a clear and positive disposition to go to the mission among those non-evangelized people or those still needing to strengthen their faith as Christian communities.
- The CLM want to share (giving and receiving) their life (faith, capacities, etc.) among the people to whom they are sent.
- As Christians the CLM announce the Gospel:
 - a) With their testimony of life;
 - b) With their commitment in the civil society by means of their work and at the service of the integral human development, of human liberation, of justice and peace;
 - c) With their commitment in pastoral activities, promoting a ministerial Church;
 - d) Promoting the missionary awareness of the Church.
- They promote the missionary vocation.
- From the point of view of the poor making them the main protagonists of their own liberation.

c) Comboni

- As the Comboni Family, the CLM live their vocation through Daniel Comboni's charisma, re-creating it by the light of their lay status.
- In general they work in co-responsibility and in collaboration with the Comboni Family.
- This supposes:
 - a) Identification with the charisma, the founder's knowledge and his spirituality, to be witness of Jesus' Gospel.
 - b) "To Save Africa with Africa" being promoters and animators of local laypeople.
 - c) To make a preferential option for the least in society (the excluded and impoverished), which to be authentic, is born of faith, which influences the world of politics, of education, of the economy, etc. willing to bear the cross with the crucified of today.
 - d) Community Life as the fundamental dimension of the missionary life. That is carried out in the community of CLM (where it is possible), be it in the apostolic community with the Comboni Missionaries or other pastoral agents; maintaining an austere style of life and an attitude of sharing with people.
 - e) Continuing in their country of origin the "missionary" work being carried out especially in the promotion of the justice and the solidarity, with an "alternative lifestyle" and maintaining the CLM presence in projects 'ad extra' in the various missions.
 - f) As part of the Comboni Family, we believe that the CLMs , MCCJ, Comboni Sisters and seculars should come together for assemblies (as observers), retreats, feasts or special days of the Comboni Family, etc.

Formation

Several stages exist:

- **Stage of knowledge and first contacts** (Length varies according the candidate.)
- **Discernment stage** (Around one year, minimum) to know the candidate and to discern their vocation, etc.
- **Going in-depth stage** (it varies according to the Province, 1 or 2 years): it is developed in weekend encounters, seminars, retreats, etc.
- **Specific preparation** (an ideal of a minimum of 6 months of community experience):
- Usually the CLM candidate has a course with other missionaries of the country, and it is more intensive course with residence in a Comboni house: for the language preparation, study of the culture of the destined country, Comboni spirituality and charisma, etc.
- **Formation in mission:** includes six month period of enculturation (culture, language, etc.), specific formation for lay people, supervision from someone outside of mission.
- **Permanent formation:** (Includes those who have returned from mission).

We suggest that there will be personal accompaniment in all stages of formation.

We believe it is necessary to prepare more lay people who are able to guarantee the formation and accompaniment within the CLM in order to gain greater autonomy.

The Central Committee will coordinate the sharing and distribution of material among the CLM and will prepare a "basic course of formation".

That the CLM continue walking towards establishing international communities. To help this, the formation programmes should be shared more during the coming 3 years.

Autonomy

- We propose that in the next 6 years there be regular meetings of the CLM at least: of the Provincial Coordinating Team once a year; of a Provincial CLM Assembly every 2 years; of the Continental Coordinators Team every 3 years, and the General Assembly every 6 years.
- We believe it is necessary to encourage the creation and implementation of continental committees.
- There will be personal commitment of each CLM according to their ability to contribute. They will have co-responsibility to the movement. Each CLM group should continue in its own process toward financial autonomy.

Several topics

- The CLM asks the Mccj for space on the web site www.comboni.org, to facilitate better communication and exchange between the CLM groups. The material (news, formation programmes, requests, etc) will be published in the language(s) made available by the CLM. Members of the Mccj Provinces are expected to give a hand in providing translations.
- We will create a network to help facilitate communication between the CLM groups where we can share ideas about formation, projects, or request financial help.
- That a historical study be made on the relationship between D. Comboni and the lay missionaries. The Central Committee will contact some MCCJ scholars for it.
- That there be 2 LMC in the Central Committee

Election of the new Central Committee members:

- Alberto de la Portilla (E)
- Gloria Morales Hernandez (Torres) (M)
- Fr.Günther Hoffman (DSP)
- Fr. Umberto Pescantini (Roma)