

SPECIFIC GUIDE LINES FOR THE WORK OF A CATHOLIC YOUTH MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

by Hubert Bucher

The question as to whether the transplant of a youth movement to Africa is feasible has already been answered in the affirmative, with the one important proviso that any such movement must respond to a real need existing in the place where it is introduced.

The present situation in South Africa might be said to reveal the simultaneous existence of two conditions which individually have provoked the rise of two distinct types of youth movement, the Belgian *Patronage*, and the German *Jugendbewegung*, at different times in Europe. The country's rapid industrialization has deeply affected the African population, bringing the typical problems which arise when a rural population is faced with the task of adjusting to urban conditions. Secondly, mounting juvenile delinquency, though often merely stemming from the country's peculiar race legislation¹, points to the need for providing the young with an opportunity to spend their leisure hours in a more meaningful way. As elsewhere, the young unemployed pose a particular problem. Broken homes, social insecurity and the ever-present temptations of the street are reminiscent of the needs which inspired the foundation of *Patros*² in 19th century Europe.

But this is only one aspect of a complex situation. The other is the acute generation gap. The elders, once the pillars of African society, whose wisdom was respected by all, today have lost their authority. Under the old tribal system, the young looked up to them for guidance and received status in society only through their sanction. The advent of book education and a money-based economy has almost reversed the rôles. It is the young who gain access to the bewilderingly foreign world of the White Man and it is chiefly they who earn the money.

The guardians of the tribal past try to impose on the reluctant young people a rigid fabric of observances suiting a world which the young know now belongs to an irretrievable past. This is the classical situation

¹ Cf. the study entitled *The Extent of Juvenile Crime in South Africa*, published by the Native Bureau of Education and Social Research, compiled by J. D. VENTER, covering the period from 1945 to 1954 (p. 71): of the total number of crimes committed by females aged 17—20 years, 54.8 per cent concerned the infringement of curfew regulations. Amongst males of the same age-group offence No. 164 of the Registration and Presentation of Document by Natives was the most prevalent. VENTER observes: "The consequence and danger of this great number of offences is to be found in the influence which imprisonment has on the Native. Strictly speaking — the infringement of the Legislation under discussion is sociologically [sic] not criminal, yet after sentence has been served and contact made with real criminals, such a Native is mentally prepared so embark on a career of crime."

² Shortened from of PATRONAGE, commonly used in Belgium.

conducive to producing a *Jugendbewegung*. Indeed, the urban locations and "Bantu Homelands" in South Africa abound in clubs and various other associations founded by young people. What they normally lack is an orientation beyond the fulfilment of some immediate felt-need, to use the fashionable expression cherished by some American anthropologists³. If a Catholic youth movement could aid these masses of young people by providing them with an aim in life which is worth while to live for, it would render both the Church and the country an invaluable service. This would seem a formidable task which may only be attempted by degrees.

The following guide lines are proposed with the intention of achieving the best possible solution in the circumstances. In their compilation the writer also drew on the wealth of recommendations he received in answer to a questionnaire which he sent to people in South Africa who are actively engaged in Chiro's work⁴.

1. THE MOVEMENT'S PLACE IN THE CHURCH

Pius XI once referred to the *Patro* as "the minor seminary of the parish, the first cell of Catholic Action". In these words he expressed his hope that through this youth organisation the Church would be able to obtain the men and women who could give back to her the vigour she needed to conquer a world which, on the one hand, was becoming increasingly de-Christianized and, on the other, to a large degree had not yet encountered Christ at all.

Although the evidence suggests that the *Patro* has hardly justified this optimism, Pius XI's words are nevertheless worth recalling, because the launching of Chiro in South Africa as a late successor of the *Patros* arouses hopes in the hearts of Church leaders in the country similar to those of the late Pius XI. We no longer live in the times of those who thought that "Catholic Action" is a sufficient response to the need to render the Church more relevant to the modern world; and the value of "the parish" as the basis of Church life has become more debatable, even in Europe. Yet, the Church's basic preoccupation today is still the same as it was then, to train people for the task of acting as witnesses to their faith in Christ.

In South Africa the need to instil into Catholics a more mature type of faith becomes acutely felt due to the widespread existence of migratory

³ Cf. e.g. L. J. LUZBETAK, *The Church and Cultures*, Techny (1963) p. 287ff.

⁴ Cf. *Appendix*. The questionnaire was sent to 102 names supplied to the writer by the South African Chiro Centre in Klerksdorp. These were mainly priests and Sisters, including many Africans, with a few Catechists, teachers and Chiro leaders. Forty-four replied, a very good response. Also, during this year's Chiro General Council (19th to 21st July, 1971), the questionnaire was discussed by members of the five language groups represented at the meeting — Xhosa, Sotho, Zulu, Pedi and Tswana — and their conclusions were sent to the writer.

labour. Missionaries working in the rural African reserves often find that members of their congregation who stay for a long time in the city switch their allegiance from the Catholic Church to one of the numerous African Independent Churches. Quite often this step is accompanied by a remarkable change in the way the person concerned presents himself in public. From being an insignificant parishioner before his departure, he returns as a zealous missionary of a new way to salvation, working with such conviction as to suggest that he has never heard about salvation before in his life.

In the same number of the *African Ecclesiastical Review* as carried a warm welcome to Pope Paul's imminent visit to that country, a veteran missionary in Uganda wrote that "the thesis might be seriously defended that many parishes are preparing Catechumens to go out into a world which has passed out of existence, not at all into real life. The Roman system is no longer up to the tasks facing it in African society... It exercises a most superficial hold on our people. We need in Africa a system as clear, self-evident, and internally consistent as the message it is meant to convey⁵."

Although ultimately the writer of that article may be in search of Utopia, it is certainly true that he uncovers a problem which is felt even more acutely in the particular situation in which the majority of African men, and, to a lesser degree, women, find themselves in South Africa; namely, the fact that the traditional parish life does not sufficiently prepare our Christians to be able to give witness to their faith, once circumstances have forced them to leave their parish and to live with different people in unfamiliar surroundings. Not having learnt to be out-going and mission-minded themselves, it often happens that a number of Catholics hailing from different places live in the same compound for months, without knowing of each other's religious affiliation. Consequently, they cannot support each other in adjusting to their new situation in a spirit of faith. They do not join for worship, and still less is it likely that any of them will actively radiate his faith to others, if one bears in mind the strong tendency towards communal action which is inherent in the African tradition.

If they are lucky, a priest will offer the Holy Eucharist at regular intervals somewhere near their place of living. But even the Mass does not usually have much power to create the two components which would be of the utmost importance to the life of a Christian living in these circumstances.

For various reasons — especially the multiplicity of languages spoken by the participants, and its air of impersonality — the Mass has little success in creating a community out of those who come from far and

⁵ Vol. XI, no. 3 (1969) p. 226. G. MACINNES: "An African Parish — Is there a problem?" (p. 219—236)

wide to stay in the city. Likewise, because it makes little allowance in its structure for the active involvement and participation of the congregation, the Mass tends to foster a spirit of passive expectancy, rather than one of radiant witness for one's faith.

Under these circumstances, it should not surprise us that African Independent Churches often make a deep impression on our Catholics. In these they find not only a liturgy which involves them far more actively, but also the type of personal relationship which is familiar to them as a result of the intensive relationships connecting them with the members of their own extended family and lineage.

What South African Catholics require is a reference group consisting of people who have been trained to radiate their faith and are thus easily recognizable; who are actively concerned with the affairs of the community, wherever they may be; whose constant aim it is to build community in a Christian spirit, even where they find people living their lives in dejected apathy. If Chiro could become this model group in South Africa, the attempt to launch this movement would be well worth the effort.

It ought also to be mentioned that migratory labour would still be necessary for a long time to come, even if the present attempt by the South African government to reverse the influx of African labour into the "white" cities were to be given up. What is being said here, then, does not only refer to the present, abnormal situation. It has a far wider application and ultimately aims at ameliorating what MacInnes calls the "Roman system".

It may seem that to assign to a youth movement a task of such wide scope would almost mean making it a church within the Church. But although it cannot be ruled out that some future Chiro members might be inclined to see things in this way⁶, it certainly need not be the case.

a. *A Call to live the Gospel*

«Il est un domaine dans lequel l'action de l'Eglise en Afrique, en certain pays surtout, est immense: celui de l'éducation. Il n'y a de véritable éducation chrétienne que celle qui forme des hommes responsables, prêts à s'engager au service des autres... L'Eglise doit „proclamer un Evangile qui réalise le salut de tout l'homme, dans lequel les réalités terrestres ne sont pas séparées des valeurs chrétiennes, sous peine de s'évanouir, mais trouvent en elles leur vraie signification...»⁷

⁶ Cf. the long list of Native Separatist Churches in BENGT SUNDKLER's *Bantu Prophets in South Africa*, London (1948) p. 354—374 (1961 edition). The official list of Churches in South Africa in 1960 contained more than 2030 Bantu Separatist Churches, of which many were the offspring of a "historical church", (in Barrett's terminology).

⁷ J. BRISBOIS, "L'Eglise et le Développement", in *RCA*, vol. XXII, no. 5 (Sept. 1967) p. 539

The Second Vatican Council's "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity" ends with a solemn exhortation, entreating all laymen to answer generously the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Young people are told to regard this admonition as being directed at them especially. Through the Holy Synod, the Decree goes on, the Lord Himself invites all laymen to unite themselves with Him evermore and to associate themselves with Him in His saving mission⁸.

Chirojeugd's⁹ *aggiornamento* of recent years is known to have taken its inspiration from the Council's Schema XIII, the "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World", *Gaudium et Spes*. This Constitution, on the basis of a renewed Christian anthropology, overcame the dualism which until then had been haunting the Church's attitude towards the world.

The Constitution's positive approach, which does not overlook the *dramatica indoles*¹⁰ of the world, found its appropriate expression in article 13 of the "Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity". It says that the laity fulfil their mission in the Church especially through the harmony which must exist between their life and their faith, and thanks to which they are able to become the light of the world. In other words, they are called to live the Gospel in a world which, as the Council also observes, is characterized by a growing interdependence between all people¹¹. The Council lays special emphasis on inviting young people to respond to this call. This invitation prompts certain basic considerations with regard to Chiro's work in South Africa.

(i) There can no longer exist any doubt that the apostolate, understood as an active involvement — in the spirit of Christ — with everything concerning man in his world, must receive absolute priority in a youth movement inspired by the Church.

It would be a great advantage, if Chiro could cast its apostolic aims — apostolic in the sense just explained — into a few captivating maxims. Chiro-Burundi's motto *Joie — Vaillance — Amour* provides an example of what these maxims should try not to be like. "We build a new society without hatred", or "We dedicate our lives to building community", are examples of maxims which are more than mere slogans, as they contain a whole design for life and at the same time offer a concrete aim for its daily practice.

For the smaller members a code of ethics as the *Loi Xavéri*¹² will certainly be a great help in teaching them to apply such an overall

⁸ *Apostolicam Actuositatem* art. 33. Article 12 of the same Decree is exclusively devoted to the apostolic activity of youth.

⁹ Flemish name for Chiro Movement = Literally: Chiro Youth.

¹⁰ *Gaudium et Spes*, art. 4

¹¹ Cf. *ibid.*, art. 23

¹² *Mouvement Xavéri*, an African youth movement founded in 1952 by Fr. George Defour in what was then the Belgian Congo.

design to concrete situations. As members grow older, however, they must be taught to accept increasing personal responsibility in solving their problems in life in the light of Christ's teaching.

(ii) This is the message contained in the histories of the German Catholic Youth Movement, of Chiro-Burundi, and of *Chirojeugd* too. The first brought forth its most mature fruit when the Nazi tyranny had deprived it of all external *Aufmarschkultur*. The process of personalizing its members' relationship to Christ, which had already begun in the movement before 1933, then underwent a deepening which one would not have imagined possible among mere adolescents. Its sincere realism made the pre-1933 analogies between Christ, the noble knight, and his youthful squires, and other "intuitive" crutches of the like, appear as shallow talk.

Personalization of the act of faith, education towards personal ethics, would seem to be at variance with the predominantly communal orientation of African society. No doubt in a sense it is, and hopefully the Africans will avoid the individualistic approach to faith which has been so typical of Western Christianity for centuries. But African societies are no more static than any other. Indeed their intimate contact with foreign cultures for nearly a century has influenced them greatly. Among them, the South African indigenous societies have certainly been most deeply affected by this contact.

The move from a kinship society, based on close personal relations between its members, towards an open society, sets the task of assuming rôles in an increasingly complex social structure. This requires the ability on the part of individual South African Christians to make responsible moral judgements, regarding particular situations in the light of their faith in Christ.

Chiro-Burundi can serve as a warning. When in 1967 the J.R.R.¹³ challenged its monopoly on youth work, it was suddenly forced to realize that its past indulgence in *Aufmarschkultur* had led it to neglecting almost completely its task of training a *cadre* of young Christians in the above sense.

The message to be read in the history of the Catholic youth movements is clearly this: even in those parts of Africa where at the present moment young people are not yet faced with as heterogeneous and multi-dimensional a world as their European counterparts, the aim of a youth movement catering for them must be the same as that of a youth movement in Europe; the same as that of *Chirojeugd*, for instance, since it has launched itself on its *Impuls* programme — namely to educate the young to taking a critical attitude towards what is being taken for granted in their society, and to rouse their involvement with the major

¹³ Abbreviation for "Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Rwagasore", the official, state-sponsored youth movement in Burundi.

spheres of present world problems. This is just another way of saying, "to educate them to live the Gospel"¹⁴.

To suppose that a youth movement must necessarily go through the same evolutionary stages which have been distinguished in the history of the movements studied in this thesis would be absurd. The openness of a youth movement towards the adult world and its involvement with the problems of real life need not be preceded by a period during which the youth encapsulates itself in a separate *Jugendreich*.

In addition, the African's deep desire to base his life on "participation" and "to live a life in harmony with humanity and with nature"¹⁵ makes it very unlikely that he would ever fall for such an artificial concept as a *Jugendreich*. It is reasonable to expect, too, that this same desire to live in harmony with the whole cosmos will induce the youth in Africa to embody a less radical protest against the "establishment" than that which is currently in vogue among Western youth.

(iii) The important thing is to get priorities right. If they are in the right order, many secondary questions which have traditionally plagued some Catholic youth movements lose their importance. As, for instance, the question of whether such a movement ought to be conceived as a mass movement or whether it should be aiming at forming an *élite*. Or the question about methods — family method, intuitive method, active method, and apostolic method.

If a youth movement understands itself as having a call to live the Gospel, it will make that Gospel the centre of all its concerns. And it will find its basic method in the imitation of Him who first preached that Gospel. His message called for action: to practise *metanoia*, to re-order one's own life and to bring into harmony the life of society as a whole.

His parables were always taken from the every-day experience of His listeners and emphasized the importance of a personal response. No wonder that Cardijn's J. O. C. stressed both the intensive study of the Scriptures and the method *voir — juger — agir*, which was so masterly employed by the Lord. Nobody who has ever lived for some time in close contact with Africans can fail to see how near the language of the Gospel is to the imagery used by the African proverbs. These are the time-honoured means of providing young people on the Dark Continent with "a code of good manners, a treatise on moral behaviour and a guide to correct social relations"¹⁶.

¹⁴ Cf. on this point the deliberations of Work Group 4, "Glaubensverkündigung in Jugend- und Erwachsenenbildung", of the 83. *Deutscher Katholikentag*, Trier, (1970), in *Gemeinde des Herrn*, Paderborn, (1970), p. 438—457; esp. p. 442, 453

¹⁵ *Meeting the African Religions*, Secretariat Pro Non-Christianis, Roma (1969) p. 33

¹⁶ F. M. RODEGEM, *Sagesse Kirundi: Proverbes, Dictons, Locutions Usités au Burundi*, Tervuren (1961) p. 7

Often the more dynamic types in the South African communities have already formed clubs to provide themselves with entertainment during their leisure hours. They would not be attracted for long by whatever offer Chiro could make in the field of entertainment¹⁷. Often, too, such people are of the calibre which anthropologists find to be characteristic of men who are able to bring about what they call "culture change". Such men look for *ideas*, not for ready-made activities. And it is well worth remembering that Christ has described his mission as being "to bring fire to the earth"¹⁸.

What is being emphasized here is not that Chiro (South Africa) should never organize games and other entertaining activities, but that it must see its priorities in the right perspective. Games and the like will be organized by Chiro members for their fellows in a spirit of service derived from the Gospel, but they will not form the centre of Chiro's own activity, as if intent on building a cosy "family" turned on itself. Who need have fear that playful activity will not turn up where young people come together? And in Africa at that! Therefore "games" need not and must not constitute Chiro's first concern. It may be permissible to paraphrase the whole point at issue by our Lord's admonishment to "seek first the kingdom of God; and all other things will be given (to you) in addition"¹⁹.

(iv) There is plenty of scope for Chiro's action in South Africa in the sense described in the preceding two points, even given the conditions in which the country finds itself at present. Without any doubt, as has been already emphasized, the Churches and all men of good will must do all in their power to help bring about a just social order in the country. The fact, however, that for the time being the present order of things in South Africa is not likely to change significantly, does not allow the conclusion that apathetic resignation is the only possible attitude to take.

Adrian Hastings, writing about South Africa's black population, remarks that "[its] suffering can bring with it a compensation in maturity"²⁰. Recent events in many of the newly independent African states have shown that basic civic attitudes did not appear suddenly or grow faster after independence. Yet they are the *sine qua non* for achieving

¹⁷ In any case this is not often of a very diversified kind. Cf. the complaint by a leader who has been connected with Chiro since 1965: [Chiro] specializes only with games and songs and nothing else. All those activities are meant for younger ones to them. They need something other than games and songs. Something that can attract them to join the Chiro, e.g. football, band in the Chiro, first aid training, etc. Not only games and songs.

¹⁸ Luke 12, 49

¹⁹ Mat. 6, 33

²⁰ *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, London (1967) p. 104

the bitterly necessary economic development of these countries and are equally important for the formation of stable government.

To say that the present situation in South Africa holds no scope for teaching and exercising these civic virtues, is to wilfully misrepresent the facts. There are thousands of Africans who hold positions of responsibility, ranging from high-ranking officials in the governments and territorial authorities of the "Bantu Homelands", to teachers and qualified nurses. They all have a chance to practise loyal, unselfish service in the best interest of their people and thus to set an example for imitation.

Once more: the present régime in South Africa is responsible for the continued existence of multiple social evils which are harmful to the growth of these attitudes in the African polity. Therefore its replacement through a more equitable social order is highly desirable. But it would mean denying a lesson contained in the history of many a nation, if one were to say that black South Africans cannot do anything towards developing important aspects of their nationhood even now — whether this be realized within the order of the present government's policy of creating independent "Bantu Homelands" or in a completely different way.

Here follow only two examples showing how Chiro could make its influence felt:

— By curbing all sorts of vice and banditry in urban areas. In this respect some clear thinking is required. It is often maintained that the existence of crime in South African cities is entirely due to the jungle of laws which has been created in an attempt to enforce the government's policy of strict influx control²¹. This is an over-simplification of the facts. Crime raises its ugly head also in Dakar and Kampala, where no attempts at controlling influx into urban areas are made by the authorities, at least not for the sake of implementing a group areas plan based on colour of skin²².

²¹ Cf. e.g. S. MULLER, "Juvenile Delinquency and the Colour Bar", in *Africa South*, vol. 3, no. 3, (April/June 1959) p. 35—41

²² Cf. M. WILSON & A. MAFEJE, *Langa*, Cape Town (1963), p. 181: Some observers looking on the new urban African communities see only chaos, but in fact there are regularities in the breaches of law, logic and convention. The same types of conflict recur in Langa, in Broken Hill, in Salisbury, Kampala, Stanleyville; the breaches are within a framework of regularity... It causes some men to despair because they look on the good that is gone, and the present evil; they see the isolated tribal society, or the peasant village, as Arcadia, and compare it with the *tsotsies** smoking dagga and knifing their fellows. But this

* South African expression for the equivalent to European "Teddy-boys". Cf. A. BENJAMIN, "Kings of Alexandra", in *Africa South*, *ibid.*, p. 29—34. Although Alexandra township meanwhile has disappeared, the portrait of the *tsotsi* presented by the article still holds true today.

The South African police try to tackle the problem from without, by applying what often seems the brutal force of the law. And the odds are always against them. For it is the same police who pursue, on the one hand, the maintenance of law and order by curbing crime and protecting people, and who, on the other hand, pester people needlessly in order to keep up the system of *apartheid*.

Chiro could tackle the problem from within. It could plead with the young offenders to give up their crooked ways both for the sake of Christ and because their actions harm the cause of their people. Why should it not be possible for the present uneasy relation between the police and the African population to be changed by the weight of African popular opinion itself? No doubt the *tsotsies*, at present so ingenious in organizing systems of racketeering, also contain elements who would apply themselves with equal zeal to the task of furthering the cause of their people, if only their civic conscience were roused. An even wider scope for action is open in the field of improving sanitation, in brightening the often dreary appearance of the urban locations, and in spreading a spirit of neighbourly co-operation among their inhabitants²³.

— In the rural areas, which includes most parts of the *Bantustans*²⁴, a similar problem is posed by the wandering hordes of young men who trek from one beer bout to another, breaking the monotony of this “occupation” only by frequent stick fights among themselves and with other groups of the same type. The phenomenon represents the hypertrophy of a social institution which the old tribal system was perfectly capable of keeping within bounds. But because of the above-mentioned reasons²⁵, at present the problem is particularly acute, with no agency being able to control it effectively.

Here Chiro’s call to live the Gospel, in order to build a better South Africa, must bear fruit. It has been said that it will be one of the Church’s most important tasks to teach Africa “a Christian mystique of

antithesis ignores half the facts, both in town and country. [Besides the *tsotsies*, the authors have found, there live many “decent people” in the urban centres, who judge the *tsotsies*’ behaviour to be bad. There exist moral standards, they declare emphatically.] Hence the constant demand for compulsory education for Africans, for technical training, for jobs for adolescents, and the repeated attempts by middle-class leaders to “look after the interests of the youth in the township” and to organize clubs for them.

²³ *Kairos*, a monthly published by the South African Council of Churches, contains regularly reports on development projects undertaken in Southern Africa by its member churches. Supported by the Council, all these programmes, which are co-ordinated by “Inter Church Aid”, aim at “developing the dignity of the people enjoy freedom and independence from hunger and poverty and show them a new way of life”. — *Ibid.*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Feb. 1971) p. 5

²⁴ Alternative term for “Bantu Homeland”

²⁵ Cf. above, p. 253.

work"²⁶. Not that Africans are unwilling to work hard. What is involved here is one of the difficult aspects which accompanies the task of adapting a mentality based on a primitive subsistence-level economy to the complexities of a modern market-oriented economy.

A close co-operation with the local authorities will be required to achieve anything in connection with this problem. Whether experiments at finding solutions to it will move in the direction of creating a kind of community service on a national level or whether they will be left entirely to spontaneous enterprises taken on a local level, two considerations will be of paramount importance. Firstly, any such move must be made with the widest possible common consent, and secondly, it must involve the whole community, not just a tiny section of it²⁷.

(v) From this it is clear that Chiro's programme of activities for its older members will have to be quite distinct from that for the young ones. Although the insistence on active involvement in the life of the local community must be a characteristic of the entire movement, seeking social involvement becomes of overriding importance for those members who stand on the verge of being fully integrated into adult society.

Interestingly, during the Chiro (South Africa) General Council Meeting held at Klerksdorp from 8th—9th July, 1969, the motion was tabled by a delegate "to form an organisation quite different from the younger age-groups of the Chiro"²⁸ for young people above the age of seventeen years. It was suggested that this organisation should not be called "Aspirants", but bear a totally different name which would not immediately reveal its connection with Chiro. Its programme should "centre around the preparation of the youths for adult life, as Christians and as members of society, service for and influence on the youth outside Chiro". A number of further recommendations concerned its "style". Although the General Council decided that such groups would be started at a few (unspecified) places and that a report about these experimental groups was to be tabled at the following years' General Council, the minutes of that meeting²⁹ contain no hint as to whether the project was undertaken and whether it was successful or not.

The evidence from the answers to questions five and six of the questionnaire make it amply clear that in this matter Chiro is still faced with a serious problem, for which a solution must be found quickly. The movement cannot afford to wait until the impression that "Chiro is for the kiddies" has become the general opinion among the 14 to 17 year-olds

²⁶ Cf. H. MAURIER, "Insertion de l'Eglise dans le Monde africain et Problématique de la Doctrine chrétienne", in *RCA*. vol. XXIV (1969) no. 314, p. 316

²⁷ On community development work, T. R. BATTEN, *Communities and their Development*, London (1967), is a very readable book, offering also a list for further reading. P. 62—99 refer especially to what is being discussed here.

²⁸ Official Report, issued by the National Secretariat, point 6

²⁹ Held at Mariannhill from 10th—12th August, 1970

who are now leaving it in great numbers, because "they feel themselves too old to take part in the games the younger ones are playing"³⁰. The recent development in Flanders of the *Jongerengemeenschap*, *jeugdclubs* and *jongerenclubs* has been seen to spring from similar reasons and pursue similar aims as those which make South Africans wish to have a different organisation for the older Chiro members. The fact that the same desire should turn up under vastly dissimilar conditions would indicate that here a fundamental defect in Chiro's basic design is uncovered, a fault which has indeed been pointed out by authorities in pedagogics also³¹.

(vi) Unless a youth movement has to "sell" an idea it will be doomed to failure. In its heyday *Chirojeugd's* attraction was in no small way the result of its various *stijle* elements, but these alone would not explain the dynamism which the movement has developed. Behind this stood the idea of making Flanders into Christ's kongdom. Somewhere this idea was influential even when later its members were called upon to make great sacrifices for the movement's spread in Africa.

It has been proposed in this sub-section that Chiro in South Africa should regard its mission as raising a call to live the Gospel. In a situation where so many see violence as the only solution to the impending problems, the Church cannot fulfil her task better than by drawing the people's minds to the foundation of that faith which teaches us "to hope against all hope"³². To infer that such a move would amount to feeding "opium to the people" would be to say that the Gospel does not concern itself with the ordering of human relations at all. The apparition of the so-called "Social Gospel" was not really necessary to draw attention to the fallacy of such an inference. A far more convincing argument is the profound influence the Gospel has had on Mahatma Gandhi's social thinking which has left a lasting impression on recent Indian legislation³³.

b. *Collaboration with all Men of Good Will*

"Catholics should try to co-operate with all men of good will to promote whatever is true and just, whatever is holy and worth loving. (Cf. Phil. 8.)"³⁴.

³⁰ Extracts from letters received in answer to the questionnaire

³¹ Cf. the following answer to question five of the questionnaire which comes from a respondent who says of himself that he was "formed and deformed for years in the Chiro [in Europe]": Because we don't have an appropriate programme for our bigger ones we lose boys and girls after 15 years old. *It is exactly the same problem as in Europe. We need special programmes, specialists for that age-group.* [Writer's italics]

³² Rom. 4, 18

³³ Cf. J. D'SOUZA, "Mahatma Gandhi and Christianity", in *Bulletin* (Secretariatus pro Non-Christianis), 4th year, no. 12, p. 162—179, esp. p. 172 & 176

³⁴ *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity, art. 14

Openness will be one of the necessary characteristics of Chiro in South Africa, and this in several respects:

(i) Ecumenically. The common stand against *apartheid* policy has brought the South African Churches closer together than is the case in several other countries of Africa. There is a growing realization that if each church continues its mission to the world along narrow denominational lines this would not only be short-sighted, but would provide the critics of the churches good grounds for their having written them off as irrelevant³⁵.

Disunity not only diminishes the credibility of the Gospel, it is also responsible for an immense wastefulness of Christian resources in men, money and buildings, and gravely hinders the impact of the Church upon a predominantly pagan society³⁶. As regards youth work, leadership training courses and the common use of educational facilities offer a wide field for ecumenical co-operation³⁷.

(ii) Openness to non-Christians. A respondent to the questionnaire states that in their Chiro groups they have more non-Catholic than Catholic members. "Yet", she goes on, "their lives are so closely interwoven — they go to school together, play together, live together — the mutual influence is great". The point made in the letter is so interesting, it seems worth quoting at some length: „We therefore find it as our apostolic duty to accept and help the non-Catholics as well as the Catholic children. Often it is even the case that non-Catholics are more faithful than Catholics. In... village, where we have only few Catholics who did not even come for some time, we wished to stop Chiro. But then the non-Catholic children and even some of their parents asked us, please, to continue. Under such conditions, may I put forward my questions: Are we not allowed to train non-Catholics for leaders? If not, why? Can non-Catholics make the promise and join the training camps? If not, why?"

There follows a passage in the letter which unconsciously seems to paraphrase our Lord's sentence that "anyone who is not against you is for you"³⁸, and reflects St. Paul's burning concern for Christ to be preached by all means possible³⁹.

The objection that "when non-Catholics join a leader-training camp they might learn our way of Chiro and then start their own youth

³⁵ Cf. *Kairos*, vol. 2, no. 1 (Feb. 1970) p. 3: "Church Planning for the 70s"

³⁶ Cf. *The Southern Cross*, Feb. 12, 1969, p. 13: "Report on the 3rd meeting of the Church Unity Commission of South Africa"

³⁷ Cf. *Kairos*, vol. 2, no. 10 (Dec. 1970). P. 7 contains a report on a National Youth Leadership Training Course, lasting three months, which has become an increasingly ecumenical affair though it is sponsored by the Methodist Department of Christian Education and Youth.

³⁸ Luke 9, 50

³⁹ Cf. Phil. 1, 18

movement on similar lines", I do not find a valid reason. Even if this should happen, it would be a blessing for them having had a chance to become better people and it would prove that our labour is not in vain; we helped to spread Christ's kingdom.

(iii) Openness to all races. On principle, Chiro in South Africa ought to be ready to accept as members any young people, no matter which race group they belong to. However, under present conditions it is likely that Chiro will mainly spread its influence among Africans and Coloureds only. Among the latter there exist already some Chiro groups in areas which are predominantly inhabited by this race group. Among European children and adolescents in South Africa the "Christian Life Group" (CLG) Movement has been spreading fast in recent years under the energetic direction of South African-born Fr. Goller, a Jesuit⁴⁰. The Christian Life Groups make it their task

to seek constantly the answers to the needs of our times and to work together with the whole people of God for progress and peace, justice and charity, liberty and the dignity of all men⁴¹.

Granted this preoccupation of the movement with the apostolic involvement, it is to be hoped that bilateral relations between it and the Chiro movement will be established on various levels, although the present legislation would not really encourage "mixed activities"⁴².

(iv) Openness towards spontaneous groups. It has been claimed that "the innumerable associations of the modern African townships may, indeed, be seen as a school of civilisation"⁴³. Wilson and Mafeje show convincingly that in managing these clubs, a great many men and women

⁴⁰ The movement's *General Principles* were approved by Rome for use *ad experimentum* in March 1968, and are obtainable at the National CLG Centre, Forest Town, Johannesburg.

⁴¹ *General Principles*, p. 1

⁴² That there is nevertheless scope for Christian Life Groups to work "across the colour line" has been deduced by Janice DRYDEN who is conducting a survey of social work done by the CLG movement. Cf. her article in *The Southern Cross*, Nov. 25, 1970, p. 13: CLGs have visited non-white institutions and entertained their inhabitants. They have also carried out various other charitable missions in Non-European areas.

An article in *The Southern Cross* of April 23, 1969, entitled "Much Contact across Colour Bar still legal", states that "Churches, church halls, schools and their grounds are of their nature private... In all such buildings and their grounds interracial services, meetings, concerts, plays, debates, sports, etc., are legal, provided they are by some selective *invitation* and not by general opening to the public."

From this it is obvious that there is also scope for CLGs and Chiro groups meeting each other even under the present restrictive legal system, devised to reduce interracial contact to a minimum.

⁴³ M. WILSON & A. MAFEJE, *Langa: A Study of Social Groups in an African Township*, Cape Town (1963) p. 179

are gaining experience in the organisation of groups which are no longer based on kinship and which are part of a money-based economy. Thus these associations are liable to fulfil precisely that rôle of "banc d'essai de la vie" which Cammaer and others wish that youth groups should assume in Europe⁴⁴.

It would be neither realistic nor desirable to hope that all these groups would gradually be absorbed by the Chiro movement. It could even be argued whether any sort of "assimilation" — perhaps following the Flemish *pat club* model — would be the right thing to aim at. In any case, it is not worth while theorizing about this point; it will have to be left to experience to find a solution in each particular case. What should be stressed, however, is that on principle Chiro must be prepared to co-operate with and counsel whoever intends to work for the same objective, namely to make South Africa a better place for all its inhabitants to live in.

2. THE MOVEMENT'S PLACE IN THE COUNTRY

Among the services a youth movement could render South Africa, the following would seem to be of the utmost importance. All of them have been referred to already, though only in a fleeting manner.

Firstly, in the country's present situation, which for the African population is characterized by the typical symptoms accompanying the rapid change of a society's cultural pattern; Chiro ought to offer itself to young people as a reference group with whose values and ideals they can identify themselves.

Secondly, while it strives to prepare the young adults for responsible citizenship, Chiro must endeavour to bridge the gulf which has opened between the youth and the older generation.

Lastly, but by no means least, Chiro could contribute its share towards a peaceful settlement of the problem most poignantly felt by everybody in South Africa. By helping the African to regain his self-respect, and devoting itself to creating a climate of mutual respect and trust between all races, Chiro could point out the *via regia* leading to ultimate harmony, where today there loom mutual distrust and fear.

a. A "South African Chiro"

After all that has been said about the importance of achieving the firm embedding of a cultural transplant in the local culture to which it has been transplanted, the stress on the need to give Chiro a proper "South African" image needs no further explanation.

⁴⁴ Cf. J. VAN ECHELPOEL et al., *Jeugdwerk in Perspektief*, Antwerpen (1969) p. 82; G. VESSIGAULT, *Le Statut et la Formation des Cadres de Jeunesse*, Strasbourg (1969) p. 37; "Education for choice" in *Youth Policy* (1968) p. 10; L. RÖSSNER, *Offene Jugendbildung*, München (1967) passim, esp. p. 60—75: „Offene Jugendgruppen als soziale Übungsfelder mit gesellschaftlichem Modellcharakter.“

Beyond the requirement of seeking the utmost possible in the way of "africanisation", South Africa offers to Chiro several additional challenges. One of the greatest is the task of helping the young people in developing the qualities they require to make a successful move from a primitive, onedimensional society into the plurality of industrial society. This implies their integration into a type of society which demands of the individual the making of choices and the taking of decisions with personal responsibility, without their losing immediately that sense of communal responsibility which is typical of a small-scale, kinship society.

In the following, several *pierres d'attente* are listed with the intention of helping Chiro shape its South African image in such a way that it will truly be an answer to the country's specific needs.

(i) Elders' co-operation. A point turning up in almost each of the replies received in connection with questions 3, 6 and 9 of the questionnaire is that of public relations, especially the necessity to win the support of parents for the movement.

Before the movement can become active in a particular area of an African "Homeland", the headman's approval has to be obtained. Sometimes this has proved a difficult task. Suspicion on the part of the elders springs mainly from two considerations. The movement might contain the seeds of yet another religious sect, but more important, there is a fear that Chiro will foster in the youngsters a spirit of insubordination towards their parents and provide them with an excuse for dodging work at home. Another reason for the reluctance some parents feel against allowing their children to join the movement is the fear of further expenses, since their budget is already stretched to the limit if they have children who are attending school⁴⁵.

(ii) Liaison with the customary African initiation. As has already been emphasized, African tribal society provided for youth a training which was adequate to its needs. Boys and girls were gradually led to acquire those skills that were needed in their communal life. Children learnt early to respect parental authority. Older men and women, often the grand-parents, taught the traditional tribal etiquette which operated in almost every phase of life: courtesy towards adults; remembrance of and respect for the ancestors; behaviour at meals; and respect for property. Finally, each boy and girl, on attaining marriageable age, underwent a

⁴⁵ Thus a Chiro organiser in a place where Chiro has been active since 1969 writes: "Last but not least, *Chiro movement is really an expensive movement*. In some places really it is very, very difficult to start it. You may get in touch easily with the parents and convince them about Chiro. So they can help you to recruit the children. But now where are you going to get literature and the group flag? Because once you mention money, the start to be against you and tell you that they are poor and starving. They are willing that the children must join the movement but cannot afford the requirements of the Chiro." [Writer's italics]

prolonged *rite de passage*, which was designed to prepare them for their life in adult society. During this initiation they were dramatically severed from their childhood past, and the elders conferred on them their own wisdom and experience concerning marriage and the family, as well as all aspects of the nation's political life⁴⁶.

With regard to South African tribesmen living in towns, a researcher wrote as early as 1937 that "the great majority of the young men and women now growing up on the Witwatersrand know little or nothing of the old form of initiation"⁴⁷. He therefore concluded that "schooling after the Western pattern must, of necessity, take the place of the former training in the tribe".

The wisdom of this syllogism is doubtful, and the evidence indicates that close on 35 years later by no means all children born on the Witwatersrand receive any schooling in the Western pattern at all. But it is also true that urbanisation has further developed since Phillips wrote his book, and has been invariably accompanied by the facts he had observed, i. e. the disintegration of the traditional forms of initiation.

On the other hand, at least in a rudimentary form, initiation is still adhered to by many tribesmen living in urban conditions, and has generally retained an important place in the life of people who live in the rural areas. Indeed, it is one of the strongholds of customary usage, behind which the local culture has retreated in the face of overpowering pressure from European culture. There remains also in parts of the country a living memory of an age-set system based on initiation classes, which had been operational in the tribal past. But while it may still serve as a point of reference with regard to establishing one's tribal identity, initiation cannot be said to fulfil any more under present conditions its former task of initiating the young people into the adult world lying ahead of them. Being an protective cultural stronghold, it transmits modes and attitudes which were suitable for a tribal past, but are out of tune with the modern world.

In these circumstances, an effort should be made to seek a liaison between Chiro's declared aim to serve as a vehicle for the youth's initiation into adult society and those initiatory institutions which have served this purpose in the tribal past. The questions involved are certainly of a very complex nature and would require a serious study before any final steps could be taken. This does not mean to say that life in the Chiro movement should lead to and have its climax in tribal initiation. One

⁴⁶ Most monographs on African tribes and peoples contain pertinent observations on this subject. For a more specific example, cf. S. SWIDERSKI in *Revue de Psychologie des Peuples*, 21 Année, no. 2 (1966) p. 194—220: "Les agents éducatifs traditionnels chez les Apindji" (a tribe in central Gabon). For a masterly introduction to the basic aspects involved in initiation, cf. M. ELIADE, *Naissances Mystiques*, Paris (1967).

⁴⁷ R. E. PHILLIPS, *The Bantu in the City*, Alice (Lovedale) (1937), p. 146

very important objection to such a procedure, among others, would be the fact that Chiro would not wish to help reinforce the former narrow tribal loyalties. Rather its aim must be to overcome these, in the interest of the Africans' growth to mature citizenship in a modern society.

What is proposed is to model Chiro's scheme for the youth's initiation into adult society on the traditional tribal initiation. More especially, Chiro's initiation should incorporate what has been the main characteristic of the tribal initiation: it must be a final step, and a public sanction of the fact that the young man or woman has now reached a new status in society. On having been initiated, the initiates were no longer regarded as children, but as grown-ups, and acquired new rights and duties accordingly. Applied to the people of God, Chiro's initiation would have to amount to a public declaration by the Church that it trusted that the initiates would now live up to the expectations which the community, the living Christ, placed in them. It is quite obvious that the sacrament of Confirmation could be linked with this ceremony in an extremely sensible way⁴⁸.

Initiation into a Christian style of life, which is not only ready to hold its own under adverse conditions, but to radiate faith to others, should have been completed by a certain age, and this fact must be sealed by a public ceremony. Of course, this is not to overlook the fact that growing to the "fullness of Christ"⁴⁹ is a task for life; Christian teaching will always have to stress this evident truth.

In the case of South Africa, it is suggested that this critical period in life falls between fifteen and seventeen years. This is the age when most boys enter the labour market. It is, of course, impossible to present a rule which would fit every situation. Students naturally form an exception, and in urban conditions boys would often pick up jobs long before they had reached this age. To suit the optimum number of diverse situations, a realistic suggestion might be to envisage the initiatory ceremony taking place soon after the members' having completed their fifteenth year of age. The same age limit can be said to apply to girls also, their marriage as a rule taking place at a rather early age. Besides, girls of that age-group, unless they study, would almost invariably take up some sort of employment.

The mass exodus of Chiro members when they reach the age between fifteen and seventeen years, observed by all respondents to the questionnaire, is not only due to the lack of a suitable programme for these adolescents — who show a healthy resentment to being taken as "kiddies" — but reveals also the need for a marked break, separating the

⁴⁸ Interestingly, Work Group 4 of the *Deutsche Katholikentag* 1970 adopted a resolution which demands of the bishops not to confer Confirmation before the 15th year of age. Cf. *Gemeinde des Herrn*, Paderborn (1970) p. 457

⁴⁹ Cf. Eph. 4, 13

ante from the *post*. The fact that tribal initiation, which has precisely this character of marking the important step from one status to another, is still in living memory, would seem to offer a unique opportunity to Chiro in South Africa. It could help to avoid there the inherent ambiguity of European youth movements, namely that the movement on the one hand expected its members to remain active in it until they should marry, and on the other — realizing the lack of realism hidden in this expectancy — paid lip-service to the principle that its “older ones” would join some suitable grown-up association of the “Catholic Action”, while hoping that they would take this step as late as possible.

It is also obvious that there may be a chance here to bridge the gulf between the old and the young generation at least to some extent. “Initiation” would simply be a farce and be robbed of its intrinsic value, if it were to be conceived without a substantial involvement of the older people. The post-Vatican II trend towards greater participation of the laity in the affairs of the parish, epitomized by the election everywhere of parish councils, and the growing realization of the communal aspects of the Church on all levels, would seem to offer a wide field for experimentation in this matter.

(iii) *Ascension personnelle*. Traditionally, Chiro’s idea concerning the *ascension personnelle* found its expression in a series of “promises” which a member took as he moved from one age-division to the next. Resembling the vows taken by religious, the system of promises was likened to concentric circles, which repeat the central idea of a members’s duty to strive for an ever closer union with Christ as the centre of his life, and to achieve an ever growing radiation of Christ’s love in his environment.

This is a perfectly defensible view of a Christian movement’s aim and purpose, and it has helped thousands of young men and women to live a life in close union with Christ in his Church. However, apart from being liable to breed an in-group spirit, particularly if one considers its use in connection with Chiro’s “family method”, this system lacks the healthy tension which could have been introduced into the movement, if every “promise” had been conceived as a step bringing the member ever closer to a final status. It is here where the system of meritocracy (*ascension personnelle*) links up with the proposed initiation.

The notion of making several “promises” contains yet another serious disadvantage, once it is transplanted to Africa in its present form. As every missionary knows from the experiences he has had in Africa with the *cautelae*, the signature on a piece of paper, even when it is covered with the most solemn formulae, in a culture where traditionally important agreements had to be sanctioned by a public concourse is virtually worthless.⁵⁰ The same can be said of the flag or banner, which are

⁵⁰ Besides, “the method of workbooks and filling in forms is rather complicated for the African children. It also involves too much money for all the expenses.

equally as alien to African culture as Europe's "paper-culture". A "promise" to be loyal to Christ made on the flag may at best produce a colourful ceremony, but its practical consequences will be rather meagre.⁵¹

But even in Europe itself, the idea of "promises" to be taken by children and adolescents, to mark their growing union with Christ, would seem a dubious practice in the light of facts presented by authorities in modern catechetical pedagogics. They emphasize that the faith of a child and that of an adolescent are not a concise edition of the faith of an adult. It must take its shape in response to a catechetical presentation which is to be carefully adapted to each phase of the growing person's development. Most important, religious instruction ought to aim at leading the growing person to an ever growing realm of freedom. Within this realm he must constantly make new decisions concerning his adherence to Christ, in response to his expanding perception of the world and his own situation in it. Promise has its appropriate place in the world of the mature grown-up and it seems therefore a doubtful instrument to be used in the *ascension personelle* of a child and adolescent.⁵²

Thus modern catechetical pedagogics teaches us that faith is not a condition which is to be preserved by way of keeping a promise. An *ascension personelle* which puts the emphasis on constantly increasing one's knowledge and acquiring new skills would seem to suit the dynamic character of growing faith far better than does the idea of "promises", as these would rather tend to convey the notion of faith being something static.⁵³

I would find it very necessary to simplify these preparations for initiation* and promise. (Extract from a respondent's letter)

⁵¹ A humorous (?) experience made by the writer during a camp in 1968: the Chiro flag had been hoisted. The chaplain had delivered his address to the group standing "in formation" around the flag-pole. Now it was the chief leader's task to sing an appropriate song or hymn to honour Christ, symbolized by the flag. His choice was the chant, "Honey, I love you", taken up by sixty enthusiastic voices.

⁵² Cf. A. EXELER, *Glaube an Jesus, den Christus*, Freiburg (1968), esp. p. 17—31, on: "Die entwicklungspsychologische Bedingtheit des Christusverhältnisses". Cf. also his article in *Concilium*, Jahrgg. 6, Heft 3 (March 1970) p. 162—166, containing useful bibliographical hints.

⁵³ For all those who in their answers demanded that in Chiro the children "should learn something that they do not yet know", the following extract from a letter by a leader who has been affiliated with the movement for many years may stand as typical (in answer to questions 6 and 7): "At present in our diocese the Chiro devotes attention to the leader-formation, but hasn't a target yet for its members as well. The aspects I see could help the movement in its devotion to all members is there should be something made which members are

* Initiation is here used in the sense of induction into one of Chiro's different age-divisions, not in the sense in which the term was used in point (ii).

(iv) Ritual and Symbolism. A movement, whether it caters for grown-ups or children, will invariably tend to express its fundamental ideas in the language of ritual and symbolism. This may consist of the celebration of particular feasts, a peculiar way of members' saluting each other, or other such "style" elements as have been seen to be characteristic of *Chirojeugd*.

People who have devoted their lives to the study of this subject, both from a philosophical angle and from its evidence in the history of religion, feel justified in speaking of a "logique du symbole".⁵⁴ The use of symbols, they say, allows man to assimilate and to unify the heterogeneous aspects of the cosmos into a system in which he himself becomes a symbol. In Africa, man still feels far more part of the cosmos than does his Western counterpart after a long process of struggling to harness the powers of nature. Consequently, to the *mens africana* the universe still represents a "forest of symbols";⁵⁵ and participation in ritualized activity can be said to be a need in the life of man in Africa.

This being so, Chiro would do well to concern itself very seriously with the choice of appropriate symbols and rituals, for here is a *pierre d'attente* which could open to the movement a secret path to the very heart of its African members. If, on the other hand, the movement fails to adapt its ritual and symbolism to the African scene, it may condemn itself to being no more than a superficial gloss, despite its high-sounding intention to represent a call to live the Gospel.

Two dangers must be carefully avoided: first, the Europeans dealing with the movement must not try to impose on their African partners their own suspicion and hesitancy with regard to the use of the language of ritual and symbols, to which they have been conditioned through living in a rationalistic cultural environment. Secondly, it is worth every effort to eliminate from the movement, before its introduction in a certain place, any ambiguities and such traits which can with certainty be said to remain alien or indifferent to the local culture.⁵⁶ Only some hints regarding the second caveat will be given in the following.

aiming to reach some day like at school children are sure of becoming something as there [are] posts in front waiting for their success. I know the Chiro is not similar to school method, but even other organisations have aim and ambition to make their members professional following their victories in their activities. Chiro is a Christian movement which could see to its members that they proper in their [sic] and give them something which people could realise that this movement is powerful and it will our nation to change in life and gain recognition to other races of the world and to God."

⁵⁴ E. g. M. ELIADE, *Traité d'Histoire des Religions*, Paris (1964) *passim*, esp. p. 367—382 (1968 edition)

⁵⁵ Cf. the book of that title by V. W. TURNER, Ithaca (1967)

⁵⁶ In one location of a South African "Bantu Homeland" the headmen refused Sisters permission to start Chiro, because when they had first heard about the

(a) In the light of the provenance of *Chirojeugd's* militaristic *stijle* traits and their ready disappearance in the course of the Flemish Chiro's recent *aggiornamento*, it can no longer be claimed seriously that such features as marching and various kinds of drill must necessarily form part of a youth movement, because they allegedly respond to a natural desire in young people. Let drill be used by schoolmasters to enforce discipline; in a youth movement which aims at building a community spirit and fostering personal responsibility it is a doubtful device, to say the least. The same can be said of banners and pennants. Apart from anthropological misgivings, and the question of cost, there is always the inherent danger that such paraphernalia will become the centre of attention and will eventually support a superficial *Aufmarschkultur*, rather than symbolize an invisible ideal.

(b) It will be worth while to scan the rituals of tribal initiation, primarily those still in use today in South Africa, to discover the basic pedagogical purpose which they serve. Even those missionaries and soldiers who have left us the first notes of a more reliable type concerning native customs, could not help admitting that these were pervaded by a deep wisdom about human nature and seemed extremely effective in achieving their purpose. To appreciate the importance of such an admission, one has to keep in mind that these Victorians were extremely prejudiced against the objects of their description, whom they continuously referred to as "heathenish barbarians".⁵⁷

In one such custom, still widely used today during the various *rites de passage*, the subjects of initiation are solemnly reminded by the elders, in a public ceremony, about their duties towards each other and the community at large. It is obvious that this practice could be profitably employed in Chiro's own proposed initiation rite, and on the occasion of the instalment of new leaders.

Further afield, Dyson-Hudson, in describing the succession-ritual of the Karimojong of Uganda, gives an account of the remarkable rules governing the people's behaviour on their journey to the sacred place where the ceremony takes place. No one may make a noise, still less

movement they thought of it in connection with "kill", the letters R and L easily being confused by speakers of the language spoken in that area. Studies of cargo cults and other millenarian movements abound with examples showing how innocent objects and actions, made use of in the normal day to day life of Europeans, became laden with symbolic meaning and were often made the centre of a syncretistic reinterpretation of the people concerned. Among the culture traits which have suffered this fate are flag-poles and, less surprisingly, flags, as well as marching and military commands. Cf. e.g. P. WORSLEY, *The Trumpet shall sound*, London (1968); and K. BURRIDGE, *New Heaven, New Earth*, Oxford (1969)

⁵⁷ Cf. e.g. Col. C. B. MACLEAN, *A Compendium of Kafir Laws and Customs*, Mount Coke (1858) p. 100, 160

fight; no one may steal; no one may rake up old disputes by asking for the repayment of debts. The significance of these rules is clearly to keep the peace among a generally turbulent people, when it is about to assert its unity in the nation's most solemn ritual.⁵⁸ This seems to give a hint: rituals of acting out the Gospel could be visualized, to remind Chiro members constantly about their movement's highest aim. Chiro's rituals and Chiro's *ascension personelle* must both be employed to train its members to live the Gospel.

In this connection it is worth returning for a moment to the earlier mentioned studies in African child psychology conducted by French scientists. They are in agreement in their assertion that African children generally exhibit a low frustration tolerance and explain this fact by the ease with which these children could gratify their desires in early childhood. Whether this explanation is true and will still hold when a greater number of pertinent studies have been made, has yet to be seen. All the writer wants to do is to draw attention to the importance of teaching children the ability to control gratification, in order to facilitate the development of achievement motivation.⁵⁹ How closely such motivation is linked to the notions of progress and development need hardly be stressed.⁶⁰

(c) Uniforms. This is a delicate question, which is rarely discussed without emotion. Few South African correspondents returned a positive verdict on the question of whether it may be advisable not to use uniforms in the movement there. But it should be mentioned that with few exceptions the answers in favour of having a uniform came from places where Chiro is only known and active since 1969 at the earliest. However, one veteran member, who can pride himself on having a long record of affiliation with youth work, is in favour of a complete abolition of uniforms. He would like to see them replaced by a simple badge.⁶¹ Reasons given by people in favour of uniforms do not go beyond those stated in official Chiro publications: attraction, unity, witness. Surprisingly, not a single one of the respondents mentions any practical considerations in favour of a uniform.

⁵⁸ Cf. N. DYSON-HUDSON, *Karimojong Politics*, Oxford (1966) p. 189f.

⁵⁹ Cf. L. BARKOWITZ, *The Development of Motives and Values in the Child*, New York (1964) p. 42: Although the evidence on this point is far from certain, research points in the direction that need-gratification is not only insufficient for the development of strong achievement motivation, but continued easy satisfaction of desires may actually destroy this instigation.

⁶⁰ Cf. D. McCLELLAND & D. G. WINTER, *Motivating Economic Achievement*, New York (1969), passim

⁶¹ "No uniform, no red tape trouble for becoming member, no difficult opening of meetings, no style of Western youth movements based on Hitlerjugend, no military drill."

The truth is that the idea of using uniforms is already engrained in the South African social body. Tribal society has known the use of distinguishing signs and badges before the advent of white culture, though the idea of aiming at uniformity was certainly absent. Under the impact of Western culture, however, the entire Xhosa nation (3,570,000) was divided by what has been referred to as the "Red-School opposition".⁶² Whereas "School-Xhosas" aspire to absorb the white man's culture, the "Red Xhosas" cling to the traditional tribal values and institutions. This includes wearing their characteristic red blankets. Thus the "Red people" purposely distinguish themselves by their uniform mode of dressing from their "School" conationals wearing European clothes.

Also schools throughout the country follow the English custom of demanding that children wear a uniform during school hours. This has helped to spread the idea that a uniform creates a "sense of belonging" still further. Groups of children appearing in popular "concerts", even if these are not organized by their school, like to sport a "uniform", which sometimes consists of nothing but a flimsy skirt made of crêpe.

In urban locations, and to a lesser degree in the African "Homelands", on particular days of the week the scene is dominated by the colourful uniforms worn by the women belonging to the various churches' *Manyanos*. These have been described as "the original framework within which the women's emancipation [in South Africa] develops and expresses itself".⁶³ Brandel-Syrier says that "any African minister's wife when asked about her *Manyano* will start by saying: 'They are those women who take up uniform'".⁶⁴

Up until now Chiro in South Africa has strongly insisted on the use of uniforms by its members, supporting its demand with all the ideological arguments known from *Chirojeugd*. But granted that it is the Africans themselves who will eventually have to decide whether the continued use of uniforms in the movement is desirable or not, the fact remains that Chiro was imported to them, uniform and all, without their having had a choice in the matter. Hence a basic reconsideration of the whole issue cannot logically be dismissed as an impossibility, even if at present it seems rather remote.

It is of special importance to realize that a uniform not only helps to create an atmosphere; it is itself a *milieu*. The danger is undeniably present that the wearer of a uniform cultivates an attitude — if only subconsciously — which is marked by the neat distinction between "on duty" and "off duty". But Chiro's aim is decidedly to teach young people

⁶² Cf. Ph. MAYER, *Townsmen or Tribesmen*, Cape Town (1971) p. 20—42; 294—318

⁶³ M. BRANDEL-SYRIER, *Black Woman in Search of God*, London (1962) p. 220. The term derives from *umanyano* (Xhosa) = association.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49

to live the Gospel at all times and in all places. Another important point has been brought up by many respondents. They plead for the use of a completely different uniform for the older members, or advocate the discontinuance of the use of a uniform by members who have reached adolescence.⁶⁵ It is obvious how these tendencies reflect the observations Cammaer has made with regard to the *jongvolwassene's*⁶⁶ resentment of being locked into a *jeugdperiode*. The writer's suggestion of introducing in South Africa's Chiro movement a type of initiation which would mark clearly the *jongvolwassene's* entry into adult society also deserves to be recalled at this juncture. For if the adolescents have no other choice but breaking out of the *milieu* imposed on them by the movement's insistence on their having to wear a uniform, it can easily happen that in discarding the uniform they reject also all that the uniform stands for, i.e. the movement with all its aspirations.

(v) Some specific points regarding the structure and activity of groups:

(a) Although this may not sound pleasant to the ears of some Europeans, it ought to be emphasized that the African preference for informality instead of rigid organisation will have to find due recognition in Chiro's organisational make-up. It could be argued whether the inherent spontaneity in African society is not more conducive to Chiro's avowed quest for radiant joy, than is the insistence on order and discipline which the European youth movement tradition has inherited from Kant and Fichte. More trust should be put in the self-regulatory power of the African community to put its affairs in order.⁶⁷

It will be important to find out empirically the organisational means employed by the present-day kinds of spontaneous associations forming among African youth in the urban townships and in the "Bantu Homelands". This must have priority over the attempt to lay down theoretically forms of leadership for Chiro in South Africa by abstracting models from the traditional African patterns of leadership. One must

⁶⁵ A typical answer to question 4 of the questionnaire is the following: "The uniform is advisable to be in use only from Starlights, Sunbeams/Shepherds, Comrades/Companions, Christiboy/-girls*. Christis is where the spirit to neglect uniform starts, as they come with it half wear. Aspirants totally they don't want to wear it. They come with their clothes they like. What we experienced is they do like uniform, but not the one similar to that of the young divisions. They want to decide and choose themselves the one they like, since they look to feel young when they wear like younger ones."

⁶⁶ *Jongvolwassene* = young adult

⁶⁷ That draconic fines are meted out by the *Manyanos* and other more spontaneous groups, like the soccer clubs, for failure to attend or lack in punctuality shows that informality must by no means lead to anarchy. Cf. WILSON & MAFEJE, *Langa*, Cape Town (1963) p. 179

* These names are the South African equivalents to the Flemish names of divisions in Chiro.

attempt to graft onto the movement those patterns of leadership which are used by the spontaneous associations. At the same time it may be useful to experiment with new forms, conceived along the lines of traditional African leadership which were in use in tribal associations prior to contact with the European culture.

(b) In many places, especially where Chiro groups exist in non-urban conditions, correspondents find that Chiro's insistence on the leaders' duty to attend three meetings a week (leaders' meeting, cell meeting, general meeting) is too heavy a burden. Regularity of meetings will have to be insisted on, but their frequency will have to be adjusted to the local conditions.⁶⁸

(c) It is important to realize that the Chiro Centre will have to stimulate the development of differentiated programmes to meet the requirements of groups living in different socio-economic conditions. The main difference is that which exists between rural and urban areas. As elsewhere in Africa, the Church in the past has not paid enough attention to developing its influence in the urban conglomerates as rapidly as it has done in the country. Let Chiro beware of making the same mistake.

Wilson and Mafeje reckon that no less than one quarter of the city dwellers among whom they made their research belong to some sort of club.⁶⁹ These people would invariably be the more dynamic types, who are actively involved in culture change and the adaptation of their fellows to the new way of life in the towns. Unless they are assisted in this task by the Church now, they will lay the foundations for a "Secular City" in which there will be no room for a belief in God.⁷⁰ And it should be mentioned too that urbanisation in South Africa today does not only take place in the heavily industrialized areas on the Reef, but is energetically promoted by the government in the "Bantu Homelands" themselves.

(vi) Some specific remarks on the movement's lineaments and tasks. It need hardly be mentioned that Chiro in South Africa, from the

⁶⁸ One correspondent frankly lists the following reason in answer to question 6 of the questionnaire: "It [i. e. Chiro] has no holidays. It is just like Church."

⁶⁹ Op. cit., p. 113

⁷⁰ Cf. A. HASTINGS, *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, London (1967) p. 98f: "The town, the university, the great mining area, the chain of big secondary schools: these are new and decisive aspects of African society and they require a different type of evangelization ... The personnel at the Church's disposal in Africa is very limited ... and the danger is to go on concentrating too much on what we are used to — the rural apostolate — and to give far less than a reasonable minimum to new approaches. One might compare the large number of missionaries working in Lesotho, a rural mountainous area, with the relatively few at work in the African locations around Johannesburg. These locations have as big a population as has the whole of Lesotho, they even include very many of the young people of Lesotho who have come down to get employment; and it is surely in the great urban areas that the future of South Africa and its leadership will be decided."

beginning, will fall under the category of "youth work" and not that of "youth movement".⁷¹ If, nevertheless, the term "movement" is constantly used here in connection with Chiro's work in South Africa, this is simply for the sake of convenience and to follow convention. Besides, it may well be that Chiro's work in the service of the South African youth will serve as a catalyst for the rise of a truly popular movement.

This might happen if Chiro's call to live the Gospel appeals to the imagination of the broad masses, instigating them to further the progress of their people by increasingly developing such qualities as would be needed for its achievement: a sense of responsibility for the common good, soberness, parsimony, hard work, and self-reliance. Therefore Chiro will place the emphasis on organising help for self-help. The movement cannot escape the fate of first having to organize institutions and activities for young people, but at the same time it will train them to run their affairs themselves. Hopefully the movement will develop more and more on its own momentum as time goes on.

In urban conditions one of Chiro's main tasks will be to stimulate the provision of centres similar to the Flemish *jeugdtehuizen*⁷², with one significant difference: bearing in mind the vast number of young people who are badly educated and cannot find proper employment, emphasis will have to be laid more on advancement in professional skills than on providing an opportunity for healthy modes of recreation, though these must by no means be neglected.⁷³

As regards the young people in the country, great efforts are to be made to prepare them for the culture shock awaiting them when they go to work in the white cities. It is well known that in our own societies in Europe the problem of easing the young people's entry into the harsh realities of professional life has for a long time occupied a multitude of minds and led to an impressive range of special protective legislation. When South African youths join the industrial working force, they are certainly protected by safeguards laid down in their contract of work.

⁷¹ In the case of "youth work" (from Gmn. *Jugendarbeit*) something is being done for the young people "from above": the organisational, institutional structures are more pronounced. In the case of a "youth movement" we deal with movement arising from the young people themselves.

⁷² *Jeugdtehuizen* (sing.: *Jeugdehuis*) = a kind of youth club open to all young people regardless of whether they belong to a youth organisation.

⁷³ Though conditions have no doubt improved since then on the Reef, in many other places in the Republic what R. E. PHILLIPS wrote in 1937 (*The Bantu in the City*), Alice (Lovedale), p. 291f) would still be true today: "So far as recreation is concerned, the majority of the Native people on the Reef are poorly provided for ... The locations are gloomy places after work hours. Little attention is given to the life of the children, especially of those who are not at school. And activities for older youth — the occasional concerts and dances — are often of a questionable sort."

But the problems arise when they are suddenly confronted with a world which is bewilderingly different from that in which they grew up. They face the task, not only of integrating themselves, like their European contemporaries, into the professional world of adult society, with its rules of keen competition, its race for profit and its basing a person's value on the degree of efficiency he attains in his work. In addition, they must absorb the shock of facing for the first time in their lives the overpowering material wealth of white civilisation.

Preparation for married life is another important point, for Christian marriage in Africa today is certainly no less "neuralgic" than it was sixteen years ago.⁷⁴ Fortunately, the young people themselves realize this need in increasing measure. Thus one of the reports from the discussions, held by the various language groups during the recent General Council of Chirom (South Africa), on the writer's questionnaire, states: "For Aspirants we suggest more discussion — Dialogue in connection with preparation for life: Question of love — marriage — child-care etc. Further on it was suggested to co-operate with groups and clubs outside Chirom and tackle common tasks together in various places and locations." The *déséquilibre* between the length of time we devote in the Church to preparing people for the holy Eucharist, and the small amount of preparation we traditionally offer them for their married life, has been pointed out recently by a team of African priests.⁷⁵ In their suburban parish in Kinshasa they have made successful experiments with conducting marriage preparation courses on a communal basis.

Hardly less important, though lying on a different level, is the need to open avenues for the young people to become initiated in the basic aspects of money economy. The formation of credit unions would offer a means to do this in a way which is uncomplicated and at the same time capable of teaching them the truth of the motto stamped on South African coins: *Ex unitate vires*.⁷⁶

Coming to speak once more of the *ascension personnelle*, the tests which must be passed in order to acquire a new status in the movement — in other words, to "ascend" in it — must mainly concentrate on practical aspects. For instance, for boys of a certain age, one of the required tasks could be to know how to patch the tube of a bicycle. Another one might

⁷⁴ Cf. a talk given by Sr. MARIE-ANDRÉ du Sacré-Coeur on "La Structure sociale coutumière en face du Christianisme" in: *Formation Religieuse en Afrique Noire: Compte Rendu de la Semaine d'études de Léopoldville*, Bruxelles (1955) p. 60

⁷⁵ Cf. *Orientations Pastorales*, no. 132 (Sept./Oct. 1970) p. 278—291: "Essai d'une Pastorale de Préparation au Mariage dans une Paroisse Urbaine"

⁷⁶ Cf. the "Rhodesian Credit Unions 'miracle'" featured in an article in *The Southern Cross*, Nov. 5, 1969. Having started their first credit union only six years before, Rhodesians by 1969 had formed over thirty savings clubs and eleven credit unions. Between them they had pooled an amount of £ 20 000.

be to save money for buying some useful tool, say a spade, and to perform certain types of work with it (see to it, for instance, that a particular part of the road near one's homestead is always kept in good order). Similarly, girls might be required to know how to cut the material for a certain piece of clothing, in order to pass a test; or to administer a simple hygienic treatment to a baby. Here again it is clear that tasks will have to be adapted to the different situation in town and country.

Last, but not least, Chiro will have to co-operate with whoever is willing to provide the White public in South Africa with more information on the true nature of African society and its inherent values. To mobilize goodwill among Africans themselves, to conquer their frustration and apathy, will certainly be Chiro's primary aim. Increasing self-respect among Africans will go hand in hand with raising their respectability among a growing number of White South Africans, and allaying the latter's fears of being swamped in a wave of what many of them would see as black barbarism.

At the same time, however, the appalling ignorance on the part of many Europeans with regard to their African co-nationals will have to be overcome. It is not saying too much if one maintains that many white South Africans have as many weird ideas concerning native customs and the African way of life, as the Victorians held a hundred years ago. And this in spite of the fact that they share one and the same country with the Africans, an advantage which the Victorians did not have.

Furthering mutual understanding between the races, and increasing their respect for each other, will have to be a major target to be strived for in a multi-racial country. This is a basic truth and it remains a truth, no matter whether one sees the country's ideal future as lying in the pursuance of the policy of "separate development" or in that of building a harmonious pluralist society. Respect requires as its basis understanding; this again can only grow where truthful information is freely available to everyone.

APPENDIX

1. Which do you find is the most attractive aspect about Chiro for our boys and girls?
2. In case you would find that the pedagogics of Chiro are not yet sufficiently adapted to the African mentality, which would be your suggestions regarding this point?
3. In your experience, which are the biggest difficulties encountered by a person who wishes to start Chiro work in some place? And which are the difficulties encountered, if any, once the group has been started?
4. Do you think it would be advisable not to use uniforms in the movement? If so, for what reasons?
5. At which age do you find most boys and girls leave Chiro? For what reasons?

6. Which do you find are the main causes preventing the young from joining Chiro groups?
7. Do you think the movement devotes enough attention to the personal formation of its members?
If not, which are the aspects which you would like to be seen having more emphasis laid upon?
8. Do you think the Chiro method prepares our young South Africans sufficiently for their "lay apostolate" in the Church and in their milieu?
9. What does the older generation (parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts) think of Chiro?
Do they show an active interest in the venture?
10. Have you noticed any spontaneous moves among the youths to bring their Chiro programme more in line with the local requirements? Any interesting moves to "africanize" Chiro?
11. How do you manage the financial affairs of the group(s)? Who is in charge of them?

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