

THE NEW EVANGELIZATION AND THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Questions leading to a Response

The Pope has issued a call to the entire Church to undertake a new evangelization. He first mentioned it in Latin America in the context of preparing for the Fifth Centenary of the evangelization of that continent. Then the idea was extended to the whole world. The call is universal.

The Christian school, by its very nature evangelizes and therefore it must examine itself to discover its role and responsibility in the light of the call of the Vicar of Christ. Does it or does it not have something to say, something to do, in the work of evangelizing the modern world?

Both as an examination and a study, let us try to answer some questions, keeping in mind that the Pope is talking about an evangelization "new in its enthusiasm, new in its methods and new in its expression".

1. The Call of the Pope.

- A large part of the world still does not know the saving message of Christ.
- In Christianized societies there are large areas which live only on the fringes of Gospel values. Many have lost the faith or are indifferent to it.
- All Christians need to increase their faith by means of a continuous evangelization.
- The Gospel must provide answers to the questions raised by men at the present moment.
- The transmission of the message must be adapted to the needs and situations of today.
- Does the call of the Pope to undertake a new evangelization mean that the previous evangelization was inadequate or insufficient?

- Is the Gospel sufficiently proclaimed in the so-called Christian societies?
- Does this proclamation of the Gospel reach the generality of Christians or only a part of them? Which Christians do not hear the message?
- Does the Gospel reach the non-believers of "already Christianized" societies?
- Does it reach peoples who have not yet heard of Christ?
- Are Christians involved in the diffusion of the message of Christ? Or do they consider it the responsibility of others, especially the clergy and religious?
- Does the Gospel that is presented respond to the actual problems of men?
- Is the language used in proclaiming the Gospel adequate?
- In what measure are different cultures impregnated with Christian values?
- In general, is the diffusion of the Gospel message widening, stagnant or vanishing?

2. The Christian school and the New Evangelization

- The purpose of the school is to provide formation for the whole man. His person is a single, whole entity. The body, mind, attitudes, spirituality... nothing can be excluded.
- The Christian school bases its education on Christian values which are presented in such a way as to elicit a personal and positive response from the student.
- Christian education tries to form the citizen and the believer as one and the same person.
- The Christian school is both: a school because it transmits culture and knowledge; Christian because its perspective in all things is based on the Gospel.
- Is the Christian school, in general, a situation, a place and an instrument of evangelization?
- Is the Christian school a witness to lived Gospel values?
- Are there schools which are called Christian but which do not transmit the Gospel message?
- Do the structures of the school foster the presentation of Christian values or hinder them?
- Does the school as a whole evangelize or is this done only in Religion classes?
- In what measure is the entire school program evangelizing its clientele, even the secular teaching and activities?

- Does the Christian school need specific programs for religious formation? Or are these considered unnecessary?
- In the school situation as I see it conducive to the proclamation of the Gospel?
- What difficulties do I find at present which are an obstacle to the presentation of the Gospel message?
- What methods and procedures would be recommended for the proclamation of the Gospel message in the school situation today?
- What would be the difference in this school between the New Evangelization and that which is going on at present?
- How would you differentiate between a school which evangelizes and one that does not?

3. The Christian Educator and the New Evangelization

- The Christian educator is an educator, teacher, professor who teaches and forms students; but he does it from a lived faith, from Gospel values.
 - That is why he is an agent of evangelization, by means of his entire ministry, not only when he teaches Religion or when he speaks about God.
 - The Christian educator not only transmits knowledge but his personal life also impresses his students as a true example of a believing man.
 - The Christian educator is an agent of the pastoral ministry of the Church. His work becomes an apostolic ministry.
 - In a Christian school, the Christian educator is part of the educational project of the entire community, to which he brings his life and his experience.
- In what measure is every Christian educator an evangelizer even when he is not a teacher of religion?
 - What internal and personal demands fall upon the Christian educator by the fact he is an evangelizer?
 - What is the role of the staff in a evangelizing school?
 - What preparation is necessary so that a Christian educator can be effective not only as a teacher, but also as an evangelizer?

- How far does group commitment among the faculty go in order to achieve its evangelizing purpose.
- In other words, what must be the degree of living a community of faith for it to consider itself an evangelizing community?

4. The Student in the Christian School and the New Evangelization

- The student of a Christian School gradually discovers Gospel values. It is not just for himself, but it must be shared.
 - Through the Christian values he acquires, the student grows as a believing person while accomplishing his daily duties. They reflect in his life, his school, his family, his environment.
 - Christian values must bring the student to a commitment to social justice and a just order.
 - It is the student of a Christian school who must be a real witness to human and evangelical values.
- Is the evangelized student capable of evangelizing?
 - Does the student of the Christian school commit himself to the apostolate?
 - Does the student who is evangelized feel that he possesses values which he must communicate?
 - Is the student of the Christian school aware that the commitment to transform the world is a consequence of his faith?
 - Does the student of the Christian school feel the need to always practise his religious formation in his daily life?

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These questions can first be answered by considering the total picture, and then making specific applications to actual situations.

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