

## Best Practices Continental Mission in Latin America and the Caribbean

### Workshop – San Antonio

#### USCCB – Spring Meeting

- I. Continental Guidelines produced by CELAM
  1. 2008 – Continental Mission for a Missionary Church
  2. 2009 – Itinerary for the Continental Mission
- II. Country wide Experiences – Bishop Conference Projects
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## I. Continental Guidelines

### 1. Stages and players of the mission

Todos los cristianos son a la vez destinatarios y sujetos de la misión. Es necesario tener en cuenta que el discípulo se forma para la misión y, a la vez, la misión forma al discípulo. Por eso, al realizar la acción misionera, al mismo tiempo que los discípulos se renuevan en la vida de Jesucristo, se preparan también para llevar la Buena Noticia a todos los pueblos.

1. Stage 1 **destinada a la formación y al reencantamiento** de los agentes pastorales y evangelizadores (año 2009 y siguientes)
  - a. Propósito: a fin de que sean los pastores, los animadores y responsables de las comunidades los primeros en asumir este desafío del discipulado misionero.
  - b. Protagonistas: Se trata de Obispos – Presbíteros - Diáconos permanentes - Vida religiosa y consagrada, incluyendo Vida monástica y contemplativa - Laicos más comprometidos de las distintas áreas pastorales - Dirigentes de movimientos y comunidades - Seminarios y Casas de formación - Consejos pastorales - Dirigentes de grupos, organizaciones, instituciones, colegios, universidades católicos.
2. Stage 2 etapa para **profundizar la experiencia cristiana con grupos prioritarios** en la pastoral de la Iglesia (año 2010 y siguientes);
  - a. Requisitos: Exige una conversión personal y pastoral de los miembros de grupos, movimientos y asociaciones para que pasen luego a evangelizar a los diversos sectores de la comunidad.
  - b. Dirigido a grupos pastorales prioritarios: a manera de ejemplo nombramos algunos: Misión en espacios virtuales - Colegios y Universidades Católicas - Educadores, Catequistas - Diversas áreas pastorales – Organizaciones de profesionales católicos - Grupos de Pastoral indígena y afrodescendiente - Cofradías, Hermandades, Movimientos y Comunidades.
3. Stage 3 una etapa destinada a **las misiones sectoriales o ambientales (año 2011)** y siguientes)
  - a. Dirigido a los diversos sectores de la sociedad. Nombramos algunos a manera de ejemplo: Académicos - Educadores y mundo de la educación – Jóvenes - Empresarios y trabajadores - Comunicadores y todo el ámbito virtual – Políticos Mundo castrense y policial - Mundo de la salud - Mundo carcelario - Organizaciones de voluntariado
4. Stage 4 una etapa **dedicada a la Misión territorial** (año 2012 y siguientes)
  - a. Dirigido a la pastoral territorial: Parroquias – Familias - Comunidades eclesiales de base - Pequeñas comunidades - Organizaciones comunitarias civiles: juntas de vecinos, clubes deportivos, ONGs. En esta etapa es necesario tener en cuenta a los alejados, indiferentes y no creyentes.

**Los misioneros que se vayan formando en cada etapa se deberían sumar a las etapas sucesivas de la misión.** Por otra parte, **mientras se vive una etapa se debe ir preparando la siguiente.** Insistimos en que **no hay fechas de término sino procesos que maduran en el tiempo**, como quien encuentra una veta y la sigue hasta agotarla

2. **Signos y gestos comunes:** expresión de comunión y simultaneidad de la Iglesia en la Misión Continental
  - 2.1. Lanzamiento oficial de la Misión en el CAM3 (Agosto 17 de 2008)
  - 2.2. Entrega de la Biblia y del Tríptico con breve catequesis sobre su significado, especialmente a modo de un “altar familiar” para cada hogar.
  - 2.3. Oración para la Misión continental
  - 2.4. Logotipo (de Aparecida)
  - 2.5. Elenco de canciones misioneras y eventualmente un Himno basado en la oración oficial, que se puede hacer a través de concursos nacionales.
  - 2.6. Algunas celebraciones de grandes fiestas litúrgicas con sentido misionero:
    - Epifanía
    - Pascua
    - Pentecostés
    - Fiesta mariana de cada país.
  - 2.7. Producción e intercambio de subsidios formativos misioneros.
  - 2.8. Material divulgativo: Poster sobre la misión; Spots televisivos y radiales; Página Web sobre la misión; Videos sobre la Misión (hechos con los tiempos de TV)
  - 2.9. Un gesto significativo en materia social en cada país.
3. Roles and Responsibilities en la Misión Continental
  - 3.1. Rol de las **Conferencias Episcopales**
    - ✓ Dar orientaciones pastorales en clave de misión continental (sintonía y sincronía) para que todas las circunscripciones eclesíásticas se pongan en estado de misión permanente.
    - ✓ Crear una comisión central para animar la misión a nivel nacional.
    - ✓ Elaborar los subsidios que crea pertinentes para la formación de los agentes pastorales y evangelizadores para la realización del proyecto misionero.
    - ✓ Revisar o elaborar las Líneas o Directrices Pastorales Generales a la luz de Aparecida en orden a la formación y acción de discípulos misioneros.
    - ✓ Preparar equipos a nivel nacional para dirigir retiros espirituales con base en Aparecida.
    - ✓ Crear centros misioneros a nivel nacional.
  - 3.2 Rol de las **Diócesis:** “La Diócesis, en todas sus comunidades y estructuras, está llamada a ser una comunidad misionera” (DA 168) y, por tanto, el sujeto de la misión.
    - ✓ Revisar el plan pastoral a la luz de Aparecida a fin de darle una gran renovación misionera que contemple, como signo de madurez, la misión ad gentes. La misión continental debe abrir a las personas para ir más allá de toda frontera.
    - ✓ Crear una comisión central que se encargue de animar la misión diocesana.
    - ✓ Elaborar los subsidios que crea pertinentes para la formación de los agentes pastorales y evangelizadores para la realización del proyecto misionero.
    - ✓ Ofrecer una propuesta de cursos de preparación y de Ejercicios espirituales para los agentes pastorales y evangelizadores en cada una de las etapas.
    - ✓ Realizar un trabajo conjunto con las diócesis vecinas, a nivel de provincias eclesíásticas, con un gran sentido de comunión eclesial.

II. Country –

1. Honduras Bishop Conference proposes this series of activities

Activities	Lenght													
		D	E	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
<b>Administrative Committee</b>	Yearly	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Diagnostic of situation (consultation with bishops)</b>	2 months	x		x										
<b>Elaboration of Mission Materials</b>	2 months			x	x									
<b>Aparecida Workshop for Pastoral Agents</b> (Bishops,clergy,lay,seminarians,pastoral counsils,delegates, colegios,univ.etc)	Feb			x										
<b>Creation of National Team</b>	Feb			x										
<b>Assembly and training Diocesan Teams</b>	March				x									
<b>Programming and evaluation workshops and materials</b>	2 months				x	x								
<b>Reproducction and editing</b>	April					x								
<b>Launching</b>	May 31						x							
<b>Distribution mission materials</b>	June							x						
<b>Mission “ad intra” by sectors at each Diocese (pastoral agents)</b>	3 months							x	x	x				
<b>Development of mission at each parish all Dioceses</b>	6 months								x	x	x	x	x	x
<b>Evaluation CEH – National Team</b>	3 months											x	x	x

Activity	Contents Event - name	Number of events	Participants per event	Location
<b>Stage 1 Planning/Coord</b>				
<b>Assembling Administrative Committee</b>	Programming of Mission in Honduras	1	5	CEH
<b>Diagnostic reality</b>	Consultation Bishops	2	11	CEH & each Dioc
<b>Materials</b>	15 pamphlets CELAM	1	10	CEH
<b>Course/Workshop</b>	Workshop for pastoral agents/ multiplicadores	1	110	Valle de Angeles
<b>National Team</b>	Formation National Team	Feb.	10	Tegucigalpa-CEH
<b>Diocesan Teams</b>	Formation <b>Diocesan Teams</b>	One per Diocese	100 at each Diocese	At each Diocese
<b>Stage 2.- (pastoral Agents evangelizers)</b>				
<b>Evaluation</b>	Programming, evaluation y adjustments (Nat Team)	March -april	15	Tegucigalpa-CEH
<b>Reproduction materials y symbols Mission</b>	Reproduction materials	April		Tegucigalpa-CEH
<b>Launching</b>	Opening ceremony Mission	At each Diocese		Eight Dioceses
<b>Distribution materials</b>	Distribution	At each Diocese - June		Eight Dioceses
<b>Stage 3.- (sectors)</b>				
<b>Development mission "ad intra" at each Diocese</b>	Workshops y/o encounters y retreats	At each parish as needed	100 per event	Eight Dioceses
<b>Development at selected sectors Diocesan</b>	Workshops / conferences	At each Diocese as needed	100 per event	Eight Dioceses
<b>Mission at each Parish All parishes</b>	Workshops y/o encounters y retreats	As needed per parish	100 per event	Each Parrish
Evaluation/National	Evaluation	Oct. Nov. Dec	16	Valle de Angeles

## Argentina

1. **The Church's mission is primarily to communicate the Christian faith; to encourage it, nourish it and strengthen it and to allow it to grow.** Peter said to the paralytic begging at the entrance to the Temple: "But Peter said, "I do not possess silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you: In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene-- walk!" (Acts 3:6). Just like Peter, the Church presents the faith, invites others into the faith, presents it and supports it. This has to be the Missionary Goal that that the Aparecida Document recommends to us and that corresponds to the recommendations of the Bishops of Argentina laid down in the document *Navigating the Inner Journey (Navega Mar Adentro)*. Therefore, we understand Mission as the pastoral consequence of the faith: strengthening faith either as ministers or as those members of the faithful who have fallen away from the Church. Faith both supports and dignified the life we live in Christ himself, when it is experienced as a moment of inclusion and communion with the Church. We must also bear in mind that "The bond that exists between the disciple-missionary and Jesus, is not in the first place an intellectual one. It means a personal relationship with him through the faith."<sup>1</sup>
2. **There is a need to stress a missionary approach which is organic within the pastoral work of the diocese, and especially in the individual parish.** The Continental Mission, understood as "a pastoral conversion" should lead to a better understanding of those "worn out structures" that make the work of evangelization more difficult so as to renew them and make them fruitful again. To avoid reducing the Great Mission to a superficial gesture, the great challenge will be to renew the day-to-day pastoral work according to a new missionary style.
3. **The new missionary approach** must be applied to pre- and post-baptismal formation where the Church displays a deep concern for the children that come from within its midst. This post-baptismal could also be linked with preparation for the Sacraments of the Eucharist and of Confirmation. Baptism preparation should take note of the liturgical celebration of the sacrament, where it is clearly the ecclesial community itself that receives its new members. **The new missionary approach** to baptismal preparation should respond to the challenge of sustaining the baptismal vocation of being a missionary and a disciple through one's entire life. This will help develop the missionary potential contained within each baptized person.

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<sup>1</sup> NMA, p. 62.

4. To talk of the Continental Mission is to talk of two distinct things: the necessary link between a renewed missionary style and a concrete program of missionary engagement:
  - a. to work towards a “pastoral conversion” that translates into a permanent state of mission
  - b. to organize missions that embody and make visible this renewed missionary style
  - c. At its heart, we find the desire to uncover the way in which the Church made herself present during the early period of evangelization in Latin America: a missionary Church made up of missionaries.
  - d. The Church in our Continent was born as essentially a missionary Church. Some time later, a pastoral style was developed designed to preserve the gains from this missionary stage of evangelization. In fact, this period of conservation, where the notion of transmitting the Faith lost some of its strength, is insufficient to respond to the needs of our own time. For this reason, it’s suggested that we need to rediscover this original impetus where to be a Christian meant being a missionary.

Cardinal Jorge M. Bergoglio, Archbishop of Buenos Aires and President of the Bishops’ Conference of Argentina, put before us the following pastoral challenge during the First Presbyteral Council of the Archdiocese of Buenos Aires in 2008. He stated:

*The proposal of Aparecida is even more daring than one thinks, it goes beyond a missionary program that is more expansive than before. The Mission that Aparecida launches is not limited by time, but, once started, is seen as a **permanent** mission. It’s not merely about laying out a series of actions, although they are not ruled out. But it involves launching something without a defined conclusion. We can, therefore, talk about the Permanent Mission and the Continental Mission as a “**Mission Paradigm**.” This means that we should see mission as the key optic through which we understand all pastoral action that strongly encourages a pastoral process that is characterized by a missionary dimension in ordinary pastoral work. It is not missionary work ad extra alone but ad intra and ad extra in a continuous and permanent way. Mission therefore becomes the paradigm for all work of evangelization.<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>2</sup> Speech of Archbishop, Cardinal George Bergoglio, during the first meeting of the Presbyteral Council in 2008. *Boletín Ecclesiástico del Arz. de Buenos Aires*, May 2008, No. 495, p. 147.

## Chile – Who is Responsible for this Process?

1. The content of the Continental Mission and its stages must be determined by the Assembly of Conference of the Bishop of Chile (CECh). Seeing to the completion of this process should be the task of the COP.
2. The Bishop charged with this process is Bishop Héctor Vargas, Bishop of Arica and Chairman of the Church Section of the CECh. Assisting him as Coordinator of the Continental Mission in Chile is Rev. Cristián Precht who will be helped in executing this role by the General Secretary of the CECh.
3. A Committee for the Continental Mission will be established by representatives from the dioceses, from the pastoral sections of the CECh and other important Church bodies e.g. COFERRE, movements, colleges, etc.
4. To implement the Continental Mission, help will be offered by the Pastoral Districts (Vicariates) within each diocese and by the pastoral areas of the CECh, as permanent structure of the Church in Chile.

### III. Diocesan Level

#### 1. Archdiocese of Santiago de Chile

- i. Launching –a few days after the III American Mission Congress, on August 17, 2008, sent a Diocesan wide Convocation-Invitation by Cardinal Francisco Javier Errazurriz to start the Mission in Santiago
- ii. Published a 16 page pamphlet – “Convocation to the Continental Mission in the Archdiocese of Santiago” which included:
  1. 5 Objectives of the Continental Mission
  2. 4 Stages of the Continental Mission
  3. Invited to reflect and answer 3 questions
- iii. 2009 – Msgr. Cristian Precht as Vicar General, diocesan coordinator for the Continental Mission published document “Pastoral Lines for Santiago in the Continental Mission”, proposing the following missionary actions to be held during first stage
  1. Practice and teach Lectio Divina – Encounter with Jesus
  2. Open up Closed Churches, practice hospitality
  3. Encounters among very diverse communities
  4. Blessing of Aparecida Triptych at homes, visit the sick
  5. Write the “Gospel of Chile” – as in Aparecida, the N.T. will be handwritten by thousands of Chileans.

2. Archdiocese Valencia – Venezuela – Launched January 25, 2009
  - i. Followed itinerary and stages proposed by CELAM guidelines
  - ii. Presented a request proposal for funds to Church in Latin America
  - iii. Created a new Diocesan Mission Department with 4 commissions
    1. Formation
    2. Spirituality
    3. Organization
    4. Diffusion and Communications campaign
  - iv. Instituted the “Archdiocesan Schools of Missionary Formation”
    1. Formation Courses for Diocesan representatives
    2. Workshops on “Animacion Misionera” for parish based pastoral agents
  - v. Distribution of 10,000 Bibles
  - vi. Formed Itinerant Missionary teams to promote the Continental Mission

#### IV. Who’s ahead of the Curve?

Since March 2008, Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) has jump started the process by launching a Conference wide program to launch and promote the Continental Mission. They just finished the first stage.

##### 1. **Methodology agreed by the AEC Plenary Meeting:**

- i. to use almost exclusively already-existing Church Community groups and activities in order to implement the program:
  1. Liturgy & Choir groups, marriage encounter groups, prayer groups, RCIA, baptismal, confirmation and marriage preparation groups, youth groups bible study groups, daily mass and novena groups, parish management, lay training groups, commissions, etc,
- ii. Missionary discipleship is not an additional activity, but rather a dimension, a responsibility & vocation to which all Catholics are invited. To recognize, To embrace and To expand in what they are already doing.

##### 2. Activities done to date:

- ✓ Translation in English,
  - Publication of first English edition of Aparecida,
  - Distribution of AD across the region
- ✓ Adopt the Spirit & message of Aparecida in Diocesan publications & regional Catholic Press, web sites
- ✓ Introduce the theme of Missionaries and Disciples in Synods, Regional activities, AEC Commission programs, for example:

- Castries Archdiocese. Theme of year-long Synod Activities, 300 copies of AD to coordinators - study & implementation.
- Regional Youth Assembly 9-19 July 2009, Kingston
- Program of Catechetical Commission supported Missionaries in North West Guyana
- Seminary training programs
- Planned Regional Retreat for Diocesan Catechetical Coordinators , CATC activities, etc

### 3. Challenges to the TRAINING AND FACILITATING TEAM

- ✓ Aparecida concrete challenge to:
  - “foster the responsibility of lay people in the world for building the Kingdom of God”
  - “continual concern of those who are lapsed and are oblivious to the Lord in their lives” (AD 280).
- ✓ Bishops also challenge themselves:
  - Suitably prepared training teams -assure effectiveness of process to accompany people with dynamic, active, and open pedagogies.
  - Participation -lay men & women on training teams (AD 281)
- ✓ AEC Catechetical Commission:
  - Coordinate and facilitate process of training missionaries & disciples in the AEC region. Supported US Bishops, CELAM,

- V. What makes it different? **What is new about this Great Continental Mission** and how does it differ from “the missions” that we have become familiar or from the mission that, while worthwhile, we have implemented in the past?

This missionary thrust can be distinguished from past missionary efforts in the following way because it:

- places the entire Church and every individual church in a permanent state of mission and therefore it does not have a fixed time period but continues throughout time;
- takes place by engaging in a dialogue with the world we live in, seeking out interlocutors more than recipients, to share with them the experience of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;
- is different because it aims to offer, share and to give Life – Christ, the Life of Man and the Life of the World – to people as well as to society

- will seek to impact every level of the Church and not only at the parish level, including parishes, colleges, universities, monasteries, religious congregations, secular institutes, apostolic movement and new communities.
- takes place within a cultural context in which the novelty of the Gospel is the greatest contribution to the development of our people;
- will unfold within the context of the Bicentennial of Independence, in several countries, in which it might seem opportune to foster a type of re-founding of these nations according to values more consistent with our tradition as well as our religious and cultural heritage.

## VI. The Big Challenges Ahead

1. From Argentina they remind us that: También la fe es la clave del misionero. El Papa Juan Pablo II nos dice en *Redemptoris Missio*: “**La misión es un problema de fe**, es el índice exacto de nuestra fe en Cristo” (RM, 11).
2. Will the two laws implicit in Aparecida: las dos leyes que se descubren en Aparecida: la primera es que **la vida crece y se desarrolla en una comunidad fraterna y justa**; y, en seguida, que **la vida es la única realidad que se alcanza y madura en la medida en que se entrega para dar la vida a otros. Es decir, que se multiplica cuando se la da**
3. #365 AP Esta firme decisión misionera debe impregnar todas las estructuras eclesiales y todos los planes pastorales de diócesis, parroquias, comunidades religiosas, movimientos y de cualquier institución de la Iglesia. Ninguna comunidad debe excusarse de entrar decididamente, con todas sus fuerzas, en los procesos constantes de renovación misionera, y de **abandonar las estructuras caducas** que ya no favorezcan la transmisión de la fe.
4. la Misión conlleva una **conversión personal, pastoral y eclesial** e “implica reformas espirituales, pastorales y también institucionales”<sup>6</sup>. Es decir, cambios profundos en nuestra manera de vivir la fe, de organizar la pastoral, de administrar la Iglesia y de servir al mundo, **dejando de lado estructuras caducas** que condicionan nuestro caminar.
5. La pastoral de la Iglesia no puede prescindir del contexto histórico donde viven sus miembros. Su vida acontece en contextos socioculturales bien concretos. Estas transformaciones sociales y culturales representan naturalmente nuevos desafíos para la Iglesia en su misión de construir el Reino de Dios. De allí nace la necesidad, en fidelidad al Espíritu Santo que la conduce, de una renovación eclesial, que implica reformas espirituales, pastorales y también institucionales.
6. 368. La conversión de los pastores nos lleva también a vivir y promover una espiritualidad de comunión y participación, *proponiéndola como principio educativo en todos los lugares donde se forma el hombre y el cristiano, donde se educan los ministros del altar, las personas consagradas y los agentes pastorales, donde se construyen las familias y las comunidades*<sup>207</sup>.