



WORLDWIDE NETWORK CRESCENDO

For a more human and christian ageing

<http://www.rcrescendo.net/>

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SUMMARY

Message of the President.....	2
Hélène Durand Ballivet	
About the scandals in the Church.....	5
P. Joseph Joblin sj	
Haïti; The rights of the Elderly - Are they respected in times of catastrophes ?	7
Ximena Romero ; Coordinator of the Latin american Network of Gerontology .RLG Christel Wasiek ; Assessor RLG	
FONDACIO, a new member of Crescendo.....	9
Hubert de Quercize	



MESSAGE OF THE PRESIDENT

To the Presidents of the Member Organizations
of the Worldwide Crescendo Network
To the members of the Administrative Board
To our associated experts and consultants

Dear friends,

Without doubt you already know, Alberto Marxuach, who had been elected President of the Worldwide Crescendo Network in 2001, arrived at the end of his second term. Based on this fact, some members of the Administrative Board of the network and Alberto himself contacted me during 2009 to ask if I would agree to take on, as of January 2010, the presidency of Crescendo. Since my activities at the Centre Catholique International de Genève (CCIG) were coming to an end in December 2009, my time was free. This request therefore seemed to me like a call that I could not ignore. However, I want to assure you: Alberto is still with us. He became, by unanimity, Honorary President of the Network and accepted to carry on the redaction of the Bulletin. We express our sincere thanks for all his efforts, for, by his charisma, his soul, his heart, his enthusiasm regarding all the individual or collective initiatives concerning aging, he knew and knows and will continue to discover how to identify and galvanize energies on the path leading to the development of the Network, towards an aging always more human and more Christian.

The General Assembly of 13 December 2009, full of emotion, was for the participants the occasion to thank as well Simone Gebs, representative of MIAMSI who had asked not to be reelected. She gave much of her time and energy, sharing her vision of a laity engaged in the service of the promotion of the dignity of the human person, as much at MIAMSI as at the Conference of OIC or at Crescendo. Simone and Alberto, as well as the members of the Administrative Board, were equally thanked for all of the work accomplished, for all of the contributions of Crescendo to the thought and action of movements concerned for the aging, whether at the level of

advocacy or on the spiritual and religious plane, since the creation of the network in July 2001: participation at the United Nations conference on aging in Madrid (2002), publication of the electronic Bulletin (since 2003), declaration and information diffused across the network of Catholic NGO represented at the European Council of Strasbourg concerning euthanasia (Rapport Marty 2004), the seminar of Bossey (2005), the 5th and 6th World Meetings of Families at Valencia (2006) and in Mexico (2009), the distribution of the questionnaire sent in the course of last summer to the member organizations (2009), the document on elderly women (2009), and so many other individual contributions by one or other members of the Network. This General Assembly was equally the occasion for welcoming two new associations who joined the network by the intermediary of Alberto: “Fondacio” and “The Oblates of Saint-Joseph”.

At the conclusion of this General Assembly a first meeting of the new team of the Administrative Board¹ was planned for 28 and 29 January 2010.

This first encounter was the occasion to take account of the expectations of each organization regarding the activities of Crescendo for the two years to come, recognizing our financial weakness. We came to the conclusion that it was important to distinguish immediate action from long-term. Our priorities will thus be as follows:

- Immediate Action : respond to the need for information about the members and what is happening with them. At each meeting of the Administrative Board, the members will inform one another about the life of their organization, which will foster exchanges in view of a better mutual comprehension. We will begin drawing up a schedule of important encounters of the member organizations as well as the international institutions in the weeks to come.

¹ Board Members: President: H el ene Durand Ballivet (presented by **VMI**); Ecclesiastical Advisor: Father Joseph Joblin s.j.; Vice-president: Marie-Bernadette Cantenot (**VMI**); General Secretary: Fran oise Gaudemar (**AIC**); Treasurer: Charlotte Pauwerlynn-Bevernage (presented by the Congregation of the **Daughters of Wisdom**).

Other members of the Adm Board: **Caritas Internationalis** : Christel Wasiek ; **CICIAMS/Filles de la Sagesse** : S eur Annick le Roux ; **FIAMC** : Fran ois Blin ; **Petites S eurs des Pauvres** : S eur Anne-Marie de la Croix ; **SIGNIS** : Daniel van Espen ; **Fondacio** : Charles van Ypersele.

AIC : Association Internationale des Charit es, **CICIAMS** : Comit  International Catholique des Infirmi res et Assistantes M dico-sociales, **FIAMC** : F d ration Internationale des Associations M dicales Catholiques, **MIAMSI** : Mouvement International d’Apostolat des Milieux Sociaux Ind pendants, **SIGNIS** : Association Catholique Mondiale pour la Communication, **VMI** : Vie Montante Internationale.

- Long-term Actions: They will be of two kinds. One will be directed towards the international institutions, be it at Strasbourg, Geneva, Paris, Brussels or New York. The other will concern more particularly the handing on of the Christian message by means of our activities. How do we bring to society what we hold as fundamental, to make it recognized as something that exists? In effect, the danger for people in direct action is to forget the international level where they have the impression that time is wasted, and for those at the international level to believe that they alone suffice while they have to support themselves by movements, this “conjunctive tissue” that is their strength.

The Administrative Board began to draw up some precise projects on the research of funds, communication, and action with international institutions. These projects should be elaborated and budgeted by the new Board and presented at the next meeting of the Administrative Board, in May, which will decide on their undertaking. The third meeting of the Administrative Board, which will take place at the beginning of Autumn 2010, will be the moment for an initial judgment on activities undertaken or already completed. At each stage, we will keep you up to date on our activity. This is how, dear friends, in this spirit, with such dynamism that we attempt to continue the work initiated with such energy by Alberto and his team.

13 December 2009 I felt very humbled in accepting this important mission that you confided to me. Today, thanks to the encouragement and support of the members of the Administrative Board, and to the active collaboration of each one of you, we should all feel more united by a common project, our project “For a human and Christian aging.” The expertise of each of the member organizations of the Worldwide Crescendo Network brings a contribution, an enrichment to the work of the others. This need for complementarity must incite us to engage ourselves further in the research of the means appropriate to the realization of our mission. We contribute to it by means of our activities in the domain of our national organizations as much as on the international level by our contact with the international institutions and non-government organizations of Catholic inspiration who are active near the international Catholic centers of Geneva, Paris and New York.

I know that I can count on you, since you engaged yourselves in this mission long before me. I want you to know, in return, that you can count on me so that together we may lead to a good end what we will decide.

My most cordial greetings to all of you.

Geneva, 8 March 2010



Hélène Durand Ballivet
President

ABOUT THE SCANDALS IN THE CHURCH

J. Joblin sj

“In the life of the Church there are wrong and shameful things. No Catholic can deny it. .. Throughout history and in the lives of Catholics, there has always more than enough to play into the hands of opponents who, assuming that the Holy Church is the work of the devil, want to confirm their idea... Why should we be surprised that for 1800 years there have been blatant examples of cruelty, infidelity, hypocrisy and depravity and that not only among Catholics, but also in high places, in the palaces of Kings and of Bishops, even in the Chair of St. Peter ?.... What can we conclude if we admit that at such time, here or there, the action of the Church and its relationship with its children appeared determined by errors of practical judgement, inappropriate actions, a certain timidity or hesitancy to act, temporal principles, inhuman rigor or narrow-mindedness? I would simply say that because of who man is, it would be a miracle that such scandals are absent from Church History.” (John H. Newman, Pensées sur l’Eglise Cerf 1956 pp. 305-306).

1. Newman’s quote puts the attacks that have just been launched against the Church and the Pope into perspective. Without wishing to minimize the seriousness of the crimes of a clear number of members of the clergy they should all the same be placed in the historical context.

- the allegations concern only a small minority of those engaging in these criminal activities; according to a 2008 U.S. government report, clergymen represent 0.03% of the guilty; relative or total silence is held for the vast majority of those who commit these crimes.
1. For the believer, whatever his condemnation of these acts, the action taken against the Church, is part of history's ongoing struggle, "a monumental struggle against the powers of darkness pervades the whole history of man." (*Gaudium et Spes* par. 37.2).
 2. Some consequences of the current crisis on the life of the Church
 - In democratic countries, laws recognize that persons do not have to denounce all known public offences, either for reasons of kinship, occupation or because there is prescription. One of the sharp rebukes addressed to communist regimes is to have induced or compelled families to accuse each other of breaches to the communist party.
 - Democracies organize the protection of social ties that are the basis of trust between members of their various communities; thus there exists among others, on the national level the defence secrecy, professional secrecy for lawyers, doctors and others... etc.
 - The question here is whether a type of secrecy must be recognized for the benefit of members of the Catholic Church and, if so, how to understand it.
 - For societies in which the Church has a formal place in public life, the inviolability of the seal of confession is recognized and relationships of trust established between the faithful and members of the hierarchy must be protected.
 - The new place held by the Church in contemporary society increasingly obliges a review of the place it is given by the secular civil society
 - The complete violation of the sanctity of secrets held by members of the hierarchy because of practicing their duties would undermine the very structure of the Church and is contrary to the exercise of religious liberty as defined at the Helsinki Conference. The attacks and comments on current events overlook this aspect and tend to make bishops as well as simple parish priests adjuncts to the police.
 - The obstacle to defending a confidentiality that ensures trusting relationships between priests and bishops is justified when speaking of the protection of victims; but one can legitimately ask whether the failure to be able to speak about this condition will not contribute to the spread of evil, for in most cases, when taken at the beginning, it can be cured.
 3. Some consequences of the current situation on the presence of the Church in society
 - Current events show that the Church and Christians have an increasingly limited role in the formation of public opinion. We should be grateful that the Pope has managed to retain his dignity and not fall into the trap of becoming personally involved in discussions about scandals; but none Catholic,

Christian or secular organization has been able to dismantle the mechanism of the campaign in the face of public opinion; because, after all, charges dating back tens of years and arising simultaneously in several countries would not have necessitated a long and costly preparation?

- Public opinion must be able to judge the information it receives critically. Christians have a role to play. It is urgent that they learn once more to act as Christians in the civil and professional settings that are theirs; a return to the teachings of Vatican II is needed so that a Christian anthropology that is consistent to the Gospel is presented in professional and family settings. The speeches of Pius XII to the Italian Catholic Jurists on December 6, 1953, contain ad hoc instructions on the subject; and have been taken up again by Vatican II.

April 11, 2010

HAITÍ

THE RIGHTS OF THE ELDERLY – ARE THEY RESPECTED IN TIMES OF CATASTROPHE?

**Editorial from the bulletin of the Latin American Network of Gerontology,
February 2010 (with the permission of this network)**

www.gerontologia.org

In addition to drawing attention to the devastating implications and consequences that natural disasters can have in the context of extreme structural poverty, the tragic events which recently took place in Haiti rendered visible in Latin America another cruel reality present in times of catastrophe: the rule of the law of the strongest, with the discrimination that flows from it and the deprivation of attention to the most fragile persons, among whom are frequently found the elderly.

Discrimination against people because of their advanced age contributes to rendering them more vulnerable and to exclude them from receiving immediate aid, including during the phase of recuperation from the disasters. When catastrophes take place, the elderly may have greater difficulty finding shelter or protecting themselves by their own means. They are thus one of the groups most mortally affected. In the phase of recuperation, in contrast to other groups, a great number of elderly people do not have sufficient strength to overcome losses by themselves and are frequently deprived in the

prioritizing of psychosocial help, specific aid concerning health needs and lodging, and of basic teams and services.

When speaking of situations of disaster and social urgency, it is essential to ask ourselves: Do we take into account the diversity of conditions, specific necessities of security, and the autonomy of the population? How do our stereotypes and prejudices influence the way we treat the elderly in times of catastrophe? It is indispensable to consider the growing and urgent need to create physical and social environments accessible for all ages, including the reduction of every type of risk. We must also redouble efforts in the domain of education to make it understood that aging is a distinctive characteristic of our societies and a process that accompanies our whole life. On this base, we can work to overcome the stereotypes and prejudices that are the foundation of the different forms of discrimination which, in times of catastrophe, can arrive and put in danger the life of the elderly.

On the other hand, the experience of international cooperation of Caritas Germany shows that it is necessary that humanitarian aid be founded on the principle of durable support, so that it can contribute to structural change. It should also look to assure that, during the phases of recuperation and reconstruction after the catastrophe, aid to the elderly be effective and contribute to better prepare society to include these people in social and community life, without limiting aid to those directly affected.

Programs in favor of the elderly developed by Caritas Cuba, Caritas Peru and the Caritas Mexico Foundation for the Well-Being of the Elderly DF, were born precisely after catastrophes experienced in these countries. These experiences permitted, in their turn, the creation of spaces for the contribution of the elderly themselves to other victims of catastrophes, with the services of direct aid such as the preparation of food, as in the concrete case of the Third Age Program of Caritas Cuba, during the floods provoked by Hurricanes Gustav and Ike.

Thus there exist concrete experiences in Latin America concerning the role that NGO can play to contribute to the development of programs that watch over the inclusion of the elderly and defend respect of their rights. We desire that the NGO who today lend humanitarian aid to the Haitian people be conscious of the importance of also directing this aid in favor reinforcing the rights and the dignity of the elderly population.

Ximena Romero – Coordinator RLG

Christel Wasiek – Assessor RLG



“FONDACIO” A NEW MEMBER OF CRESCENDO

Hubert de Quercize

www.fondacio.org

I - *Fondacio*, a Christian community in dialogue.

Marked by the Second Vatican Council and its openness to the world, *Fondacio* is an international community with 3000 active members, in 24 pays, committed to society and the Church. These Christians strive to live a spirituality founded on:

- **A spirit of blessing:** they believe in the dignity of the human person and in the beauty of creation. Alive with faith and hope, they aspire to become collaborators in the creative work of the Father.

- **A Proclamation of the Gospel and friendship with the world:** they love this world so loved by God. They want to work, together with others who search for meaning, to find new avenues for humanity in the various areas of social action, with full respect for consciences and liberties.

- **An attentiveness and fidelity to the Holy Spirit.** They mean to collaborate with his unifying action in the life of each individual.

- **A resolve to build communion among persons,** especially in the ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue.

II - *Fondacio*: a community of laity committed to Society and the Church

Founded in 1974, *Fondacio* is recognized by the Catholic Church (with canonical statutes of pontifical right). Roman Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox Catholics pursue a way of unity in respect for differences. The community is sensitive to current cultural pluralism, especially present in countries where Christians are the minority. This community is engaged in the dialogue among cultures and religions.

To achieve its missions, *Fondacio* seeks, in the majority of its projects, to work with persons and institutions outside the community who wish to join in with the same spirit. In this way, the community creates multiple partnerships and joint collaborations with

diverse ecclesiastical and civil structures (universities, ecclesial movements, dioceses, monasteries.)

The members are « ordinary » men and women who recognize in this form of Christian life an opportunity and a calling. Each year, they are able, through the community, to make a covenant with God and with each other, and they commit themselves to live according to these four priorities:

- to nourish through prayer each day their relationship with God,
- to enter and persevere in the dynamic of formation,
- to live out the communitarian dimension through encounters and sharing,
- to accept being sent as witnesses to the Gospel in the heart of society.

Certain members who have renewed their membership for several years and who have received a special calling to give their lives to Christ in this place in the Church which is *Fondacio* express their **long-term commitment** before the community.

Many are recognized as friends of *Fondacio*. They are connected without being committed as members. They bring alive, in their own way, the spirit of *Fondacio* and they contribute to its mission and deployment.

Those who are **permanently engaged** are the members. They have received a particular calling to work full time for the community and its projects. They receive salaries regulated by the laws of their respective countries. They endeavor to create a network of donors who support them through a system of sponsorship.

There are **priests** who are committed to *Fondacio* in each country. They accompany the community and receive their mission from their Bishop.

III - *Fondacio* proclaims the Gospel and forms Christians

Members of *Fondacio* are in search of life and meaning. They find that the encounter with Christ and the living out of the Gospel are “humanizing factors” which open humankind to its true dimension. To those who wish to deepen their Christian vocation, *Fondacio* proposes courses of formation and would like to offer this same formation to others, in a contemporary style, with great respect for consciences.

The community is at the service of humanity

Eager to be a presence and a sign of the unconditional love of God and his commitment to the good of everyone, the members of *Fondacio* collaborate in the realization of an integral development of the person and of society. They are particularly attentive to the younger generation, to the places of suffering and of poverty, both material and spiritual, and to the questioning on the meaning of life. They aspire to render each person an active participant in his own development.

They function through the **collective projects of *Fondacio*** carried out by the residents of a region to meet the most pressing needs of their country. All their activity is based on the autonomy of the person and the respect for local cultures. Today, sixty-two projects of solidarity exist and are developing in areas of health, education, and economy. Antoine Dзамah, vice-president of *Fondacio*, is Togolese. He explains: “In Africa, we have developed workshops for ranching, agriculture, masonry, carpentry, and sewing. These activities provide training for young people and adults from the area and from

neighboring countries. We give them the possibility for initiation and formation. We help each person to become an active participant in their own life choices and to assume responsibility for educational and health needs, as well as local development in the village collectivities.”

The service “**Volunteers for the World**” enables about a hundred young people each year to become involved in local communities for the development of projects. These volunteers are mostly Europeans and they come for stints varying from several months to one year.

Youth

Fondacio endeavors to help **young people** build character so as to take their place in the world. The community develops propositions structured for each age group (clubs for 12-14 year olds, camps for adolescents 14-18 years old, forums for those between 18 and 25 years, as well as week-ends and retreats.) The youth learn how to have confidence and to achieve better self-knowledge so as to realize their potentials. They also learn openness to others and to the world and its stakes. They gain skill in handling their difficulties, taking risks, and assuming responsibility. They discover the Gospel as a way of life and are taught to share their faith with others. “I have found a place for listening and in-depth sharing. I, who am usually distrustful, I felt free to express myself without fear of judgment by others . . .” (Joel, 13) “I rediscovered the joy of living. I also understood that it is I who must make choices and be an active participant in my life . . .” (Valentine, 17) « I experienced a true encounter with God, a God who calls me to be fully alive, fully myself. » (Victor, 20)

Couples and Families

Diverse initiatives (sessions, cycles, groups for sharing), enable **couples** to renew and revivify their desire to live as a pair, to take the means to revitalize their life as a couple and a family, to discover positive points in difficulties encountered and to clarify their life together spiritually. “We came as two individuals, practically strangers, with our children ; we leave as spouses, as a couple, a family.” (Jean and Armelle) “I discovered the importance of an authentic dialogue in which God is discretely present.” (Edmond and Charlotte).

The actors and those with responsibility in the city

How to be – **by profession – an active factor for humanization at the heart of society?** How to live one’s professional and family engagements in harmony with one’s deepest aspirations and in the spirit of the Gospel when one is living in a world of intense, previously unknown, troubling constraints? *Fondacio* offers opportunities for reflection and sharing, empowering one to be and to act with integrity of conscience. A week-end seminar for directors of enterprises is organized on the Island Saint Honorat, off the coast of Cannes, in partnership with the monks of Lérins: “**Competence and performance . . . and then what?**” “I discovered in myself things that I ignored: presuppositions, fears, shady pretensions, but also an unsuspected interior wealth, hidden under all the clutter in my life.” (Bertrand)

Seniors and Elderly

Finally, *Fondacio* is concerned by the world of **the elderly**. This is one of the five major axes of the mission of the community. When we speak of older persons, we refer first of all to the **newly retired** who have left or will leave important professional responsibilities and find themselves suddenly confronted by the unknown. They are called « seniors. » For them, *Fondacio* offers week-long sessions in the country or in the mountains «**Re-treating my life,**» as well as support groups to accompany the transitions inherent in this stage of life. All this is marked by respect for the convictions and the experience of each one. Those of **the Third Age** whom we call « the elderly, » sense the approach of the stage of dependence and loss of autonomy. They wish to assume their identity as elderly and live it to the full. Two-day encounters « **Towards a New Life**» brings them together and, if they wish, they become involved in communities for providing resources and service, especially for helping those most deprived. In Belgium, a community called « With Open Hands » unites the oldest members of *Fondacio*, whose action is principally that of prayer. At the heart of the community or fraternity, the newly retired and the elderly discover a new space for sharing and openness to each person seeking meaning in this stage of existence, so rich in values to be welcomed. Whatever their age, they are an integral part of our world. They possess a solid experience of life waiting to be shared.

Fondacio offers to older people the certitude that the encounter with Christ is always an opportunity for the joy of growth, at whatever age they may be

“A few years ago I found myself retired; it was a brusque change for which I was not prepared. For me, retirement was a sign of marginalization, of expulsion, of loss of recognition, of the demise of my points of repair, I, who had been so used to working full-time, with fascinating things to do and rendezvous’ not to be missed. A week-long session in the mountains « Re-treating my life,» and a spiritual approach in a fraternity, offered by *Fondacio*, opened in me a doorway to hope, a liberty to be grasped, a new life to be welcomed, a motivation for the rest of my life. I could make choices peacefully and rediscover, in this difficult stage, meaning in my life so troubled at the time. Now that I am over 70 and among the “elderly,” I realize that there are others—young people, married couples with families, those with responsible positions in society—who have had similar spiritual experiences at different ages. They are, like me, members of this community and committed to a mission in society and in the Church. »

IV – The Government of *Fondacio*

An international congress of those responsible for the community representing the various countries is convened every five years. It defines the orientations and priorities for the mandate. They elect the president. With his council, he governs the community in conformity with the directives decided collegially. The mandate of the president is for five years, and may be renewed two times. The international center of the community is in Paris, 5 rue Monsieur, in the 7th arrondissement.

Each country is led by a person in charge and a national Council working closely with the international Council.

Fondacio is recognized civilly as a private association of faithful, Article 1901 of French law. It has recently been recognized as a civil congregation in France. Wherever the

community is present, it has civil rights necessary for its activity, according to the law of the perspective country.

Fondacio is a member of *Crescendo* since the General assembly of November 13, 2009.

Hubert de Quercize

