



AFRAM ZONAL COORDINATOR
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"We can't row the canoe fast with one paddle"
(African proverb)

AFRAM UPDATE 1003, March 31, 2010

Dear Fathers Provincials, Regional and Mission Superiors,

The 8th AFRAM Zonal Assembly. I thank once again each and every one of you for your lively participation in the Assembly. I am happy to read reports about it in your Newsletters. Informing the confreres is an effective way of bringing us closer as a Zone. During this month I have finished the compilation of the Acts of the 8th Zonal Assembly and the Treasurers Meeting. Copies are ready to be sent to you. I have already submitted to the Generalate the Minutes of the Assembly and have presented for approval the following: (1) the Vision-Mission Statement, (2) the Seven AFRAM Zone Recommendations, (3) the Five recommendations of the Treasurers that we approved and the (4) other decisions that we made concerning the annual contribution, the organizer of the next Treasurers Meeting and the AFRAM Calendar.

The AFRAM Calendar. If you review what is written in the Minutes (last page) you will notice that there are three Workshops set for 2011 which concern five areas of coordination, i.e. the Biblical Pastoral Ministry and Communications (Easter in Madagascar), the JPIC and Mission Animation (April in Kenya) and Formation in Ghana (June). I consulted the members of the Execom, the provinces that will be hosting the Workshops and the Area Coordinators asking them whether it is good to postpone two Workshops in one place to 2012. The reasons *in favor of postponement* are to lighten the budget and to reduce many simultaneous activities in the Zone at one time. The reasons *against postponement* is that almost all areas have no longer met for more than three years and that in 2012 we will be concentrating more on the General Chapter. If we want for instance the JPIC to act and concretize our recommendations then the coordinators have to meet as soon as possible. I also asked the opinion of the Generalate because most of our budgets are subsidized by Rome. Please don't hesitate to give your opinion.

Digging the past. During the 8th Zonal Assembly we tried to reconstruct the history of the Zonal Assemblies in AFRAM without supporting documents. This was recorded in the Minutes and **needs to be corrected**. In the document "*Statements, Decisions and Orientations of the AFRAM Zone*" Fr. Patrick Claffey, the first Zonal Coordinator, recorded the Assemblies this way:

- 2nd Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya in 1990
- 3rd Assembly in Nsawam, Ghana in 1992
- 4th Assembly in Nairobi, Kenya in 1994
- 5th Assembly in Tamale, Ghana in 1995

At that time meetings were held almost every year and there was no clear distinction yet between the Provincials Meeting and the AFRAM Zonal Assembly as we understand it today. The AFRAM Statutes which stipulate that "the Assembly takes place **every three years**" (AFRAM Statutes 1.1.2.) were ratified only in 2003. Fr. Gerhard Lesch, the second Zonal Coordinator helped us to complete the picture, thanks to his penchant for history. The event in Nairobi, Kenya from November 25 to December 1, 1990 was actually the **birth of the AFRAM Zone** because it was only at that time that Fr. Patrick Claffey was appointed as the first Zonal Coordinator with Fr. Gaspard Mudiso as first Area Coordinator for the Bible Apostolate. We can therefore consider it as the 1st AFRAM Zonal Assembly. There were previous meetings which laid the grounds for the Zone. In June 9-14, 1986 the Vice General Joseph Connolly gathered together six Major Superiors of SVD Africa in Kinshasa, D. R. Congo, to get in contact with them and share their views on the priorities of the 12th General Chapter. During the 13th General Chapter in Nemi (1988) the SVD African delegates gathered often to talk about common interests.

If we consider therefore the Zonal Assemblies as the time when Major Superiors and Coordinators meet and elect the new Executive Committee and the Coordinators then we have the following results:

1 st	Nairobi, Kenya	1990	- appointment of the Zonal and Biblical Coordinators (one area only!)
2 nd	Nsawam, Ghana	1992	- three years term for Zonal, Bible, + Formation and Treasurer Coord.
3 rd	Tamale, Ghana	1995	- reelection of Zonal, Formation and Treasurer + new Bible coordinator
4 th	Mahalapye, Botswana	1998	- addition of Mission Animation Coordinator, Treasurer dropped
5 th	Mananjary, Madagascar	2001	- addition of Communication Coord = four coordinators for five areas
6 th	Luanda, Angola	2003	- five coordinators for five areas, approval of Statutes
7 th	Kinshasa, Congo	2007	- five coordinators + amendment on the Execom roles and meetings
8 th	Lomé, Togo	2010	- five coordinators one of which is contact person for brothers
9 th	Zimbabwe	2013	- rendez-vous in Septembre

Family Feast. We are very grateful to Fr. Provincial Thomas de Melo for bringing us (Bro. Guy Mazola the Formation Area Coordinator and Fr. Provincial Bernard Ilunga of CNG) to Ghana up to Tamale right after the Afram Zonal Assembly. We had the opportunity to meet so many confreres and SSpS sisters in the Northern Arnoldus Family celebrating the Family Feast last February 15. Congratulations to: Bishop Vincent Boi-Nai (40 years in vows), Fr. Joseph Mazur and Fr. Marek Kowalik (25 years in priesthood), Fr. Henry Duah and Vicar General of Yendi, Tomy Thomas (25 years in vows) and sister Carmen Bravo (40 years in vows). We also had a chance to stay in CFC-Tamale and meet informally the Staff and the scholastics.

Elections in Togo. The CENI (in English, National Independent Electoral Commission) has proclaimed Faure GNASSINGBE as the winner of the Presidential Elections held last March 4, 2010. According to global assessment the elections went relatively calm and orderly despite irregularities especially compared to the past. Protests went on from the opposition parties and the official investiture still has to wait to give time for verification of anomalies and complaints. We thank the Lord for sparing Togo from another traumatic event and pray that the democratization process take its course.

100th Birthday! Bishop Oliver Bowers celebrated his century Birthday last March 28. He is the fourth oldest Catholic Bishop in the world. He was bishop of Accra from 1952 to 1971 and then bishop of St. John Basseterre in the Caribbean. When he retired in 1981 he returned to his beloved Ghana and is with us in AFRAM till today. It shows us that we can live that long here in Africa.

Fraternally yours in the Divine Word,

P. Xene A. Sanchez, SVD
AZC