

REPORT

COMBONI MISSIONARIES AMONG THE PASTORALISTS IN SOUTH SUDAN, KENYA AND ETHIOPIA

Gospel and Culture



Juba, South Sudan

6-9 May 2014

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1.0 Opening of the Workshop

1.1 Opening Prayer

The workshop is introduced by a moment of prayer by Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, the General Secretary for Evangelization of the Comboni Missionaries (MCCJ).

1.2 Opening Remarks

Fr. Danielle Moschetti, Provincial Superior of the MCCJ in South Sudan, welcomes the participants and officially opens the workshop.

In his opening remarks, Fr. Daniele underlines that this kind of meetings at the level of APDESAM (Association of Provinces and Delegations of East and South Africa and Mozambique) takes place for the first time in South Sudan. This workshop is a follow up of another one done in Juba for confrères working in South Sudan in April 2012, also on the theme of the pastoralist peoples of South Sudan.

Fr. Daniele stresses the importance and significance of this workshop shown by the presence of Fr. Mariano Tibaldo from the General Administration and Fr. Julio Ocaña, provincial of Ethiopia and in charge of the matters of evangelization at the APDESAM level.

This kind of reflection workshops are in line of the recommendations from the Social Forum in Tunis in March 2013 where thematic reflection were encouraged to be done in order to achieve strategies and methodologies of work.

Moreover, this workshop is taking place in a moment when the country is at a crossroads: the war is taking place in the three South Sudanese states where the majority of the population are pastoralists.

This year is marked, as well, by the 150th anniversary of the Plan of St. Daniel Comboni and the 50th anniversary of the missionary expulsion from Sudan, a very important moment in the history of the Comboni Family in Sudan and the Comboni Missionaries Institutes.

Some more concrete and logistical notes were added by Fr. Daniele, especially concerning security and careful movement in the peculiar situation of Juba at a moment of war in some parts of the country.

1.3 Message from the Superior General to the Participants

Fr. Julio Ocaña reads to the participants the letter message sent by Fr. Enrique Sanchez, the Superior General, to the participants of the workshop (Appendix 1).

In the letter, Fr. Enrique Sanchez welcomes the reflection of this workshop. These are times of changes which upset traditional values among pastoralist peoples. It is important and imperative to redefine and redesign new models and methodologies of our work among the pastoralists.

The Superior General reminds the participants that the work among the pastoralists is one very dear to the Institute since its inception. It is one of the fields of work that engages the highest number of personnel in East Africa's Comboni provinces.

He further expresses his desire that, from this workshop, we might be able to draw resolutions with clear time-frame plans designed on sound criterion for their implementation and subsequent evaluations.

Fr. Enrique thanks the participants for the effort to come together and reflect. It is a sign of the good will to work among the pastoralists.

The particular moment of war in South Sudan is not forgotten in the letter. He reminds the participants of the importance of the ministry of healing and reconciliation at this moment of the history of South Sudan. It should be one of the dimensions to be included in the plans the workshop desires to arrive at.

Finally, Fr. Enrique mentions the context of the 50th anniversary of the expulsion of the missionaries from Sudan and the 150th anniversary of the Plan of St. Daniel Comboni. These anniversaries are, undoubtedly, an inspiration for the work we have ahead.

1.4 Introduction to the Workshop

Bro. Alberto Parise, MCCJ, the main facilitator of the workshop, starts to introduce the participants into the dynamics of the workshop (Appendix 2).

Exploring the reasons and motivations for the current workshop, Bro. Alberto reminds the participants that the work among the pastoralists is the biggest commitment in resources and personnel the MCCJ have in East Africa.

At a moment of transition there is need for reflection on the transformation that is happening among pastoralist peoples.

The current workshop is the follow up of 2 previous workshops undertaken in South Sudan by the missionaries working in this country: in April 2012 – “Comboni and the Pastoralists of South Sudan” – and in April 2013 – “Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution in South Sudan”.

The main goal of the workshop:

To elaborate a common vision and approach to the evangelization of the pastoralist peoples in East Africa.

Objectives of the workshop:

1. To share our experiences and insights on mission among the nomads.
2. To identify patterns (e.g. convergences and singularities) emerging from our experiences.
3. To suggest a shared method and approach in our ministry to the nomads.
4. To indicate possible guidelines for the formation of confrères who will work among the pastoralists.

The methodology of the workshop is characterized by participation, dialogue and collaboration among the participants, building on the dynamics of the Appreciative Inquiry method. We want to learn from our sharing what were the stories and strategies of success in the evangelization of the pastoralists. We value and build on those positive approaches that have produced positive transformation among the pastoralist peoples.

For this exercise we are following the steps of the *Pastoral Cycle*: 1. Experience, 2. Analysis, 3. Theological Reflection and 4. Action Plan.



Basically, the workshop is based on the Pastoral Cycle. The workshop will have no much input from the facilitators. Rather it is a time to share and work together, building up and drawing from the personal experiences of each of the participants.

Participants agree on the programme presented in Table 1 below.

| | May 6 | May 7 | May 8 | May 9 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 8.30-10.30 | Introduction Opening Address: Fr. Mariano Q&A, comments | Recap Input: Change Dynamics Emerging principles | Recap Input: Theological Reflection (TR) ID focus of TR | Recap Guidelines for Basic and Ongoing Formation |
| B R E A K | | | | |
| 11.00-1.00 | Sharing stories & analysis | Approach to Gospel & Culture | Personal Prayer Group sharing | Way forward |
| L U N C H | | | | |
| 3.30-4.30 5.00-6.00 | Sharing stories & analysis Conclusion | Group presentations & discussion Conclusion | Group presentations Conclusions | Action Plan Conclusion |
| P R A Y E R | | | | Adoration |
| After Supper | Videos on Karamoja | | Videos on Sudan | Social |

Table 1: the programme of the workshop

After the above presentation, the participants go on sharing and presenting their expectations, as reported below:

- To learn tools to engage the faith of the people.
- To develop a contextualised way (in time and place) to evangelize pastoralist peoples.
- To learn how to approach practical challenges facing the work among the pastoralists.
- To develop a common approach among the participants in the ministry to pastoralists.
- To learn from the experiences of others.
- To develop more coordination among the missionaries working among the pastoralists.

The participants agree on some shared norms for the workshop, led by the question: “What is it that we need to do or we need to avoid in order to be effective and accomplish our objectives?”

Next, the participants divide among themselves some logistical services needed for the smooth running of the workshop.

Bro. Alberto Parise presents, as well, some resources and written materials available for consultation by the participants during the workshop.

1.5 Opening Address by the General Secretary of Evangelization – Fr. Mariano Tibaldo

Fr. Mariano Tibaldo, General Secretary of Evangelization (GSE), presents to the participants a reflection on the role and function of the continental reflection groups (Appendix 3).

Fr. Mariano starts by stressing that to read history is one of the great insights of the II Vatican Council. This allowed a shift in the missionary paradigm in the Institute. He speaks of an “epochal” shift between the General Chapters of 1969 and 1975. From the “reading of the signs of the times” element brought up by the II Vatican Council, the life and the message of St. Daniel Comboni and the mission *ad gentes* become the basic pillars on which the mission of the Comboni missionaries is now organised. Thus, mission commitments are no longer considered based on a geographical criterion, but rather “situations of Nigritia”.

Further, the GSE refers to an unforgivable shortcoming: the lack of proper reflection at many levels of the Institute. Moreover, he calls the attention that the continental reflection groups should have a greater contribution in counteracting this tendency. Likewise, Fr. Mariano calls the attention to the indispensable contribution of the provincial secretariats of evangelization. They are supposed and mandated to be a driving force in the reflection dynamics in the province concerning the pastoral commitments the Comboni missionaries are taking up and developing. He expresses his view on the reasons for such situation with the following words:

“The reflection groups – remarks the Ratio Missionis – [...] if really active, have no practical implications in missionary life.” The Ratio adds that the reason is “*probably caused by a discontinuation between the leadership and the reflection groups so that the indications of the groups are not implemented and contextualized to become qualified choices and decisions of practical methods or missionary contents.*” In other words, reflection as such does not change anything if it is not followed by decisions leading to strong resolutions. Reflection and leadership skills must go hand in hand.”

Finally, Fr. Mariano recalls the participants to the role and the functions of the continental reflection groups.

1.5.1 Forum/discussion on the Presentation of Fr. Mariano

Some of the points highlighted in the discussion:

a) Discontinuation between reflection groups and authority

It is emphasized that, following the presentation, there is need to reflect on the connection between the centres of authority and the centres of reflection, so that planning and decisions be taken based upon reflection. It is unfortunate that many times emergencies take priority and the real and psychological space and availability for reflection is not there.

b) Lack of documentation on the reflections and evaluations done

c) Avoid the extremes

One thing is to do nothing on reflection and another is to make out of the reflection group an “elite” of more intellectual confrères, or more conversant with reflection; in the reflection groups the base of confrères working in the field cannot be forgotten.

d) Insufficient training on reflection during basic formation

Some confrères commented that during our basic formation there is lack of training on group reflection on issues relating to our pastoral and missionary work outside the pure academic theological sphere.

1.6 Sharing experiences

Participants shared and discussed positive experiences of evangelization among the pastoralists. Most of the stories have been documented in writing prior to the workshop (Appendix 4).

1.6.1 Fr Titus Makokha – Amakuriat (Kenya)

- Correlation between Social changes and a life style and religious changes
- What is it that really matter to Pökot: blessings against curses, sicknesses, natural disasters and witchcraft.
- Prayers involving singing, dancing and preaching (more than doctrine and moralism)
- Eventful activities (celebrating in larger groups gives sense of identity and belonging)
- Blessings are like the signs/means of experiencing the salvation of God in their lives.
- Symbols are important

Contributions: Mariano – differences between Borana and Pokot:

- More stable personnel that favour development;
- The missions were there more permanently
- Stability among the pastoralists is very important
- A major change in a place and a people is always an opportunity for newness and further changes in development of the culture.
- Easy is what is more similar to my own background and more difficult is what differs more from my own background;
- Development initiatives (health, education, etc.) facilitates more changes.

1.6.2 Fr Joaquim Moreira da Silva– Gilgel Beles (Ethiopia)

The story is about Tesfaye, a person living in Gumuz area where we have been working for the last 10 years. Tesfaye got a degree and started working with the government. He has been helped by the mission and has been one of the mission's collaborators in the first days. He was a catechist with us and married in church.

He was accused of corruption by a person not from the Gumuz community and put in prison. The Gumuz have always been in that land, it is their ancestral land, but they have been always looked down and discriminated by other tribes in the area. They were like slaves of the others.

We met Tesfaye in prison in the context of our pastoral work there. He was deeply depressed. During catechesis about the history of salvation and the life of the people in that situation, some comments came up from the inmates. God is always on our side and helps us.

After 1 week, Tesfaye was changed in his attitude towards life. He even taught a song about the joyfulness of God and God's love. Later on, he was acquitted and released from prison, and today he is an influential person in the party, and still comes to church. He did not give up easily as it is common among the men in the Gumuz, who have low self esteem. The Word of God, confronted with his life, encouraged and transformed him.

Some comments on the presentation:

- Dialogue, listening, and the Word of God have been instrumental for change in the life of a person.
- The condition of the person/people in a difficult situation is a significant entry point for the Word of God; situations of vulnerability – like the situation of a prisoner – and crisis open the heart of a person to listen the Word of God.
- Here the one being changed is the main actor in the process of change.
- The issue of leadership is underscored – most of local leaders are Catholics and empowered by local government; we need to dialogue with them to bring the influential message of the Gospel in the society.
- Evangelization helps people to make sense, to construct meaning in their life. The Word of God and cultural meaning making expressions play a pivotal role. Songs composition is a significant expression among these youth and an effective way of constructing and celebrating existential meaning.
- Acts of charity to marginalized groups (prison) can be an entry point to a deep experience of Christ.

1.6.3 Fr Markus Koerber – Tali (South Sudan)

A boy called Metodio (from Mundari community) was born with a heart condition and required an operation, definitely expensive for the family. Contrary to traditional cultural assumptions, the

mother and other Christians inspired by Gospel values mobilised themselves and sold some cows to have the operation done in Khartoum, rather than giving in to traditional remedies. The happy ending of the story has made an impression on the community, so much that other two patients with similar conditions followed the example given.

Some comments on this story

- The question of being poor or not having cows to foot health costs portrays a different values system of these pastoralist peoples.
- There are 2 levels of change: one is the family of Metodio – to sell the cows for the sake of the boy; the other is that on the basis of the first change – there is the change of the next family that also sacrifice themselves for the value of life more than the survival of the fittest.
- The issue of witchcraft: these are very strong and commonly held beliefs. When they are detrimental to life and human dignity, there is a need to question them.

1.6.4 Fr Alazar Abraha – Marsabit (Kenya)

The story is told by a lady who embraced Christianity and conducted an intense spiritual life, even challenging cultural assumptions and adversities.

Some comments on the story

- To be a Christian in this area is heroic. Because of her life style she is respected by every tribe.
- The background of the story: the context of fear of her original religion, which was not fulfilling for her. That fear was making her even to become sick.
- The connection between her own sickness and the suffering of Christ – change at personal level, on herself – a move to deeper relationship with a new dimension in her life relating to God.
- The Church now is her family – her sense of identity and belonging has been broaden beyond blood relations.
- The condition of women among the pastoralists: often the stress is on giving them funds and resources to support their livelihood, but what about the need for spiritual formation?
- Why does it make a difference to start with the Word of God? When they start at the level of income generating activities (IGA) they do not change their behaviour before they come together. When you start with the Word of God and then you go into IGA, there is a change first of the basic attitudes towards life and in the way of being together. So we should start first with the Word of God, changing attitudes from the Word of God.

1.6.5 Fr Mariano Tibaldo – Pokot (Kenya)

Fr Mariano presented a reflection on the history of evangelization among the Pokot, from which the following characters emerged:

“From suspicion to trust”

- Things that build trust of the Pokot to the missionaries: the mobile clinic; staying with people in time of hardships, famine, difficulty; persons of reference; stay with the people for long period; to appreciate their culture, traditions and learn language;

“From being passive to their own protagonist of their life”

- People want to be at the front stage of their development and future: the education was paramount, the formal and informal (parish, women group);

“Women self awareness”

- Through the sisters and priests the Pokot women have been empowered.
- Interaction with other ethnic groups helps them to bring down their prejudice towards them.
- Many examples, very concrete, that show the Christian inspiration of the daily life of the Pokot.

Some comments:

- The short time of rotation goes against the need of the people to be together for longer periods.
- Not too long periods in the same mission station, but also not so short to the point of not being able to get inserted, learn the language, etc.
- Rotation might not be helping but also the continuity that is not there many times and starting anew every time someone new comes; there should be a kind of guidelines on the way we work among the people of this mission in order that continuity is there.
- The collaboration with the local church (empowerment of the laity) should be increased in the sense of promoting the continuity of the activities;
- Missionaries should have the interest and the competence to work with pastoralists when being appointed.
- Formators and PCs should study more the abilities and attitudes of a person before appointment.



1.6.6 Fr. Raimundo Rocha dos Santos – Leer (South Sudan)

There are some significant changes in the socio-religious-cultural fields, which could follow the pattern of announcing the Gospel, witnesses to faith, conversion, embracing faith and discipleship, Christian marriage/Sacraments and women emancipation. People experience a life of joy and free from some sufferings and death (kujur). They also seek to live a Christian life based, of course, on Christian values.

The Nuer are deeply religious people. More than the Gospel values, the healing presence of Jesus. Gospel values are slowly being assimilated.

Some challenging situations in the socio-cultural field that need to be changed are: the culture of revenge, early and forced marriages, lack of inclusiveness, need for reconciliation and other aspects of social transformation such as sharing in the natural resources, access to education and respect to human rights. Seeds of the Gospel values have been sown. God and time will make them yield fruits.

Some comments:

- For any work we do in our missions we have to take into account that there will be positive results and also less positive or challenges.
- The sense of belonging of traditional beliefs is always stronger than the one of belonging to the Church. People have to choose between the traditional values and the gospel values when they are conflicting. The real challenge is to change hearts, minds and beliefs: it is really something hard and difficult.
- Human maturity is a determinant aspect to the adherence to faith. It is a process of integration. Are we working and putting our efforts in these type of people or rather with youth who would not be mature to integrate things as the older ones?
- What happened in Leer (being out in the bush with the people for 18 days under cross fire) talked louder than many buildings we had built for many years.
- Christianity growth has never been a mass movement. So we should concentrate more into the positive aspects. The negative are just the usual outcome of opposition to the gospel whenever it is announced.
- People tend to have a more dramatic approach at moment of a striking situation. When people are not under pressure or in a pressurising situation they tend to be more attentive and adherent to Christian values.
- Revenge among the Nuer is a value and a must when it is demanded by culture.
- Christianity is a process that is ever on the move, it never ends.
- The issue at stake here is not success as such but rather fidelity to the mandate of Jesus to go on evangelizing.
- In spite of everything we do need to rethink our methodologies of evangelizing.
- Fear is something that it is determinant who goes much beyond the culture of revenge or so. There is the need of pastoral attention also to these fearful Christians.

1.6.7 Fr Teddy Njaya – Turkana (Kenya)

On behalf of the Turkana zone, Fr. Cefalo compiled a reflection, presented by Fr Teddy. Fr Cefalo has been working among various pastoralist peoples (Karimojon, Pokot, Dinka, Turkana) for more about 50 years.

The reflection presents a method of first evangelization tested over the years that it is yielding good outcomes. It starts with visiting the elders and building rapport with them; on their invitation, the mission sinks a bore hole for water, which allows women and children to settle and then a nursery school is started. A catechist works also as local teacher, and a catechumenate is initiated. As these outstations grow, other initiatives may be started according to local needs and situations.

Some comments

Fr Cefalo tried different pastoral approaches, in the end the most effective way of implementing Christianity is to change lifestyle from nomadic to settlers through schools and borehole, feeding people brings them together, otherwise you can't find them, but is it positive to change nomads?

1.6.8 Fr Hubert Grabmann – Kacheliba (Kenya)

- Great changes have been achieved in Pökot mostly because of the education effort, together along with some boreholes and clinics. This has helped a lot in abandoning nomadism and settling down.
- From the beginning education, health and water has been the method implemented.
- Most of the people that come to the church are women, children and youth. Elders are most difficult to be reached.
- Case of widow inheritance: Roseline Limasia. She has refused to be inherited with 5 children. She started to receive communion and managed to raise the children. She adopted one more child that was very sick and handicapped.
- Transformation: a child that was "worthless" for the Pökot, is saved by Rosaline and the real mother, who initially refused her, has started to come to see the child who, meanwhile underwent operation and has improved quite a long.

Comments on the story

- Pastoral care of the widows among the pastoralists is something that we need to give attention.

1.6.9 Fr Giuseppe Pellerino – Mapuordit (South Sudan) – (See Appendix 4)

Fr Pellerino presents the experience of PANAMAT, a project started by Bro. Damiano Mascalzoni.

1.6.10 Sch. Cornelius Lwanga – Yirol (South Sudan) – (See Appendix 4)

Scholastic Lwanga presents a reflection on culture and evangelization among the Dinka,

2.0 Analysis of Experience

Bro. Alberto Parise presents to the participants a short input on the dynamics of change (see Appendix 5). This is an introduction to the second step in the Pastoral cycle: Analysis.

There are mainly 3 types of change: emerging change, transformative change and projectable change.

The first it is more or less a change that comes by itself, spontaneous, as the move of times. Transformative change it is one such transforms totally the person or the society. Projectable change it is a programmed and planned change of an initiative that is supposed to bear a

determined result or outcome. Due to time factor, we skip the full presentation about change in order to concentrate in the task of our workshop: to learn from our own stories.

The first assumption is that we can really learn from the stories of change. If we know what helps inculturation we can build on them for evangelization.

The process we are going to follow is:

1. Concrete Experience (doing/having an experience)
2. Reflective Observation (reviewing / reflecting on the experience)
3. Abstract Conceptualisation (concluding / learning from the experience)
4. Active Experimentation (planning / trying out what we have learn)

This is a cyclical method: finishing the 4th step we start again with the 1st one.

Each type of change has implications for evangelization. There are different tasks involved according to the type of change we need to tap for evangelization.

The work of the participants at the workshop is to reach to a grounded theory of principles of our work among the pastoralists. We are to draw some insights from our presentations and, based on those, construct principles for evangelizing change among the pastoralists. These principles will lead us to draw activities in our own areas could come out of these principles. Later on at the workshop we shall come back to these principles to see our capacity building and action plan to facilitate the principles.

Such principles can guide us in a dialogue between gospel and culture which may transform: the self, relationships, cultural patterns, and social systems.

The steering committee has put together the following insights as an example of the points extracted from the stories we had. These are just some examples to start to work with in the 3 groups in the assembly.

2.1 Insights

1. Development activities produce change of style of life. In this situation the people need to redefine their identity and sense of belonging. Evangelization should help in this redefinition of the way to understand life and new reality where gospel values base a redefined identity..
2. Sense of belonging and community experience of faith is a fundamental element of the experience of faith of the people and its external expression.
3. Composition and performance of songs with evangelical message is a primary means of evangelization and catechesis.
4. Centrality of celebration and events are the expression of belonging and togetherness.
5. Bible reflection and sharing by grass roots community can be a catalyst of transformation:
 - a) at personal level: developing and nurture a sense dignity, self-esteem and healing;
 - b) at interpersonal level: creating/construction new relationships;
 - c) in terms of collective thinking patterns: changing perceptions, interpretation of events and revising assumptions and values;
 - d) in terms of social structures: integration of marginalized groups into the community, overcoming dependency through economic activities, IGA, etc...
6. In all the instances we observe, there are individual agents of change that promote the change and eventually spread to the community (youth, women, catechists).
7. The transformative changes that we observe in people are holistic (religious, social, relational, material, economic).

8. The ministry of healing, reconciliation and blessing are very important to the people we are working with; it is a primary context where they experience the power and the grace of God in their life.
9. Life giving services (blessing, clinic, help in dire situations, etc.) with continuous and prolonged contact and interaction builds trust which is one of the main objectives of insertion.
10. Continuity in our ministry is a very important factor in the process of evangelization/inculturation. That is, continuity of personnel, methodology and activities, competence and interest of the personnel.
11. From our observation the reality of witchcraft still pervades the life of many people. The gospel that comes as good news liberates them from fear and generates joy and serenity.
12. Crisis/stuckness situation are favourable entry points for transformation.
13. The greatest influence we have on people is not what we say, do or teach, but how we relate with them.
14. Special pastoral care of specific vulnerable groups (traditionally taken care by the previous status quo of the tradition like) need now to be taken care because they find themselves in a new situation where traditions are being changed.
15. People develop multiple identities and struggle to integrate these identities in times of crisis. It is a process of reaching human maturity. This is the moment where raising critical awareness of what they are experiencing and the theological reflection are most influential. Many times this is not possible right away but attention should be given afterwards. For example the ministry to the lapsi.

2.1.1 Added by group 1:

- Positive examples bring change, need of persons of reference for that
- When the system of values is in crisis, people are prone to change (repeated above)
- No group is an island; exchange between cultures. No development in isolation.
- The pastoral agents are not the only agents of change and not even the gospel alone, but influence of others, willing it or not, change is inevitable.
- Change is a personal matter: cannot be controlled by others.
- Special moments of need and despair are entry points of social transformation and spiritual growth; we should take advantage of that (bible sharing, etc...)
- Appreciation of the work done by missionaries among pastoralists who ...
- Reconciliation is hard among own pastoral communities and yet is a theme that has to be brought forward all the time.
- There is need to respect the rhythm of growth of the others. It is a long process and requires patience and perseverance.

2.1.2 Added group 2:

- We cannot have the same pastoral methodology everywhere , even though we can have insights.
- Change is a long process, needs perseverance.
- We can facilitate change but the change is to each and every person and community.
- Need to reach out to nomadic pastoralists in their "manyatta"

2.1.3 Added group 3:

- Different time awareness and rhythm of life does not fit with church calendar.
- *Insight #1:* development: what priorities? Is the connection to gospel evident in what we want to promote? What change do we really bring?
- *Insight #4:* to add as an event meaningful – funeral prayers. There are more people than Sunday Mass... and everybody shares in the meal. Meal is a very important moment for the pastoralists.
- *Insight #5 :* Bible sharing – It is not a very prominent point among the stories we heard... it is difficult to have bible sharing groups in Nuer. Need for bible sharing that leads to meeting Christ authentically
- *Insight #7:* Authentic change is transformative/holistic and long lasting.

After the sharing of the insights above, Bro. Alberto has introduced the participants to the next step: coming up with some emerging principles that can be guidelines that can facilitate the process of inculturation of the Gospel.

2.1.4 Some basic assumptions from the insights seen by the work groups:

- Inculturation and change are made by the people themselves, on four different levels (personal, relationships, mind-set, social structures)
- But missionaries can facilitate conducive conditions for people to make their free choices...
- Therefore, from our insights, some general principles can be inferred to facilitate and support the process of inculturation. Some examples in order to introduce the group work:
 - *Principle "Common Cause":*
 - o learn and appreciate language and culture
 - o staying with people in times of hardships
 - o empower people to become main agents of their own transformation
 - o ministry of healing, reconciliation, blessing, funerals
 - *Principle of "meaning-making"*
 - o People have multiple identities and need to make sense, integrate them especially in times of crisis or "stuckness". This is when they can best transform themselves.
 - o Encourage and mentor people to reflect theologically on their experience, through different means (eg. Bible sharing, composing songs, eventful activities...).
 - o Nurture the sense of belonging to the Christian community.
 - *Principle of holistic change*
 - o Inculturated change is transformative, holistic and long lasting
 - *Principle of continuity:*
 - o Personnel
 - o Methodology and activities
 - o Competence and interests of personnel

2.1.5 Presentation of the group work

Group 1

1. Principle of accompaniment

- following groups
- the pastors smelling like the sheep

2. *Transformation by a community for a community*

- continuity
- succession in method and personnel
- all “projects” are for a social group

3. *Principle of empowerment*

- from being evangelized to being an evangelizer

Group 3

1. *Principle faith based human promotion*

- make clear the faith motivation of human promotion projects
- human promotion promotes new styles of life – help in keeping good tradition values in new style of life

2. *Genuine interest in local culture*

- adaptation to the pace of the people
- don't hurry/rush for the results
- willingness to learn local language

3. *Respecting dignity of the person*

- question a culture of killing/vengeance
- women empowerment

4. *Fostering Relationships*

- collaboration among all pastoral agents
- continuity of personnel, strategies, activities...
- participation into meaningful events of the people

5. *Principle of Joyful Life*

- Ability to be together and celebrate

Group 2

1. Proclamation of the Gospel
2. Christ centred evangelisation
3. Formation of conscience
4. Networking
5. Evangelisation of the culture

The assembly went on trying to make some matching among the principles that the groups have brought forward.

A clarification was pointed out that these exercise it is not to come up with a manual or some of the kind so strict for our evangelization. It is only some indications that favour more or less the inculturation process. They have to be materialized into action plans adapted to which particular situation and environment of work. These are a kind of things that can facilitate the transforming encounter of the pastoralists with Christ.

Out of the many points/proposals that came out from the presentations, the steering committee together with the secretaries of the groups came out with a synthesis of the points presented.

2.2 Synthesis

PREAMBLE

Inculturation and change are made by the people themselves, on four (4) different levels (personal, relationships, mind-set, social structures). However, missionaries can facilitate some conducive conditions for people to encounter Jesus Christ and make their free choices.

The following principles are proposed as broad points of reference for the facilitation of processes of inculturation.

These principles are not normative formulas, but wise suggestions derived from meaningful experiences of evangelization among pastoralists peoples in East Africa.

1. PRINCIPLE OF PROCLAMATION

- Proclamation of Jesus Christ by means of Word of God (proclaimed, shared and lived), liturgy, human advancement and communion.
- Staying with and accompanying people in their joys and hardships.
- Situations of crisis and being stuck are an opportunity for inculturation of the Gospel.
- Bible reflection and sharing by grassroots communities can be a catalyst of inculturation:
 - * *at personal level*: developing and nurture a sense of dignity, self-esteem and healing;
 - * *at interpersonal level*: creating new relationships;
 - * *in terms of collective thinking patterns*: changing perceptions, interpretation of events and revising assumptions and values;
 - * *in terms of social structures*: integration of marginalized groups into the community, overcoming dependency through economic activities, etc...

Comboni Charism: The hour of God for Africa (RL 6)

2. PRINCIPLE OF FAITH BASED HUMAN ADVANCEMENT

- Human advancement activities are a clear and explicit expression of Christian love.
- Life giving traditional values be enhanced in social change processes.
- The Gospel uplifts the sense of identity, dignity, belonging of people. This is paramount especially in situations of social change
- Pastoral and human care of the poorest and most neglected

Comboni Charism: The Poorest and the Most Abandoned (RL 5)

3. PRINCIPLE OF AUTHENTIC ENCOUNTER

- Appreciate and learn the local language and culture
- Understand the reality of the people
- Cooperation between all agents of evangelization

- Continuity of personnel, methods and activities
- Participation into meaningful events of the people
- Move together with the community, rather than leaving them behind

Comboni Charism: Total Dedication (RL 2) and Universal Outlook (RL 8)

4. PRINCIPLE OF EMPOWERMENT

- Facilitate critical awareness and formation of consciences
- Regeneration of Africa by means of Africa
- Recognition of the role and development of the potential of women in society
- Leadership formation of the people

Comboni Charism: Save Africa with Africa (RL 7)

5. PRINCIPLE OF CELEBRATING LIFE

- Ability to be together and celebrate
- Sacraments and sacramentals (ministry of healing, reconciliation and blessings) as events where people experience the power and grace of God
- Composition and performance of songs with evangelical message as a significant means of evangelization and catechesis
- Centrality of celebration and events as expression of belonging and togetherness
- Constructing Christian meaning of all life situations, including the Cross

Comboni Charism: Mystery of the Cross (RL 4) and theological discernment



3.0 Theological Reflection

The day of Thursday is dedicated to Theological Reflection (TR), the 3rd step in the Pastoral Cycle.

Bro. Alberto Parise facilitates a short input presenting the dynamics of TR. (Appendix 6)

By TR we mean: a reflection on experience in the light of faith that leads to a response. The best entry points for theological reflection are contradictions and dilemmas. TR is done with the contemplation of the Word of God.

3.1 Dynamics of Theological Reflection

There are three dimensions/voices at stake when doing TR: culture, experience and faith tradition. Dialogue of perspectives interpreting events, situations, contradictions, and dilemmas

3.2 Benefits of Theological Reflection

A) The Word of God may come to challenge assumptions and basic attitudes:

- Discovering own limitations / potential
- Seeing own role / contribution in a new light
- Perceiving situation in different way
- Seeing transcendent meaning of reality changes perspective and attitudes

B) The Word of God can encourage and give hope, motivate:

- hearing the call of the Lord
- gaining an alternative vision of the future
- mutual listening, opening communication, respect, intimacy, bonding, trust, responsibility

3.3 Exercise of TR

We are outlining principles for facilitating the encounter between Gospel and Culture. The precondition of any ministerial activity is our relationship with the people.

The participants share in groups the most significant challenge or dilemma in the way we relate to people. Each group will come up with one theme for the group.

Then, at the end, within the group, choose a Biblical passage that may speak to you about your dilemma.

Retreat for one hour of personal prayer with the text and you may see this:

- what's happening in the scene?
- how does the text displace or surprise you?
- how does the text invite you to respond to the situation?

After about one hour of personal prayer, the groups come together and by way of group prayer atmosphere, the participants share and come up with a group resolution.

Plenary presentation is done in the afternoon in groups too. This time is supposed to be the sharing of the prayer and sharing done in the groups. These questions are reference for the presentation in plenary:

- a) what is the situation you reflected on?
- b) message from the Word to the group?
- c) what resolutions (personal or shared)?

3.4 Sharing in the plenary

Group 3

- a) The dichotomy between the expectations of the people and what we really are supposed to come and do
- b) To be or give more attentiveness to those who come to us
- c) Resolution: to always give time and attention to those coming to us.

All this reflection relates to several principles identified before: 1, 2 and 3.

Group 1

- a) 1 Cor. – Proclamation of the Word of God to the people. S. Paul was doing everything for the sake of the Gospel. He did all that to win most of them for Christ.
- b) Insertion is paramount for winning people to God; preaching is a must in order to make the message to reach to people. Paul is a model of every missionary that proclaims the Word of God.

Resolutions:

- Leave concretely the inspirations of the Gospel;
- Reality should provoke us to be docile to the people and have an attitude of docility to the people
- Appreciate, respect and study the culture of the people.

One of the problems and dilemmas that we find is the different levels we find ourselves and the people. This is a very difficult situation which comes up also with the level of education or growth of Christianity.

There are some connection with the principles we identified before: 2, 3.

Group 2

- a) Change comes about through relationship with the people. But how deep can our relationships can be? Most time we have not deep relationship with people because of work but also preferences with someone particular and being accused of favouritism. So can we really relate with the people.
- b) Jo 4 – Samaritan woman. That Jesus goes beyond any boundary of culture and believes in order to get to win the person to Christ.
- c) We can never be equal to the people.

Resolution: Go ahead in deeper relationships for pastoral sake.

3.5 Plenary Reflection

This has been our path up to now:

Step 1: We started with Experience

Step 2: Then we came to Insights

Step 3: From there we had come to Principles

So now – what to start with?

Start with what we are struggling with at the moment. This will allow me to move on and unless I make immediately use of the principle, the insight or something I run the risk to loss it.

But it is important to remember:

- make it real... rather than ideological!
- It's our faith journey... personal and in community
- ... it's work in progress

Bro. Alberto presents now to the participants a tool developed by Social Ministry on Theological Reflection. It is not a bible sharing tool but rather a tool that can be used in groups of people of 30-35 people, even by illiterate groups. This scheme starts always with the experience and then the Bible. (Appendix 7)

Following, Fr. Daniele Moschetti presents the outcome of the workshop on pastoralists in the province of South Sudan in April 2012. He presents the proposals for concrete action.

In South Sudan, 6 out of the 10 communities work among the pastoralists. The presence is diverse: parishes and some other pastoral methods. The 1st type (parishes) goes evangelization goes together with human advancement. The 2nd takes only into account staying with the people and evangelization.

After the short presentation, some interaction takes place among the participants on the proposals presented. Meanwhile, the situation of war of the country has changed and right now, among the pastoralists, the issue that is at stake is reconciliation and healing.

Next Fr. Mariano congratulated the Secretariat of Evangelization of South Sudan for the role that they have on the reflecting work for the province. Fr. Mariano asks also about other provinces, on how is the situation in their provinces.

Next, Fr. Filipe Resende, as secretariat of Evangelization presented the position of Kenya Province in what relates to the role of the Secretariat of Evangelization as a means of helping the Province reflecting on evangelization issues. He presented the reality of the Missionary Reflections group that, as such, is not purely made up of the secretariat of evangelization. It is the main and most helpful means of helping the Province and the confrères reflecting on evangelization issues.

Fr. Joaquim Silva presents to the participants on the work of the Comboni Family among the Gumuz, in Ethiopia.

He starts to underline that the Gumuz are not as such pure pastoralists as in other provinces. We have arrived to the zone relatively recently, about 10 years ago.

The image people have of the presence of the missionaries is that of human advancement organization.

The Gumuz are agriculturalists and live very simple life. Most of the people are young and also those who work mostly with the church. There has been in the last years a lot of investment on the formation of catechism so that this year the number of baptisms is quite good.

Tribalism among the several clans is there and there is a need for work on reconciliation.

Another challenge is the language, which is Amharic that is not the first language of the people.

In the evening session, after supper, some documentaries about South Sudan were presented.

4.0 Action Planning

This day is dedicated to the 4th step in the Pastoral Cycle: Action Planning.

In the first moment, Sr. Maria do Carmo shares with participants some notes of the work of the CMS among the Dinka in Chuibet.

Then Bro. Alberto begins makes a recap of what the workshop has done so far in order to consolidate the achievements up to now. There are two reasons for this work to be done in a systematic way: to consolidate in a summary form the learning up to know and to look back to our expectations.

4.1 Lessons Learnt since the Beginning of the Workshop

4.1.1 It looks that we have identified up to now 2 models of pastoral work:

1. *Insertion and pastoral care:*

= Among the Nuer in South Sudan – church started by catechists, who called the missionaries; war situation that prevented setting up permanent structures

2. *Insertion, pastoral care, human promotion:*

= Practised in Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia – education, health care, reconciliation, at times relief: overall more common model.

But this second model as 2 different approaches, somehow adapted in each zone:

- = In Ethiopia the church is registered as an NGO, therefore human advancement projects are needed
- = In South Sudan there are centres (parishes) but also outreach to cattle camps (nomads)
- = In Kenya we saw that the nomads are rather settling down and the approach tends to be with more centralized pastoral work

4.1.2 Some further comments on these models

1. *Insertion and pastoral care:*

- = It is characterised by simplicity and sustainability, many times demanded by the concrete situation of isolation of the place
- = There is special attention to the language, culture and relationship with people
- = Isolation and the vastness of the territory among the Nuer in Malakal make the interaction with the local church very poor, from both sides – leads to lack of sense of belonging to the local church

But some other elements/challenges to take into account:

- = People demand also access to basic services, which the Government is not providing as it should
- = Human advancement as integral part of the proclamation of the Gospel does not feature
- = National integration of pastoralist community is a very remote possibility

2. *Insertion, pastoral care, human promotion:*

- = It is a holistic approach, appreciated by the people, an outcome and consequence of the faith based human advancement activities
- = Proclamation builds on situations where people redefine identities

But some other elements/challenges to take into account:

- = Sustainability may be an issue (cf. Leer, Nakwamekwi...) and there is a risk of inducing dependency of the people
- = Challenge of “balancing” relationship with people
- = Risk of leaving “nomads” behind – how do we reach out to the peoples who move? – this model is not effective in reaching out to the traditional pastoralist life style

4.1.3 Inculturation Principles Identified

1. Proclamation
2. Human Advancement based in Faith
3. Authentic Encounter
4. Empowerment
5. Celebrating Life

We saw that these principles are in strong connection with the Comboni charism.

Now, what kind of methodology we see or need from these conclusions?

4.1.4 Pastoral Cycle Methodology

1. *Insertion:*

Presence, language, culture, enter situations of crisis, accompaniment, participation in meaningful events

2. *Analysis:*

Understand people, engage cultural themes, facilitate critical awareness, uncovering contradictions / dilemmas

3. *Reflection:*

Proclamation, formation of consciences, sense of identity, belonging, dignity, healing, social integration, constructing Christian meaning.

4. *Action:*

Ministries, leadership formation, celebration, cooperation and networking.

A last remark is that the overall and ultimate goal is a transformative encounter with Jesus Christ (evangelization and inculturation).

4.1.5 Emerging Sticking Points

a) Weak continuity:

- = Affects learning language and culture, relationship with people, methods and activities.

b) Scanty reflection / evaluation / celebration:

- = Among missionaries and people
- = When it is there... how does it feedback to practise?

c) Cooperation:

- = within communities and with other agents of evangelization
- = integration with the local church

d) *Deepening methodology:*

- = in practice we do have a clear approach and method...
- = ... but how much do we invest in updating and developing tools for our practice in our daily activities?

Some other sticking points highlighted by the participants:

- At the level of insertion we lack self-criticism
- Patience in achieving results
- We are weak in handing over structures
- Instability of personnel
- Too much time of some confrères in one place unable him to move
- Different ecclesiological and religious formation of several members that affect integration of the different views of approach of evangelization
- Type of leadership – if there is no strong leadership there is not much reflection; there is need to get out of the place to animate the whole process of reflection
- Lack of a shared theology of mission among us

4.1.6 Further Considerations

The discussion of these points raised the question of how to overcome differences and build communion in our communities and pastoral teams. Bro. Alberto elaborates on a theory of communion building (cf. M.Scott Peck, *The Different Drum*). This theory has been elaborated out of practice and tested in a large number of workshops. It builds on the *Dynamics of Community Building*.

When we come together and there is a genuine will to become one, to live in communion there is a process:

1. *Pseudo-Community*: basically it is not real communion, but we fake it. We want to live in harmony so we do all we can in order to avoid confrontation; it is an important phase because we build a space to start to become who we are authentically. It builds a safe place to express ourselves with our differences, which then introduces us to the 2nd phase.

2. *Chaos*: we feel threatened by differences and hurt, so when these realities surface in others we tend to try and convert or heal them. We try to change the others, but the more we try, the more they resist. This leads into conflict. By the way, even though we think we are doing so to help others, we do not realise that in reality we are simply trying to protect ourselves.

3. *Emptiness*: the only way to overcome chaos is to transcend (instead of deleting) differences. For this, we need to empty ourselves; we are what we are and we are able to let it go. We find that what unites us is not theology or theory, but Christ, who loves each one of us the way we are. When this happens, we enter the fourth stage.

4. *Communion*: it is when we reach to live at peace within our own differences. This is not reached once and for all, however; and there are some other risks of stagnation for the sake of keeping the harmony.

4.2 Clarifications

At this time there were some clarifications on terminologies among the pastoralists. The terms nomads can be too much global and misleading. There are the nomads, who really are the true

nomads, then we have the semi-nomads, who are people half-way nomads, and then the transhumants, who are peoples that those on the move are one of the sections of the society, not the whole society as such, people that are in transformation of society.

4.3 Implications for formation

In the session before lunch, Bro. Alberto invites the participants to work in small groups and look for suggestions for basic formation and on-going formation on the issues we have been analysing these days. These suggestions are in view of preparing better ourselves and our students to this type of apostolate.

4.3.1 Basic Formation (by order of priority voted by the participants)

1. Continuity of formation and 1st assignment: revisiting periods of exposure to pastoralists during BF, to have a pastoral plan (personal project) for the period of formation, 2 years missionary service and then stay after ordination, chose courses / do research connected with future appointment
2. Formators to invite missionaries working in pastoralists frontier situations to come over and share their experiences in the houses of formation. Information about pastoralist frontier situations in the houses of formation done by the visits of the Provincials' visits and promoting catechesis on frontier situations.
3. At the time of options, scholastics and brothers should choose a specific mission field of work (e.g. Pastoralists) rather than a province;
4. Human maturity (especially in relationship level)
5. Anthropological studies
6. Be open minded and ready to learn
7. Know the English language well
8. Present outcome of this workshop to the scholasticates / CBC (through the secretariat of evangelization)

4.3.2 On-going Formation (by order of priority voted by the participants)

1. Properly planned language
2. Workshops at provincial level (CMS+MCCJ), seminars on special emerging themes (e.g. marriage, peace building, etc.)
3. To have resource cultural centres at local level, point of reference for any research material (e.g. on website of secretariat evangelization, a library), courses
4. Missionary magazines present the work of the of the missionaries working among the pastoralists (CMS+MCCJ)
5. Missionary Reflection to publish material of the work among the pastoralists
6. Revive reflections done at local level of the work among the pastoralists – the case of Turkana, West Pokot and Karamoja
7. Offer introductory courses to (new) confreres
8. Print important texts, because online documents are less read
9. Sec of evangelization present workshop outcome to communities among the pastoralists

4.4 Planning

We go now into planning and the following tool is provided to the participants.

1. Prioritize action on on-going formation
2. Following the order of priority, fill in the form:

| Priority | WHO | WITH WHOM | BY WHEN | SUCCESS INDICATORS | EVALUATION |
|----------|-----|-----------|---------|--------------------|------------|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |
| 5. | | | | | |
| 6. | | | | | |
| 7. | | | | | |
| 8. | | | | | |
| 9. | | | | | |

Each Province/country worked out an action plan based on the form above. (Appendix 8)

Conclusion

The workshop was concluded with an exercise of evaluation. Finally, participants asked themselves: How are we going to use what we have learnt in this workshop to improve our ministry?

= At personal level

= At provincial level

This is a very important question for learning. In fact, without using the insights gained through the workshop immediately, we are going to forget them, or at least to miss the opportunity to consolidate our learning through practice. Instead, by practising what we learnt, we will not only consolidate what we have learnt, but transform ourselves since those insights will become a habit, part of us.