

# JAPAN VICE PROVINCE

## MISSION MEETING

### DISCERNMENT ON COUNCIL MAKEUP

SOCIAL  
PASTORAL  
EDUCATIONAL  
ECUMENICAL  
APOSTOLATES

Moderator  
David Ullrich, OMI



## Tokushima

## December 27-28, 1973

# PREPARATORY PHASE



1973



December 2, 1973

IN RE : MISSION MEETING '73



As you know from Bert's recent letter, there is a mission meeting scheduled for the 27th and 28th of this month in Tokushima and that I have been asked to chair it. So, here I am!

As I understand it the purpose of the meeting is threefold:

- I. to discuss the possible structures of the new provincial council and to decide upon one;
- II. to provide an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the activities, problems and concerns of the men in the four areas determined by the steering committee--namely, in the social, pastoral, educational and ecumenical apostolates;
- III. to determine the form and content of the next mission meeting in 1974.

What is being done to accomplish these purposes?

I. In regards to discussion of possible structures for the council, Bert is asking several men who have expressed opinions on this topic to present them at the meeting. They are also being asked to write their suggestions and send them to all the houses of the province so that everyone can be generally acquainted with the alternatives facing us before the meeting starts.

In regards to decision on the council structure, each house will soon receive an article suggesting a specific decision making process. The method contained therein is not new but has only recently been re-discovered. The article is somewhat long but practical. Please read it. It aims at providing a specific format for encouraging group participation in the policy making process while eliminating much of the friction that frequently accompanies such endeavours. The first thing on the agenda in Tokushima will be to determine if the group wishes to use this method in its decision on the council structure.

II. In regards to sharing experiences in the four apostolates enumerated above, various reports are being requested of men active in their respective fields in order to stimulate group discussion. The list of those giving reports is not yet complete but will be included in the final format to be sent out before the meeting. The speakers in each of the four areas are asked to channel their reports along the questions suggested below.

- A. Social Apostolate--four men are being asked to report on their involvement for no longer than 15 minutes. (For the purpose of the meeting, the working definition of "social apostolate" is considered to be those activities which reach beyond parish boundaries to deal with under-privileged groups, e.g. orphans, delinquents, young workers.) The speakers are asked to center their report as much as possible on these questions:

on these questions:

1. What are you doing in this field?
2. What is your objective?
3. What measurable results are there to show that you are reaching your objective?
4. What mistakes have you made that others similarly involved should avoid?

B. Pastoral Apostolate--each parish is requested to give a report on its progress. Since there are many parishes and not much time, please do not exceed 5 minutes and try to center on the two questions below:

1. What are you doing in the parish?
2. What measurable results are there to show that the parish is developing as a Christian community?

C. Educational Apostolate--three men are being asked to speak for 15 each on the following points:

1. What are you doing in education?
2. What is your objective?
3. What measurable results are there to show that you are reaching that objective?
4. What mistakes have you made that others so involved should avoid?

D. Ecumenical Apostolate--three men are being asked to speak no longer than 15 minutes, addressing themselves to such questions as:

1. What are you doing in the ecumenical field?
2. What is your objective?
3. What measurable results are there to show that you are reaching that objective?
4. What mistakes have you made that others similarly involved should avoid?

III. In regards to preparation for the meeting of '74, each of the participants is invited to state:

1. their reactions to the just finished meeting
2. what they expect from the next meeting
3. when and where it should be held.

This is how things are shaping up in the mind of your humble chairman. I am eagerly awaiting any and all specific suggestions that you have to offer.

Dave Ullrich





Fratres, Here is more or less the final format that I have prepared for the meeting. Suggestions are welcome.

December 27, Friday

- 9:30 Convocation of the meeting  
 -Short Scripture Reading  
 -Adoption/Amendment of Agenda

"What can we do that we are not doing?"

6:00 Supper

Council Decision (see next page)

- Adoption/Amendment of the decision-making process already sent for your consideration
- Presentation of proposals in re the structure of the council (i.e. number, area vs. at-large)
- Voting on structure proposals
- Presentation of proposals in re the manner of selection of councilors (i.e. election, consultation)
- Voting on the selection proposals
- Decision on when to choose council members (before or after new provincial is announced)

December 28, Friday

9:30 Reports and Discussion on Education Apostolate

- Short Scripture Reading
- Reports from the field:
  - Len Inui --kindergartens
  - Ron LaFramboise --night school
  - John Mahoney --English teaching
- Questions directed to the reports
- Group discussion, such as--
  - "How do your own experiences, problems, objectives compare with those of the speakers?"
  - "How do you evaluate the province's efforts in the educational field?"
  - "What can we do that we are not doing?"

12:00 Lunch

11:00 Concelebration of the Eucharist

1:30 Reports and Discussion on Social Apostolate

12:00 Lunch

- Short Scripture Reading
- Reports from the field:
  - Lee Simons --orphanage work
  - Mike Yamazaki --orphanage work
  - Xavier Delporte --reformatory work
  - Willie Derudder --J.O.C.
- Questions directed to the reports
- Group discussion, such as--
  - "How do your own experiences, problems, objectives compare with those of the speakers?"
  - "How do you evaluate the province's involvement in the social field?"
  - "What can we do that we are not doing?"

1:30 Reports and Discussion on Ecumenism

- Short Scripture Reading
- Reports from the field:
  - Ed Lowney --the Tokushima experience
  - Jose DeFruyt --directions to move in
  - Dick Bonang --dialogue with the Buddhists
- Questions directed to the reports
- Group discussion, such as--
  - "How do your own experiences, etc compare with those of the speakers?"
  - "What should we be doing?"
  - "What should be our objective?"

Ten minute break

Short break

3:40 Reports and Discussion on Pastoral Apostolate

3:15 Discussion on '74 Meeting

- Short Scripture Reading
- 5 minute reports from parishes of province
- Questions directed to the reports
- Group discussion, such as--
  - "How do your experiences, problems, objectives compare with those of the other speakers?"
  - "How do you evaluate the province's pastoral involvement?"

- Short Scripture Reading
- Evaluation of present meeting
- Suggestions for '74 meeting:
  - \* topic and steering committee
  - \* time and place

5:00 Conclusion

With the exception of the decisions on the council and on the '74 meeting, the meeting is not policy oriented. Rather, the main emphasis in the format devised here is on learning what the men in the province are actually doing and how we can profit from it in our own work. Having listened with our hearts and not just our ears, perhaps we will be better prepared to take up at a later meeting the pressing question of the future direction of the province.

To facilitate progress at the meeting, I take the liberty to suggest the following as responsibilities of those participating at Tokushima:

- 1) thorough preparation
  - a) reading of material pertinent to the meeting
  - b) advance formulation of reports by those who have agreed to give them.
- 2) active listening--listening that goes halfway to meet what the speaker says and why he says it.
- 3) willingness to share one's experiences and opinions rather than mere passive, begrudging presence.
- 4) careful use of words--avoidance of ambiguities, generalizations, and especially of expressions which lead others to reject one's contributions.

And if we all do these things we'll be ready for immediate canonization.

## Suggested Procedure for Council Decision

If we decide to adopt the decision-making process suggested in the article "A Method for Communal Discernment of God's Will," by Jules J. Toner, S.J., the procedure for deciding the matter of the council would be approximately as follows:

### A. Structure of the Council

#### Presentation of Proposals:

- Proposal I --two-man council at-large (i.e. elected by entire province)
- Proposal II --two-man council with "ad hoc" members from each district <sup>1</sup>
- Proposal III--four-man council at-large (i.e. as it is now)
- Proposal IV --four-man council, one man chosen from each district.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This proposal in its original form suggests that the two permanent members of the council be chosen by consultation; but in this procedure consultation/election is taken up later in B.

<sup>2</sup> This proposal in its original form calls for the election of the four-man council, but this would be considered later on under B.

#### Step 1--Presentation of Reasons:

- a.--Reasons against Proposal I--each man, whether he tends to support this proposal or not, brings up reasons against its adoption; if he can sincerely think of none, he says so; once everyone has spoken, there will be a chance to add any further reasons.
- Reasons for Proposal I --same as above; the idea behind this order is that the consideration of each alternative ends on a positive note.
- Secretary reads notes; corrections; questions about reasons given.
- Very short break
- b.--Reasons against/for Proposal II--same as above
- c.--Reasons against/for Proposal III--same as above
- d.--Reasons against/for Proposal IV--same as above

#### Step 2--Prayerful Reflection over the Reasons --each one privately, without consultation (except for the sake of information) reflects on:

- 1) the weightier reasons given for each proposal
- 2) which of the weightier reasons for each proposal outweigh those of the other proposals
- 3) how he himself has maintained "freedom of spirit" in the discussion

#### Step 3--Presentation of Evaluations -- each one presents the results of his evaluation

--Secretary reads notes; corrections; questions about evaluations.

#### Step 4--Voting --if there is a consensus forming in step 3; if there was no sign of consensus in step 3, consult p. 143 of the article for necessary procedure.

### B. Manner of Selection of the Council

#### Presentation of proposals: Election and Consultation

##### Step 1--Presentation of Reasons:

- a.--Reasons against/for election (see above)
- b.--Reasons against/for consultation (see above)

##### Step 2--Prayerful Reflection over the Reasons

##### Step 3--Presentation of Evaluations

##### Step 4--Voting --if there are signs of consensus in step 3

### C. Decision on when to choose council --this is a relatively simple problem that may be able to be decided by a show of hands.

One of the advantages of proceeding in this way is that everyone has ample chance to be heard and to be taken seriously, and thus more apt to go along with the final decision once it has been reached--something that does not always happen in other decision-methods. The outline may look a bit forbidding but since much discussion has already been held about the council, the "presentation of reasons" is likely to go more swiftly. With a bit of luck, the whole thing could be over in about 2 hours.

Best wishes,

*Hane Ulrich*

Re- The Four Man Council

( Prop. IV Bill Maher )

No matter which form of council we come up with the main concern of their decisions and re-evaluations should be spiritual animation and the missionary action of our group, here in Japan. The provincial and his council should be in live contact with the mission and those they serve and be a source of constant communication between the various members of our group. The governmental process should start from the bottom in our living apostolic communities and in our various districts and work up to provincial council level, the higher levels being in close communion and communication with the lower levels.

In my opinion the most practical and effective way of doing this, in regards to the council at least, is to have the various, de facto, apostolic communities that are physically capable of frequent communication and joint action, therefore our districts, send a representative as councilor to the provincial.

A councilor from each of the following regions would seem to be necessary,  
1. Tokyo-Akita, 2. Tokushima-Itami, 3. Fukuoka, 4. Kochi

In regards to the method of choosing these men I would be in favor of direct election of the men in each district since this also seems to fit the above principals better than the other methods. I would be in favor of a two thirds majority being required.

If a man is moved from the district in the period that he is councilor another election be held.





ECUMENISM: directions to move in.  
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Prepared for Discussion on Ecumenism, December 28,  
O.M.I. Mission Meeting, Tokushima 1973. José De Fruyt.

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When asking ourselves what directions to move in we must realize that one thing is important above everything: the "return to the Father". (IOI) (Numbers between brackets will refer to my "A Meditative Reading of the Acts of the Apostles.")

How can we discern God's will? God's answer to this question is CHRIST. "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father". (Jn 14,9) "I am the way, I am the truth, I am the life; no one goes to the Father except by me" (Jn. 14,8).

Our point of departure is Christ. Our problem is the same as Philip's: (cfr. Jn 14,9) We work with a fragmented Christ, with a partial view of Christ. We must discover the ecumenical Christ, the universal Christ. The TOTAL Christ. The Christ who can be immanent, totally immanent everywhere, because he is totally transcendent. We must learn to receive the ONE body of Christ who reveals himself in many-colored splendor. This one body of Christ, present in the world since the Word became Flesh, cannot be divided.

"Everyone should examine himself, therefore, and with this attitude eat the bread and drink from the

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cup. For if he does not recognize the meaning of the Lord's body when he eats the bread and drinks from the cup, he brings judgment on himself as he eats and drinks." (I Cor. II, 28-29) It is not only the written Word that we preach and of which we can say in a certain sense that we "have" it, like "having the true doctrine". The one body of Christ in which we are gathered together is the Word become flesh. In this sense we don't "have" it, we are possessed by it. "For me to live is Christ".

God's relationship with us has been and continues to be, through the incarnation of his Word, "a dialogue of salvation". God's own dialogue is the prime analogate, it is the pattern of our dialogue with Japan. (85)

**\*\* God spoke first!**      God's conversation with us  
has begun on his own initiative.

"This is what love is: it is not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the means by which our sins are forgiven." (I Jn. 4, 10)

"But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us. It was not because of any good works that we ourselves had done, but because of his own mercy that he saved us through the washing by which the Holy Spirit gives us new birth and new life. For God abundantly poured out the Holy Spirit on us, through Jesus Christ our Savior, that by his grace we might be made right with God and come into possession of the eternal life we hope for. This is

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a true saying." (Tit. 3,4-7)

What we need to do first of all is 'totally accept ourselves, each other and every one else' as 'the accepted ones' through the gift of God's grace. This is what Paul means by 'the truth of the Gospel' (78). Tillich: "And when he found that he was accepted, he was able to accept himself and to be reconciled to others." (93) Merleau: "When love is only a 'virtue' among others, Man forgets that "God is love" and becomes unfit for this universal grace in which we inwardly know God as our Creator and Redemptor, who has saved us from the boundaries of a purely restrictive and aimless existence "under the law". (94) Spaer: "The dialogue with other faiths heralds our epokhè of rethinking - together with the Japanese - our own faith. The depth and actuality of that faith, and the wisdom and courage which it will take to put it into practice, may very well be God's choicest grace to his Church in this second half of the twentieth century." (87)

This is the 'whiteness of the harvest'.  
Spiritus replevit orbem terrarum. All what is good and beautiful, wherever you find it, comes from the Holy Spirit. (81) We cannot separate the wheat from the weeds, the good ones from the bad ones. (99) The one who took and continues to take the initiative of his eternal dialogue of salvation with all his people (83), has put us in a situation that we can say in truth to every one else: "I'm OK - You're OK".  
(66)



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That is why Pope Paul says in Ecclesiam Suam:

**\*\* The Church must speak first. We have been chosen 'first', not**  
in the sense that we would enjoy preference, or have reason for complacency or exclusivism. We have received nothing merely for ourselves, but everything to be a blessing for others. That is why we must bless even our enemies. We must start and continue dialogue with others without first laying down our own conditions. The only privilege in being close to the Master is that we may serve, wash the feet of the servants. The primacy of Peter is a primacy of serving love (43). The Church must look outward like it looks at itself: with the eyes of faith. If we look at the Church as a mere historical phenomenon it is easy to discern a mess. We must look at the invisible Church instituted by Christ, a historical and theological reality which becomes visible for the eyes of faith. We must look outward in the same way. This will enable us to discern the one body of the Lord and to speak 'clearly' as the pope asks (85).

«See what big letters I make as I write to you now with my own hand! Those who want to show off and brag about external matters are the ones who are trying to force you to be cir-

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circumcised. They do it, however, only that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. Even those who practice circumcision do not obey the law; they want you to be circumcised so they can boast that you submitted to this external ceremony. As for me, however, I will boast only of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; for by means of his cross the world is dead to me, and I am dead to the world. It does not matter at all whether or not one is circumcised. What does matter is being a new creature. As for those who follow this rule in their lives, may peace and mercy be with them — with them and with all God's people! » (Gal. 6, 11-16)

St. Paul's contrast between the "Israel of the flesh" (I Cor 10:18, Rom 7:5) and the "Israel of God" (Gal 6:16) brings out the continuity-in-discontinuity

between Israel and the Christian community. Basically, this transsignification of the religious sign (the sacrament) of Israel takes place in the messianic reality of Jesus Himself. In the life of the apostolic Church, then, even though there may be relatively little difference between this community and the community of Israel, its whole life has a transformed inner meaning and power: the reality of the Risen Jesus, the Lord. Thus, though the primitive Church may continue much of the religious ritual of Israel (Baptism, cultic repentance, laying on of hands in ordination and in confirmation as the sign of the gift of the Spirit of God, anointing of the sick, etc.), the inner meaning and power of this ritual is the fulfillment of all the promise which lay at the heart of Israel's life as a people and of her ritual religion. (Joseph M. Powers, Eucharistic Theology, pp. 171-172)

God's dialogue of salvation does not ignore anything that has value in the historical heritage of his people. "Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and with the teaching of the prophets. I have not come to do away with them, but to give them real meaning." (Mt 5,17)

I/ THE NEW JERUSALEM, = the indivisible Church,  
fulfillment of Israel of God.

It is this Israel of God, fulfilled in the body of Christ, which we must discern in the Local Church, catholic as well as non-catholic.



A/ The LOCAL DIOCESE:

I) Diaconal structure: rediscover the ecumenical pattern of church structure that gives due recognition to the WHOLEness of the body of Christ, organic in nature and able to function only as a whole, in 'corporateness'.

"Each one must use the special gift he has received from God for the good of others, as a good manager of God's different gifts." (I Pet 4,10)

"Do not restrain the Holy Spirit; do not despise inspired messages. Put all things to the test: keep what is good," I Thess 5, 19-21

A community of varied ministry of services must correspond with a community of various spiritual gifts. The Church of the present must face up to the history of its origins in the matter of Church constitution as well (38). Let us study among ourselves and with all the christians together as well what this means in terms of church structure as it grew in and developed out of the Palestine and Gentile churches. As a basic text I propose: H. Kueng, The Church, pp. 393-443. We could study the complete text first in teams and draw up a Japanese text afterwards.

O.M.I. Documentation of December 15, 1973 asks the Spanish province: What is the connection between evangelization and sacramentalization? (p. 6) The question is relevant for the pastoral work within the christian community too! I suggest that the

answer is: We must evangelize in such a way that the Church can be more a visible sign (sacrament) of the encounter of God with men, for the insider and the outsider as well. We need to find again our balance between apostle and prophet, priest and missionary, apostolic succession and apostolic man, the mystery of the sacrament and the freedom (in the paulinic sense of the word) of the faithful (6). Also the bilateral activity of missionaries in the field and the leaders of the Church, the particular Churches and the Universal Church, the office of Peter and the work in the field of Paul, the synod of bishops and the grassroots, the Church instituted by Christ and the Church comforted by the Holy Spirit (55). That's how the sacrament functions and evangelizes.

The problem is not primarily a political question of structures, it is also that. Basically, it is a social question: how do we live, express and experience our christian community? Christ does not live locked up in the tabernacle under the care of the priest, but down among his people. He wants the building of 'basic christian communities'. (16) The people with and among whom we live must be enabled to discover "God's philanthropic face" (3) in the community. We must be poor so that no one will be in need (Acts 4, 34). Our personal expenses must be brought to the level of the poorest in the community (4). Our money invested in projects of imme-

ciate relevance (8) to a missionary policy formulated by the whole community. Investment according to the goals. And to make this possible, the whole community needs spiritual re-sourcement (5) and post-conciliar education (32).

2) Collegiality: The diocese can only function when there is true colleague-ship between bishop and priests, between priests and faithful, between city parishes and country parishes, between all organizations within the same parish and city, between every member of the church, which is the one organically functioning body of Christ. (68) We do not only decide (voting) but also prepare decisions (this entails the creative participation of every church member) and execute them together with the WHOLE church (Acts 15, 22).

Creative participation presupposes the christian self-confidence that is based on self-acceptance and acceptance of others through an existential knowledge of the fact that all are 'received and accepted' by the initiative of God's gracing love through the Holy Spirit. No christian, wherever he or she may be on the hierarchical ladder of the Church, may continue to display 'child'-behaviour in upstairs relationships, nor 'parent'-behaviour in downstairs relationships. (70-71) We must create and experience 'adult' equality. (71) Share and bear, all what we are and dare!

The widely diffused right to act must be replaced

by a unified ability to act. Our dependence on Rome may not stand in the way of a unified diocese. We must transcend our congregationalism (31). The diocese must become financially one (17). The extent of our colleague-ship is universal (74) and expresses itself also in structural care for all entrusted to our love (75). On the local level, christians and priests should meet every week, not only to celebrate the eucharist but also to extend their prayer into study-sessions aimed at the application of Christ's many graces to the community. Priests and missionaries need an extra weekly meeting to prepare these workshops. That is our job! I beg every one of you to take a Parish Leadership Conference course of the Ecumenical Institute to stimulate your imagination re practical tools, methods, and models to effectively minister today and to have insight in what we must teach to the indigenous leadership that we are supposed to form.

As we are breaking the walls of isolation and parochialism we will be faced with the pluriformity of many different ideas and approaches. Gods salvation has as many colors as the rainbow (2). The inner tensions that our openness will bring about will be solved in the paradox of love of the christian dialogue (62).

3) Indigenous leadership: "The stone that you the builders despised turned out to be the most important stone." (Acts 4,11) We must not



pray for the vocations of our dreams but rather for insight that we may receive the real ones that Christ has already given to us. If our love is really "serving", then we shall not hold on to the best places at the top of the pyramidal church structure. We shall put ourselves in the marginal position of servants.

We owe an answer to Dick Hanley's questions in his 1972 Christmas letter:

- How best to re-evangelize the old churches before it is too late?
- How can we authentically indigenize the gospel message according to the cultural sensitivities of the people we serve?
- How can we undo the Western, colonial or otherwise cultural substitutes for authentic Christian faith?
  
- Are pastoral gaps to be filled indefinitely by foreign priests wherever local churches fail to produce a sufficient number of autochthonous priests for the normal pastoral ministry?
- Cannot the pastoral ministry be modified so that local churches could be served more by indigenous peoples?
- Cannot the priestly ministry be shared more diversely with the people of God?

Yes Dick! That is where we have to make our U-turns.

(5) We must allow for more self-criticism as a constructive contribution to discerning the will of God

and the WHOLEness of the body of Christ. At this moment we are all the troops he needs, but we must be self-confident, not self-complacent. "Do we stay in a country until we're thrown out by the government?" is another question of Dick in the same letter. I propose that the answer at this time is : deacons and catechists in our diocese. In the meantime we will also subsidiate our administrative role (the application of the principle of subsidiarity was called for in Vat II) and give our full time for prayers (which includes also studying) and the work of preaching (including the training of our indigenous leaders). (15) We will switch from a caretakers' apostolate to an apostolate more in line with our original oblate missionary vocation (Missionary Outlook 9).

B/ Preparing the RE-UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST:

The re-united Church that the Holy Spirit is preparing for us is the Church where John, Peter and Paul can boldly speak together, without fear, of all what they have heard and seen (6, 42-43). Pope Paul has already inaugurated the pilgrimage to the Cross of Jesus at Jerusalem, where he also embraced Athénagoras. Our division is based on disobedience to the Lord, who made us one. The split started in 1954. The wound must be healed that deep too. "The Holy Scriptures can only be totally understood in the universal communion of all the Churches, assisted by the Holy Spirit, and in the will to transmit the

Gospel to the world of today (46). For many centuries the division of the churches was mainly felt as an intra-christianity problem. The colonialization of the modern times and internationalization have made us aware of the necessity of unity "that the world may believe". (42, also 43-45)

The primary reason for our unity lays in the command of the Lord. It is to be true to ourselves, to be true Catholics that we must ecumenically unite. (46) When Ananias was afraid to meet Paul (Acts 9,13), the Lord said to him: "Go, for I have chosen him to serve me." (9,15) Our need for uniformity must resolve in the confident unanimity of pluriformity. We must deepen our insight in the complementarity of different forms of christian life. (46) The acceptance of the contributions of different churches to the one Church of Christ will make us better christians. The demarcation between flowerbeds (45) will be taken away, not for disorder and confusion, but to make the garden of the Lord open to all. Also here applies what Jules J. Toner, S.J. says in "A Method for Communal Discernment of God's Will", on page 136:

God, St. Paul tells us, made each of us with his own gifts for the sake of all. All complement one another. The Spirit works in all as parts of one organism. Even the mistakes of this or that individual may serve the purpose of the Holy Spirit for the whole group by affecting the group in a certain way, for example, by balancing an opposite mistake, stirring up a new way of thinking by reaction, and the like. For we cannot even assume in any communal effort that the Holy Spirit will lead each one to see the correct conclusion in his private prayer and reflexion before dialogue with the other members of the group. If that were true, there would be no

need for the main step of the dialogue. What trust in the Holy Spirit will lead us to expect is that He will lead each one into that way of thinking which will enable him to contribute to the common effort."

This also implies that we can't make stock in advance of all that which we will receive through our ecumenical efforts. However the Holy Spirit has already given to us catholics some of the harbingers of what promises to be an abundant vintage.

From the orthodox church we must receive her balanced view of the Church of law and the Church of charity as a single reality (6, 52, 63). Her joyful faith in the resurrection: see how she celebrates Epiphany (= manifestation) and sings her Alleluia's on Easter Sunday. Look at the Risen Lord in her Icons! And the role of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments (6). And what the suffering Church in Russia is producing for the 20th century and many centuries to come (Dostojevsky, Solzenithsen, Sakharov... and much that is still unknown to us).

Our protestant brothers have and continue to help us tremendously in the area of receiving God's grace and justification. "Those who are faithful to the original grace of protestantism, are precisely those who see in all its depth, as Luther has seen it, that the 'virtue' of the good ones may, in reality, be the biggest religious disaster for a society, and that the crucial problem is the conversion of the good ones to Christ. Kierkegaard, Barth, Bonhoeffer and the protestant existentialists are of this opinion." (96)



But it must be an encounter in faith, not a clash of mutual decadency. Faith will open our eyes for each other's graces and multiply them. In the matter of indigenous leadership too, they have a lot of experience to share with us (67). And they can teach us to pray, as Bill Maher said at our meeting last week in Kochi. Personally, I have received much from the Ecumenical Institute and I wait for the day that we have them as colleagues in our community and in the diocese. I also go regularly to the Breakfast Prayer Meetings and wish that many more attend these meetings, even help found them in places where they do not yet take place. For they recall Acts I,14: "They all joined together in a group to pray frequently, together with the women (what a tremendous potential in the Japanese church! (I-2), and Mary the Mother of Jesus, and his brothers."

II/ The NEW JAPAN: = continuity-in-discontinuity,  
fulfillment of the Japan of God.

I) God's sun shines over all his people.

"The old Covenant comprises in reality a whole series of covenants, which subsist still today side by side." (2) "Paganism; in a certain way, prefigures, by its proximity to the origins, the final transfiguration of all life in the Holy Spirit." (2)

"If I proclaim myself a Catholic solely by rejecting all that is Moslem, Jewish, Protestant, Hindu, Buddhist,

etc. I will finally find out that there will not be much left to declare catholic, and certainly no inspiration of the Spirit to do it." (56) "I feel that often those who finally brought Christ may have fallen short of the preparation that the Holy Spirit had provided and hence our Lord was not seen in all his Divine splendor." (14)

The Japan of God is this line of continuity that gives one-ness to its history and that is fulfilled in the Risen Lord. The Church must recapture it and 'save' it (14). We must rediscover the symbolic life of the ancestors and read the line of salvation that runs through it. Their history of salvation is also ours. All history is one. We all stand together in the fulfillment of all the promise which lay at the heart of all the peoples lives - all whom the Lord our God calls to himself (Acts 2,39).

"The nature of Christ, as Paul so deeply saw it, was that, "inserting" himself in a tradition which prepared for him, he made it explode; he obliged the spirit to re-interpret everything in function of himself." (3)

"Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself." (102) Paul saw the "recapitulation" in Christ in all its cosmo-historic dimensions.

"Christianity overflows the Church everywhere." (49)

"Christianity and the Church must catch each other up again for a new period of the history of Christianity."

(102) "Do not consider anything unclean that God has declared clean." (Acts 10,15) (28)

2) Amaterasu: rays of God's "Sun of Justice"?

"And God, who knows the hearts of men, showed his approval of the Gentiles by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he had to us." (Acts 15,8) "One must know to pay attention. How much joy when a face opens itself!" (18) "Christ is 'the sun of justice' who makes the faces of the just ones glitter with light..." (19) "Many elements of sanctification and of truth can be found outside of the visible structure of the church. These elements, as gifts properly belonging to the Church of Christ, possess an inner dynamism towards Catholic unity." (49)

"Japan can lead us to a better sense of balance, or, to an increase of what we essentially or potentially carry within ourselves but have failed to nurture to full growth. Certainly, Japan can add nothing to the Spirit. But she can direct our attention to these complementary truths which others emphasize sometimes better than we do." (88-89)

"One of the things I would like to share with Asians is not only Christ but Asia itself." (14)

3) The Church: to be a light for the Gentiles.

"It all comes down to our actual relationship with our brother. I do believe in my brothers. I stand or fall with them, and I hope to rise with them. I need them and they need me. And all together we need a lot of other people. And the bonds

that unite us are supremely important." (41)

"We are just men, human beings like you!" (Acts 14,15)

"Dialogue is a two-way educational process in which the former confrontation of 'religious systems' is replaced by a heart-to-heart meeting between one homo religiosus and another. Theirs is a mutual listening to God." (86)

"Show me not the disparity but the unity of the teachings." (90) "We must go back to the source." (91)

"Maintain plurality and the self-consciousness of unique heritages." (75)

"Offer for-Japan-totally-new forms of 'experience'!" (70)

"Testimony unto love, transcending limits imposed by ethics." (63) "Plumb the work of the Spirit." (63)

"Get the pieces of the mosaic of the broken image of God together again." (57)

"Establish new methods of relationships in human society." (7) "Build together models of social justice in which the Japanese can recognise their gospel train." (17)

"The early church demanded nothing, imposed nothing." (13)

"Give the old symbols their full meaning in the light of the New Covenant." (30)

"If love is not the law of our being the whole of my argument falls to pieces." (22) Deo Gratias!



ECUMENICAL APOSTOLATE--NON-CHRISTIANS



Each one of us is to a certain degree a product of our own culture. The Christianity which we proclaim is also a product of the same cultural environment. To put it very simply, each one of us--for better or for worse-- is culture-bound. However, I feel this same analogy limps when applied to the Japanese hierarchy, clergy and laity. It is true that these people are also products of their own culture yet the serious religious thinking of these people has been directed by non-Japanese or Japanese who have studied abroad or who were tutored at home by non-Japanese. Even when Japanese direct Japanese, the result is the same, a Western-orientated form of Christianity. In other words, the whole process is self-perpetuating.

Non-Japanese missionaries have certain religious customs and practices which they pass right along with their catechesis as if they were of equal importance. Unfortunately, the majority of Japanese religious and laity indiscriminately accept this combination without question, primarily because they have not explored their own indigenous religious manifestations, and secondly because they are unfamiliar with religious rites, practices and thought of other cultural areas.

Some missionaries, both Japanese and non-Japanese, attempt to walk a middle course. They try to adapt Japan and Christianity to one another. To do this they select diverse Japanese elements which are not contrary to Christianity doctrine or practice and try to fit them into the whole of Christianity. It is a valid attempt and should be praised. In reality, however, only a thin layer of Japanese paint is laid over Christianity; and like all paint, this surface is susceptible to cracking, peeling and chipping. In the end there is nothing to show for the time and energy exerted. This is because all these attempts stay at the outside of the problem and do not solve the dilemma. To put it in more technical terms, in Japan we are still applying what is called ADAPTATION-THEOLOGY. Unfortunately this method does not penetrate into the heart of the problem but rather circumvents it. (cf. E.D. Piryns, "Japan and Christianity: Towards the Overcoming of a Dilemma", The Japan Missionary Bulletin, Nov. 1973.)

The real problem, however, must be stated and explored in depth, if our work as missionaries is to have lasting effects and results. This requires an entirely different approach. I call this approach CULTURO-RELIGIOUS. By this is not simply meant: what is Japanese culture? It is a much more profound study, embracing the totality of the past as well as the present. For example, how do the Japanese express their basic religious propensities? In Japanese religious rites are there patterns which regularly manifest themselves? (cf. Mircea Eliade, Patterns of Comparative Religion, Images & Symbols, The Sacred And The Profane, Shamanism) This is an approach which requires hours of personal study and also consultation with knowledgeable individuals. I do not say ordinary laymen, because as I explained earlier, they are products of our culture-bound Christianity.

The Holy Spirit is leading us toward this CULTURO-RELIGIOUS approach. Without taking time to review the missionary efforts since the early Church, through the Rites Controversy to our present century, let us recall the teachings of Vatican II. In the Declaration on the Relationship with non-Christians it states:

In her task of fostering unity and love among men and even among nations, she (the Church) gives primary consideration in this document to what human beings have in common and to what promotes fellowship among them. (#1)

Here we find stressed the twin principles of John XXIII: what men have in common and the solidarity of man. It should be noted that neither principle denies or neglects differences; they simply give primary consideration to common goals and interests.

The Council document then goes on to spell out some of these common interests.

Men look to the various religions for answers to those profound mysteries of the human condition which, today even as in olden times, deeply stir the human heart: What is a man? What is the meaning and the purpose of our life? What is goodness and what is sin? What gives rise to our sorrows and to what extent? Where lies the path to true happiness? What is the truth about death, judgment and retribution beyond the grave? What, finally, is that ultimate and unutterable mystery which engulfs our being, and whence we take our rise, and whither our journey leads us? (#1)

The Declaration further encourages us to enter into dialogue with our non-Christian brothers:

The Church, therefore, has this exhortation for her sons: prudently and lovingly through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, and in witness of Christian faith and life, acknowledge, preserve and promote the spiritual and moral goods found among these men, as well as the values in their society and culture. (#2)

These three brief quotations certainly do not exhaust the Council's treatment of this subject. However, I feel that it is a sufficient introduction to the question at hand, namely dialogue with non-Christians, in particular Japanese Buddhists.

Not long after ~~we~~<sup>I</sup> arrived in Japan, a colleague informed me that Buddhism in Japan was dead. It was to be found only in museums, a relic of the distant, unenlightened past. This impression remained with me for many years, until I began browsing in book stores. Much to my surprise, there was always a selection of books pertaining to Buddhism. The number of such volumes has increased remarkably during this past year, thus indicating that Japan is in the midst of-- to say the least-- a mini Buddhist boom.

Three reasons are offered as to why such a phenomena is occurring. First of all, the Japanese have more leisure time now, and some people are using this time for more serious endeavors, such as an academic study of Buddhism. Secondly, during 1973 the births of two great Buddhist apostles, Kobo Daishi (773-835) and Shinran (1173-1262) were celebrated nationally. Some feel that this double celebration was sufficient to promote the present Buddhist revival. The third solution is simply that there is a genuine interest in Buddhism. I feel to say which of these three is correct, is to miss the point. All three are contributing to the present boom. Yet as missionaries (Such conduct brings to mind the familiar picture of the ostrich with his head in the ground.) can we so simply ignore the fact that Buddhism is very much alive and vibrant. In other words, missionaries pretending that this living Buddhism, does not exist. Our layity are in constant face-to-face dialogue with Buddhists. Buddhism in Japan is a reality!

If we are honest with ourselves, therefore, we must ask how will we approach this field. There is, of course, an intellectual approach, which entails a scholarly pursuit not only embracing Buddhist history but also Buddhist intellectual thought. There is also a pragmatic approach. What can I learn from the Buddhists? Both approaches have value but I am afraid that they do not go beyond the ADAPTATION-THEOLOGY level, mentioned earlier...a surface layer. If our encounter with Japanese Buddhists is to have lasting results, then the spirit of dialogue must prevail. Dialogue is the key word but dialogue is fruitful only when we have personal contact with these people. This personal contact takes place not just on an everyday living basis but also on the level of mature men of religion.

As we all know, dialogue occurs in a world of understanding and only in such a world. It is not debate, discussion, conversation, arguing, proving or verbal ping-pong. In dialogue I keep quite while another is speaking; I listen to his words; I try to understand what he is saying; I want to understand what he is saying. I am endeavoring to think with him, in his context.

Anyone engaging in dialogue breaks the dialogue if he does any of the following: prepares what he wants to say while another is speaking; tries to prove his point against an opponent; skirts along the edge of the matter; goes off on an example at the expense of the point under investigation. In dialogue one seeks understanding, not victory. In true dialogue, there are no opponents. In short, dialogue offers an opportunity to dispell prejudice and misconceptions, as well as setting the stage for mutual understanding.

Certain factors, however, militate against dialogue, yes at times even making it impossible. For example, dialogue is personal, and we live in a world which is largely impersonal, again we are products of our environment. Also fear of error and mistake, lack of openness and honesty, roles and masks are conditions working against dialogue. (cf. The Priest, "Dialogue and Priestly Ministry", April 1973, pp. 23-25)

With this in mind, therefore, we can not say: Tell me clearly what I will learn or what can I learn from Japanese Buddhists? In our encounter with these people we open ourselves to the Holy Spirit. But this is a frightening venture. Frightening, not in the sense that there is danger of abandoning Christian faith, but rather that we might realize that we share many points in common with Japanese Buddhists and/or that certain customs and symbols which we cling to in the name of Christianity are meaningless. These latter are just not transferable from one culture to another, just like the punch-line of a joke can not be translated from one language to another. Again, I point out that I refer not to the essentials of Christianity but rather to the periphery which forms the mold of our culture-bound Christianity.

To further our understanding of Japanese Buddhism we should continue to read pertinent material but as I stated earlier, there is no substitute for personal contact with knowledgable individuals, without whom true dialogue is impossible. However, human nature being what it is, we must find the right person, one with whom we can talk and confide.

My own personal experience over several months has been with a Zen priest. From our short relationship numerous results, both tangible and intangible, have come. Today I will share two of these with you, granting the fact that these are not at the core of Japanese Buddhism. The first concerns prayer. (I am not concerned here with the controversy whether za-zen is prayer.) This Zen priest said that anyone, even a younger person, can recite a sutra but only a man of prayer, one dedicated to his religious calling, can communicate with people. The second result is along a similar vein. How to keep the lines of communication open with people of all ages and walks-of-life. His solution is through study. He laments the fact that many Buddhist priests are so taken up with work that they fail to carry out this important duty. He hopes that the same disaster would not befall priests and ministers.

These two topics, stated in a few sentences, are the results of many hours of talking. Therefore those who wish to engage in dialogue with Japanese Buddhists must be willing to spend time and not to consider this time "wasted".

In summary I think that dialogue with Japanese Buddhists is not only important but also necessary. I think that we Oblates, working in Japan, should go on record as being aware of this fact and in the future encourage those among us whom the Holy Spirit directs to initiate such dialogue and to persevere in their undertaking.

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MEETING



1973

Stacy En. for May; Ullrich Angelo  
Ray Bourgois

Ron

"The Minutes for the Meeting of the  
Oblates of Japan: Dec.27, & 28th,1973"



Dec.27th; 9:45 A.M.:-The meeting opened with a prayer and a scripture reading.

-The chairman then stated the purpose of the meeting as he envisioned it; to discuss the type of Council and the manner in which it was to be chosen; to share as much as possible our personal experiences in the ministry; and to disseminate information on the works of each, while trying to foster 'openness' and the desire to work as a team.

-It was then determined if the "agenda", as was proposed, was acceptable? The "agenda" was unanimously approved and accepted as was.

-It was then determined as to whether the men agreed to using "The Method for Communal Discernment of God's Will" as developed by Father Jules Toner, S.J. After a brief review of the main points of the procedure, a vote was taken as to its acceptability. It was agreed to.

-After brief statements on the procedural method and schedule, we began the meeting with presentations of the Four (4) Proposals concerning a possible Council.

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Prop.I: This proposition was presented by Dave Ullrich.

Simply stated: "A Two (2) man, simple, Council." (No further qualifications or provisions!) "They are to be chosen on an 'at large' basis."

Prop.II: This proposal was presented by Raymond Bourgois.

A provision for "A basic Two (2) man Council, also to be chosen at large, who with the provincial would form a team. With the added provision for 'ad hoc Council advisors to be chosen according to procedures and determinations to be later established."

The term "ad hoc Council member(s) -advisors- came to be used to describe the unique 'advisor(s)' to the permanent Council provided for in this proposal. It may not have been used by the original proposers of this plan.

It was pointed out that these "ad hoc member(s)" were to be chosen by the men of each district, or interest group, to go to the Council to explain the feelings of the men on any given matter which directly concerns them.

Prop. II (con't):

The number of these "ad hoc member(s)" would be determined by the particulars involved and the number of persons to which the question pertained. (Hence, if it was a question that involved only Kochi-ken, then only these men would chose a representative to go to the Council to inform them of the feeling of the men of that area. If it were a question concerning, education ( an interest group), then only those men directly concerned with this field would chose a representative(s) to go to the Council.).

The main reason given for such a system was to ensure the "grass roots" participation of all those involved in any given question. To ensure that they think, and talk about the major issues together, and then that their thinking would reach those responsible for the decision making. This system is to insure that all realize and act upon their responsibility to keep both themselves and the Council well informed.

It was further pointed out that only the "Two (2) man Council, chosen at large" aspect of this proposal need be forwarded to Rome for approval. (Due to the fact of the 'non-voting', 'advisory' nature of these "ad hoc member(s)"). This procedure is only to facilitate the flow of information and ideas among the men of the Province, and to ensure that the Council has the best possible advice available to them. It is merely ment to be an "internal form of procedure".

Clarifications asked for on Proposal II:

-It was asked whether these "ad hoc members" were to have a vote in deciding questions or policies? The answer given was that as now proposed this was not the case! This method was to ensure that the men keep the Council well-informed, and that they exercise their responsibility to reflect upon and keep informed about all the issues.

-We were also refered to the pamphlet on "Administrative Structures", page 5, where it clearly states the distinction between a 'Collegial Body' ( which this was not ment to be in the technical sense) and a normal Council. Were we to wish further clarification..cf page 33(same pamphlet) #31.

N.B. It was also pointed out that on certain issues, which we determine among ourselves at a general Congress and apply for to Rome, a system of 'Collegial Decision Making' can be used. (cf. same pamphlet page 33; #31.).

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Prop. III: This proposal was presented by Ron La Fromboise.

A proposal for "A Four (4) man Council, chosen at large."  
(The present system.)

Prop.III(con't):

It was pointed out that structures are minor to the 'content' and 'policy' of our missionary work. It is therefore felt that we should leave the present structure as is until the time when we further define a common policy and vision, and then it would be the time to make any changes or adjustments necessary to better bring about this new policy.

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Prop.IV: This proposal was presented by Bill Maher.

A proposal for "A Four (4) man Council, chosen one man from each of four 'districts', by the men in those districts."

Since a 'councilor' should be among his men and well informed as to their thinking, the main issue is "how best to insure this?"! Councilors chosen by a 'district division', by the men of that given 'district' ensure that the thinking of the men will best find its way into the Council circles.

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-Using the "Toner Method" we the proceeded to give the reasons "for" and "against" each of the Four (4) Proposals. We started with the 'reasons against Proposal I. (This is to insure that we end on a positive note with the 'reasons for'.)

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The Main Reasons "against" Proposal I:

-With only 'two councilors' they would tend to get bogged down in their personal work and thus lose contact with the men. It does not adequately guarantee the necessary "grass roots" contact with, and participation of the men in the decision making process.

-In this system there is danger of a "triumverate rule".

-The more heads involved in the decision making the better guarantee that all the possible views and sides, on any given issue, will get heard.

-Due to the fewness of numbers, this size Council would interfere with the personal work of its members by putting too much responsibility on them...the great need for them to sit and talk with the men.

-With only two there is the danger that someone may not find a "sympathetic ear" on the Council, due to personality differences with the Council members, and hence the danger of 'isolation' for some members of the community.



The Main Reasons "against" Proposal I(con't):

-A Council such as this would not create an atmosphere for real personal sharing among the men. There would be the danger of 'just leaving it up to the Provincial and the Councilors' type of attitude developing.

-There is a real need for personal contact and discussion with the men, and using the telephone and the mail do not satisfactorily fulfill this need. In order not to place too great a burden on the Councilors, this fact would seem to indicate the need for a greater number on the Council itself.

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The Main Reasons "for" Proposal I:

-A Two (2) man Council is basically "simple". It sets the focus on the group as a "charismatic body" and therefore lays less emphasis on things like structures and organizational functionings. It allows more freedom for the "Spirit" to move in and among us.

-It is easier for a smaller group to arrange their schedules together so that they can meet as often as necessary.

-A Two (2) man Council tends to 'free' the others to do the work they feel necessary. Less interruptions of less peoples work schedules.

-It enhances 'trust' among the men by not trying to guarantee, through structures, that the Council and the men will take their roles seriously: to keep each other well informed.

-It makes for stronger 'community'.

-It is more economical.

-It puts greater responsibility on all parties and sides to really participate.

-The fewer the number involved, the more time that will be saved all around.

-The possibility that the Oblates as a group might start making more concrete proposals to the Bishops and to other National Conferences and Bodies is enhanced when you have a smaller "well-knit" team leading the way.

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Proposal II: "A Two (2) man Council, chosen at large, with a provision for 'ad hoc members' who are to keep the Council 'advised'." (The 'ad hoc member(s)' would be non-permanent, non-voting in status.)

The Main Reasons "against" Proposal II:

- Its a waste of time and money.
- Its an unnecessary multiplication of the use of time, money, work, and effort.
- Implimentation would be difficult and impractical.
- The lack of clear-cut norms and the difficulty of setting up such norms to solve all the possible situations that might arise...which issues and in what situations is this to be applied, and who will decide?...makes this Proposal very difficult to realize.
- In light of the fact that we are all aware and desire more 'general meetings', there is not so great a need for this type of system to ensure general participation in the decision making process, as this will naturally follow. These meetings and preparations for them will keep the men 'informed' and 'involved'.
- It is only natural in the future that all issues will be properly and thoughtfully considered by all those directly concerned, before any final decisions are made.
- The proposed 'district division' gives a stronger representation to fewer people (Tokyo & Kyushu) and would tend to weaken the voice of the majority in the Shikoku-Itami districts.
- Since it is presumed that the provincial and his Council will solicit and seek out the ideas of the men on the issues, and that the men themselves will seek to keep informed, this system would create an unnecessary multiplication of the "passing on of ideas".
- A Council of 'good men', rather than the men on their own, would be more apt to choose and seek out those best able to inform, and most experienced in any given area.
- The "ad hoc member(s)" might in fact become a block to a real free exchange of ideas between the Council and the men, as they would tend to become 'intermediaries' between the Council and the men, and as such might not truly represent the thinking of all concerned.

The Main Reasons "for" Proposal II:

- It provides a good system for getting the "grass roots" participation of the men on all the related issues, while at the same time ensuring a stable body which would help in the implementation of these decisions.

The Main Reasons "for" Proposal II (con't):

- It stresses the need for greater participation on the part of all in the decision making, and encourages such a movement on the part of the men by getting them to meet and discuss the issues, and chose chose someone to represent them.
- It insures that the most capable persons will be chosen to represent all, and places the burden on all to think and to take part.
- It insures that those whom the men feel are the most 'knowledgeable' on an given issue will be present and able to make their contribution to the Council.
- It guarantees that the Council has to listen to the men.
- It helps to eliminate the weaknesses of a "simple Two (2) man Council" (the personal work load of the members; the need for thm to move about and discuss with the men; the fewness of numbers if one of the Council members is absent for some reason..vacation, illness..; etc.).
- It would be of great help to the Council in helping them to make proposals and decisions, both within and outside of the Oblate Community.

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Proposal III: "A Four (4) man Council, chosen at large." (The present system.)

The Main Reasons "against" Proposal III:

- An unnecessary multiplication of Council members with a parallel waste of time, money, and effort.
- It interferes with the work of four men, when we are so few in number, thus hampering our effort as a whole.
- It tends to discourage "grass roots" participation by fostering a 'leave it up to the Five'...they'll know what's best attitude.
- In an "at large selection system" there is a danger that one area will be over represented, to the detrement of another.
- Tends to over emphasize 'structure'.
- It could lead to the establishment of an "oligarchy".
- The Council should work as a real team, and the more people involved the more difficult this is to accomplish, especially when the numbers are territorially scattered and involved in different works.
- It is inefficient.

The Main Reasons "against" Proposal III( con't):

- We are too small to have so many on the Council..its time for something 'new'.
  - The present day communications system eliminates the need to have so many on the Council.
  - This proposal lacks the imagination and reflection found in the other proposals, and does not lay the stress on the need for all to get involved in the decision making.
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Main Reasons "for" Proposal III:

- Five voting instead of three insures a wider range of views will be expressed. The more involved in the decision making the better.
- It is a 'tried and true' method.
- It insures more communication and movement within the provience.
- More minds will be able to give a more balanced final decision.
- If there are four men on the Council the rest of us will be left alone to do our work.
- With 'four' there is less likelihood that the Council will be dominated by a "strong personality".
- If one of the Council members is away for some reason, it insures that enough men will be present to do a decent job.

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Proposal IV: "A Four (4) man Council, members chosen from 'districts' by the men of the 'district'."

The Main Reasons "against" Proposal IV:

- too many members.
- There is no need for 'district representation' as such.
- There is not an adequate representation of the 'whole group'.Tokyo & Kyushu would be over represented, while Shikoku-Itami would be under represented.
- The problem of moving a Council member into another 'district' and then chosing another Council member.
- Councilors should not represent the members of a 'district' but all the men of the Provience.

The Main Reasons "against" Proposal IV (con't):

- This system would lead to 'sectionalism' and divisions, instead of the desired 'unity'.
  - This system restricts the choice of the best men who would be available to serve by prohibiting more than one man from any given 'district' from being on the Council.
  - There is no allowance for "interest groups" in this representational system.
  - There is an artificial structuring of the 'districts'.
  - Since the Councilors should represent "all", they should be chosen by "all".
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The Main Reasons "for" Proposal IV:

- It insures that a manifestation of the thinking of the men of each area will be had.
- It helps create "grass roots" participation by making the men of each district meet to discuss the issues and to inform their representatives and one another.
- It insures 'inter-district', as well as 'district' level dialogue.
- It provides the best way of insuring that the feelings of the men on any issue will be had, as the Councilors are close and available.
- It allows for the selection of the best qualified men for the Council by those who know them best.
- It is economical; insuring the best representation of all views with the least amount of money, travel, or time spent.
- The more involved in the voting the better the final decision should reflect the thinking of the men.
- It promotes the 'local community' and discussion within it.
- It reflects the General Administrations policy of having the Assistant Generals living in the field with the men they represent, thus ensuring a better understanding of the problems of the men in this way.

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-After trying to consider all the reasons "for" and "against" each Proposal we took 15 minutes to reflect about these, and to consider which proposal we favored and why. We were then each individually asked to state which Proposal we favored, only one, and to state the weightier reasons why we chose this one.

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The Weightier Reasons given in favor of Proposal I:

\*We need "simplicity" and the minimum amount of 'structure' to insure that simplicity. This, to emphasise the important "human" and "Spirit" aspect of decision making.

\*It emphasizes the need for 'trust' among the men by playing down the need for guarantees, and by giving 'freedom' to all to do what is necessary.

\*In its simplicity we are assured of more sharing of our lives within the context of true community, and as such we receive more 'wholeness'.

\*It fosters "trust", "unity", and "simplicity".

\*Its simple; if two good men can't be trusted then who can?

\*All the advantages of Proposal II can be had in Proposal I, because the men we chose will be capable and representative or they wouldn't have been chosen, and since all have clearly expressed their desire for "grass roots" participation any future Councilors will try and foster this goal.

\*A 10 to 1 representational ratio is sufficiently high, and due to the fact of more future "general meetings", these meetings in themselves will bring about the needed dialog and flow of information.

\*It shows our trust in the Two men and the Provincial, that they will do what is right.

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The Weightier Reasons for Proposal II:

\*It guarantees "grass roots" representation and participation.

\* It insures that the best possible 'advice' will be given on any issue.

\*It provides for the flow of "fresh", "new" ideas and blood into the Council and insures the Councils exposure to these ideas. Also in making the men meet to chose a representative, it insures that the men will discuss the issues among themselves as well.

THE Weightier Reasons in favor of Proposal II (con't):

\*The dangers of: Inadequate representation on any given issue;  
An Oligarchy or Triumverate being established;  
and of misrepresentation...  
are eliminated with this system.

\*It provides for a 'collegial' or 'corporate' decision making body, while leaving the final decision with those having this responsibility.

\*With the "ad hoc member(s)" it allows for a loose structure, while at the same time ensuring wide participation.

\*It maintains a simplicity in numbers, while putting stress on the wider sampling of opinion.

\*It insures the most possible 'sharing' among ourselves.

\* "Grass roots" participation is guaranteed, while promoting that the most 'knowledgeable' men will be involved in the decision making process. Such guarantees are necessary because we are human.

\*It effects and brings about 'unity' through communication, while providing for a sharing of one's own personal 'charisma' with all. At the same time it insures that this 'charismatic value' will be best used both within our group and outside it as well.

\*It allows for a lot of "creativity" while remaining basically simple.

\*It insures a better and clearer understanding of the issues.

\*In this system there are only 'two' men on the Council, thus freeing more to serve the larger community, yet it still encourages all to participate in the decision making process.

\*It gives a visible sign of the "bond" between the men and the Council.

\*A 'two' man Council is fascile.

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The Weightier Reasons in favor of Proposal III:

\*This system can allow for all the things expressed in the 'others', "grass roots" participation, dialog...etc.; while not committing us to 'structural cahnges' without first setting common policy. Any future Council will have more a role of "activating" and "animating" than of "decision making" as such. Later, if the Council 'structure' should not fit our purpose, then would be the time to change.

\*It provides for a greater availability of differently qualified men, who can then pool their ideas for the benefit of all.



The Weightier Reasons in favor of Proposal III:

\*The more men on the Council, the more possibility for personal interest in the work each one of us is trying to do.

\*This system does not exclude use of "ad hoc member(s)".

\*The main issue is whether we want a 'two' man or a 'four' man Council. With a 'four' man Council the possibility that all will find someone who will represent their thinking, and to whom they can talk, is greater.

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The Weightier Reasons in favor of Proposal IV:

\*It is the only "practical" method for insuring "grass roots" participation, and for fostering a living "Apostolic Community".

\*Insuring with a minimum of travel, time, and expense, that all will have an opportunity to express their ideas, it still eliminates the confusion of electing new 'representatives' on every new issue that arises, and therefore it seems to be the best system.

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VOTING:

-It was decided to ascertain if there was any kind of consensus among the group in favor of any one proposal. We agreed to split up the four (4) Proposals into two basic groups: Group A contained Proposals #I & II (for various types of two (2) man Councils. Group B contained Proposals # III & IV (for various kinds of four (4) man Councils. We then checked to see if this temporary grouping was satisfactory? It was!

-We then took a vote according to this division:

Those in favor of some form of TWO (2) Man Council.....	20
Those in favor of some form of FOUR (4) Man Council.....	4
Those abstaining.....	<u>1</u>
The number eligible to vote (25). TOTAL:	25

-It was then accepted to limit any further voting to "what form of TWO (2) Man Council" we wished to choose.

VOTING (con'T):

It was here pointed out that if we chose Proposal II we would at some time have define 'when' and under 'what circumstances' we wanted to employ this system. We would have to decide :

-What kind of "ad hoc representation" we wanted. We would have to decide the limitations and outlines for several future possibilities of implementing this system.

The chairman the stated the Proposals which we were now voting upon:

Proposal I: For a "Simple Two (2) Man Council, chosen by and for the Province as a whole."  
(Chosen on an 'at large' basis.)\*

Proposal II: For a "Two (2) Man Council with the added provision for: "ad hoc advisor(s)", to be determined at some future date according to the issues and circumstances in question at the time."  
(Sometimes 'district representation'; sometimes 'interest group' representation..).\*\*

\*Concerning Proposal I it was pointed out that a system can be changed at any time when we feel that it no longer functions as we desire.

\*\*Proposal II is for a Two (2) Man Council, chosen at large. This is the basic Proposal that would be petitioned for to Rome. The implementation of the "ad hoc representative(s)" would be considered as a type of "internal policy" and as such not to be included in the petition to Rome. It is merely to be implemented on the Provincial level within the Province.

Those in favor of Proposal I : 13

Those in favor of Proposal II: 12

Those abstaining None.

Those eligible to vote:(25). Total- 25

N.B. It is to be noted that in this vote there was no absolute "discernment" according to the standards of the "Toner Method". But in the discussion that followed it was felt that we did not want to continue the discussion at this time. We wanted to continue with the schedule. We then agreed to petition Rome for a Two (2) man Council, chosen at large, as seemed to be the desire of all. We then called for more "grass roots participation" to be somehow implemented by the new Council, leaving open the possibility of change toward Proposal II if we feel it necessary at some future time.

-It was also decided to continue the discussion on 'election' or 'consultation' on the following day: Dec. 28th. at the 3:15 P.M. session.

-The meeting then proceeded along the lines of the proposed "agenda", as presented by the chairman, with the exception that the session on "The Pastoral Apostolate" be postponed to a later date when we would have more time to do it justice.

Reports were then given on the "Social Apostolate" by:

Lee Simons	"orphanage work"
Mike Yamazaki	"orphanage work"
Xavier Delport	"Reformatory work"
Wilfred Derudder	"The J.O.C. Movement"

Friday, Dec. 28th; 9:30 A.M.

Reports on "The Education Apostolate" by:

Len Inui	"kindergradens"
Ron LaFramboise	"Seibo Gaku-en"
John Mahoney	"English Teaching"

11:00 A.M. Concelebrated Mass:

12:00 Lunch:

1:15 P.M.

Reports on "Ecumenism" by:

Ed Lowney	"The Tokushima Experience".
Jose DeFruyt	"Directions to Move in"
Dick Bonang	"Dialog with the Buddhists".

3:15 P.M.: "Election" or "Consultation" for the Council:

-It was decided that one man in favor of each possibility, read off the reasons in favor of that side.

\*Dick Harr read the main reasons in favor of Consultation, chiefly taken from a paper on the subject as sent out from Rome and originating within the Province of Sri Lanka. (cf. this paper for reasons given.)

\*Dave Ullrich then read the parallel reasons listed on the same paper in favor of election. (cf same paper.).

After this brief review of the possibility(s) a preliminary vote was taken to see if there was already some sort of consensus on this issue, or if we would have to resort to the "Toner Method", for further reflection. (?)

Election or Consultation? (con't):

Preliminary vote:

Those in favor of "election":	4
Those in favor of "consultation":	21
Abstentions	1
No vote registered	<u>1</u>
Those eligible to vote (27).	27*

\*Two new voting members arrived before this session.

After the preliminary vote the chairman asked those in favor of election, the minority, if they felt a desire to further reflect on this issue, or if they felt that it would be alright to take a "final vote"? The Four (4) in favor of "election" agreed that any further discussion would not prove profitable.

FINAL VOTE ON "ELECTION" OR "CONSULTATION":

ELECTION	5
Consultation	<u>22</u>
Total	27

When to start  
"consultation"?

-It was then voted on as to whether we wanted to ask for consultation "now" or "after the new provincial has been announced"?

Those in favor of starting consultation "now": 5

Those in favor of asking for consultation  
"after the new Provincial is announced" : 21

Those expressing no opinion 1

Eligible voters:(27) Total- 27

Straw Vote for  
new Council:(?)

-A vote then was taken on the suggestion to have a 'straw vote' on whom we would like to see on the Council before we ask for "consultation", but taken after the new provincial has taken office.(?)

Those in favor of having a 'straw vote' : 22

Those opposed to such a 'straw vote': 4

Those abstaining: 1

Those eligible to vote:(27) Total- 27.

EVALUATIONS OF THE MEETING OFFERED BY EACH PERSON:

- \*This meeting was well prepared for by all and this helped greatly.
- \*More thought should be given to 'logistics' ( meals and their burden) when such a meeting is held at an Oblate facility in the future. More use of outside catering services.
- \*The "Method for Communal Discernment of God's Will" was very helpful!
- \*The 'informative' aspect of this meeting was very good and should be keep up.
- \*There is a need for more 'general reports' by more people on the work of those people who were not able to speak today.
- \*The chairman did a great job and helped towards the great success of the meeting!(This was expressed by many, as well as their appreciation to him).
- \*For the sake of 'peace' and 'harmony' we tended to downplay the aspect of our suffering to grow together.
- \*Through 'preparation' and 'openness' we had a chance to come closer together.
- \*It was an excellent chance to express our 'gratefulness' for each other.
- \*It showed the great need for better communication among the men to insure better future meetings.
- \*The schedule was a bit 'over-loaded'. We tried to do too much in too little time.
- \*The obligation of all to meet, discuss, and become better informed as well as to inform was made very clear.
- \*We did not go into a reflection on "what we can do that we are not doing", and should try and to this at the next meeting!

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The Preparation for the next Meeting: TIME; PLACE; TOPICS; & STEERING COMM.

Time: The last week of May: The steering committie will announce the exact dates.

Place: The steering Comm. will chose the place after due consultation with the members of the Provience.

Topics: "The Pastoral Apostolate" (Centering on the questions that Dave Ullrich presented on this topic. -cf. Dave.).  
"Missionary Outlook & Policy": giving each man a few minutes to state what his hopes and his vision are, and then a common reflection on this

PREPARATION FOR THE NEXT GENERAL MEETING:(con't).

Topics (con't):        -The leaving open of a day to handle any unforeseen business, or any questions that the new Provincial and his Council may wish to bring before the men.

Steering Committee:    A 'steering committee' is to be formed of four (4) men elected at large, the names of each person's choice were to be submitted to the Provincial(the present one:Fr.Silver) before Jan.10th. This committee will then meet and set up the May-Meeting after consultation with the men in the Province as to their further wishes and suggestions.They will have the ultimate responsibility for arranging the next general meeting.

END OF MINUTES AS RECORDED BY F.J.HAHN,omi.

A word of apology in advance for any of the misspelling and or typing mistakes, and especially if in any place I have failed to record, or have incorrectly recorded the contributions of any of the 'brothers'. I am also sorry if in any wording of a persons contribution I have "editorialized" in any way;I am sorry.! I can only remind you that not even the Gospels are written with<sup>out</sup>the personal prejudice of the recorder coming through, and with this in mind I ask you all to realize that no malice is intended...its just "me" your secratery being "me"!