



Conclusions

Continental Meeting of the CLM of America

Guatemala, September 15-20 2014

The third continental Assembly of the Comboni Lay Missionaries (CLM) took place in Guatemala on September 15-20 2014. The group was made up of seven priests, one sister and 27 lay people (12 delegates and the others belonging to the Guatemala group, invited at different times during the meeting). The group included the coordinators of the six provinces that have CLM and three representatives of the CLM Central Committee.

The meeting had as its objectives to evaluate the journey of the different groups since the 2012 meeting in Maia and to set new lines that will help the growing process in a coordinated manner. The theme of the meeting was: "What does it mean to be a CLM from America."

In the light of our American reality, inspired by St. Daniel Comboni in the imitation of Jesus and in union with the missionary journey of the other CLM around the world, we tried to reach a series of commitments that will help us grow as CLM in our own countries.

These commitments, divide into areas, are:

Our reference group as CLM

In order to strengthen our local group (community) so that it will help us live our vocation all throughout our lives, we propose:

- To cooperate, promote and communicate with the groups from different countries in order to be enriched by everyone's experience;
- To develop discernment processes that will help us to live our vocation as a life-long option;
- To formally accept new CLM in the group;
- To assume ownership of our history and documents as CLM

Structure and Coordination

In order to strengthen the groups of each province/circumscription and the continental organization, we propose:

- That in his/her field of responsibility each CLM “own what needs to be done and be done well;”
- That both the CLM and the MCCJ advisors know the international and continental agreements, as well as the various directories;
- That we be aware that the journey towards self-sufficiency must undergo a strengthening of organization, economy and formation;
- That we need to work in cooperation with the entire Comboni Family.

Responsibilities of the Continental Committee:

- To be in constant communication with the Central Committee and within the continent;
- To implement the international and continental agreements;
- To call and prepare the continental meetings.

Mission Fields.

We recognize the different rhythm and maturity of the various groups of CLM in each country; just the same, we need to take steps in view of the mission outside our borders. We understand that as CLM we must give a double answer to our vocation ad gentes: both at the personal level (the call each individual receives) and at the level of the CLM group (taking responsibility as a group open to the possibility that others will go and act in our place), thus opening the Church to its missionary dimension ad gentes and inter gentes.

For this reason, our priorities in missionary activity as CLM shall be:

- To promote mission and missionary vocations within the Church;
- To be in frontier situations;
- To form leaders in mission situations: “Save Africa with Africa.”
- To strengthen and ensure continuity to our presence as CLM in the existing communities.

Economy

As a continent we want to take up the following commitments:

- We recognize that we belong to this international CLM family and feel ourselves called to take responsibility for its existence. In this spirit, all the CLM must contribute to the group's common fund. Starting from this local fund, the group must then contribute to the international common fund managed by the Central Committee.
- We are called to spur the local Church and all people of good will to support our missionary activities.
- We must strive for economic self-sufficiency with transparency and creativity, by promoting the search for funds and the creation of projects that will allow us to finance our missionary activity.

Communications and Networking

We know that communications is the necessary path to unity. For this reason we commit ourselves:

- To improve communications between the CLM groups of America, utilizing all means at our disposal;
- To have a secretary of communications in each group (or that this responsibility be taken up by the general secretary);
- To see communications as the responsibility of all the members of the group;
- To print information material to be made available to people who have no internet access;
- To share the local wealth of information by having each group send an article to the international blog every two months;
- To publicize our being CLM and the realities of missionary life through the social media, in order to help mission and vocation promotion;
- To share regularly news and/or documents of the local coordinating team with the Continental and the Central Committees.

Formation

As CLM of America we commit ourselves to follow a common path of formation where the resolutions of previous assemblies will be our guide. Furthermore, we want to take up the following commitments:

- To move towards taking charge of the formation of our own CLM;
- To include a mission field experience in the period of formation;
- To explore the possibility of experiences of inter-community formation with groups of different provinces;
- To take advantage of the opportunities available in various ecclesial, social or cultural formation centers in our vicinity;
- To offer specific formation on the economy to manage fund raising and our relation with money;
- To use the basic source of international CLM formation from which: we will share the formation programs, use its content and enrich it with new material coming from each group;
- To facilitate personal guidance during the period of re-insertion.

Directory

It is fundamental that our local directories contain the general lines of our identity and organization, developed in a clear and flexible form, in a contemporary and attractive language. The following aspects must be included:

- To take into consideration the presence of CLM from other countries in order to facilitate their insertion into the local group;
- To clarify the peculiarities of each country in a province with both the national and foreigner CLM;
- To define a minimum time of participation in order to be part of the executive;
- To define economic cooperation both locally and internationally;
- To plan the re-insertion of the CLM who return home;
- To include a short historical review both at the international and at the local level;
- To revise and update the directories in view of the next continental assembly.

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We add also the reflections of the Comboni Missionaries (Fr. Arlindo Ferreira Pinto, member of the central committee; Fr. José Manuel Baeza, continental moderator of the CLM on behalf of the provincials of America; Fr. Sergio Agustoni, moderator of the CLM in Peru; Fr. Laureano Rojo, moderator of the CLM in Mexico; P. José Manuel Sánchez, moderator of the CLM of Costa Rica) and of the representative of the Comboni Sisters of Guatemala (Sister María Cecilia Sierra Salcido), who were present at the assembly.

In the context of the Continental Assembly of the CLM of America we gathered and have come up with the following reflections:

1. We see the need to confirm a moderator for the Central American Province.
2. It is important to keep clarifying the role of the Comboni moderators of the CLM groups. This task goes beyond spiritual guidance. The Central Committee will put together a document which will explain what their responsibilities are. This explanation will also help the provincial superiors. We propose a deadline of March 2015.
3. We confirm Peru as the preferred place for an international presence of CLM.
4. As a first step it could be possible to start working toward a stable presence of Guatemalan CLM in San Luis Petén.
5. Medical insurance should be included in all the contracts with the CLM.
6. The CLM are not owned by the Comboni Missionaries or by the Comboni Sisters, but are a movement on the way to its own autonomy. They are part of the Comboni charism and they are slowly shaping up as the fourth branch of the Comboni Family. They are closer to the Comboni Missionaries for historical, circumstantial and juridical reasons.
7. We talked about the economic autonomy of the CLM as we saw how some groups have grown a lot in this respect, while in the majority of countries on this continent a lot remains to be done. We must not forget that, when people help the Comboni Missionaries, they intend to help the missionary work of evangelization. The CLM are part of this work and, for this reason, the Comboni Missionaries should be all the more generous. There is the need for a dialogue with the provincials on this matter.