

APARECIDA and AEC



Aparecida at Prayer



AEC and APARECIDA

What is the AEC?

- The Antilles Episcopal Conference (AEC) comprises the Roman Catholic Hierarchy of the Catholic Dioceses of
 - . the Dutch and English-speaking Caribbean (CARICOM)
 - . and the French-speaking territories except Haiti.
- Includes 13 independent countries from:
 - . Belize in the West,
 - . Bermuda in the North and
 - . Cayenne in the South-East.
- The conference's 21 ecclesiastical units include:
 - . five Archdioceses and
 - . Fourteen Dioceses,
 - . total population: 8.4 million,
 - . 2.4 million: Roman Catholic.

- Antilles Episcopal Conference:
 - . Current President : Archbishop Donald Reece of Kingston, Jamaica.

- . AEC Secretariat in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad:
 - . Coordination activities of the Conference:
 - . hosting Annual Plenary Meetings of the Bishops
 - . Other frequent meetings:
 - . Permanent Board
 - . Regional Seminary Board
 - . Finance Commission.

- Other AEC Commissions:

Catechetic,	Doctrine	Ecumenism
Education	Family & Life	Justice & Peace
Laity	Youth	Evangelization & Mission
Liturgy & Ministry	Tourism	Migrants & Refugees

AEC was at Aparecida



AEC representation at Aparecida

- Total population of Latin America and the Caribbean:
 - . 600 million
 - . 22 Episcopal Conferences
 - . 150 Cardinals, Archbishops and Bishops participated in Aparecida

- Population AEC:
 - 8.4 million, (1% population LA & Caribbean)
 - Representatives at Aparecida:
 - Archbishop Don Reece, of Kingston,
 - Archbishop Robert Rivas of Castries,
 - Bishop Luis Secco of Willemstad in Curacao,
 - Bishop Robert Kurtz of Hamilton in Bermuda (3% of total Bishops at Aparecida).

- Other participants:
 - 115 priests, sisters and laity, including:
 - Sr. Priscilla Clement of St Lucia,
 - Fr. Carl Clarke of Jamaica (2 % of the non-Episcopal participants).

- AEC **well-represented** making important inputs to Aparecida Document (AD) especially the section on Catholic education.

AEC Review of Evangelization after Aparecida (SEE)

At the March 2008 Annual Plenary meeting of the AEC in Rome the Bishops assessed the current state of evangelization in the region following Aparecida.

Conclusions

- For years local Catholic Churches in the Region have been experiencing a hemorrhaging in membership; Factors include:
 - . Catholic culture vs. Protestant culture
 - . levels of poverty
 - . effectiveness of Catholic formation/education.
- Catholics have been evangelized to:
keep the commandments, attend Mass, be kind to others,
- But they were not trained or formed:
 - . to become missionaries as lay people
 - . only Priests and Religious portrayed as missionaries.
- Aparecida: evangelize differently:
 - . to form dedicated Catholic Christians, missionaries.

Focus on Key Priority for response (Judge)

- Conference Theme “The Christian as Disciple and Missionary” highlighted urgent double-barreled thrust to
 1. stem the hemorrhaging &
 2. instill life & powerful sense of mission/vocation in each local Church.
- **To identify one priority area of the goals and objectives of the AD to guide the joint pastoral efforts of AEC in immediate future.**
- **The AEC decided to focus on Chapter 6:
“The Formative Journey of Missionary Disciples”
with emphasis on Catechesis - life-long learning process of adult faith formation to accompany religious formation of children & youth” (Paragraphs 276-300).**

Priorities for the AEC (cont)

Vocation & commitment to be disciples & missionaries of Jesus in Latin America & the Caribbean require clear & firm option:

- . for formation of our communities
- . for the sake of all baptized
- . regardless of the role they play in Church. (AD 276)

Aparecida document highlights 5 steps in the process of forming missionary disciples:

1. Encounter with Jesus Christ who calls us to follow him.
2. Conversion to following him through the Action of the Spirit.
3. Discipleship, maturing in love & following Jesus, enabling us to persevere in Christian life & mission.
4. Communion, since no Christian life except in community & with its pastors to mature in life of the spirit.
5. Mission, as disciples go to the world to proclaim Jesus Christ & practice love & service of the neediest.

AEC Pastoral Letter on Catechesis and Guidelines for Catechesis

The Antilles Bishops noted that:

“These steps are similar to those proposed by General Catechetical Directory, adopted by AEC in its Pastoral Letter on Catechesis, and applied in the region (2000):

1. Knowledge of the faith
 2. Formation based on Faith Knowledge
 3. Commitment to the Lord flowing from knowledge and formation
 4. Mission as a result of informed Commitment
- The AEC underlines that “each of the four elements must be present in the life of mature Christian”.
 - Their interaction is the heart of the growth formula for a Christian. (AEC Pastoral Letter on Catechesis Art 27)

Implementation of AD in AEC (Act)

- To Sensitize every Catholic Community in the Antilles:

That “The vocation and commitment to be disciples & missionaries of Jesus Christ,

today in Latin America and the Caribbean

require a clear & firm option:

- . for the formation of our communities
- . for the sake of all the baptized
- . regardless the role they play in Church.”

(AD 276)

Methodology

Methodology agreed by the AEC Plenary Meeting:

- . to use almost exclusively already-existing Church Community groups and activities:
 - . 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, to implement the programme.

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.

ACTIVITIES TO DATE

- **Facilitation of Translation in English,
Publication of first English edition of Aparecida,
Distribution of AD across the region**

- **Spirit & message of Aparecida in Diocesan publications
& regional Catholic Press, web sites**

- **Theme of Missionaries and Disciples for Synods, Regional
activities, AEC Commission programmes, 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**
 - ❖ **Programme of Catechetical Commission supported
Missionaries in North West Guyana**
 - ❖ **Seminary training programmes**
 - ❖ **Planned Regional Retreat for Diocesan Catechetical
Coordinators , CATC activities, etc**

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,

Expected Results

Goal AEC programme:

- . to implement Aparecida producing missionary disciples in all church groups participating in process & key members of teams to multiply the initial impact in dioceses across the Conference.

- **WITH THE CONFIDENCE OF THE CHURCH AT APARECIDA THAT MISSION AND DISCIPLESHIP ARE THE WORK OF CHRIST**

- We look to Jesus, who personally trained his apostles & disciples.

Christ gives us the method:

“Come and see” (Jn 1:39),

I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (Jn 14:6).

- With Him to develop potential in people and form missionary disciples.
- Like Him persistent patience and wisdom, continual invitation.
- To follow him into the mystery of the Kingdom
- After his death & resurrection, to preach Good News in the power of his Spirit.
- His style characterizes those engaged in formation,
- Especially in current challenging times
- The Church must respond to the new socio-cultural context of Latin America and Caribbean. (AD 276)

THANK YOU

**QUESTIONS?
CLARIFICATIONS?**

AND ESPECIALLY SUGGESTIONS FOR

- 1- HOW CAN CATECHISTS BETTER RESPOND TO THE CHALLENGES OF APARECIDA FOR A NEW EVANGELIZATION?**
- 2. HOW CAN AEC SUPPORT THE WORK OF CATECHISTS, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS OF TRAINING & RECOGNIZING MISSIONARIES & DISCIPLES OF CHRIST ACROSS THE REGION?**