

ONGD

SECULAR OR CHRISTIAN?

editorial

Our ONGD wants to be secular and Christian.

The identity of an organization depends on many factors and it cannot be reduced only to its statutes, even though they are important. Talking about the identity of an organization would lead us to talk about the spirit that inspires its actions (or principles) and about the ethos (or ways of doing) that are expected from its members. Because of this, some organizations -especially Church ones- have elaborated a document that is called *Letter of the Volunteerism*, where the principles of the organization as well as the distinctive characteristics of the volunteerism they develop, are identified.

We, as a young ONGD that we are, have still not arrived so far away, although some possible misunderstandings have already appeared and may happen again if we do not do a discernment of what we are and of what we want to be as organization. It is obvious that many of us we come from a Christian tradition, more concretely catholic Christian, as we wrote in the first editorial of our bulletin. There we also declared the commitment that we want to put into practice of to welcome everyone who wants to be compromised for a supportive and more just world respecting the dignity of the human being in his integrity. For all this, our ONGD was legalized and it is registered in the Generalitat of Catalunya as a non profit organisation, at the same time that in the statutes we refer explicitly that our ONGD is identified with the social doctrine of the Church.

Therefore, it makes sense to ask ourselves if we are or we want to be a secular or Christian ONGD. Concerning this question we believe that the thoughts of Luis Aranguren in his book "Cartography of the volunteerism" are helpful when he undertakes this subject from his Christian identity. He thinks that a committed christianity in the world through organizations has three challenges:

(1) The identity as being opened. That is to say, to welcome everyone that accepts and takes as his the projects that the organization carries out, respecting always the identity of the volunteer.

(2) The confessionality as concreteness of the values of the Kingdom. The author understands that the confessionality is not exhausted in the signs of the Church and that the faith confessionality in terms of social action moves with a different dynamic to that of the signs of the Church. The Church has three essential pillars -the Word as explicit announcement of Jesus, the Liturgy and the *diakonia* or the service among the poor- that do not use the same language. In the case of the service to the most underprivileged, more than speaking of God, it is a matter of discovering and experiencing Him.

It is also important to add on this point that we do not have to confuse the educational itinerary of a volunteer in an ONGD with the catechetical itinerary of a catechumen, because they are two different nature processes. In the first case we go from the person himself, without more, from its initial motivations and expectations in its supportive commitment towards the others; in the second case it is a matter of developing an option of faith that has been explicated.

(3) Public presence as construction of a civic ethics. The gospel allows us to discern and to value, but it does not give any clue on how to solve the concrete difficulties that we will be finding in our projects. From the commitment ONGD members, from its different cosmovisions, the civil society is reinforced and it helps to build an ethics of minimums. This civic ethics of minimums cannot replace the religion nor its proposal of happy life or its maximums ethics proposal, that in the case of the believer is concentered in the Beatitudes. The ethics of minimums is requirable, the ethics of maximums is desirable and as such it can only be proposed.

If CxD is a means to be better people -believers or not- through the social commitment, it must be also a means for being better Christians. Therefore, ¿our ONGD is secular or Christian? Our ONGD wants to be secular and Christian. Merry Christmas!

The Council

THE HIV/AIDS SITUATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

thoughts

Sexual Abstinence before marriage is a lifetime investment.

Am I or am I not infected? that is the question on the minds of many South Africans between the ages of 13 and 45, statistics say that at least one in five South Africans are infected with HIV although that is also questionable so we use it only as an estimated statistic, however we are also told that at the moment there are five million South African living with HIV.

After a long period of silence and denial South Africans are beginning to talk about HIV/AIDS, sex and death. AIDS is a condition when the human body is unable to fight off diseases due to lack of immunity, which is caused by HIV. HIV is a virus that lives in all body fluids and is transmitted through contact with any of these. The fluids are blood, semen, vaginal fluids and breast milk. The main way in which people get infected with the virus today is through sexual intercourse with an infected person.

Our response in the Catholic Church has been through providing a holistic approach that provides three programmes, Education for Life, Home-based care and psychosocial support for orphans and vulnerable children. I am involved in the area of education as a trainer who gives facilitation skill to volunteers who provide the information in communities.

We provide HIV/AIDS awareness programmes, however it is apparent that information alone will not help to reduce the rate of infections which are now being estimated at 1600 a day. This number includes people who have a lot of information such as Doctors, nurses and

other professionals. We help people look at their every day life so they can ask themselves if they have behaviours, attitudes or lifestyles that put them at risk of acquiring the virus and if so generate new behaviours that will replace old ones. We help them also to understand that in any new behaviour they commit to God has to be the focus because without him temptations and challenges will be difficult to overcome.

There is still no cure for AIDS and the least we can do for those infected is offer support and care when the need arises so that they are not alone in their daily struggle with the virus and for the children whose parents are infected we offer them support not only with their physical needs but also by preparing them for the loss of parents and helping them to grieve and process all feelings that come with being orphaned. We also help young people to get involved with projects in their communities, what helps develop their skills and generate income as we work in one of the poorest provinces in South Africa

In the face of such a pandemic as AIDS we need to rethink our solutions. AIDS has given us an opportunity to align our lives with God. Lets not kid ourselves, there is no such thing as "Safe Sex". We need to embrace God's law and make life-giving choices. *Sexual Abstinence before marriage is a lifetime investment.* We can all help young people say YES to Saving sex for their life time partners and remaining faithful in marriage. They are capable of it.

Thandi Hadebe
Education for life Trainer
Catholic Diocese of Tzaneen, South Africa

A DANGEROUS BET ON DIGNITY

experiences

But whereupon a person only takes advantage of the bet, the effort will have been worth the trouble.

My last summer has been different for me, doubtless. Both for me and for those who have participated in the Work Camp which we have carried out in Madombidzha (South Africa) the last July and August within the framework of the project "MaS" (Madombidzha Special School) that our ONG "Claim for Dignity" is making with local "Our Lady along with of Peace Parish of Makhado", represented by Father André Stephan msc, director of the parish, and Sister Elite, director of the school for handicapped psychic of Madombidzha.

The project "MaS" does not only consist of the physical construction of a new school by the children and psychic handicapped young people of Madombidzha and surrounding areas, but also it consists of giving an impulse to the educational task as well as standardising a little bit more the reality of the psychic handicapped ones in a society that often hides them. Maria Simeón and I, students of Architecture, and Cristian Naudín, already Architect, have lived our participation in the Work Camp with a different "chip", since we were part of the Technical Commission of the project, we had to focus -against the clock- on making the change to Maria Hernández, Architect of the project, to be able to go on with the work.

We arrived at the beginning of August, in the second expedition of the Work Camp and went on with the work that the members of the first expedition, which they were from end of June, had already begun. The previous work that already were fact consisted, among other things, to choose and to contract the person in charge of the execution of the work - the foreman -, who was finally Mr. Walter Mhangwani. Soon I realised that this fact caused surprise and incredulity to those who came closer to the work. I will explain myself. Walter is black and, in South Africa, white people is the owner in exclusive right of the economic system, hardly would contract it for a responsibility position: until now this had always limited to him and privated of the necessary experience to prosper and to accede to a worthy pay. Therefore, the election of Mr. Walter Mhangwani like constructor has been one of the most dangerous bets and controvert project, since there was the

serious danger that he did not know how to manage the work sufficiently well and the project remained by halves.

In spite of his deficiencies at technical level, Walter demonstrated many desire to make the things well and specially to learn: he was totally conscious of the opportunity that he had in his hands, and did not even matter to him to sacrifice the pay with so throwing ahead the work. From the first day he was committed and totally identified with the project. We could verify day to day like with effort and work, to correct -against the clock- and mainly to listen to the wise advice of John Fernandes - white constructor related to the parish; he acceded of altruistic way to supervise the work and to bring materials, although he had never been in Madombidzha -, how he acquired enough skill to organise the workers and to throw ahead the construction. At the moment of our departure, the young foreman had ten workers already and planned to title with courses of formation to people to create his own company of construction.

It could happen that when one makes a dangerous bet on dignity with people trying to help, for example, to 10 people, as they could be Walter, Chengue or Mashudu, in nine of them may haven't found an answer or result under any circumstances that we take, therefore, disagreeable surprises and disappointments. But whereupon a person only takes advantage of the bet, the effort will have been worth the trouble. From my point of view acquired like a foreman in South Africa, I trust that the hiring of Walter was a serious mistake towards the optimal execution of the project. I claim and I maintain it. But like a person, it was a gift to be able to throw ahead the school with him. And I would do it again.

Roger Layola i Fabra



communications

- The past Thursday 28 of October ie was carried out in the Parochial Center of Sarriá the 1st Ordinary General Assembly, supreme organ of CxD, with the presence of 20 associates. The done management was approved up to now, as well as the new Executive Council was chosen, that practically is the same one that there was, and that has in front of itself a mandate for two years with the objectives that were proposed. The Executive Council, that is the collegial organ of CxD, is composed for 13 members at present. The Council has President (P), Vice-President (VP), Secretary (S), Vice-Secretary (VS), Treasurer (T) and Vice-Treasurer (VT) and 7 vocals. To internal level all the members of the Council are located in the different commissions or working groups:

Educational commission: Ceci Benet (VS) and Bea Valer (S)

Sanitary commission: Laura García-Faría (VT) and Irma Fañanás

Technical commission: María Hernández and Joan Sols

Commission of formation and sensibilización: Carles Hernández and Pedro Sols

Commission communication: Aleix Layola (VP) and Édison Fañanás (P)

Economic commission: Antonio Esparza (T)

Vocals without fixed commission: Mariano Hernández and Javi Laguno

The minutes of the Assembly are in our web page. It agreed to celebrate the 2nd Ordinary General Assembly the third weekend of October of 2005.

- Friday 29 of October, Edi, as President of CxD, participated in the jury of the II Assembly of Aids of the Foundation Ordesa.

- The Foundation Ordesa already has given us the money of the second time limit. We have paid the pending debts and have done the last shipment of money to South Africa -11.500 Euro- pertaining to this concept. Our official relation with the Foundation Ordesa is maintained until December 31st, 2005 . In October of 2005 we have to present the final report of management of the money that gave us in the I Assembly of Aids.

- In our Office we have received the book "To Evaluate to develop. Three years after the Mitch. The management of the Local Power in the face of the emergency and the reconstruction " (Catalonian Fund of Cooperation and Development, Barcelona: November 2003, 120 pp). We emphasize the proposed alternatives at the present model of development: articulated (to accompany processes vs. to support to punctual actions); participatory (to accompany vs. to help); horizontal (subject vs. object -victim-); coherent (to dignify vs. to help); opportune (process vs. project); compromised (to transform vs. to perpetuate).

- It has been asked us aid in a project in Colombia, also scholarships in South Africa.

- Last October 31st was born in Tübingen (Germany) Mercè Fañanás Hernández, second daughter of María and Edi: congratulations!

agenda

- The date has not yet been set, but it is predicted to do a meeting-supper for Christmas. People who are interested to participate please contact with Aleix Layola or Bea Valer.

- From January 1st, 2005 and just as agreed in the Assembly, all the members should pay the quota through the bank and to give the Secretary the whole personal details. More information in the letter of Christmas that you will receive in the next days and in our web page.

- All the "active" associates should be linked to a commission or working group. The dates of the meetings of each commission, please, consult with the respective head.

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