

PROVINCIAL FORMATION GUARDIAN
ANNUAL REPORT
2010

1) Since Chapter 2009, most groups in the Province have been visited.

The PFG attended the Chapter of the Western Province in Kumasi in December, 2009, and was able to visit several members resident in Accra who could not attend. The PFG accompanied the Minister Provincial on visits to the group in Bulawayo and Harare in the Central Region and the groups in the Copper Belt and in Eastern Zambia. The small group in Mfuwe (actually at Msoro) was visited and members from the groups in Chipata and Petauke met with us in Katete. Unfortunately it was not possible to visit a small group of two in Northern Zambia at Lualapula and a lone tertiary in Lusaka. It was also impossible to visit the three members in Tanzania. In May, 2010 the Regional Guardian and the PFG visited the group in Lesotho. From 1st to 6th October, 2010, the PFG attended the Northern Region Chapter (the first in several years) at Katete.

At the Chapter in Katete, Charles Chisulo was chosen as Provincial Guardian, Lloyd Mwansa as Vice Guardian and Michael Chuni as Convener of the Katete Group (with Philemon Malaya as his understudy). Two novices, William Mashalo and Justine Chiwele were professed.

Notable among those present were Tasila Daka, a member of JUFRA (Young Franciscans) who has just decided to become a nun, William Mashalo who bicycled 180 Km to attend the meeting, Moffat Sakala who bicycled 100 Km and Adrian Kalumbi who walked 50 Km (and would have walked another 50 Km home had a lift not been arranged.)

2) A number (11?) of greeting cards and formation documents have been sent by post to almost all members in the Province individually.

Feedback suggests that most of these have been received despite the very unreliable postal systems in some areas. In Zimbabwe, it has proven more feasible to send copies to the Conveners of the two groups by email for reproduction and distribution at meetings.

3) Two PFG documents detailing the work of the Regional Conveners and Guardians were sent to them

3) Thanks to anonymous donors, it was possible to produce versions of “The Manual, Part 2,” “The Principles and Daily Readings” and “A Reader for Enquirers, Postulants and Novices” designed for durability in poor tropical communities and, in the case of the Reader, in language designed for easy accessibility by people of non-European cultures for whom English is not the first language.

These special PFG versions of our documents were meant not to replace previously existing documents, but to supplement them in some areas.

The Principles and Daily Readings were distributed by hand in the Western and Northern Regions and Lesotho. The Reader was distributed in Lesotho and The Northern Region, but the Manual Part 2 so far has been distributed in the Northern Region only.

4) Attempts are being made to persuade members in the Regions outside RSA to produce translations of some of our material in their vernaculars. A number of translations of prayers,

which can be found in the tropical version of The Manual, Part II, have been produced in Bemba; a translation of The Manual, Part II in underway in Chichewa, and Sesotho translation of the Daily Obedience and The “St. Francis” Prayer has been completed.

SUMMARY & COMMENTS.

I think it can be said that thanks in part to the establishment of increased communication, there is a sense of a reawakening of life in those Regions outside RSA. All of the groups in those areas are growing or at least meeting more regularly. There is in addition in some areas a sense of greater integration into the Province.

If the Standing Committee of APTOC has met and agreed, a new group in Uganda and a lone tertiary in Cairo will be admitted. This means that the African Province may become comprehensively African – from Cape to Cairo, in fact, which is very encouraging.

Operating primarily with mass mailings has its disadvantages, particularly in its impersonality which does not permit adjustments for or input by individuals. (e.g. input needed by some may seem unnecessary or even insulting to others, and there is scant opportunity for clarification.) Given the practical situation: the very high cost of travel and the immensity of our Province, I don't see any alternative, however, and appeal for both tolerance and understanding, and as much feedback as possible. There is at the moment at least one person in most groups who can be contacted by email, which helps, but unfortunately the main group where there is no direct email contact is Katete, the most active group in the Province, though a friend of tssf has agreed to pass on information by email.

In our Province the majority of members are non-western or partly non-western in culture and many are not fully literate in English. All our procedures and institutions and our operating language are western, however, which limits growth and the fullness of participation among the non-western majority. There is a need to take steps to accommodate varied ways of thinking and behaving in the Order without losing its essential characteristics. The process is difficult and complicated and needs to be undertaken cautiously and thoughtfully but if we are to thrive on into the 22nd century, it must be undertaken. Fortunately, one other province, that which includes the Pacific Islands faces the same problems, so we are not alone globally in the Order

. Stewart Lane PFG