



DIVINE WORD MISSIONARIES
AFRAM Formation Board

AFRAM FORMATORS WORKSHOP



*"The Impact of Secularization
on the Religious Life in Africa
and the different methods of formation."*

Franciscan Friary—Lusaka/Zambia
27 July – 2 August 2008

AFRAM Formators Workshop
27 July – 2 August 2008
Zambia

27 July 2008 –> 8 p.m.

I. All are welcomed by Fr. Omir. Then the participants are asked to introduce their names, workplace, give their expectations and a gesture of welcome.

Here are the expectations:

- be able to strengthen our ideas of formation
- be able to know more about formation especially in AFRAM zone
- be able to put our ideas together in order to succeed in the formation program
- be able to find some common things about formation especially in AFRAM and share
- be able to learn about formation
- be able to learn some strategies in vocation promotion
- be able to share/exchange our experiences and learn from it
- be able to find a common ground as SVD
- be able to build a communication link
- be able to tighten our bonds and to encourage one another
- be able to learn from other's experiences
- to have a common program/syllabus and understanding
- to move where the Society wants us to go
- be able to streamline our Formation Program
- be able to give better service to our Formandi
- be able to see that our Formation Program corresponds to the changes around us (Contextualize in the situation)
- to come to a unified Formation Program
- to come up with a written guidelines

II. Welcome address by Fr. Paul Shiju as the hosting Province (Botswana). He mentioned about the restructuring of the Formation Program as part of corresponding to the “change of times”.

III. Welcome address by Bro. Guy Mazola as the Area Coordinator for Formation. He wished to have guidelines for the formation programs of the pre-novitiate level in the Zone.

IV. Fr. Xene Sanchez also shares that it is really worthwhile to have this AFRAM Workshop and gives his 3 points inspiration as a Zonal Coordinator:

1. it is very unique to see each other from different places/countries and have time to come and share experiences; to have time to tighten the bond as Formators
2. widen our horizon in Formation
3. slowly to have a common vision as AFRAM zone and to give the best of ourselves.

V. Fr. Thomas Malipurathu (Secretary for Formation and Studies) from the Generalate also expresses his joy of being here in our midst. He extends the desire of the Generalate to know and keep updated with the AFRAM Formation Program for it is its top priority. He mentioned about “Prophetic Dialogue” in our missionary service which should already start in our Formation Program. This Workshop hopes to make us aware of the fast changing development in Africa and also Global and be able to translate and pass it on to our Formandi.

Fr. Omir went through the schedule of the week. Then we end at 9:00 pm.

28 July 2008 – **1st Day** > Monday
9:00 am.

Theme: Impact of Secularization on the Religious Life in Africa

Given by Fr. Gabby Afagbegee

We started with a verse from the bible which we learn to sing.

Phil. 2:1-5 Deep within us
 Shared among us
 May we ever keep the mind and heart of Jesus Christ.

While we hum the song the Prologue from the Gospel of John was read. Then we divide into groups and share about our understanding about the theme. Here are the ideas that transpired:

- how to go about the various changes the world imposing on us?
- how to bring the various cultures into our formation? Will these various cultures survive?
- deep rootedness in culture and religious life (positive point)
- secularization or polarization use to accommodate everything.
- Pope Benedict XVI: get rootedness in our founder’s values

- to be aware of the different elements of secularization and how it affects religious life
- how do we respond to this impact in our context here in Africa and at the same time open to the rest of the world?
- stress on the material things
- values are threatened
- how to stress the religious aspect?
- how to fill the emptiness within oneself – is it with material things or spiritual?
- how to live our vows in a radical way?
- how far does secularization affects Africa?
- how relevant or are we still relevant as religious?
- doubt about the impact of secularization with unstable economic and political situations
- is there any impact on remote villages?
- leading us far from spiritual life
- affects the community life
- making or having many choices in life also affects our daily commitment

Some points that were brought out from the sharing by Fr. Gabby:

- Some of us feel that our formation is the same with the diocesan.
- Can the aspirants see how to be an SVD in our formation?
- Can we bring the Formandi to where the Society wants us to go (SVD values)?
- How to inculcate to our Formandi about Prophetic Dialogue?
- How to be firm with our conviction and yet open to listen to others?
- Fr. Omir's prayer was mentioned about looking critically what is going around us.
- How about us, what is going on in us as an SVD?
- Fr. Paul's homily was also mentioned about "localization"/rootedness. How to be inculturated yet open to other cultures?
- Pre-novitiate = Postulancy, philosophy should be "the Foundation" – Religious foundation.
- "The quality of the Christian life depends on the quality of the catechesis that takes place in the community." Applying this to the Christian life: "The quality of the Religious life of a congregation depends on the quality of formation that takes place in the congregation."

Duties of Catechist – same as in Formation Program

1. Promote knowledge of the faith
2. Teach how to pray
3. Moral formation
4. Liturgical education especially the Eucharist
5. Introduce and educate into community life and mission.

Objective of Catechism – to bring people in communion and ultimate relationship with Christ.

Comments in general about Formation:

- Is the aspirant being formed as a human person taking into consideration one's psychological and family background?
- Do we relate to our formandi in the light of one's own human experience / realities / socio-economic situations?

The Pains and Gains as a Formator

We divide into groups and share.

A. Gains

- the joyfulness of the formandi
- formandi are able to make free choice
- someone growing and responding to formation
- see change in young people's lives
- growth in human and spiritual life of the formandi
- growth in sense of responsibility
- listening and guidance has helped personal growth
- trying to be good example for the formandi
- formandi who are naturally fantastic

B. Pains

- making decision for someone's future is a big struggle for a formator
- team work among formators was not functioning well
- Formation team not supported by the Province
- stress on materialism and secularism values
- misunderstandings and lack of support from the confreres
- sense of lack of impact
- when growth retrogresses
- conflict among the formandi
- being misunderstood or misinterpreted

11:00 a.m.

Part I - Religious Life

Sharing some general ideas about religious life.

- specific way of life base on the fundamental Christian principles
- imitation of Christ lived through the evangelical counsels.
- There is a dimension of community way of life
- Way of life geared to the perfection of Charity.

Power point presentation about Religious Life by Fr. Gabby

Some comments made after the power point presentation about religious life that are non-negotiable.

- cell phones (for future discussions)
- community living –some confreres are impossible to live with
- formandi sees what formators do
- what is ideal and reality
- everyone is a formator but are we giving a good example
- bottom line is personal decision – emphasize on personal calling
- are you going to follow the good or the bad example
- show also the positive and negative aspect of the Society and discern which is to improve
- importance of initiation (motivate) or create situations where formandi might get/form values where they will be able to use in the future
- confreres living life opposite to he values that are being taught in the formation

All these are great challenge to the formator especially on how to get the balance.

15:00 p.m.

Secularisation

Question is raised on what we can say about Secularization.

- Religion and faith has no relevance in the public realm
- The sense of the Sacred has no more relevance in human affairs – “God is Dead”.
- Very much related to the materialistic attitude
- Secularism - Secular state

- Religious state

Power point presentation continues on the Secularization Today.

Two authors are mentioned Inglehart and Norris talks about secularization as a tendency / differentiation about values and behavior.

- tendency to differentiate the “Sacred and Secular”
- Politics and Economics = concerns only on the profit value no matter what means you use as long as you get the profit
- Consumption – create and artificial need

Then we go for sharing and questions are asked.

What if a person does not go to church does it mean that he/she is not a believer?

What if they have their own belief?

How do we know they have this belief? Or a believer of what?

We have also the Comfort culture where the attraction is on the “C”

“C” = Christ or

= Cell phone, car, cheque, credit card, computer, cash

17:00 p.m.\

A question is being raised.

What is an African context? – African ness

Being an African and being involved in African Formation what is the core characteristic of the Africans?

Here are the answers gathered about African ness.

- togetherness – community life, even to the extended family. “I am because we are.”
- Respect of elders
- Notoriously religious
- Are Africans afraid of the truth about ancestors, transcendence, and God?
- No rooted ness in traditional religion and Christianity
- The origin of African religiosity as it exist today in its different manifestations
- Identity is a relationship but subtly enveloped by individualism
- Relates easily in a group- integrational community
- Sense of sodality
- Religious minded
- Love of music – expresses all kinds of emotions and feelings
- Love of dancing

- Human warmth > differences
- African ness = humanness
- Respect for the dead
- Ancestors = saints; Jesus as proto-ancestor
- Strong sense of happiness
- Witch hunting is very strong – looking for the cause of the misfortune
ie. Sickness, death, etc.
- Strong respect for the sacred
- Respect for authority
- Readiness to accept others without suspicion
- Strong family bond
- Respect for human person
- Custom and traditions still strong
- Obsession with uniforms

29 July 2008 – **2nd Day** = Tuesday

8:30 a.m. = Tour around the college (St. Buenaventure)

9:30 a.m. = start with a prayer by Fr. Leo

Fr. Gabby continues his lesson by reviewing yesterday's lesson on the Sacred and Secular. Then he also touches on core characteristics of the African ness.

After that the Power point presentation on the African Traditional Worldview.

Some sharing about one's experiences of African traditions.

- there is a dichotomy on what is traditional and Christianity
- how do we integrate African tradition and Christianity?
- We are looking the same reality at different angle (sacred and secular)
- A formator's challenge = How do we make it relevant the Christian Spirituality in an African formandi?
- What do you do when a person comes to you and share that he/she had bad dreams that somebody is trying to kill him/her?
- Ask her/him about the surrounding circumstances/ feelings, or relationship with the people in the dream, etc.
- We should not leave the person alone.
- How about praying with the person, how about blessing the person...
- We should go beyond just listening – continue to help the person overcome one's fears.
- All aspect of the traditional African life – social, economic, political, etc. are hedged around with "sadness"

Then a question was raised concerning the existence of evil. Does evil really exist? Do we allow it in the formation house?

Then sharing of experiences and answers.

- It is written in the bible
- Catholic tradition tells us that we have an exorcism, prayers
- It is psychological
- A story about an Archbishop doing an exorcism
- A formandi and even a theology student believing in the presence of evil
- How do we go about it? Help them in their journey step by step not just stop them and tell them that it is all psychological.
- Our continues help in the long run will change their mind concerning the presence of evil.
- Fear of black cat...
- Experience of continues death in the family...

15:00 p.m.

We are given two questions to reflect and we divided into two and share our experiences.

1. What are the main issues / challenges that have emerged as a result of our sharing / discussion on religious life, secularization, and traditional African Worldview and core values?
2. In light of these issues / challenges what values do we need to inculcated in our formandi to ensure that their behavior is in tune with their (positive) cultural values and core values of religious life, especially in SVD?

Q # 1.

Group 3

- traditional beliefs
- materialism
- consumerism
- community life (respect to other culture)
- the vow of obedience
- attitude towards secrecy
- openness
- experience of formandi in contrast to the way of life of senior confreres
- to form our formandi to become authentic African Christian religious SVD

- rekindle in Christian way the African values of community
- living and religiosity to fit into the SVD religious life

Group 2

- openness to dialogue
- specificity of SVD formation
- deep and authentic religious life
- reconcile biological vs. SVD family; motivation vs. SVD Vision
- tendency to escape to traditional costumes
- congregation becomes an opportunity to obtain many things
- sacrifice African core values for the benefit of modernization
- materialistic, consumeristic reality vs. genuine missionary vocation
- fear of openness
- inculcate interior life
- sense of belonging

Group 1

- the need to know our own culture in order to know other cultures better
- the supremacy of the core values is dwindling
- community life vs. individualism
- shift of focus: religiosity vs. materialism
- to appreciate one's culture while being open to embrace others.
- Drifting away from priorities
- How to become good ambassadors of Christ / SVD?

Common issues in Q # 1:

1. materialism
2. openness
3. authentic religious
4. community life or sense of belonging
5. culture
6. Priority

Q # 2

Group 3

- dialogue and constructive
- discussions between the formators and formandi
- to know more about their culture and beliefs in the light of our

Christian faith

- to cherish one positive values and leave out the negative values
- having responsible attitude towards material things

- to inculcate to the formandi the respect of the sacred and the sacred things
- to help the formandi to bring their intrinsically religious attitude to a Christian attitude

Group 2

- respect / fear
- dialogue, openness
- clarity in presenting SVD
- educate: basic Christian values, church, Svd traditions
- encourage to current and global perspective
- clarify SVD charism, expectation
- deeprootedness = culture, gospel, SVD
- inculcate SVD community life, SVD spirit of service, sense of belonging to SVD family
- self-emptying = kenosis
- self initiative and creativity
- formator's knowledge of local culture, customs, values

Group 1

- help the formandi to appreciate positive aspect of their culture
- initiate programs or provide forums for cultural exchange among formandi
- community / province involvement in the formation program
- community is the teacher; supremacy of the community in Formation
- appreciate one's culture while being ready to transcend
- core values = simple living, humble service, radical following of Christ
- availability, regular personal talks with the formandi; walking / talk

Common values in **Q # 2**

1. culture
2. dialogue
3. sommunity
4. self-emptying, spirit of sacrifice, humble service

5. availability of formators
6. clarity of presenting SVD
7. deep rootedness
8. Spirituality

It is not for formators to deal the psychological aspect of the formandi. The formandi will close up or have the fear to disclose. There should be a separate year for human development. It is integrated in the 3year program. The Vocation director should do the background check.

Day 3

Presentation by Fr. Gotthard Rosner, M.Afr.

The complete text of the presentation included below. Section typed in Italics indicate discussions/comments/questions from the group.

Fr. Gotthard worked 16 years in formation and was the Superior General of Missionaries of Africa. He is now the Provincial Superior of the M.Afr in Zambia.

Theme: different methods of formation.

Start – general picture. Slogan of their founder – ebe apostles and nothing but apost. – we're forming apostles. In many areas we need primary evangelization – e,g Iwangwa valley – no Christians. Encounter with other religions. Justice and peace.

We put a lot emphasis on intellectual formation but is it what's really needed? He wonders...

The same care is not taken for human, spiritual and misionary formation.

Me must find balance between these – integrated formation. There should not be much ephasis on academics.

Holistic formation includes:

- human formation – lots of problems are connected with lack of human maturity. It is complex reality, may be achievable only after death. Work is the best way toget to know and form young men

- spiritual formation. We have nothing to offer any more if we are spiritually empty. Being connected with the holy spirit is imperative, we are men of of god and must be connected with him all the time. JPII – missionaries, never forget that the HS precedes you. Any kind of community needs building up. In community we must teach young men that we are responsible for this community.

In large communities secondary school mentality prevails. In small communities seriousness dominates.

- intellectual formation. – academic though cannot be the only way
- apostolic formation – practical immersion experience is imperative. So that theory we learned about Jesus can be applied.
- Formation for material life. Student should know how to earn, spend, save money.

Intercultural communities - culture is learned and not inborn. But certain genes can get worked into genetic make-up – example of his friend's child.

You don't look into the eyes of others among bantu – you look into souls and there are things there that should not be revealed.

Functioning with events not with linear time – African culture things in events – big things and small things.

Today formation for multicultural communities is imperative.

We must form others to understand feelings of others and respect them.

Affection must be there. Both sides must be able to hear

Beware of cultural romanticism. – often people of dominant culture will consider others as exotic, museum pieces and don't see what is happening in community.

Three stages of cultural living

-1. fascination – curiosity etc. for 6 months then frustration of life and problems begin to appear leading to tensions and frustrations. These must be faced and overcome.

The assembly separated into small groups to share and discuss using the above-indicated questions as guidelines.

Reports from group sharing:

Group 1

Each participant shared personal experiences of living from their own multicultural communities. Some of these were positive, some negative to the point of distressing struggle. The group did not address questions 2 and 3 and instead focused on the last question proposing the following as ways to improve on the community living:

- There was re-emphasis on what was shared already—strong Christian foundation in faith provides the starting point for growing in the areas of religious and human development.
- Human formation needs to be pursued in order to adequately deal with personal issues such as sexuality.
- The idea of intentional communities surfaced—creating teams consisting of members who can work well with each other.
Ongoing formation for all confreres so that may be informed and trained to assist in formation.

Group 2

The first question was answered positively. Nearly all African confreres had their share of negative experiences and were made to feel that African confreres are unable to do things well. Judgmental attitude, gossips, insensitive talk were all named as problems in intercultural communities.

Strengths and weaknesses of both African and non-African confreres were named.

From the discussion on question 4 the following were suggested as way to improve the quality of community life:

- Regular dialogue to express oneself.
- Allowing for a critical look at each individual living, convictions, mission.
- Loose time to gain a confrere – spending time with confreres is not a loss but a necessary means to create a bond between members
- Clear verbal communication expressing likes and dislikes of others is necessary for conflict-less community living.
Internationality sometimes helps, sometimes hurts, we must accept that.

It was also pointed out that conflicts do not necessarily arise out of cultural differences but often due to differences in character/personality.

Group 3

Negative and positive views of Africa were discussed. Mass Media focuses almost solely on negative aspects of life on the continent while Africans tend to see only positive aspects. Unfortunately missionaries also tend to focus on the problematic areas.

Lack of sensitivity to African sensibilities was pointed out.

Strengths and weaknesses of African and European confreres were pointed out.

As suggestions for improvement open dialogue and confronting those who go wrong were suggested.

Discussion and comments on the reports

How do we achieve strong Christian Formation?

What is the problem really?

The problem lies in weak Christian formation at home. Our candidates, though sincere, lack genuine knowledge and often experience of Christian living. – perhaps not completely without but some believes are distorted or selective. Therefore this system needs to be deepened and broadened. That can hardly be done during philosophy as the focus of the latter is entirely different. Therefore the preparatory stage, propaedeutic year should be compulsory. This year has been identified as an excellent opportunity for faith deepening before philosophy and novitiate which is maturation.

Missionaries of Africa focus on the following during propaedeutic year: teaching meditation, prayers (rosary), combined with courses but not too intellectual. Students like talks with formators but on the friendly bases, without a gap. Propaedeutic year is not for intellectual formation.

Day 4

Setting up a program for the two days ahead. The goal is to come up, formulate, and achieve consensus on guidelines for initial formation. Fr. Joy presents his summary of what has been achieved till now, his own observations on formation (which are included in separate pdf files in this folder) and provides guidelines for group discussions.

***For the text of Fr. Joy's presentation see appendixes:
"Some general observations" and "Two Initial Premises".***

The assembly was divided into group for discussion.

The afternoon forum.

Groups reunited and both groups agreed not to discuss principles for recruitment/admission stage as they are well formulated during the workshop for Vocation Promoters in 2005 in Kenya.

Extensive discussion on terminology and structure of pre-novitiate formation took place.

After a lengthy discussion it was agreed that only those who qualify to the university in their respective countries should be considered for admission to the Society.

The first year after the admission should be called Propaedeutic and the period of 6 months to 1 year immediately before novitiate be called Postulancy.

The need for the propaedeutic year was strongly emphasized.

Numerous issues, particularly in the area of human development need to be addressed at the level of formation lest they surface later on, often with damaging results. Thus, the need to have a unified program before going to novitiate was strongly felt so that students achieve a more or less equal level in various areas of formation when going to novitiate.

Note: Recommendation for implementation of this preparatory/propaedeutic year to the provinces which do not have it (Ghana and Togo) should be made.

The proposal presented by group 2 was used as guidelines for discussion. Group 1 supplemented it with its own suggestions. Both are presented below:

Original proposal:

We identify five areas as being of central importance for the pre-novitiate stage of formation and distinguish the following as non-negotiable values together with the ways to achieve them:

1. Basic Faith Formation

- Living relation with Christ through prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, retreats/recollections, spiritual reading, bible study and sharing, meaningful participation in liturgy, regular participation in the sacraments, formation of conscience

- Deep and informed Christian faith through study of Christian teaching, sharing of faith experiences, catechetical formation

2. Basic Human Formation

- Human Maturity through deepening of self awareness and self knowledge
- Responsibility through giving suitable assignments and accountability
- Integrity through working towards cohesion between Christian believes and practical behaviors in all spheres of life.

3. Formation for Intercultural Living

- Ability to live and work in diverse cultural settings through living in multicultural community
- Openness to others through community activities such as group dynamics, cultural exchanges, dialogues, recreation, games, common manual works
- Sense of belonging to the SVD family through sharing ones' own resources, time and talents.
- Sensitivity to the needs and sensibilities of others through exchange of ideas views and experiences

4. Formation for Missionary Service

- Willingness and ability to serve through initiation into various pastoral activities such as immersions, family visits, catechesis, etc.
- Mission awareness thorough inviting other confreres to share their missionary experiences
- Global awareness through staying informed of events and processes taking place in the world

5. Academic Formation

- Capacity for effective learning through improving language skills, study methods, fostering reading habits, and computer skills
- Critical and analytical reasoning through and array of academic and intellectual activities (applicable particularly to philosophy)
- General Knowledge through discussions, debates, reading, exploring topics of interests

During the Philosophy years formation continues to focus on these areas with academic formation assuming the central role. Thus continuity of the program might and should be maintained. However, emphasis on academic and intellectual formation should not bring about the neglect of other four aspects.

In preparation for novitiate gradual introduction to svd spirituality, religious life, and the four-fold prophetic dialogue should be included.

Supplemented Proposal which will be further discussed during tomorrow's sessions:

We identify five areas as being of central importance for the pre propaedeutic year and distinguish the following as non-negotiable values together with the ways to achieve them:

1. Basic Faith Formation

- Living relation with Christ. (*Thriving Spiritual Life?*).

Means: prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, retreats/recollections, spiritual reading, use of Scripture in various ways, creative liturgies where cultural, political, economic and social aspects are introduced, Society devotions, regular participation in the sacraments, formation of conscience, at least one directed retreat

- Deep and informed Christian faith

Means: study of Christian teaching, sharing of faith experiences, catechetical formation

2. Basic Human Formation

- Human Maturity

Means: various tools for deepening of self esteem, self awareness, and self knowledge such as Genoram, Journal writing, *Enneagram*, *MBTI*, *Mayers + Briggs*, confronting aspects of fear and openness, and learning about human sexuality

- Responsibility

Means: suitable assignments and accountability

- Integrity

Means: working towards cohesion between Christian beliefs and practical behaviors in all spheres of life.

3. Formation for Intercultural Community Living

- Ability to live and work in diverse cultural settings

Means: through living in multicultural community

- Openness to others

Means: community activities such as group dynamics, cultural exchanges, dialogues, recreation, games, common manual works

- Sense of belonging to the SVD family

Means: sharing ones' own resources, time and talents.

- Sensitivity to the needs and sensibilities of others

Means: exchange of ideas views and experiences

4. **Formation for Missionary Service**

- Willingness and ability to serve

Means: initiation into various pastoral activities such as immersions, family visits, catechesis, etc.

- Mission awareness

Means: inviting other confreres to share their missionary experiences

- Global awareness

Means: staying informed of events and processes taking place in the Church and in the world

- Capacity for dialogue

Means: Guided and processed exposure to other cultures, other religions, poor and marginalized, faith seekers in the spirit the fourfold Prophetic Dialogue

5. **Academic Formation**

- Capacity for effective learning through improving language skills, study methods, fostering reading habits, and computer and other necessary skills
- Critical and analytical reasoning through an array of academic and intellectual activities (applicable particularly to philosophy)
- General knowledge through discussions, debates, reading, exploring topics of interest

A final suggestion made was not to discuss guidelines for novitiate as there exist very clear guidelines in constitution and handbook for superiors pertaining this stage of formation. Perhaps recommendation should be made to check where the programs in particular provinces adhere to what is in the constitutions and handbook for superiors.

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Day 5

Extensive discussion on the supplemented proposal took place. Its final version is as follows:

Guidelines for Formation During the Propaedeutic Year

(This applies also for the Brother formation)

1. **Basic Human Formation** (the focal point for the propaedeutic stage of formation)

• Human Maturity

Means: various tools for deepening of self esteem and self awareness such as Genogram, Journal writing, *Enneagram*, *MBTI*, etc., exploring psycho-emotional aspects, confronting fear, lack of openness, anxiety, etc., learning about human sexuality, etiquette

• Responsibility

Means: suitable assignments and accountability

• Integrity

Means: self evaluation, peer evaluation, fraternal correction, ratio, working towards cohesion between Christian beliefs and practical behaviors

• Health and Hygiene

Means: formation and information on health matters, sports, body care,

2. **Basic Faith Formation**

• Deep relationship with Christ

Means: prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, retreat/recollections, spiritual reading, use of Scripture in various ways (Personal/Common reading, Bible sharing, Lectio Divina), creative liturgies which reflect cultural, political, economic, social, and ecological aspects, SVD devotions, regular participation in the sacraments

• Deep and informed Christian faith

Means: study of Christian teaching, sharing of faith experiences, catechetical formation, formation of conscience

3. **Formation for Intercultural Community Living**

• Knowledge and appreciation of one's own culture and tradition

Means: cultural exchanges, dialogues, celebration of national days and regional feasts

• Ability to live and work in diverse cultural settings

Means: living in intercultural community

• Openness to others

Means: community activities such as group dynamics, recreation, games, manual work

• Sense of belonging to the SVD family

Means: sharing one's own resources, time and talents

• Sensitivity to the needs and sensibilities of others

Means: exchange of ideas, views, and experiences

4. Formation for Missionary Service

- Willingness and ability to serve

Means: initiation into various pastoral activities such as immersions, family visits, catechesis

- Mission awareness

Means: inviting visiting missionaries to share their experiences

- Global awareness

Means: staying informed and participating in events and processes taking place in the Church and in the world

- Capacity for dialogue

Means: Guided and processed exposure to other cultures, other religions, poor and marginalized, and faith seekers in the spirit the fourfold Prophetic Dialogue.

5. Academic Formation

- Capacity for effective learning

Means: improving language skills, study methods, fostering reading habits, computer and other necessary skills

- General knowledge

Means: discussions, debates, reading, exploring topics of interest

The assembly divided into groups to discuss guidelines for formation during philosophy.

Group 1 came up with the following formulation:

During the Philosophy years formation continues to focus on the five areas outlined in the guidelines for propaedeutic year with academic formation assuming the central role. Thus continuity of the program might and should be maintained. The following should be emphasized and implemented during Philosophical studies:

1. In the areas of Basic Faith Formation and Basic Human Formation the students should be guided and helped in integrating the knowledge which they acquire through studies into their spiritual and religious life and development of their personalities
2. A course of foreign language (French or English) should take place at suitable time
3. The students should undertake regular pastoral ministry, a part of which should take place in an SVD parish or other SVD pastoral setting

4. In the last year of philosophical studies (postulancy) particular attention should be paid to discernment together with introduction to svd constitutions and spirituality, religious life, and evangelical counsels.

Recommendations:

1. The language taught in the AFRAM during the pre-novitiate stage of formation should be French or English
2. Given the pressures of the final year of philosophy (thesis writing, final exams) the postulancy period should be at least one year to allow for lighter yet systematic introduction of the themes intended for this period.

Group 2 proposed the following :

- academic life should be the focus of this stage of formation
- there should be a chance for directed retreat at least once during this period
- introducing fraternal evaluation in the middle of the academic year instead of the end and the results should be communicated to the person
- an orientation before the personal evaluation should be given
- either Spanish or English should be taught
- identifying students who might later be candidates for further studies (philosophy)
- utilize long holidays for special trainings

After discussion the following formulation was adopted as Proposal for Guidelines for Formation during the Philosophical studies:

During Philosophy formation continues to focus on the five areas outlined in the guidelines for propaedeutic year with academic formation assuming the central role. Thus continuity of the program should be maintained. The following should be emphasized and implemented during Philosophical studies:

1. In the areas of Basic Faith Formation and Basic Human Formation students should be guided and helped in integrating the knowledge which they acquire through studies into their spiritual and religious life and into development of their personalities
2. A course of foreign language (French or English) should take place at suitable time
3. The students should undertake regular pastoral ministry
4. Students should undergo at least one directed retreat during philosophy

5. Peer review and evaluation should preferably be done in the middle rather than at the end of the academic year. It should be preceded by adequate orientation and its results should be conveyed to the formandi concerned.
6. Students capable of a more profound Philosophical education should be encouraged to pursue it
7. In the last year of philosophical studies (postulancy) particular attention should be paid to discernment together with introduction to Svd constitutions and spirituality, religious life, and evangelical counsels.

Recommendations:

1. The language taught in the AFRAM during the pre-novitiate stage of formation should be French or English
2. Given the pressures of the final year of philosophy (thesis writing, final exams) the postulancy period should be at least one year to allow for lighter yet systematic introduction of themes intended for this period.

Discussion on recommendations followed. Their final formulation is found in a separate file.

Workshop concluded with evaluation whose result are found in a separate file in this folder. The need for independent opinion on guidelines was felt. It will be sent to the confreres in Botswana province for evaluation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. This assembly proposes that provinces/regions/missions in the zone make it mandatory to have a year long propaedeutic year before sending aspirants to philosophy/ postulancy
2. The assembly proposes the following guidelines as mandatory for propaedeutic stage of formation
3. The assembly proposes the following guidelines as mandatory for philosophy stage of formation
4. The assembly proposes the following stages as mandatory
 - Vocation promotion/Candidate selection
 - Propaedeutic stage (not less that 1 year)
 - Philosophy (with the specific preparatory period of not less that 1 year called postulancy directly before going to novitiate. In this context the assembly further proposes that the provinces of Ghana, Togo/Benin introduce propaedeutic year into their formation program and that the province of Angola streamline their program in line with the proposed

guidelines and accept only those students who are qualified to go to university.

5. This assembly proposes to appoint men of integrity and with proper training/skills as formators. Their ongoing formation be attended to. Occasional (not frequent) workshops and seminars to share their experiences be facilitated.
6. Considering particular situation of the AFRAM zone, this assembly proposes that the language taught in the zone during the pre-novitiate stage of formation should be French or English
7. Given the pressures of the final year of philosophy (thesis writing, final exams) this assembly proposes that postulancy period should be at least one year to allow for lighter yet systematic introduction of themes intended for this period.

APPENDIXES

SOME GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

Some elements of the mental orientation of our candidates in general.

-
- These are just mentioned here as examples to set our reflections rolling. There are neither absolutes nor exhaustive.
- They might be classified as tendencies, or influences by which our candidates see their world.
- They influence our way of thinking, and hence our behavior.

SOME EXAMPLES

-
- ⇒ They prefer to do what they like most often [A kind of dislike for discipline and structures..]
- ⇒ They seem to have all the answers whatever be the situation...
- ⇒ Normally do not like to listen to anyone... [Sees as infringing on their freedom..]
- ⇒ Want to have access to anything they want or like... [No one should stand on my way...]

SOME EXAMPLES OF BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS.

-
- Visually inclined, Movies, T.V. videos, music etc.

- Likes lots of movements – traveling..
- Generally do not want long-term commitments, just in case a better opportunity turns up..
- Hedonism, individualism and self centeredness..
- Lack of openness, congruence and honesty and at times even confusion.
- Defensiveness, and sees hardly anything wrong in what they do...
- In formation they interiorize very little and often the blame comes to formators.
- Silence is a problem.
- Lack of self-awareness.
- Resistance to learning – repetition of same mistakes.

FORMATION AS A MOVEMENT OF TRANSFORMATION.

It is a movement to a **new or greater** level of consciousness, or awareness.

1. Awareness of self and motivation.
2. Self-direction.
3. Integration
4. Purposefulness
5. Responsibility
6. Integrity
7. Openness / congruence / honesty.
8. Interiority
9. Wholeness
10. genuine humanness
11. Holiness.

ON FORMATORS

- FORMATORS themselves are human persons in need of growth and change.
- The process of growth are same for all human beings – though needs might be different at different times.
- Formation is a life-long process.
- Formation demands from the formator, natural qualities and acquired abilities developed by effort and experience.
- The best formation is consistent and coherent life of the formator.
- Formation is an active process and those in formation are their own primary formators.
- Formation primarily focuses on the interior space.

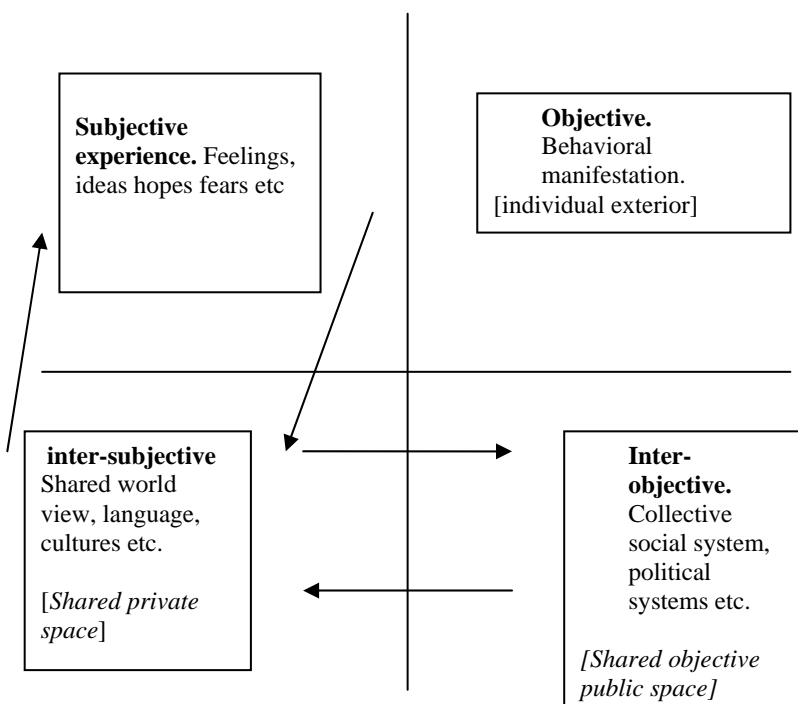
CHALLENGES FOR FORMATION IN OUR TIMES.

Formation is a developmental process.

- * Humans are **meaning making** organisms.
- * Reality is **constructed** in a context.

Formation is assisting in this **meaning making and reality construction** process.

- * Subjective experience. Feelings, ideas hopes fears etc.
- * right top. [behavioral manifestation.
- * left below.[inter-subjective] Shared world view, language, cultures etc.
- * inter objective. Collective social system, political systems etc.



GETTING ACCESS TO THE SUBJECTIVE SPACE IS THE MOST DIFFICULT.

Are we trained to get access to the subjective space... ?

Three conditions that needs to be fulfilled to really assist in growth and development.

- * **ACCEPT AND TRUST** – Holding - candidates as they are.
- * **ENCOUNTER** – Challenge and sustain - accept the person, but not always the behavior
- * **BEING AROUND** – Present in person and available.
Integrate the living experience.

Hence:

- a. relate with empathy
- b. respond with congruence
- c. confront without threatening
- d. lead without pushing
- e. accompany without engulfing
- f. explore with care and competence
- g. understand with compassion
- h. walk into with respect
- i. walk about with sensitivity
- j. Respond with authenticity.

Do you have some of these skills, do you practice them etc...

Joy panamthanam

A GLANCE THROUGH OUR FORMATION PROGRAMME AT DIFFERENT STAGES.

What do we find in our documents? I must say I have not got the Togo [province] programme with me. Hence no mention can be made of the programme here. Programme in Ghana where it is needed would be compared.

1. VOCATION PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF VOCATION PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

- To make our Society known in the two countries where we work
- To show the heritage and the uniqueness of our Spirituality and Charism
- To expose the characteristics for vocations to Priesthood and Brotherhood

- To help those interested discern their vocation
- To attract young men to our Society
- To interest young men in the religious missionary ideal by presenting to them the SVD Vision of Mission, Ministries and Lifestyle

MEANS OF PROMOTION AND RECRUITMENT

- Correspondence with candidates
- Visits to postulants' homes
- Seminars, retreats, interviews, personality tests [conducted by the team or other competent persons etc]
- Involvement of our confreres & others [like *Rel. sisters, catechists, school teachers etc*] working in parishes in recruitment.
- Recommendations from relevant & reputed persons as a means of initial inquiry etc.
- Documents needed for admission are more or less same for all the provinces.

* These above elements are common to all the formation programmes as seen in the documents.

* Criteria for admission are basically three major headings, are also common to all:-

1. Experience of personal call and response by candidate.
2. Family background
3. Personality traits.

What next...??

a. Is anything missing in this process..?? hence to be added

b. The document and its actual practice..? its congruence..??

c. Any other matters of interest as related to this area of formation.

2. PRE-POSTULANCY FORMATION.

GOALS / OBJECTIVES:

- ◆ Tangible signs of self-confidence in oneself.
- ◆ Capacity to think and discuss about the world and about oneself.
- ◆ Capacity to discover oneself, his world, tribe, culture and customs.
- ◆ Understanding of himself in relationship to God, relationship is expressed tangibly.

- ◆ Initiates the process of social justice (JPIC), Social, Spiritual, Psycho-Spiritual, or Human development, Physical, Academic, Community, Missionary Zeal and SVD internationality aspects are imparted and cultivated.

.Under three areas:

1. spiritual – mission, svd society
2. human
3. academic [language, skills and culture]

In Ghana there is no pre-Postulancy programme. The contact of and with the vocation promoter which lasts from 1 year to 3 or 4 years is considered to be enough as a pre-Postulancy programme by the province. In addition, there is a month of orientation programme that is given before the first years start their philosophy classes during August-September. This coming academic year is the second such orientation programme. Some of the topics which are covered in the aspirancy and pre-Postulancy programmes of other provinces are partially covered, through lectures, and some of these aspects are covered during the three year conference. But there is no fixed programme. I [Fr. Joy panamthanam] have submitted a tentative programme of conference topics to be approved by the formation board of Ghana and the provincial council, in May 2008, but so far no information is given back to me as to the fate of the proposed programme.

3. FORMATION DURING POSTULANCY.

Both in Kenya, and CNG, the programme has the same elements, only in Kenya it is spelt out more in detail than the CNG programme.

The following are the titles of the content:

Academic, personal [human], spiritual, community, and apostolic.

In all the provinces these areas are covered as in the manual or handbook for formation.

What is not so much stressed in any of the programmes, but has come up strongly in the last three days is the aspect of culture.

- Namely deeper knowledge of one's own culture and the culture of the 'other'.
[Meaning those of a different tribe, or nationality.]

What next..??

Given the fact that these topics are recommended to be attended to, what is left is for us to examine

How does the actual implementation of them occur?

What are the positive and negative concrete outcomes of the present mode of implementation?

Could we point to any defects in the actual implementation?

Explore, and suggest ways and means to improve the present praxis.

GUIDELINES and RECOMMENDATIONS (FINAL DOCUMENT)

1. Guidelines for Formation during the Propaedeutic Year *(This applies also for the Brother formation)*

1. **Basic Human Formation** (the focal point for the propaedeutic stage of formation)

Human Maturity

Means: various tools for deepening of self esteem and self awareness such as Genogram, Journal writing, *Enneagram*, *MBTI*, etc., exploring psycho-emotional aspects, confronting fear, lack of openness, anxiety, etc., learning about human sexuality, etiquette.

Responsibility

Means: suitable assignments and accountability.

Integrity

Means: self evaluation, peer evaluation, fraternal correction, ratio, working towards cohesion between Christian beliefs and practical behaviours.

Health and Hygiene

Means: formation and information on health matters, sports, body care, etc.

2. **Basic Faith Formation**

Deep relationship with Christ

Means: prayer, meditation, spiritual direction, retreat/recollections, spiritual reading, use of Scripture in various ways (Personal/Common reading, Bible sharing, Lectio Divina), creative liturgies which reflect cultural, political, economic, social, and ecological aspects, SVD devotions, regular participation in the sacraments.

Deep and informed Christian faith

Means: study of Christian teaching, sharing of faith experiences, catechetical

formation, formation of conscience.

3. Formation for Intercultural Community Living

Knowledge and appreciation of one's own culture and tradition

Means: cultural exchanges, dialogues, celebration of national days and regional feasts.

Ability to live and work in diverse cultural settings

Means: living in intercultural community.

Openness to others

Means: community activities such as group dynamics, recreation, games, manual work

Sense of belonging to the SVD family

Means: sharing one's own resources, time and talents.

Sensitivity to the needs and sensibilities of others

Means: exchange of ideas, views, and experiences.

4. Formation for Missionary Service

Willingness and ability to serve

Means: initiation into various pastoral activities such as immersions, family visits, catechesis.

Mission awareness

Means: inviting visiting missionaries to share their experiences.

Global awareness

Means: staying informed and participating in events and processes taking place in the Church and in the world.

Capacity for dialogue

Means: Guided and processed exposure to other cultures, other religions, poor and marginalized, and faith seekers in the spirit the fourfold Prophetic Dialogue.

5. Academic Formation

Capacity for effective learning

Means: improving language skills, study methods, fostering reading habits, computer and other necessary skills.

General knowledge

Means: discussions, debates, reading, exploring topics of interest.

2. Guidelines during philosophy stage

During Philosophy, formation continues to focus on the five areas outlined in the guidelines for propaedeutic year with academic formation assuming the

central role.

Thus continuity of the program should be maintained. The following should be emphasized and implemented during Philosophical studies:

1. In the areas of Basic Faith Formation and Basic Human Formation students should be guided and helped in integrating the knowledge which they acquire through studies into their spiritual and religious life and into development of their personalities
2. A course of foreign language (French or English) should take place at suitable time
3. The students should undertake regular pastoral ministry
4. Students should undergo at least one directed retreat during philosophy
5. Peer review and evaluation should preferably be done in the middle rather than at the end of the academic year. It should be preceded by adequate orientation and its results should be conveyed to the formandi concerned.
6. Students capable of a more profound Philosophical education should be encouraged to pursue it
7. In the last year of philosophical studies (postulancy) particular attention should be paid to discernment together with introduction to Svd constitutions and spirituality, religious life, and evangelical counsels.

N.B. For the Brother Formation, it is recommended to follow the guidelines proposed by the generalate "You are all brothers" and make use of it in order to produce a suitable program in each province/region of AFRAM.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The assembly proposes the following stages for pre-novitiate program as mandatory
 - Vocation promotion/candidate selection
 - Propaedeutic stage (not less than 1 year)
 - Philosophy (with the specific preparatory period of not less than 1 year called postulancy directly before going to novitiate)
2. Given the pressures of the final year of philosophy (thesis writing, final exams) this assembly proposes that postulancy period should be at least one year to allow for lighter yet systematic introduction of themes intended for this period.

3. This assembly proposes that provinces/regions/missions in the zone make it mandatory to have a year long propaedeutic year before sending aspirants to philosophy/Postulancy. In this context the assembly proposes that the provinces of Ghana, Togo/Benin introduce propaedeutic year into their formation program and that the province of Angola streamline their program in line with the proposed guidelines.
4. The assembly proposes the following guidelines as mandatory for propaedeutic stage of formation (see guidelines for propaedeutic).
5. The assembly proposes the following guidelines as mandatory for philosophy stage of formation (see guidelines for philosophy).
6. This assembly proposes to appoint men of integrity and with proper training/skills as formators. Their ongoing formation should be given priority. Regular zonal and local workshops and seminars to share their experiences should be held.
7. Considering particular situation of the AFRAM zone, this assembly proposes that the language taught in the zone during the pre-novitiate stage of formation should be French or English.
8. Any documents concerning formation should be sent to the provincials and as well as to formation communities.

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