

Questions and thoughts about the activities of the "groupe de liaison" on the basis of the decisions Dec. 68

Letter of presentation

1. Where are we with our joint letter to all women's organizations? We had decided to send this letter in September. This seems to me essential if we want to have our feet on the ground in the December meeting. If the letter has not yet been sent, can I plead for its diffusion as it is now, no matter how many nuances we would like to introduce? (Personally, I don't mind to withdraw my own additions, if only this letter has to be operational!)
2. Can we ask the answers to be sent to Geneva (if everybody agrees) before the end of November in order to have some kind of an analysis at the December meeting? Who can make this analysis? For geographical reasons, is it possible that Marga and Brigalia work on this?
3. This may seem to overlap our decision made in June in Geneva (point 8.I.pg.3) about the follow-up of Taizé. It does seem to me that, though it means more work, the two things can complement each other.

Calendar

4. The calendar sent by Margaret Shannon is most helpful. As most of us are connected with women's organizations, it seems to me that we are a small but real channel of this information. Let us, therefore, spread the information we have received. Through the reactions to this, we could have already in December a rather concrete idea of who would be the women of our different organizations capable of acting as "catalysers" in their geographical area.
5. We need to make the calendar of events as comprehensive as possible. Could the WCC and the Council of the Laity give to the whole groups more information? This should enable in to perceive the unconscious "strategy" at work in the churches today. We need to know "where the action is". I agree 100% with Rosemary's opinion about the need for more information on studies and activities.

World day of prayer

6. Is there any progress in this questions? I have the feeling that this initiative needs to be put into context... or is it your experience that it works by itself??

Co-opting of persons

7. I subscribe again our decision in Dec.68 about the principle of co-opting persons for some studies and meetings of the group. It seems to me an extra-burden to the already complex group we form an eventual decision about somebody coopted on a more permanent basis. I state this not because I want "to protect" the group or to keep it isolated, but because I realize the exploratory nature of the group. This feature of the group has, to my mind, some consequences: a) that we define well our purpose; b) that we set ourselves quickly at action; c) that we have to end our task in a given, limited time.

Study

8. I am quite puzzled at this stage about this. In Dec.68 there was a suggestion (see minutes, pg.15, bottom) that "the co-chairmen should develop an analytical study of relevant material published about women". Since then, three important bibliographies have appeared: one of most recent books, in French, appeared in "Livres et lectures"; another one was drawn up by the WUCWO for its colloque on "women and Canon Law"; the third one by the "Dutch Working-group on cooperation of men and women". What does the group expect from Marga and me?
 a) That we "screen" these bibliographies and try to make out of lists operational suggestions for all groups of women? b) That we study as much as we can that bibliography and report on that? It seems to me that our task should be a), if our group is conceived as a group of action. Moreover if Liselotte Nold prepares the presentation we have asked her for the December meeting the ground will be covered.
9. My second question is related with point VI, pg.3 of Brigalia's report of the June meeting. If we adopt as theme for study "Conscientious Living in a World of change", what preparation do we expect for the December meeting? Is it something to be explored then?? I would think so, as the very basic ground of the practical implications of our existence has not yet been covered.

Dec.69 meeting

10. I have only one general remark about the meeting. I agree with Rosemary about the priority of "factual information, practical issues and strategy for study and action". But, again, the nature of our group keeps coming up. If we draw up a strategy (and I believe we should) we are launching a certain action. Is this the goal of our group?

11. As you probably know, I have organized in September in Holland a seminar on "cooperation of men and women", together with Tine Govaert-Halkes, from the "Dutch working-group". The seminar was intended only for persons who had been writing rather consistently about the questions. This project was planned immediately after the III world Congress of the Lay Apostolate and, therefore, before the creation of our group. Now, that this Seminar is over, I can see quite clearly that we - women of the Christian Churches - have to develop a strategy on different levels. I see our "groupe de liaison" as a platform for action. This is asked by women at the grass-root level as well as by women who are concerned more scholarly with the question. It seems to me that we are rather well equipped for that. I want, therefore, to stress that, at this moment, the gathering of information and its spreading, appears to me of paramount importance for our group. I hope that Rie Vendrik and Marianne Dirks, who have been also at the Seminar mentioned above, will help to clarify who can do what. I am not forgetting in this clarification the group of the "4" ... I believe that, at this moment, many different initiatives are needed and each one responds to a particular need. I feel that we are in a privileged position as all of us are involved in real action and able, therefore, to encourage efforts, to share experiences, to define frontiers in the goals to be reached, to contribute ~~for~~^{to} the pooling together of the hopes and aspirations of so many women.

12. With all this in mind I would like to see the agenda of the Dec.69 meeting as follows: (cf. point 8, pg.3, Brigalia's report)

I. Analysis of action:

- a) from Taizé
- b) from the answers to the letter of our group
and recommendations for global follow-up

II. Ecumenical education

- as seen in the analysis made in point I
- as possible projects (I would include here point V.b. "Case-studies and interesting projects that are going on in different parts of the world")

III. Present situation of ecumenical movement

- (could a working-document be prepared by WCC and Council of Laity about significant changes for our group)

IV. Present situation of women in the world (can we ask the different members of the group to bring with them some of the very new events and papers in this regard?)

V. Practical issues

(no remark!)

VI. Study

(see remarks made above about this)

N.B. This tentative agenda can be changed by the insights and suggestions coming from the answers to the Taizé questionnaire and to our joint letter.

Fundação Cuidar o Futuro