

## CHAPTER V

### GOVERNMENT

#### **Presentation**

69. Our government is an expression of our communion ordered to mission. At all levels (conventual, provincial and universal) our government looks after the planning, decision-making and implementation of everything that corresponds to our whole life and mission: “for a good which is accepted together is quickly and easily accomplished” (LCO 6). This co-responsibility demands today a creative collaboration which raises us above our limitations and responds to the urgent needs of the Order. To what does this collaboration commit us? What obstructs it? How can we convert it into prophetic hope? As we lack any magic formula for answering these questions, we would like to share the following with you:

- 1) certain evangelical convictions, as our base
- 2) some fundamental criteria, as our light
- 3) some operative steps, as a commitment and
- 4) our present reality, as a testimony

#### **(I) EVANGELICAL ROOTS OF GOVERNMENT AND COLLABORATION**

70. **“AND LEAVING EVERYTHING...”** They left their boats, their nets, their friends, their people... Those first disciples, whose apostolic life was imitated by Saint Dominic, overcame the frontiers of the here and now; they went beyond the here and now. Our life and mission invites us to fix our gaze on horizons that are farther than our first glance. Through our profession we are called to give our lives to God in the Order; through obedience to the Master of the Order we show our open-minded availability. Frequently, however, our present commitments prevent us from discovering other kinds of

work; the immediate needs of our communities prevent us from having a wider view of the challenges of the Order. The nets that are our work (individualism), the boats that are our priories (conventualism), the family that is our province (provincialism), can all be obstacles to our collaboration in a wider field, and they do not allow us to move beyond our immediate horizons.

“And leaving everything ... **THEY FOLLOWED HIM**”. Dominican spirituality is Paschal: we die that we might live. The stress is not on dying but on being born. Dominic, in Palencia, showed no interest in his books which he sold (dying), but rather in redeeming poverty (being born). As he began his preaching, he did not leave his heart in Castile, rather he brought it with him to Languedoc which called him. Like the disciples in the Gospel we do not emphasize “**they followed him**” but rather “**they left everything**”. This paschal teaching enlivens our government and our collaboration. If we fix our hearts on the activity that we have left behind, in the house that we have closed, in the institution that we have abandoned, how will we be able to open ourselves to the hope of a new presence, to the joy of a new institution, to the challenge of a new project?

The priorities of our mission, the frontiers, the new places that need preaching, the challenges of new areas, demand our evangelical response and call for brave, co-responsible decisions by our government. These will not be made easily. Now is the hour of Paschal courage. The goal of this search is not to destroy, but to build, and, above all, to launch ourselves “as evangelical men following in the footsteps of our Savior” (LCO 1, II) in places where the new challenges are calling for a courageous answer or demanding our collaboration. Death has a meaning when life is the perspective.

“And leaving everything, they followed him... and **HE SENT THEM OUT TO PREACH**”. “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and unto the ends of the earth.” The homeland of our lives and mission can be a community, a city or an institution, but we should always be available to go out with evangelical courage and generosity. People, communities and institutions are in exodus, as

we were reminded by the General Chapter in Avila. How can we be signs of a reconciled humanity when nation, culture, race and ideology are frontiers which impede collaboration in life and mission? It is certain that in our communal practice of government it is necessary to pay calm and genuine attention to these human situations and limitations in order to enable collaboration. However, without a spirit of apostolic solidarity and itinerancy, collaboration would be impossible, even if such limitations did not exist. Every entrenchment gambles with the hope of a new future.

## (II) FUNDAMENTAL CRITERIA FOR GOVERNMENT AND COLLABORATION

71. Our mission requires closer collaboration. To enlighten our efforts in this regard, we offer a few fundamental criteria that shed light on the concrete commitments of government and responsible collaboration:

**a) Evangelical criterion:** When poverty turns in on itself, it decays; when it opens out to redeem other poverties, it has the power to multiply. It is the evangelical logic of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes. It is the mystery of the wheat: when it is amassed, it rots; but if it falls on the fertile earth, is milled and baked, it becomes Eucharist for others. In that act of giving lies the mystique of our collaboration at all levels: conventual, provincial, universal or of the Order.

**b) The Criterion of Fraternal Communion:** Fraternal collaboration between communities and wider organizations rests on the equality and complementary nature of these entities. A collaboration where some of the friars feel inferior or subordinate is doomed to failure. The collaboration which imposes things and does not compliment destroys fraternal communion.

**c) Apostolic Criterion:** Collaboration has meaning when it looks toward strengthening our life, and when it is translated into an effective search for our apostolic priorities and for suitable ways of continually putting them into practice.

**d) Organizational Criterion:** Collaboration is genuine and always possible when there is a clear definition of goals, responsibilities and duties. These give rise to projects which are clearly defined, agreed to in writing and regularly evaluated, in accordance with the spirit and norms of our constitutions (LCO 106-107 & 390-395) and the paths which other General Chapters have opened up for us.

### (III) OPERATIVE STEPS FOR GOVERNMENT AND COLLABORATION

72. Our Constitutions give us many rich opportunities for collaborating (LCO 391), in terms of both content and method. Taking this framework into account, we propose some operative measures to generate collaboration, which go from the personal level to the level of the whole Order. Maybe they are not new. Perhaps they do not answer your expectations. However, we are convinced that when put into effect and regularly evaluated, they will open up new horizons of hope in our life and mission.

73. **WE EXHORT** all friars to revise: a) their participation in the planning and execution of their respective community's project of life and mission; b) the communitarian sense of their pastoral activities; c) their choices and presences in relation to the priorities and needs of the Order.

74. **WE REMIND** communities and local superiors of the ordination made at Walberberg (78), now included in LCO 311,I,2, to plan and evaluate their community project of life and mission in line with the priorities of the Order, and to make collaboration between the brethren easier at interconventual and provincial projects.

75. **WE ASK** priors and superiors to pay attention to the use of all the operative means for fraternal collaboration indicated in LCO: chapters, councils, conventual colloquial, community meetings, on-going formation, in spite of the difficulties of each individual priory.

76. Quite often, there are various communities in the same city or nearby region, which could belong to one and the same entity. **WE ORDAIN** that major superiors and assemblies of provincials convoke and promote inter-community gatherings at least once a year with the aim of providing a unanimous witness of supporting the priorities of the Order, and of planning projects of common interest which are suitably agreed upon.

77. We believe that the apostolic project of a province or vicariate is a sign of communion and an instrument for concretizing and carrying out the options of the Order. It is the responsibility of provincial chapters and similar governing bodies to plan and evaluate such an apostolic project with everyone's collaboration, and it is the responsibility of the Provincial and his Council to supervise its implementation. **WE ASK** these governing bodies to establish real and well-defined planning of locations, tasks and institutions.

78. **WE ASK** the priors provincials, their councils and the regional organizations of collaboration to examine realistically the distribution of the friars and their communities in any one place or region, and to have the courage to assume concrete commitments to make possible new and more meaningful presences in their own and in other places.

79. **WE ASK** superiors and their respective councils that, in order to attain a more efficient and working collaboration in the different areas outlined by the constitutions (LCO 391), they establish statutes and agreements which they might consider opportune, in accordance with nn. 390, 392, 393, 394 and 395 of our constitutions, and that those who accept these agreements carry them out consistently. The Master of the Order, on his own or through his assistants, should take special care that these numbers of the LCO become a reality.

80. **WE EXHORT** the provincials and superiors of entities that pertain to one region or linguistic group, to look for definite ways of building solidarity and collaboration, so that they can reorganize and strengthen those entities within that very region which are in difficulty or in the process of growth.

81. **WE ASK** the provincials to take care to: 1) encourage the brethren of their provinces to take part in the Order's mission beyond their own provincial frontiers; 2) create possibilities for a commitment to collaboration with other entities, including those provinces which do not have such a commitment.

82. **WE ASK** those responsible for formation that as far as possible they make sure that student brothers, during the time of their initial formation or complementary studies, spend at least six months in a community outside of their province and even outside of their own country.

83. **WE RECOMMEND** that all of the brothers learn to speak a second language. In order to facilitate communication and collaboration among ourselves, **WE ORDAIN** that during formation the brothers who do not know a second language study one; and that those whose native tongue is not English, learn it.

84. **WE ASK** the Council for Europe to define its own statutes and to present them to the Master of the Order for approbation.

85. Collaboration and solidarity in government and the needs of the Order require both information and communication. So: a) **WE ASK** major superiors to inform the brethren about these needs and to encourage their response; b) **WE ASK** the Master of the Order to complete the database of all the brothers in the Order.

86. The study of the Acts of the General Chapters is part of our vow of obedience. Therefore **WE ORDAIN**, that in conformity with LCO 419, II, in conventual colloquia and in the programs of ongoing formation of every community, the study and reception of these documents will be included.

#### **(IV) THE PRESENT REALITY SINCE THE GENERAL CHAPTER OF MEXICO**

##### **a) Positive steps towards collaboration**

87.1. Following the recommendation and declaration of the General Chapter of Mexico (206 and 207) the Provinces of the Holy Rosary and the Philippines established concrete forms of collaboration in the areas of vocations, formation and apostolate.

87.2. The Province of Saint John the Baptist of Peru, and the Vicariates of the Province of Spain and of Saint Joseph of the U.S.A., and the house of Toulouse in Peru reached an agreement of collaboration in the common formation. (Mexico 206, 1,2).

87.3. The provinces of Saint Martin de Porres and Saint Albert the Great of the U.S.A. began collaboration by establishing a common novitiate in Denver and a common studentate in Saint Louis (Mexico 209,b).

87.4. The provinces of Spain, Aragón and Bética, and the Regional Vicariate of the Province of Holy Rosary in Spain, began collaboration through common formation of their novices in order to start an interprovincial novitiate in the future.

87.5. The provinces of Saint Peter Martyr and Lombardy in Italy are in an advanced stage in the process of unification. The other provinces of the peninsula have taken steps to achieve a closer and more stable collaboration. There is a national novitiate of these provinces in Chieri and there is an agreement of collaboration to establish common centers of the study of philosophy and theology for all of Italy.

87.6. In response to the ordination of the General Chapter of Mexico (184), the Council for Europe had two meetings (Prague 1993 and Malta 1994) in which they examined the situation of the Order in Europe, the existing forms of inter-provincial collaboration, and the outlook for the immediate future, most of all in the area of initial formation.

87.7. In order to plan the apostolate of the Order in the Iberian peninsula, the Iberian Assembly of Provincials decided to form an interprovincial team for theological reflection which published the results of its study: "Presencias y ausencias dominicanas en España y Portugal, 1992".

87.8. The project of unification between the provinces of France and Lyon is being studied by their Provincial Councils.

87.9. The Master of the Order, after a proposal by CIDAL, named as promoter responsible for the mass media P. José Adalmiro Arias of the Province of Saint Louis Bertrand of Colombia.

87.10. The vicariates of the provinces of Bética and Holy Rosary in Venezuela have a common formation program for the students who, in the future, will form a new entity in the Order.

87.11. The two priories of the Vicariate of the Province of Bética in Puebla (Mexico) have been integrated into the Province of Santiago.

87.12. In Africa the novitiates of Rwanda-Burundi, Nigeria, Zaire, and South Africa are open to novices of all these entities. They are continuing their collaboration through Interafrica and through the presence of student brothers in diverse centers of studies.

**b) Projects not achieved**

88.1. The collaboration programmed between the provinces of Teutonia and Saint Albert the Great of the U.S.A. in their vicariates of Bolivia did not achieve its planned objective.

88.2. After some years of collaboration between the entities of the Caribbean, the common novitiate in Trinidad-Tobago was closed.

**c) New possibilities**

89.1. After some initial difficulties, the mission established by the Province of the Holy Rosary in Korea continues on course, with a community of three religious who are looking for greater stability.

89.2. The Province of Malta is studying the possibility of starting a mission in Albania.

89.3. The Province of the Philippines is studying the possibility of opening houses in Indonesia and in Sri Lanka.

**(V) FINAL THOUGHTS**

90.1. To govern is to act somewhere between the dream and the hard reality. Now there is, at all levels of the Order, a perceptible gap between the two - between, on the one hand, the challenges which we face and the apostolic goals which we set to answer those challenges and, on the other hand, the resources at our disposal with which to confront the challenges and to reach the goals. Does this not derive from a failure to evaluate current or upcoming projects which we have chosen to undertake together? During the course of a conventual, provincial, or general chapter, is there room for the most objective evaluation possible of the stakes, the successes, the failures, and even an evaluation of whether we should start new programs, whether we should stop or continue existing ones? How do we bridge the gap between our lack of manpower and the needs which we have to or want to meet? Do we know how to choose, and do we know how to say "No"? We accept rather willingly to share our material resources; do we also accept to share our human resources? Do we know how to communicate our needs, our joys, our sorrows, our successes - be it on the provincial or regional or world-wide level?

90.2. It is necessary to continue to sensitize the brethren to the priorities chosen and confirmed by the most recent General Chapters. Parallel to this and likewise on behalf of these same priorities, provincial or local superiors must be sensitized to the necessity of making courageous and even painful choices, of collaborating effectively

with other entities with an eye toward attaining goals set in common - assuring a Dominican presence in such a way that our people will not all be concentrated in one place, thus leaving other entire regions totally devoid of Dominicans.

90.3. Preaching is the mission of the Order, its charism, and in principle everything we do is directed toward this end. In view of this preaching, we encourage a genuine itinerancy inspired first and foremost by apostolic zeal. What then should be done with venerable buildings and institutions which were once useful, but which more recently have often proven to be burdensome? Each of our communities is in itself a “Holy Preaching”. Are we convinced that, for our communities to indeed be such, they must have at least a certain number of brothers in order to ensure a nourishing liturgical life, to encourage balance in our lives, to have a stimulating and enriching community project, to provide the Order with the image which it ought to have? If this is the case, why are there so many communities - of course exempting certain exceptional cases which can only be seen as transitory - which meet neither the criteria set by the Constitutions nor the desires of the General Chapters? Likewise, what can be done to make it possible for the majority of our communities to live a Dominican life which conforms in principle to the requirements of the Constitutions and the General Chapters? Where this is not yet possible, what kinds of networks can be envisioned and implemented which may provide avenues for discussion, collaboration, and support, and which will avoid isolation in order to keep alive the requirement for a modicum of common life?

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

91.1. We recommend that the provincials and the Provincial Chapters evaluate the apostolic objectives of their communities or of their provinces with regard to the priorities of the Order.

91.2. We recommend that the provincials and the Provincial Chapters analyze the apostolic needs of their territories or of their regions and, with regard to the aforementioned objectives and eventually in

consideration of possible collaboration with other entities, that they determine what sites and means are necessary for meeting these needs. This call to mission may be a call to go beyond the existing structures, to make choices with courage and determination, and even to withdraw from certain ministries in order to ensure the continued life and mission of the Order itself.

91.3. We recommend that the Provincial Chapters make sure that each community effectively allow the normal exercise of the Dominican life according to the criteria established by the Constitutions and the General Chapters. In particular, we recommend that the Provincial Chapters be mindful that there is an optimum number of brothers and a generational balance which must be maintained if we are to assure a flourishing fraternal common life, and if we are to provide the Order with the image which it ought to have.

91.4. A constant throughout the entire legislation of the Order is the notion that the province is the usual point of reference as regards Dominican identity and government. The province is responsible for formation, for centers of study, for maintaining diversity among its apostolates, and for giving birth to new projects. According to the General Chapter of Mexico City, the provinces “are the institutions which carry on the dynamism of the Order”. To that end, it is important for a province to have a sufficient number of brothers. It is very improbable that a province with fewer brothers than the minimum number established by our current legislation would be able to have a dynamic government. As a result, we recommend that the next General Chapter discuss the minimum number of friars necessary to constitute a province, and that it seriously consider bringing that number to sixty.