

The Impact of the Second Vatican Council on the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society (1959-1968)

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It is common for people to use the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) as a benchmark when dating events in recent Roman Catholic Church history. More than just an important event, it has become a symbol of radical change from an old Church to a new Church. Not only specific reforms are dated by the Council. Even less tangible things such as attitudes are designated as pre- or post- Vatican II.

The numerous commentaries on the Council are witness to the complexity of the reforms and documents it produced.¹ Alongside these studies of the development of Vatican II theology, there is a need to examine the impact of the Council on communities within the Church. In addition to illuminating the concerns and hopes of Catholics that found expression at the Council, these studies would help clarify where there is continuity and where there is change between the “old Church” and the “new Church.”

This paper will focus on the Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, the only English-speaking Catholic mission society in Canada. Ideally a study of the impact of the Council on Scarboro would involve looking at its entire history from its beginnings to the present, a task beyond the scope of this paper. Instead, it will focus on the period immediately preceding the Council, the Council years, and the years immediately following it. The Society’s General Chapter Meetings of 1959 and 1968 serve as useful demarcations of this time span. Responding to the various challenges of an increasingly diverse mission field, this period was an important time of reflection within the Society on the role of the missionary.

A brief account of the background to the decade under discussion begins at the turn of the century when John Mary Fraser went as a missionary to

¹ For example, there is the four-volume work *Commentary On the Documents of Vatican II*, edited by Herbert Vorgrimler (New York: Herder and Herder, 1966).

China.² He was the first English-Canadian Catholic priest to do so. Concerned with the large non-Christian Chinese population, he returned to Canada with the intention of establishing a seminary to train missionaries for work in China. In 1918 he was authorized to establish the “China Mission College” in Almonte, Ontario. The following September it opened with a staff of four and a student body of twelve. In 1921 the college, renamed The St. Francis Xavier China Mission Seminary, was moved to Scarborough, Ontario.

In 1926 the first mission band of Scarboro priests reached the Chuchow/Lishui region in Chekiang Province, where they were joined by Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from Pembroke in 1929.³ They worked there until their work was interrupted in 1943 by the Japanese invasion. Although they returned after the war, the civil war and communist victory put an end to their work in China by 1954. In 1940 the Vatican had approved the Constitutions of the renamed Scarboro Foreign Mission Society. The unrest of the 1940’s prompted Scarboro to look in other areas for new mission fields. At the invitation of Archbishop Richard Pittini of Santo Domingo, the Society began sending missionaries to the Dominican Republic in 1943, Japan in 1948, British Guiana in 1953, the Philippines in 1955, St. Vincent in 1957, and the Bahamas in 1958.

In 1951 the Society established new Constitutions which stated that the “general purpose of the Society is the glory of God and the sanctification of its members through the observance of the divine and ecclesiastical laws, and of these constitutions.” The “special purpose of the Society is the preaching of the Gospel in the territories assigned to it by the Vicar of Jesus Christ through the Sacred Congregation of *Propaganda Fide*.⁴ In the decree stating that the Society would be subject to the authority of the Congregation, the special purpose of the Society was further clarified as “the conversion of pagan people.”⁵

Lines of authority within the Society were clearly indicated, with supreme authority vested in the Superior General who governed with the aid of Assistants General.⁶ Together they formed the General Council and it was

² The story of Scarboro's work in China is told in Grant Maxwell's work *Assignment in Chekiang: 71 Canadians in China, 1902-1954*, (Scarborough, Ont.: Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, 1982).

³ Several orders of Sisters have worked with Scarboro. Most prominent are the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception from Pembroke, Ont. and Our Lady's Missionaries. They have run hospitals, orphanages, and schools.

⁴ Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, *Constitutions*, 1951, 1/2,3.

⁵ *Ibid.*, I/41.

⁶ *Ibid.*, I/94.

their responsibility to elect Regional Superiors for each mission region.⁷ They were elected at the meeting of the General Chapter, which was to meet every ten years to revise the Constitutions, if necessary, and to establish Society policy.

Behaviour and responsibilities of missionaries in formation and in the field were also legislated. The Rule for the Seminary included an annual retreat, weekly confession, and frequent reception of Holy Communion. The daily Rule included meditation, assistance at Holy Mass, recitation of the Rosary, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and spiritual reading.⁸ They were encouraged to practice perfect obedience to the Rule, which was “not intended to be a bondage to limit their freedom, but a spiritual discipline which is necessary for the priest, above all if he is to acquire priestly virtue and Christian humility.”⁹

Missionaries were instructed that their primary concern was their “own personal sanctification and salvation,” for it was felt that their personal sanctity was related to their success as apostles.¹⁰ They were to respect the authority of the Ordinaries and Superiors,¹¹ exercise the virtues of chastity and temperance,¹² and observe the rule of their mission.¹³ As communication was important whether the missionary was working with Catholics or non-Catholics, he was instructed to study both the language and the culture of the people among whom he lived.¹⁴ Frequent visits to Catholics and catechumens,¹⁵ the encouragement of native vocations,¹⁶ and the training of catechists,¹⁷ were important elements of the priest’s work with Catholics. Both the knowledge of local customs and the contacts made through visits would aid the missionary in his work of converting pagans.

For the most part the Constitutions dealt with the government, membership and financial organization of the Society. There is very little indication of the kinds of political, cultural, economic or social situations the priests encountered or appropriate responses available to them. However,

⁷ *Ibid.*, I/155

⁸ *Ibid.*, II/208.

⁹ *Ibid.*, II/203.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, III/237.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, II/233, 235, 238.

¹² *Ibid.*, II/239, 240.

¹³ *Ibid.*, II/242.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, III/251, 257.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, II/246.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, II/252.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, II/253.

there is an appendix containing a Vatican instruction on the abstention of missionaries from secular matters.¹⁸ The only specific reference to the poverty of the people is found in the instruction to missionaries to avoid displays of wealth.¹⁹ However, the difficulties encountered by the priests are suggested in the instruction that newly arrived priests should be encouraged against losing heart.²⁰ Missionaries were told that their hardships could be “a most efficacious means of mortification, if accepted and borne with resignation to the will of God.”²¹ Further, there is little suggestion on how the missionary could seek the salvation of people besides the baptism of dying infants.²²

Although one writer has said of the Second Vatican Council that the “very calling of the Council itself stirred the imagination,”²³ there is no sign that it had this effect on Scarboro. There is no mention of John XXIII’s announcement in the Society’s monthly publication, *Scarboro Missions*,²⁴ despite the fact that John’s encyclical *Ad Petri Cathedram* specified the spread of the Catholic faith as a pressing topic for the Council.²⁵ Strangely enough, the first reference to the Council is found in a humorous article published in May, 1962, on the need for better golfing instruction in the seminary.²⁶ The *Acts* of the Third General Chapter, which met for three weeks in July of 1959, do not deviate fundamentally from the *Acts* of the 1949 Chapter nor the 1951 *Constitutions*.

The 1959 Acts do suggest ways in which Scarboro priests could respond to the poverty they encountered. Many of the priests came from Nova Scotia and were familiar with the work of Dr. Coady and Dr. Tompkins. Working under the auspices of St. Francis Xavier University in Antigonish, these two

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Appendix C, “On Abstention From Secular Cares: Instruction of the Sacred Congregation of *Propaganda Fide* on Dissociating Missioners From Concern with Secular Affairs,” January 6, 1920.

¹⁹ *Constitutions*, III/241.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, II/236.

²¹ *Ibid.*, II/240.

²² *Ibid.*, III/254.

²³ Jude Dougherty, ed., *The Impact of Vatican II*, (St. Louis: B. Herder Book Company, 1966), p. v.

²⁴ The primary source for this paper is the Society’s magazine. First published in 1919 under the name *China*, it came out eleven times a year. In 1950 it was renamed *Scarboro Missions*.

²⁵ John XXIII, *Ad Petri Cathedram*, June 29, 1959.

²⁶ John Fullerton, “The Clergy and Golf,” *Scarboro Missions (SM)*, 43 (May, 1962): 10. The article was a dialogue with a layman who proposed to present a report to the Council recommending that laymen be appointed as golf instructors at all seminaries.

priests inspired a movement known as the Antigonish Movement. Combining co-operative theory with adult education, they taught people to organize community responses to economic hardship. In 1957 Scarboro opened a residence in Antigonish to serve as a centre of publicity and vocation work in eastern Canada. It also served as a residence for priests studying co-operative theory at St. Francis Xavier University. The Chapter Acts instructed the Society to take full advantage of the residence by sending alumni priests there to take a Social Leadership Course.²⁷ Selected students at the Seminary would be sent to take a course in “social catechetical doctrine, including the study of co-operatives.”²⁸

At the time of the Chapter the Society had sixty-eight priests working in six mission areas, with the largest missions located in Japan and Santo Domingo. With fifty-nine students studying at the Seminary and eighteen students expected to enter the novitiate in the fall, the Chapter concluded optimistically expecting continued growth within the Society. By this time, the relatively homogeneous mission field of China had been replaced by a varied collection of Asian and South American countries, each with different challenges and difficulties.

Just as Fraser had gone to China to convert the Chinese, Scarboro went to Japan with the intention of making converts. Despite one missionary’s report that the “conversion rate has been satisfactory,”²⁹ it was frequently stated in *Scarboro Missions* that it was difficult to convert the Japanese. Among the older people the problem was said to be traditional Buddhist and Shinto religious ties,³⁰ while the younger people were thought to be too involved in the post-war economic boom to be interested in religion.³¹ Once a fledgling Catholic community was established, there remained the problem of maintaining it in an environment which was “almost one hundred per cent pagan.”³² Since young people often had to move away from their families to find work, factories were rated according to whether or not Catholics could practice their faith freely.³³ The establishment of Catholic schools as an alternative to pagan schools was also a priority because children spent as much time as possible in school.³⁴ The priests worked to overcome the

²⁷ Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, *Acts of the Third General Chapter, 1959*, II/3/Instruction 30.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, II/3/Instruction 33.

²⁹ Cleary Villeneuve, “To Feed the Hungry,” *SM*, 40 (July-August, 1959): 8.

³⁰ Michael Cox, “Through Adversity to Faith,” *SM*, 42 (October, 1961): 17-18.

³¹ Thomas O’Toole, “Tourists!” *SM*, 42 (December, 1961): 26.

³² Thomas Morrissey, “Mission in Nagoya,” *SM*, 43 (April, 1962): 17.

³³ Donald Boyle, “North to Ichinomiya,” *SM*, 43 (June, 1962): 10.

³⁴ Francis Hawkshaw, “Mission of St. John Kinuya,” *SM*, 43 (June, 1962): 27.

difficulties they encountered by organizing lay organizations such as Young Christian Workers and the Legion of Mary.³⁵ Small groups of Catholics, called Neighbourhood Associations, were established for the mutual support of their members, although it was also hoped that their cohesiveness and their charitable acts would attract their neighbours to the Church.³⁶

Conversion was a concern for the missionaries in British Guiana and the Bahamas as well. British Guiana presented a challenge because of its multi-racial community. While catechetical classes would be well attended in some parishes, in other areas contact was made over a period of time through the parish school.³⁷

As a mission field the Bahamas were unique because here the priests focused on making Catholics out of Protestants. One missionary, after reporting that the Scarboro priests saw Nassau as “a city of souls to be saved,” went on to explain that the problem was “how to win these people, not from paganism, but from Protestantism to the true Church.”³⁸ Commenting on the 90% illiteracy rate among the adults, another priest expressed the hope that “after the people become better educated they will find that the Catholic Church is the true Church.”³⁹

The work of the Society in Latin America and the Philippines was distinguished from the work done in the other mission fields by the fact that these countries were considered Catholic. Scarboro had been invited to the Dominican Republic, to the Philippines and, in 1961, to Brazil because of the shortage of priests in these countries. Articles in *Scarboro Missions* describing the work done there focused on the sacramental ministry of the priests with emphasis on the need for more priests to handle the numbers of people.⁴⁰ They stressed the need to build chapels in mission outposts so that

³⁵ Paul Flaherty, “The Ichinomiya Story,” *SM*, 41 (December, 1960): 11-12.

³⁶ Claire Yaeck, “A New Approach to the Apostolate in Japan – Neighbourhood Groups,” *SM*, 42 (March, 1961): 5-7.

³⁷ Wallace Chisholm, “the labourers are few,” *SM*, 42 (July-August, 1961): 9-10.

³⁸ Harold Oxley, “With the Scarboro Fathers in Nassau,” *SM*, 39 (May, 1958): 23-24.

³⁹ Charles Cummins, “Cat Island,” *SM*, 41 (January, 1960): 26.

⁴⁰ John Gault, “Service of Success,” *SM*, 43 (September, 1962): 4; Vincent Daniel, “Come, Follow Me!,” *SM*, 41 (March, 1960): 7; John McIver, “Vincente and the Virgin,” *SM*, 40 (June, 1959): 10-11; Michael O’Kane, “The Church in Brazil Today,” *SM*, 43 (September, 1962): 23-24; John Gault, “God Had His Way...,” *SM*, 40 (July-August, 1959): 14-15. The need for priests to bring the sacraments to people was a common concern for the Society as a whole. The following articles written in 1959 from St. Vincent are examples of this: Eugene G. Doyle, “Jottings,” *SM*, 40 (February, 1959): 14-16; Leo Curtin, “Father Leo Goes to Jail,” *SM*, 40 (February, 1959): 23.

the priest would have a place to say Mass and the community would have a place to gather to say the Rosary and prayers in his absence.⁴¹ In many areas the priests were limited to infrequent missions which followed a pattern of instruction on the sacraments, confessions, Mass, marriages and baptisms, with large numbers of people partaking of the sacraments perhaps for the first time in years.⁴²

The diversity of situations encountered by the missionaries spawned a variety of concerns. Working in countries where the culture had been shaped by religious traditions other than European Catholicism caused Scarboro to deal with the issues of cultural adaptation. While there were articles in *Scarboro Missions* on the religious life of the host countries that concluded that it was up to the missionary to bring “the Light and Love that will banish the darkness in which they live,”⁴³ there was a growing concern that the missionary understand and respect the culture of the country. Scarboro tried “‘baptizing into the Catholic Faith’ everything that is naturally good in the customs of a country.”⁴⁴ This was particularly the case in Japan, where the missionary found a highly developed and ancient culture.⁴⁵ At least one Scarboro priest obtained a Master’s Degree in Oriental Studies at Columbia University.⁴⁶ Even in Latin American countries cultural differences were considered important. In the early sixties priests headed to missions there received their preparation at Ivan Illich’s Centre of Intercultural Formation at Cuernavaca, Mexico.

Poverty was a major factor in many of the areas in which Scarboro missionaries worked. Although one priest expressed the opinion that hungry people were not very receptive to spiritual matters,⁴⁷ articles published in *Scarboro Missions* often emphasized the spiritual riches of some people

⁴¹ “Azua Needs Mission Chapels,” *SM*, 41 (May, 1960): 22; John Gault, “I Found My Servant...,” *SM*, 43 (October, 1962): 25.

⁴² Patrick Kelly, “Love and Pesos,” *SM*, 42 (July-August, 1961): 12-14; Joseph Moriarty, “Parish Mission Latin American Style,” *SM*, 42 (November, 1961): 22-3; Vincent Daniel, “Desobriga,” *SM*, 44 (February, 1963): 24-26.

⁴³ Wallace Chisholm, “Strange Tales From Guiana,” *SM*, 39 (February, 1958): 18-19.

⁴⁴ Thomas O’Toole, “Golden Week in Japan,” *SM*, 39 (April, 1958): 14.

⁴⁵ Edgar Geier, “Japan,” *SM*, 42 (November, 1961): 9.

⁴⁶ “Mission News,” *SM*, 43 (October, 1962): 15. The priest was Bill Schultz.

⁴⁷ “Their Need is Our Concern,” *SM*, 41 (July-August, 1960): 8. Interestingly, the article went on to say “The poor of the world hunger and thirst. After what... charity? No. Not Charity. Justice. Social Justice. World Justice.” This emphasis on justice rather than charity is an adumbration of later thinking in the Society.

living in poverty.⁴⁸ One editorial stated it was the responsibility of Canadians to help the poor supernaturalize their poverty.⁴⁹ Yet others were much more critical of the economic situation they encountered. One priest serving in the Bahamas, observing the contrast between the poverty of his parishioners and the wealth of tourists staying in the resorts, commented that he could now understand why some people became communists.⁵⁰ Another told of meeting two East Indian communists in British Guiana and of their conversation about poverty. He “dutifully tried to defend the ‘Christians’ (there is no need to defend Christ’s teaching) but they asked: ‘What are Christians *doing* to help the poor, the downtrodden and the persecuted masses in South America and the Caribbean?’”⁵¹

In some areas, particularly in the Dominican Republic following the assassination of Trujillo in 1961, poverty increased political instability.⁵² Scarboro priests were actively involved with *Caritas*, an organization which distributed food and clothing to the needy. Their work through this organization was considered instrumental in thwarting the efforts of “anti-Christian agitators” trying to take advantage of the chaos in the country.⁵³

Trying to find long-term solutions to poverty, Scarboro priests became involved in experiments with the co-operative movement. By 1955 they had established a network of credit unions throughout the Dominican Republic. During the political upheavals of the late fifties and early sixties, when it became nearly impossible to continue his work there, Fr. Harvey Steele worked for the creation of an international centre for the training of co-operative leaders.⁵⁴ The result was the establishment in 1964 of the Inter-American Co-operative Institute, (ICI), in Panama City. Through the sixties Scarboro priests worked in their other missions to establish credit unions also, although the movement suffered in the Dominican Republic due to the political upheavals.

⁴⁸ Two examples are John O’Connor, “But For the Grace of God,” *SM*, 39 (September, 1958): 26-7, and Harold Oxley, “A Port in a Storm,” 43 (January, 1962): 27-29.

⁴⁹ Harold Oxley, “Providential Poverty,” *SM*, 40 (October, 1959): 4.

⁵⁰ Harold Murphy, “Margaret of Green Castle,” *SM*, 41 (September, 1960): 15.

⁵¹ John Gault, “The Complex Caribbean,” *SM*, 43 (January, 1962): 25.

⁵² The same connection was noted in an article on poverty in the Philippines taken from the *Catholic Sentinel* of Manila. It reported that “no country is stable when its base is rooted in needless un-Christian poverty,” “Rural Poverty in the Philippines,” *SM*, 39 (June, 1958): 25.

⁵³ “*Caritas*,” *SM*, 41 (January, 1963): 25.

⁵⁴ The story of Steele’s work with credit unions is told in Gary MacEoin’s *Agent For Change: The Story of Pablo Steele*, (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1973).

When reasons were given for Scarboro's involvement in the co-operative movement they tended to focus on the enhancement of the missionary's work of saving souls. In many areas it was impossible to get the men to show up for religious instruction but it was possible to get them to come for a meeting to discuss their economic situation.⁵⁵ Political stability was also a concern. It was suggested that, in light of what had happened in Cuba, a priest equipped with an understanding of socio-economic principles coupled with a zeal for souls would be the best answer to Latin America's problems.⁵⁶

Political unrest was not a new problem for the Society. Their sojourn in China had coincided with a period of great upheaval. Following the end of the civil war several priests were interned by the Communists while the rest were forced to leave the country. Although they no longer worked in China, *Scarboro Missions* continued to publish articles critical of Mao's government.⁵⁷ Political ferment continued to be a factor for Scarboro, particularly in British Guiana and the Dominican Republic. In Guiana, which was torn by racial tensions and pre-independence political struggles, Scarboro priests preached against the communists.⁵⁸

In the Dominican Republic, which was experiencing the last days of the corrupt Trujillo regime, the Society was faced with the problem of opposing a Catholic leader. Initially they had co-operated with Trujillo until it became obvious that the people were identifying the Church with the abuses of his regime.⁵⁹ When the Dominican Bishops condemned the violations of human rights in the country in 1960, Scarboro found itself in the midst of an often violent struggle between Church and State, during which one member of the Society was expelled from the country.⁶⁰ Concerned that the communists would take over after Trujillo's assassination, Scarboro priests increased their efforts to strengthen Catholic lay organizations and to educate people about the Church's social doctrine.⁶¹

Despite the facts that there was a perceived connection between socio-economic conditions and the attraction of communism, and that the Society

⁵⁵ John McIver, "Credit Unions – a manifestation of Our Unity in Christ," *SM*, 41 (November, 1960): 11.

⁵⁶ Michael O'Kane, "Amazon Town," *SM*, 44 (March, 1963): 6.

⁵⁷ Criticism of the communist government of China and of the Canadian government for considering the recognition of Mao's government was a frequent topic of the "Lest We Forget" column, which focused on China.

⁵⁸ Most Rev. Kenneth Turner, "A Trial for Santa Rosa," *SM*, 42 (May, 1961): 5.

⁵⁹ John Fullerton, "Persecution," *SM*, 43 (February, 1962): 12.

⁶⁰ John O'Connor was expelled in 1960 for criticizing Trujillo's regime.

⁶¹ "Mission News," *SM*, 43 (June, 1962): 20; "What Does He Do All Day?," *SM*, 44 (December, 1963): 10.

was clearly opposed to communism, there was disagreement within the Society about the involvement of priests in economic affairs. Steele found that while he was given the freedom by the Society to pursue his plans to establish the ICI, there were members of Scarboro who felt the only proper vocation of a missionary was the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments.⁶² The only editorial to address this issue argued that “Christ Himself did not try to correct all the social evils of His day. Nor did He commission His Apostles to do so.”⁶³

Throughout this period the picture of the missionary as one who restricted himself to preaching and administering the sacraments was challenged. Questions were raised about how much of what was preached was cultural and how much was essential to the Catholic Faith. Poverty was a problem because it distracted people from spiritual matters and led to political unrest. When priests became involved in activities to combat poverty the political implications could not be avoided. Nonetheless, the emphasis of the Society was on the care of the spiritual needs of the people, although this concern might involve them in economic or political matters.

Until the end of 1963 there are few indications in *Scarboro Missions* that a Council was being held in Rome. There were no thoughts expressed about a possible relationship between Scarboro’s experience in the field and the difficulty the Council was encountering while writing the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*. In fact, John XXIII’s death and the election of Paul VI passed with no mention at all. However, by the end of 1963 there were a few expectations expressed that the Council would emphasize the missionary vocation of the Church,⁶⁴ that it would take steps to ensure large quotas of missionaries,⁶⁵ and that it would enhance the integration of the Catholic Faith with the riches of world cultures.⁶⁶

By 1964 Vatican II had become a prominent feature in *Scarboro Missions’* articles. Issues that had concerned the Society previously were discussed in a new light. Scarboro priests were still building chapels, administering the sacraments, preaching missions, and seeking converts.⁶⁷

⁶² MacEoin, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁶³ John Gault, “Not Yet,” *SM*, 43 (April, 1962): 4.

⁶⁴ Harold Oxley, “Pope Paul VI and the Missions,” *SM*, 44 (October, 1963): 4.

⁶⁵ Fides News Service, “Why Pray For Missionaries?,” *SM*, 44 (September, 1963): 22.

⁶⁶ Harold Oxley, “The Greatest Difficulty,” *SM*, 44 (November, 1963): 22.

⁶⁷ Michael O’Kane, “Spiritual Revival in Brazil,” *SM*, 45 (January, 1964): 8-14; Craig Strang, “The Great New St. Gregory the Great,” *SM*, 45 (May, 1964): 10-12; Francis Thomley, “A Milestone on the Corentyne,” *SM*, 45 (September, 1964): 20-21; George Courtright, “Green Cross,” *SM*, 45 (November, 1964): 18.

However, the value of this work was no longer taken for granted and the methods of the past were held up for examination and often criticism.

The argument for cultural adaptation is a good example of how discussion changed after the Council. One missionary suggested that the presence at the Council of bishops from around the world had illustrated the diversity in the Church.⁶⁸ Whereas previously the model for The Faith was European Catholicism with Italian flavours, he argued, the missionary must now adopt in a culture whatever he could without hindering the progress of the Church. A former “China hand” suggested, for the first time, that it was possible, in light of the Council, to conclude that the Society could have done better work in China had it accepted the culture and the customs of the people.⁶⁹ Cultural adaptation was not a new idea but it now had the authority of the Council. Even more importantly, actions and attitudes dating from before the Council were now held up for criticism.

Another very significant change came in the perception of the role of the missionary in social and economic affairs. By 1966 the argument of some members of the Society was that the missionary was not only interested in the “religious” work of saving souls but in the complete development of all human qualities.⁷⁰ There was a growing feeling that priests had to be involved in the whole life of a community. In a report of the work of one Scarborough priest in the Dominican Republic, it was stated that the role of the priest is to bring Christ to the people and “in this world, the reality of Christ is not only in doctrine and sacraments, it is in relief of poverty, and in the satisfaction a man finds in raising his family by the sweat of his brow.”⁷¹

In Japan, where there was little interest in the sacraments or doctrine of the Church, involvement in the lives of people beyond the religious sphere was considered an important Christian witness. A priest who did what he could to help people live decent lives was showing “an example of living Christianity.”⁷² A parallel was drawn between the missionary in Japan and Paul, who encountered laughter when he used arguments in Athens, but who won admiration when people saw his life animated by Christ’s love.⁷³

During this period the idea that a priest could be an agent for political stability was also reexamined. It was suggested that perhaps there was some

⁶⁸ John Fullerton, “Cultural Approach to the Missions,” *SM*, 45 (December, 1964): 8.

⁶⁹ Lawrence Beal, “A Culture of Its Own,” *SM*, 48 (July-August, 1967): 8-9.

⁷⁰ Harold Oxley, “Hollywood Style,” *SM*, 47 (November, 1966): 9.

⁷¹ Harold Oxley, “Father Louis’ Farm,” *SM*, 47 (December, 1966): 17.

⁷² Harold Oxley, “Mr. Oishi’s Rice Farm,” *SM*, 47 (May, 1966): 8.

⁷³ Donald Boyle, “You Are Witnesses...,” *SM*, 49 (March, 1968): 9.

truth to the accusation made by communists that the Church had identified with the rich rather than the poor.⁷⁴ One priest working in the Philippines argued that because the Church had been separated from the poor for too long, it had taken a long time to recognize the problems which threatened to turn the people to violence.⁷⁵ There was a concern that if a priest failed to recognize the legitimate grievances of the poor then he lost his ability to maintain peace in the community.

Events in the Dominican Civil War of 1965, however, dramatically illustrated for the Society how siding with the poor could place the priest in direct opposition to the government. When thirty-three of his parishioners were arrested as suspected rebels, Fr. Art MacKinnon openly criticized the action from the pulpit, cancelling the *Corpus Christi* procession in protest. Shortly after he had negotiated their release he was shot on a dark road by two police officers, who were in turn shot by a soldier. It is suspected that had he not been on vacation at the time, the pastor of MacKinnon's parish, Fr. Joe Moriarty, could have also been a target.⁷⁶ He had allowed the Dominican Revolutionary Political Party to use the parish hall for their meetings. While the Regional Superior, Paul Ouellette, praised MacKinnon as a true modern martyr "who fearlessly spoke the truth and willingly offered up his life for the cause of social justice in the Dominican Republic,"⁷⁷ there were Scarboro priests who thought he had imprudently meddled in political matters.⁷⁸

From 1964 to 1968 the articles published in *Scarboro Missions* reflect a desire to consider the implication of the Council for the missionary. It was felt that the internal renewal begun at the Council would be a stimulus to the furthering of the Church's vocation to carry the Gospel to all people.⁷⁹ Themes singled out for consideration included liturgical reform,⁸⁰ religious liberty,⁸¹ dialogue with non-Christians,⁸² community life and Christian

⁷⁴ John McIver, "Social Changes – Social Problems," *SM*, 46 (March, 1965): 24.

⁷⁵ Anthony Martin, "Philippine Report," *SM*, 48 (December, 1967): 6.

⁷⁶ Harvey Steele, *Why Kill a Priest*, (Burlington, Ont.: Crown Publications, 1982), p. 20.

⁷⁷ Paul Ouellette, "A Martyr For Social Justice," *SM*, 46 (October, 1965): 8.

⁷⁸ Steele, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁷⁹ Howard Shea, "The Challenge," *SM*, 46 (April, 1965): 5.

⁸⁰ Most Rev. Kenneth Turner, "Consolation From the Council," *SM*, 45 (February, 1964): 8-12.

⁸¹ Harold Oxley, "It's Up to Them," *SM*, 47 (February, 1966): 4.

⁸² "Missions – The Vocation of the Church," *SM*, 47 (February, 1966): 20-26.

witness,⁸³ and unity.⁸⁴ There was a concern to reflect on how these themes affected the vocation to bring the Gospel to all people because, as one article pointed out, the need for this vocation had been called into question. In this case the article was written in response to those who interpreted the “Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions” as saying that there was no need to preach the Gospel.⁸⁵

By 1965 the perception of a new missionary for a new Church became a recurring theme. Editorials in the magazine argued that each ordination represented the possibility of new ideas, structures and approaches to the problems of modern society.⁸⁶ Seminary faculty perceived in the seminarians a new image of a priest who was concerned with the temporal aspects of the human condition and not solely with the eternal.⁸⁷ One Scarboro priest speaking about the concern for justice in the Seminary in the sixties said, “For us as students this all seemed normal because we were the new wave, the new ideas.”⁸⁸ At the same time there was also a concern expressed within the Society that the new generation not forget the heritage of the Society.⁸⁹

New structures in the seminary reflected the perception of the new seminarian. In 1960 the Vocation Director had written that because a priest needed to learn obedience, a candidate’s life was organized by the bell.⁹⁰ Gradually, however, the Rule was relaxed and ultimately it was abolished in 1968. It was felt that any man old enough to choose the priesthood had to be mature enough to discipline himself and act responsibly.⁹¹ The reform was also considered a reflection of the new mood of individuality and freedom pervading the Church.⁹²

Following the instructions of Paul VI and the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith that they should meet to reform their Society to conform with Vatican II, Scarboro called their fourth General Chapter to be held in the summer of 1968. This Chapter, which coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Society, was considered a “Chapter of renewal.” It met to

⁸³ Samuel Morreale, “Why Missionaries?,” *SM*, 49 (November, 1968): 19-21.

⁸⁴ Gerald Curry, “Contact!,” *SM*, 47 (October, 1966): 18-22

⁸⁵ “Meeting the Non-Christians,” *SM*, 48 (July-August, 1967): 10-14.

⁸⁶ Harold Oxley, “New Breed Thinking,” *SM*, 46 (December, 1965): 4; “Ordained to Die,” *SM*, 47 (July-August, 1966): 4.

⁸⁷ Howard Shea, “And a Word From the Faculty,” *SM*, 48 (May, 1967): 27. 88

⁸⁸ Interview, Terry O’Sullivan, May 15, 1985.

⁸⁹ Donald Boyle, “The Passage of Time,” *SM*, 49 (July-August, 1968): 4.

⁹⁰ Vincent Daniel, “He Was Subject to Them,” *SM*, 41 (December, 1960): 13.

⁹¹ Harold Oxley, “Our Boys Grow Up,” *SM*, 47 (May, 1966): 4.

⁹² Neil McMullin, “The Reform,” *SM*, 46 (April, 1965): 20-21.

re-evaluate the Society in light of the needs of the modern world and the new image of the Church.⁹³ In response to a questionnaire sent out to Scarboro priests before the Chapter, fifty-eight of the sixty-eight priests replying said they felt an early change in the Society's approach was necessary; twenty-six felt it should be radical change.⁹⁴

To facilitate this change the Constitutions of the Society were suspended and the Chapter focused on establishing guidelines which were meant to be experimental.⁹⁵ In the reform of the structure of the Society major concerns were authority and decision-making processes. Principles of collegiality, autonomy, and subsidiarity were affirmed as the guiding principles for the Society.⁹⁶ In a major step towards decentralization of the Society the election of Regional Superiors ceased to be the responsibility of the General Council and instead was left to the Regional community.⁹⁷

Much of the Chapter dealt with questions raised in reports written the year prior to the Chapter concerning the work of the Society in the field. In response to the questionnaire sent out before the meeting, the majority of priests said they felt that the missionary approach that emphasized the sacraments and the numbers administered had mediocre results.⁹⁸ Alternative ways of understanding mission were explored, keeping in mind that the Council had affirmed the understanding that the Church was a "sign through which God's salvation is offered to man."⁹⁹ At the same time they allowed for the possibility of salvation outside of the Church.¹⁰⁰

Many of the ideas presented were not new but were reiterations of ideas articulated in the magazine since 1964. Service to the community through socio-economic involvement was considered an appropriate witness to Christ even if a priest was not yet able to proclaim the full Gospel.¹⁰¹ Preaching was interpreted to include dealing with contemporary problems in light of the Gospel, and the example of an honourable life.¹⁰² Even if no converts were made, it was suggested that institutions could be established on Christian

⁹³ Scarboro Foreign Mission Society, *Acts of the Fourth General Chapter*, 1968, p. vi.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. viii.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. ix-x.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, III/J/87.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11. 100

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 107.

principles.¹⁰³ Taking the Conciliar idea of the Church as the People of God, it was felt that emphasis should be laid on the communal side of the Church rather than the institutional.¹⁰⁴

Not surprisingly, these reports did not represent a consensus within the Society. One delegate present at the Chapter remembers the meetings' being deadlocked. Then one priest stood up and broke the impasse by saying that it was obvious there was a new way of looking at things and perhaps it was time to listen.¹⁰⁵ Thus experimentation and change became an accepted feature of the life of the Society. However, growth was not taken for granted any longer. Once having student numbers ranging from sixty to ninety, they were now expecting only twenty seminarians in the fall.

This Chapter was an important event in the history of the Society for a number of reasons. Although the ideas presented to the Chapter had been expressed previously, they were now presented to the major decision-making body of Scarboro. Instead of a definitive picture of a missionary the meeting established a policy of experimentation. To facilitate this they decentralized the structure of the Society allowing for individuality and freedom. For the first time the emphasis was placed on the discussion of the experience of missionaries rather than legislative matters.

In order to evaluate fully the impact of Vatican II on the Society it would be necessary to examine the results of the experimentation that followed the 1968 Chapter. However, even during the last two years of the Council and those immediately following, it is possible to see changes in the understanding of the role of the missionary. Out of the discussion concerning the role of the priest in the social, economic, political and cultural realms emerged a common theme that the whole man, not just the functional aspects of his priesthood, had to become involved with the whole person, not just with his or her religious life.

Yet it would be a mistake to think that the concerns were new. Poverty, political unrest, and inter-cultural dialogue had been features of the societies in which Scarboro priests had worked for years. Missionaries had been responding in various ways to the challenges these elements presented according to their particular situation. The Second Vatican Council was an institutional attempt to address the situation in the modern world that Scarboro priests had encountered daily.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵ Interview, Terry O'Sullivan, May 15, 1985.

This is not to say that the Council merely accomplished at another level of the Church what had already been done at the grassroots. The Council provided authority for free discussion and the expression of nontraditional ideas. With the perception it created of a new Church came the distance necessary to allow an evaluation of the past. It also became acceptable to have a nonhomogeneous community, because individuality and freedom were highly valued. This is reflected in the structural changes in the Seminary and within the Society's authority structure, changes which allowed for greater freedom and responsibility for individual members and individual regional communities. The Scarborough Foreign Mission Society had been challenged by the realities of the modern world before the Council. However, the Second Vatican Council created an environment which made it possible for the Society to experiment with new ideas, approaches and structures in their work of preaching the Good News.