

ASSOCIATION OF SALESIAN COOPERATORS

ECONOMIC SOLIDARITY

LETTER-DOCUMENT
OF THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE WORLD CONSULTING BODY
ADDRESSED TO ALL THOSE WHO HOLD POSTS OF RESPONSIBILITY
IN THE ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 1996

“FINANCIAL SOLIDARITY IN THE ASSOCIATION”

From the reflections of the World Consulting Body (WCB)

to the final document written by the Administrator of the WCB

To:

Provincial Coordinators,
Provincial Administrators,
Provincial Delegates
Provincial Councillors

and for their information to:

Members of the World Consulting Body or “World Council” (WCB)

In charge of National or Regional Conferences

Dear Friends,

During our latest meeting of the WCB we reflected for long on the problem of financial solidarity in our Association and we have thought it necessary to involve all of you in this vital point by means of these reflections.

It is undeniable that the Association needs to support itself economically: no organization can function without some kind of self-financing. It is therefore a question of trying to see where to start to resolve this problem. The expectation is to reach a point where the Association is financed even at the world level.

The Regulations of Apostolic Life, as we know, foresee not only the local, provincial or national level of organization but also the world level. The world organism is constituted by the WCB, which has at its disposal a Central Executive Secretariat which takes care of the world dimension of the Association’s life by means of circulating information through Cooperatores and the preparation of materials of general interest, such as the “Commentary to the Regulations of Apostolic Life (1990), the “Manual for those in charge of the Association” (1993) and the “Guidelines for Formation” (1996). Furthermore the WCB participates in National or Regional Congresses (many of the Congresses count with the presence of the Coordinator General or of the members of the WCB), organizes itself congresses: as for instance, the Regional Congresses of 1993-94, and the Centenary Congress of Bologna 1995. The WCB meets every two years, where every Region has its own representative. In these meetings, it tackles the problems and challenges common to the different areas of the world, gives orientations and animates the Association according to the different needs.

Somebody could object: “we don’t need this organism”. This is not right. The activity of the WCB, in direct contact with the Provincial Councils, its direct interlocutors, reaches through them the Local Councils, and therefore the Centres, by means of stimuli, orientations and handouts or materials of different types. This Body keeps alive the world dimension of the Association.

In its latest meeting in Rome, Casa Generalizia, from July 23 to July 30, 1996, it reflected on financial solidarity. For us, it is a necessary condition for the good running of the Association at all levels. We are convinced, however, that beyond all the modalities and techniques of self-financing, what keeps us going is, first of all, the feeling of being part of an apostolic Association with a specific mission among the young and the masses.

The new Administrator, Mr. Oliviero Zoli, has tried to gather all the suggestions on financial solidarity made by the WCB and is submitting them hereby to the Provincial Administrators so that they, together with the other members of their respective Provincial Council, make a specific analysis of such material and then transmit the results to the local Administrators, in the way they think best. The expected end-product is the creation of a Provincial Plan of action aiming at fostering the right mentality in this respect, thus giving an adequate answer to this problem in each Centre of the Province.

The members of the WCB

FIRST PART

“The sense of membership and shared responsibility also extend in a material manner to the economic aspect. The Cooperator supports the Association by free contributions;...” (RAL, art. 21)

1. SOLIDARITY AND SHARING OF GOODS.

1.1. It is absolutely necessary that the talk on economy be proposed and accepted willingly and lovingly, and be done by one who loves and believes in the Association. We do not want to appeal to cold reasoning. It is our love of the Association which keeps its prosperity close to our heart. We are happy to belong to an Association with more than thirty thousand members in the whole world.

1.2. This love is expressed in sharing in a family manner what we are and what we have, because each of us is a gift for the others. This implies that a person could give more than another, or give a more consistent and committed service than another, because he/she has greater possibilities or resources.

1.3. The RAL says in fact: “in the spirit of poverty outlined in the Gospel (the Cooperators) administer their possessions with simplicity and a generous sharing; they reject all outward show and think of them in the Christian light of the common good” (art.12).

The fact of contributing is not an occasion to show off but to be generous according to one's possibilities. We don't want that anybody be deprived of what is necessary for him/her. However, it is always possible to freely deprive oneself of what is superfluous, because we are only administrators of the goods we receive for the good of all.

1.3. Self-financing by means of free contributions, i.e. offerings made according to each one's possibilities, is an expression of evangelical spirituality more than an organizational structure, seeing in the communion of goods a manifestation of 'fraternal communion'. God is love and love is manifested through works say St. James and St. John (Jn, 2,18; 1Jn 4,20). Art. 19,1, of RAL uses the expression: “United in a single mind and heart”, reminding us that Don Bosco was applying to the Cooperators this quotation from the Acts of the Apostles. The unity of hearts and minds among the Cooperators should nourish the desire to share our goods with each other. Living in evangelical communion means in fact sharing our goods after the example of the first Christians. In our case, it is a question of sharing something with the others, that will give to the Association the possibility to function.

2. SHARING AND SOLIDARITY IN THE ASSOCIATION.

2.1. It is not enough to limit oneself to a kind of solidarity that concerns only one's centre or Province. The Association is one. To it belong all the Centres, from the smallest and remotest to the most numerous and best organized. Solidarity must be effective at all levels”, knowing that some Centres have themselves need of our help.

In order to carry out its activity, to be truly alive, the Association needs to dispose of adequate means; and these means come from the contributions of all and of each Cooperator.

2.2. Financial support is like the lymph which must circulate through the different levels, from the Centres to the WCB. Provincial, National and World levels cannot stand without the support of the Centres. It is not, of course, excluded that this different levels have their own initiatives of self-financing.

2.3. Love of the Association on the part of each Cooperator is at the root of financial self-sufficiency. The supposition is that every Cooperator has at heart the vitality of his/her Association. If this is not true, our talk stops here. But if it is true, then to talk about free contributions implies communion at all levels in the Association, to the extent that self-financing can be seen as a thermometer to measure, for sure not the “gains of an enterprise”, but how much Cooperators love their Association.

2.4. Solidarity is the new name for development. We are convinced of it and we want to propose that it be applied first of all at the level of the Association. Solidarity in the Association is not manifested only through financial support but also by making oneself available to meet the needs of the Association. For instance, we can offer our own personal and professional skills as well as our material endowments. In this line, it is desirable that Cooperators offer their know-how in particular sectors of research, of technology, of art, in the administrative, social and political fields... Cooperators who are experts in graphic and typographic areas can take in their hands the Association's publications... Cooperators who are involved in commercial sectors could sell materials useful for the Association without scope of profit... etc.

2.5. The implementation of financial autonomy in the Association will lead to making solidarity something concrete in the Association, keeping in mind that in the Association there are some Centres which are richer and some which are poorer. To share our goods is also to put into practice the social doctrine of the Church which reminds us of the universal destination of the goods of the earth. We want that the first redistribution of goods take place in the Association. The problem of social injustice, of North and South of the world, could have a christian solution and this should start with our Association!

Each one should affirm courageously: “I MUST FEEL RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ASSOCIATION AND ITS GOOD FUNCTIONING”.

2.6. It has been reported that the Cooperators are generous; even more, often very generous. This is a beautiful thing. But we ask ourselves: why is not the same generosity applied to the Association itself? The reason may be that we do not see or reflect upon all that the Association does for each one of us by means of initiatives regarding formation, spirituality and apostolic support.

2.7. It is important that those in charge (the “Leaders”) make known what is being done in Councils at various levels and how much is the cost of all this; even more, they should explain what would be necessary to do and it is not done because of lack of economic support. Those in charge must not ask only for the sake of asking, but they should motivate their asking by presenting the apostolic objectives, the needs and the works to be done.

2.8. Some Cooperators may object that they are already giving much in favour of those who are suffering, who live in dire need, of missionaries... This is worth admiring. However we should also keep in mind the aim of our Association, spread all over the world. Thus to give to the Association is a way also of helping the Cooperators of the Third World, who experience very great difficulties for evangelization and the human advancement of the young. We work for the young and if we ask for something it is in function of them, in the same way as it is done by so many missionary priests.

Probably we have to ask ourselves whether we are convinced of the fact that our Association has a mission to fulfil: whether we are convinced that our Association is missionary”.

Do we feel part of an Association which does enormous efforts to prepare and help Cooperators who are in the front line of evangelization? This awareness measures our sense of belonging to the Association and, consequently, our generosity.

3. FINANCIAL SOLIDARITY, THE WAY TO TRUE AUTONOMY

3.1. There is also another fact which touches on **our self-esteem as lay people**: without financial solidarity the Association cannot be autonomous. In our activities we cannot depend childishly on the Salesians or on other external help, though this may happen at times.

3.2. Self-financing is absolutely necessary if the Association is to function and be realistic in its animation. Without it there cannot be organized activities for the growth of the single Cooperator and of the Association as a whole. We need to be aware of the fact that these activities cost and they are to be paid for by means of the generous contributions of all the Cooperators.

Let us take an example: the recently published "GUIDELINES FOR FORMATION". This document, much desired by the Association as a whole, has required days of work, trips, consultations, and finally the revision and approval of it by the WCB. This organism dedicated to this work, almost exclusively, the whole session of July '96. If we keep in mind that the meeting of the WCB costs the Association about thirty million Italian Lire, we can get an idea of how much a document of this kind costs the Association.

3.3. A look at the balance sheet of the WCB of the last few years makes us wonder: it seems to us impossible, but it is real, the fact that some Provincial Councils do not contribute anything for the activities of the WCB. We say: if the economic situation of this or that Provincial Council is so bad, let it make at least the effort of sending just a dollar (it is a way of saying something!), but do it. This fact will make us understand that there is the desire of meeting the needs of the Association, even though at present that particular Council may not have the means to do it. Let us recall to mind that "no one is so poor that he has nothing at all to give". The economic aspect is something vital for the Association: if this solidarity comes alive, much can be achieved, and it would be for the good of so many young people and for the glory of God.

4. DON BOSCO, PROMOTER OF SOLIDARITY

4.1. Our salesian roots take us back to Don Bosco who, for the support of his works, had recourse

1st. to Providence;

2nd. to the seeking of financial support from people of all walks of life.

Don Bosco teaches us first of all that Divine Providence surely helps those who help others! Providence is also made up of the efforts and sacrifices that persons and Centres impose on themselves for the good of the Association.

Furthermore, Don Bosco teaches us not only to give generously, as the Gospel widow did (who gave her two poor coins to the treasury of the temple - Lk 21,2) but also not to be afraid to ask from people, because we are not asking for ourselves but to do good to those young people that we will be able to approach... Don Bosco was never ashamed to ask for help. The Gospel phrase "ask and it will be given to you"

(Mt 7,7) can be applied also to material goods, specially when we ask for the good of others.

How many examples of Cooperators we could mention here who have experienced personally the interventions of Divine Providence in favour of the young!

4.2. In line with the times, we should also study the possibility of making use of funding agencies in favour of our organized service to the young. This could allow the Association to carry out a better service.

4.3. But we would be justified in asking from others, if we ourselves are already giving. Therefore:

“Cooperator, for your Association give what you can and when you can - but give it!”

Don Bosco in his Rule does not oblige the Cooperators to give a fixed amount. However he asked for a free personal donation on the occasion of the annual conferences.

5. SELF-FINANCING IS SOMETHING SERIOUS

5.1. One reason which is at the basis of economic autonomy is the fact that the Association is a public association of the faithful, for which the Code of Canon Law requires autonomy of management, and administration of goods in the name of the Church. Self-financing is foreseen there and it is a serious matter.

5.2. Some lay ecclesial associations go as far as asking from their members the equivalent, in terms of money, of a day's work of every month. Others ask for 10% of their personal income. The members of other associations sell even houses and give the value to their association. Probably we will not do as much but we must not be satisfied either with doing too little.

5.3. Let us keep in mind that the Regulations of Apostolic Life provide for the presence in every Council of the figure of the Administrator. This very fact already says a great deal about the essential nature of this role. Economic animation has for its purpose the economic support of the Association.

5.4. Much or little, the income resulting from the generosity of all (we may call it, “the money of the poor”) must be administered with accuracy and clarity; a periodic financial report is therefore necessary, to be prepared and submitted to one's own council and this to the next higher level. This report must be done in all transparency and in due time, as indicated by art. 39/3 of RAL. About this we will make a concrete proposal in the second part of this document.

5.5. Hence finances for us partake of spirituality (sincere self-giving, spirit of poverty, duty of solidarity, charity); they also form part of formation (from the initial stage formation is needed to this sense of shared responsibility), and of organization (to function as an institution, the Association is in need of technical organization which involves expenses of no little importance). That is why we talk of the need to contribute to self-financing.

5.6. In conclusion, we can say: let each Cooperator give freely (art. 21 of RAL), generously and **“in accordance with what he/she has decided on in his/her heart...”** because “God loves a cheerful giver” (2Cor 9,2).

SECOND PART

ASSOCIATION BALANCE-SHEETS; INSTRUMENTS OF SOLIDARITY

1. The meaning of financial reports

1.1. On one side, financial reports at all levels are absolutely necessary for two reasons: openness and shared responsibility.

Openness leads to the proper use of the Association's money. This is why the Council at every level must approve the financial report (RAL 49,3). Shared responsibility on the other hand is closely linked with the awareness of Cooperators concerning the real and urgent needs of the Association. Thus, if the superior level (beginning with the World level through the Provincial level) makes known in time the reasonable foreseen expenses for the following year, it will be possible to offer an indication of how much each centre is invited to contribute.

1.2. The fact of making Cooperators know the financial reports implies that they are made co-responsible. It implies also growth in family spirit and further on it increases the willingness of members to contribute because he/she becomes aware of the needs and of the use that is made of the money given.

2. HOW ARE FINANCIAL REPORTS MADE (RAL 49,3)

To make things clearer we present the scheme of a financial report with the items it must contain at Provincial or Local level.

Subsequently the meaning of each of these items is explained.

FINANCIALREPORT (ART. 49/3 RAL)

CIVIL YEAR_____

P R O V I N C I A L C O U N C I L

PROVINCE _____ N. OF CENTRES_____ TOTAL N. OF
COOPERATORS_____

Dollar exchange rate on 13.12._____

	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES
SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE ASSOCIATION	-----	-----
FOR RECTOR MAJOR' ACTIVITIES	-----	-----
FOR FORMATION ACTIVITIES	-----	-----
FOR APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES	-----	-----
FOR THE ANIMATION OF THE ASSOCIATION	-----	-----
FOR WORKS OF CHARITY	-----	-----
FOR SALESIAN PUBLICATIONS	-----	-----
FOR ACQUISITION OF VARIOUS MATERIALS	-----	-----
FOR TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT	-----	-----
SUNDRIES	-----	-----
<i>TOTAL AMOUNT PRESENT YEAR</i>	-----	-----
SURPLUS FROM PREVIOUS YEAR	-----	-----

CASH SITUATION ON 31.12.---

CHECKED AND APPROVED BY THE COUNCIL,

ON THIS DATE _____

The above blank sheet is to be printed in two different copies: one for the Provincial Council and the other for the Local Council with due adjustments. Only in the case of the Provincial Council it is important to specify the value of the USA dollar in relation with the local money, so as to be able to compare more easily the financial reports coming from different parts of the world.

Regarding the ITEMS of the financial report we wish that they mean the same thing for all. Therefore an explanation is given here below, entrusting everything to the good sense of each Council.

1. **SOLIDARITY IN FAVOUR OF THE ASSOCIATION.** This item is the most important of all. All the contributions for the Association in its totality are included here. It will be the task of the Administrators to subdivide the amount under this item according to the indications presented here below, and to use what corresponds to his/her Council for its the needs or initiatives. We wish to point out that the solidarity contribution is very specific and does not include what one spends personally in the acquisition of materials, for participation in a spiritual retreat and things of this kind.
2. **FOR RECTOR MAJOR'S ACTIVITIES.** In this item what comes in and goes out is equivalent, because all that is offered to the Rector Major is totally sent to the Provincial Council and from this to the WCB who in turn will hand it over to the Rector Major. It should be specified that it is a contribution for the Rector Major.
3. **FOR FORMATION ACTIVITIES.** Here, as well as in the following items, it could happen that there are no specific entries, since what is spent here is taken from what pertains to that particular Council from the economic solidarity for the Association. It is not superfluous however to insert here the contributions the Cooperators make for courses of formation, conferences, spiritual retreats, days of recollection ... The expenses will of course be the sum of all that was spent including speakers' fees, payments to retreat houses etc.
4. **FOR APOSTOLIC ACTIVITIES.** This refers to expenses for activities with the young, for initiatives aiming at animating the local area, courses for catechesis etc. It is clear that if there have been contributions for these activities they should be included in the receipts.
5. **FOR THE ANIMATION OF THE ASSOCIATION.** This item includes expenses for animation trips, meetings, courses etc. of those in charge ("leaders").
6. **FOR CHARITY WORKS.** We refer here to receipts and expenses geared towards the support of human needs: all kinds of near and faraway poverties, victims of natural calamities, wars, solidarity initiatives proposed by civil society, Church or other institutions, and to which the Cooperators want to adhere.
7. **FOR SALESIAN PUBLICATIONS.** This includes all the expenses to support the Salesian Bulletin, the newsletters of the Cooperators at different levels, the publication of one's own Provincial or Local Bulletin...
8. **FOR MATERIALS OF DIFFERENT KINDS.** This is an item which concerns particularly the acquisition of formation materials for the Centre's library, for formation at the personal level or at the level of the Association, for materials on spirituality etc.
9. **FOR TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT.** Here are included all the expenses concerning the acquisition and the purchasing of materials for the secretariat: stationeries, postoffice, telephone, light, rentals, Office workers' salaries, Office machines, furniture, etc.
10. **SUNDRIES.** It is part of this item whatever does not fit in the others.

3. AN INDICATION OF SELF-FINANCING OFFERED TO PROVINCIAL COUNCILS FOR THEIR ASSESSMENT.

3.1. Now we present a proposal of self-financing for the whole Association which should be received (and put into practice according to the decisions of every Provincial Council) with due flexibility and responsibility, and according to the spirit of the reflections exposed in the first Part of this document.

The proposal is a reply to an often heard question: "But in concrete terms, how much should each Cooperator contribute?"

Accepting the fact that it is not in the spirit of the Regulations to fix minimum or maximum levels of personal contributions, the proposal is the result of an evaluation of the effective economic needs of the Association so that it may be able to function well.

3.2. Considering the effective expenses made by the Association at its different levels, we believe that, to be able to carry out all the required activities of animation with certain easiness, as a general guide, each Cooperator should give to the Association a contribution varying from 0.3% to 0.5% of his/her monthly income", whether this be much or little. In this sense financial differences would be respected and solidarity would be practiced, thus giving more those who have more and giving less those who have less.

This proposal is linked with the budget of the World Council for 1997, which with simplicity and openness we wish to submit to your attention. It is obvious that of all that is proposed here, we will be doing only what is within our possibilities according to the means at our disposal.

BUDGET OF THE WORLD COUNCIL FOR 1997

	in IT. LIRE	in DOLLARS
Expenses for trips of members of the WCB	12.000.000 £	8.000 \$
Expenses for trips of the Coordinator General	6.000.000 £	4.000 \$
Secretariat expenses	34.000.000 £	22.667 \$
Printing of "Cooperatores"	30.000.000 £	20.000 \$
Printing of "Guidelines For Formation"	3.000.000 £	2.000 \$
Meeting of WCB in '98 (First half)	15.000.000 £	10.000 \$
Deficit 1996	20.000.000 £	13.333 \$
TOTAL AMOUNT of foreseen expenses	120.000.000 £	80.000 \$

We believe that the proposal of contributing from 0.3% to 0.5% takes in consideration reasonably well the actual economic possibilities of each one and at the same time answers to the economic needs of the Association and, in this case, of the WCB.

3.3. To understand better the practical aspect of this proposal, let each one think mentally of his/her salary, of his/her pension, of his/her monthly "tips" and let him/her calculate how much would 0.3% amount to

We repeat that this proposal, which we trustfully present to you, seems to us reasonable enough. Think, for instance, that if somebody earns monthly one million Italian Lire, he/she would be giving to the Association about three thousand Lire monthly, or about Lire 36.000 a year. The one who would be earning monthly about Lire 100.000 would be giving Lire 300 (or Lire 3.600 a year).

We are convinced that many Cooperators will say: "But I have been giving much more". Good! Continue giving as you have done so far. These reflections concern those who were not yet used to give in line with their personal possibilities and the needs of the Association.

It is clear that the proposal is now to be evaluated by the Provincial Councils so that, once it is done, the Councils take concrete decisions on this point. These decisions should be forwarded to the Administrators and Local Councils.

4. THE SPIRIT OF THIS PROPOSAL

4.1. The 0.3%-0.5% indication seems to us a reasonable point of reference, we repeat again, for self-financing. It is clear that the sum suggested must not be considered a fixed amount, but a goal to aim at, to reach and, maybe, even to surpass. The sum given must be the result of the decision of the person herself. Even after this indication, Cooperators will hopefully continue to contribute to the functioning of the Association by means of free donations. But they should not lose sight of the suggestion presented in this document, which aims at making everyone responsible according to the motivations presented in the first Part.

4.2. Each one is therefore left with the greatest freedom, keeping only in mind the two principles which are applicable in the Association: flexibility (taking into consideration the real possibilities of each Cooperator) and gradual progress (aiming at little by little meeting the needs of the Association).

4.3. It is important therefore not to take this proposal, which certainly is a very serious one, as if it were a kind of taxation. It is only a suggestion, a point of reference. It will be the task of each administrator to remind the Cooperators of the commitment to share in supporting economically the Association. Certainly no one's personal circumstances will ever be examined. Offerings should be hidden and no notes should be made of what each one gives. The offerings remain perfectly free, with only God keeping accounts. The administrator should report to the Council and to the Centre the total amount given and not how much each one has given.

5. THE SHARING OF THE CONTRIBUTIONS

5.1. Here is how the contributions are distributed among the various levels. Two situations are foreseen:

A. Distribution when the provinces are gathered into national or regional conferences. This is the case of Argentina, Brazil, North of India, Italy, Poland and Spain.

B. Distribution when the province does not belong to a national or regional Conference. This is the case of the Provinces not included in the above list of countries.

5.2. Situation A

A Local Council that belongs to a National or Regional Conference, should send to its Provincial Council, within the month of March of each year, 50% of the SOLIDARITY FUND FOR THE ASSOCIATION, collected the previous year with the 0.3%-0.5% formula. No matter whether the collected amount be big or small, 50% of it should go to the local Centre for its own activities. Of the remaining 50%, the Provincial Council should keep 60% for its own activities. Of the remaining 40%, 25% should go to the national or regional Conference, and 15% to the World Council (WCB). The amount corresponding to these two organisms should be sent to them within the month of June of each year.

Example A:

If a Centre belongs to a nation where there is a national or Regional Conference and this Centre is able to collect globally from its members, for instance, Italian Lire 1.000.000 under the formula "Solidarity fund for the Association", the distribution of this amount should be as follows:

Distribution at Local level:

1.000.000 x 50% = 500.000 amount which remains to the Centre itself

1.000.000 x 50% = 500.000 amount to be sent to the Provincial Council.

Distribution at Provincial level:

500.000 x 60% = 300.000 amount that remains to the Provincial Council

500.000 x 25% = 125.000 amount for the National or Reg. Conference

500.000 x 15% = 75.000 amount to be sent to the WCB

The distribution between National/Regional Conferences and WCB can be changed in case a Conference thinks the formula is not adequate.

5.3. Situation B.

Any Centre, that belongs to a Province not linked with a Conference, should retain 60% of the contributions collected the previous year under the 0.3%-0.5% formula, and send the remaining 40% to the Provincial Council within the month of March of each year. Of the 40% the Provincial Council keeps 65% for its own purposes and send on the other 35% to the World Council within the month of June.

Example B:

If the hypothetical entry is again L. 1.000.000, the distribution would be as follows:

Distribution at Local level:

1.000.000 x 60% = 600.000 amount which goes to the Centre itself

1.000.000 x 40% = 400.000 amount to be sent to Provincial Council.

Distribution at Provincial level:

400.000 x 65% = 260.000 amount that goes to the Provincial Council

400.000 x 35% = 140.000 amount to be sent to the WCB

Coming back to the Local Centres, it is natural that each Centre will submit to the Provincial Council its Balance Sheet and the amount corresponding to the higher levels as well as the eventual donations for the Rector Major. The Provincial Council will then forward to the other organisms the amount that corresponds to them. It should send also its Financial Report to the Administrator of the WCB.

In the case a Local or Provincial Council realizes that it has not been able to collect the indicated amount, the Council should try to raise it by undertaking various initiatives of self-financing.

In this connection we could point out so many beautiful examples of creativity and generosity, even in situations of poverty.

6. WHEN TO FORWARD CONTRIBUTIONS

6.1. For 1996 we vividly recommend that each Province make its own contribution to the WCB without paying attention to the criteria presented in this second Part, but according to the previous practice.

6.2. 1997 will be the year in which we will make the experience of collecting the contributions according to the items of the FINANCIAL REPORT presented above.

A. First of all it will be good to draw a Provincial Budget that will help the Centres understand how much it is to be collected, keeping in mind the needs of the WCB, of the eventual National or Regional Conference and of the Provincial Council.

A. It is necessary then to communicate to the Local Administrators and Councillors how much is expected of each Centre to answer the needs presented in the Provincial Budget.

C. During 1997, as contributions of certain consideration are gathered, it will be necessary to send part of them to the WCB and to Provincial and Regional Conferences where they exist, following the above guidelines for distribution.

6.3. At the beginning of 1998 the Financial Report regarding 1997 is to be made and sent, within the month of June, together with the remaining contributions for 1997, to the WCB and to the National or Regional Conference following the percentages mentioned above (See second Part, n. 5).

Then, from April 98 to March 99 the Local Council will send the contributions for 1998 to the Provincial Council. The latter will send, from July 98 to June 99, its contribution for 1998 to the WCB and to the National or Regional Conference, where this exists. This same process should be carried out in the following years.

The functioning of all this will depend on the concrete measures the Administrators will take regarding these guidelines.

6.4. In the summer of 1998 the WCB will evaluate the way things are in order to give definitive guidelines for the Association in the financial aspect as a whole. The point of departure will be the remarks regarding the above suggestions and the maturing experience of solidarity.

7. THE FINANCIAL REPORT, A FORMATIVE OCCASION

7.1. Finally, we feel the need to call your attention to the fact that the preparation of balance-sheets and financial reports provides an excellent occasion for a “formative reflection” on the part of the Council. Their making is not to satisfy bureaucratic demands nor fiscal controls. They are not even documents to keep for the future. They serve to evaluate our economic solidarity (RAL, art. 21) and the level of animation within the Association.

7.2. The items of the financial reports by themselves help us to be attentive to the goals of the Association. They become pointers to evaluate the specific traits of the mission which the Association intends to carry out.

7.3. Reflecting on their Financial Reports the Councils can ask themselves:
We, the Cooperators of this Centre, of this Province,
(keeping in mind the items of the Financial Report)

1. How did we manifest our solidarity towards the needs of the Association?
2. What kind of answer did we give to the call of the Rector Major regarding the needs of the vast salesian commitment in the world?
3. How much have we invested in activities of the formative and spiritual type?
4. How much did we give for concrete apostolic activities in favour of the young or other recipients?
5. How much money have we apportioned for the animation and qualification of those who are in charge of us (of our “leaders”)?
6. How much have we contributed to charitable needs?
7. How much have we contributed in favour of salesian publications and their diffusion, beginning with those of the Association as, for instance, the publication of our Newsletter...?
8. How much have we spent to provide ourselves with materials of the formative, spiritual and apostolic type?
9. How much have we contributed to organize well our Centre or our Province, including expenses for rentals, secretariat, stationeries, meetings, keeping contacts, sending information etc.?
10. Which other expenses have we undergone in the animation of our Centre or Province?

IN CONCLUSION

It seems important to recall to mind that the reflection on finances is to be done in a family atmosphere. There everyone should feel the trust that we have in each other and in Divine Providence.

Dear brothers and sisters Administrators and dear members of the Provincial Councils,

thank you for your patience in following us until here. It may have happen that we have not been very clear or very convincing. We are available to further clarify any doubt on the indications given. We are open to dialogue and to evaluate any other meaningful proposal. In any case, we count on you for creating a mentality of solidarity in the Association, including economic solidarity, so vital for the Association as a whole.

Thank you for all you will be doing in this respect with dedication and responsibility.

Wishing you a fruitful work, we invoke on all of us from the Holy Spirit the gift of communion.

With fraternal esteem in Don Bosco

Oliviero Zoli
Member of the WCB
Administrator

together with

Roberto Lorenzini
Coordinator General

and

Fr. José Reinoso
Central Delegate