

Western Region Report
February 2015

Present: It seems only two persons were absent from the Region, Coleman and Joe Cornely. We were very happy to have the Arizona crew with us. Those present: Abram Dono, Allen Rodríguez, Andrés Rivera, Arturo Quezada, Charley Gordon, Ed Molumby, Francisco Valdovinos, Guy, John Seymour, Nick Barille, Seraphim Molina and Francisco Gómez.

The process we followed was simple: The men who are members of the General Cenacle took some time to share their own personal impressions. Each was very positive; hope filled and considered the pre chapter experience to be of the Holy Spirit. We then divided into two groups and spent the morning reviewing the themes. We then took some time to share the results and observations. Towards the end of the meeting we took time to consider possible proposals from the Region.

Report on the pre chapter themes.

All the themes were considered very significant and on target, we did not prioritize the importance of one theme over another. There was a frequent, if not constant reference to the fact that each needed to be considered through the multigenerational, multicultural and multinational lens of our Congregation. There was also a frequent reference to the need to clarify and strengthen the role and exercise of the General Custodian and General Council. The General Council needs to be more balanced on the side of full time responsibility for matters pertaining to the Congregation. There is a need to strengthen and clarify the role of the Vicar for Mission and Vicar for Personnel.

Forming in the Charism:

There are two obvious sides to this theme: A concern for the formation of the students but just as significant, if not more so, a concern for an authentic living out of the charism in our Cenacles. How can we ask others (our students in particular) to do what we don't? Furthermore: What is the specific call or changes that each cenacle needs to make in order for it to best pass the charism to others? What does it mean in the concrete that we are a "sanctuary for the Holy Spirit"? The multicultural and multinational reality cannot be overstated.

In terms of the formation process, some specific considerations were raised: Formation needs to take place in the context of Missionary Cenacle Family. The men in formation need to have more MCF opportunities. There is a need for more ST missions close to the Formation House. The work of the MCA needs a particular emphasis.

Mission

This theme can be broken down into three parts:

1. The what – RL # 5 and RL #8.
2. The how – Models for apostolic formation, concern for systemic change, and most important the development and putting into practice a Congregation Mission plan. The mission plan needs

to place a significant amount of emphasis on necessary follow up, including evaluations, the how and when to open and exit a mission.

3. The who – General council, Vicar for Mission and the Mission Committee. This requires clear role description and integration of each.

Some practical considerations: The mission committee needs to be available to missions and provide resources for mission. The MCA requires further discussion. The emphasis on autonomy is misplaced. There is an interdependence in the MCF that can be cultivated, not autonomy. Some of the men emphasized the need for a local ST to be assigned as communication representative to the MCA.

Spirituality:

The discussion seemed to be focused on several areas. On the one hand that our spirituality is directly related to our identity as Missionary Servants. This identifies a key concern, that the spirituality we deal with is specifically Missionary Servant. Then, in terms of the Exercises, the constant note is that the degree of silence required by the Exercises, given Missionary Servant concern for community and the sharing of life experience, is not in keeping with our spirituality. This needs to be revised and a general evaluation of the Exercises may be important.

Further, we note that our spirituality is not solely dependent on the Exercises, it's the daily providence of God that nurtures our life – how we relate with one another and how we do mission.

We propose a support for creative nurturance of our spirituality at the regional and cenacle levels. – Can some form of the exercises be promoted at this level? Some of the structures that are helpful have been the Ordo, community prayer, and though they are in need of an evaluation and revision, the Spiritual Exercises.

On Going Formation in Community

The discussion affirmed the concern for those who are hurting, living in difficult situations and those who may have left hurting. The discussion also affirmed that we need to care for members and build stronger community. There was a mixed response regarding the how to respond. The suggestion of a team to do two things: respond to the needs to the confreres given the teams skill to do so and to teach the membership these same skills was confusing. On the one hand, there is the expectation that this be part of the role of the General Council. The General Council can and does have access to MCF and non MCF resources that can be brought to bear. At the local level, the members of the Region and specifically the local custodian need to claim ownership of this responsibility to care for the conferee. One structure that could be redefined is the Reconciliation Committee to better serve under these situations.

There was also some discussion around the complexity of some of the aches and pains that we bear. Often we do not know how to ask for help,... There was a call to support the role of the Vicar for Personnel.

Discerning Leadership

The discussion affirmed the need to change the way leadership is chosen. The growth into our multinational reality means that we no longer know each other well enough to be attentive to the leadership skills outside of the portion of the membership that we know. A process that would allow

the prayerful identification of the gifts and skills, shared by a General Council and not by an individual, for leadership in the present moment was affirmed. Some of the skills the leadership would need include: The capacity to see and communicate effectively in terms of the bigger picture, including culture, multinational reality, and multigenerational realities. Some of the key phrases that appeared: Compassionate, valiant, bi lingual, able to enter into personal relationship with the members.

Other Issues to be Explored at the General Cenacle:

A proposal from the Western Region is expected regarding mission to Indigenous Peoples. In each country in which we find ourselves, this is a ministry that is abandoned and where there is a thirst for Missionary Servant charism. Ministry and mission among the Indigenous People also provides a setting that will teach us to be better missionaries given the level of commitment and need to inculturate that is required.

Other areas that need attention: Homeless peoples, Youth, Immigration and Prison Ministry.