

August 21

"Women's culture in its traditional and new dimensions"

1. There are not only "local cultures" connected with geographic territories but also "group cultures" connected with social territories (e.g. workers' culture, peasant's culture, youth culture). Women's culture is one of those.

2. It is not because one is a woman nor because a group is made up of women that we can speak of "women's culture". Both individually and collectively, "women's culture" exists under certain conditions, namely:

- the person has an identity as a woman, is aware of the whole of her being - likewise the group brings ^{its} the women's sociological composition to a rational level;

- one's own experience as a woman is talked about so that the sharing of each other's experience may enlighten one's own unfolding of the being-a-woman.

3. The social territory covered by the women's culture covers the past experience of women as a group as well as the main features of today's experience of women and their reflection + study about that experience. Hence, the importance of:

- women's biographies (cf. Fr. van Ginneken's fascination with some great women saints!); and women's way of doing that have existed in the past;

- information on women's situation today (trends in relation to her presence in different types of activity, compatibility of family, remunerated work and other fields of interest + activity in the lives of women)



4. Women's culture as a very specific case of a "culture of silence". It shares with other minorities' culture the situations of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion. So its emergence is in direct continuity with the workers' movement and the liberation movements of the colonized peoples. It differs from other minorities' culture in the fact that it expresses also one of the basic relationships of the human condition: woman/man. This is why many women have difficulty to assume their full identity. Even without knowing it, they want man's love/admiration/protection. The women's culture is still today ambivalent.



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Formation, community, outreach: to whom?

1. The formation is more + more an initiation. I think that it is very important in this process to share lives + concerns of different Grail members for short periods in the typical set-up of fully-fledged members and to reflect with them about the experience.

2. Community in a lay situation is, ^{above all,} the community of mission + purpose.

Secondly, it is the community of the same spirituality to be reinforced by occasions of deepening + reflection.

Throughout these 2 dimensions, runs a thread of friendship + mutual support.

All these elements should be present every time we offer to new people an experience of community.

3. "Outreach" is one dimension of Grail life. In the present time it should happen beyond all borders: national + confessional.

4. Outreach, community and formation ought to be offered to all the young women in whose lives there is:

- a reverence for the Mystery and a genuine search for God;
- a commitment to the work for other human beings + for society as a whole;
- a rooting in one's own being + culture as a woman together with other women.



5. Outreach and its follow-ups can form the basis of an experience of formation + community. First contacts have to be pursued by letters, visits, real sharing in two directions. Meetings of small groups around an important issue for those involved are a help.



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