

# AD GENTES: A MISSIONARY BISHOP REMEMBERS

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*[This article was published in Vatican II: By those who were there, A. Stacpoole (ed.). Geoffrey Chapman, London. 1986]*

*The great central Dogmatic Constitution, Lumen Gentium on the Church, begins: 'Christ is the light of all nations'. The Decree on the Church's missionary activity begins: 'To all nations has the Church been divinely sent...' The two mirror one another in many more ways: both embody the missionary dynamic, that the Church is the great sacrament of unity for all mankind, even those as yet beyond it. The Decree Ad Gentes consciously opened perspectives to those who are non-believers. The work of preaching the gospel for the first time and building up the Body of Christ to its fullness the Fathers called 'the greatest and holiest work of the Church. The Decree went on to state: 'The whole Church is missionary'. Missionary work is the task of the whole People of God, as a fundamental duty. No other Council has ever insisted this so strongly.*

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This essay comes in response to an urgent request from the Editor, who wrote: 'May I please ask you to tell your story about the Mission Decree *Ad Gentes*?' I had practically nothing at all to do with the preparation of *Ad Gentes*, and so I asked myself, 'Why call on me to write about it?' And yet, I probably had a tiny little bit to do with the very existence of the Council document. Even in the most memorable events of human history there has been room for the hitherto insignificant fly which got into the ointment, for the mote which was in the other fellow's eye, and even for the straw that broke the camel's back. Perhaps that was the sort of role I played.

Memory is less reliable twenty years after the event and source material where I am at the moment is not readily at hand, so I propose to tell my story quite simply, just as I recall it. It will be a human-interest story, different probably from the rest of this book but it may be useful in showing how the Holy Spirit in surprising but in completely simple ways uses very human means to achieve His purposes.

I came from Africa to the First Session of the Second Vatican Council not really knowing what was likely to happen or how the great assembly would function. Very probably I was not the only bishop from what were known as 'the missions', or indeed from the developed Western world who arrived like men from rural areas coming into a big city for the first time and being overwhelmed by all one saw there. In some ways I was better off than many. I had been a student in Rome from 1933 till 1938. I knew the city and I knew some Italian. I knew a little bit about the central administration at Vatican City. Possibly most valuable of all, I had done all my Roman studies through Latin and I was still reasonably familiar with that language and capable of using it for Church purposes.

Before coming to the Council of course, we bishops received the preparatory documents and had studied them as well as the daily demands of our newly established mission dioceses, our limited resource material and the quality of our own priestly formation permitted. But for most of us, that was all the preparation we had.

On the opening day of the Council we were thrilled by the splendour of it. There were at least two thousand bishops in the great procession, walking four deep in best copes and white-starched mitres, and as we turned around occasionally to see if there was ever going to be an end to the flow coming out of the Vatican we got a glimpse of the old Pope, carried shoulder high in the *Sedia Gestatoria*, tilting slightly and precariously from side to side, in time with the measured step of his white-gloved and well-tailored bearers. The whole scene was breath-taking. We had never seen anything like it; It was majestic, magnificent. We had not yet been taught to see it as triumphalistic! It was simply taking up again where the First Vatican Council had been interrupted. The portly figure of the great Pope John and his advanced age fitted perfectly into the picture and seemed to confirm the historical continuity.

Within a few days after the opening ceremonies had been suitably accomplished the machinery of the Council slipped into gear and the real work began. The daily opening Mass, the long and beautiful invocation '*Adsumus quaesumus Domine*', the indescribable sense of history evoked by the setting of the basilica, stamped and sealed the assembly as an indisputably spiritual one; and yet there was clearly present a strong, human and down-to-earth managerial group well in command of the proceedings. The

rumour spread that we would be finished with all the Council business in quick style and be back home for Christmas.

Meanwhile we daily became familiar with procedure, finding the Latin easier and able to identify the different accents of those who had the temerity to submit an intervention and speak in the Aula. The magisterial presence and voice of the General Secretary Felici and his totally brilliant and easy competence with Latin were enough to chasten the ambitions of any mere missionary bishop who might dream of having recorded in his obituary notice that he had spoken at the Vatican Council.

In practice most bishops from missionary dioceses were happy enough to leave the actual interventions in the Aula to one among them chosen for the task, after they had agreed on the matter to be submitted and had the Latin text shaped and polished by some official or non-official *peritus*. The *periti* were legion and were everywhere. At the same time the bishops themselves through daily study of the growing mass of documents, by meetings in committees or at social functions were sand-papering one another into awareness of the issues evolving and preparedness for participation when the moments of decision would arrive.

About this time in the early weeks of the Council there were heard in the Aula new and commanding voices of some bishops and non-Curial cardinals – mostly from Europe, challenging the procedures of the central administration of the Council. It began to appear that perhaps the Council might last somewhat longer than had been anticipated and that its business was not going to be completely finished, wrapped up and safely stowed before Christmas, before too many new-fangled ideas could be promoted and spread abroad.

Meanwhile something very important for me had happened. Shortly after the Council had got under way the Secretary General announced that elections were to be held to fill up places in the Preparatory Commissions of those who had become incapacitated or who had died in the interim. Members of these groups were to be chosen from among the assembled Council Fathers.

I shall never understand how my name came to be proposed as a candidate for the newly created Secretariat for the Promotion of Christian Unity, but it was, and after the ballot papers were counted I was declared to be elected' with almost 1000 votes. I do not know how this came about but I rather *suspect* that not knowing that I was Irish, and seeing the name 'Lamont', the French speaking bishops of the Council thought I was one of them and loyally supported me. I say that I suspect that something-like that happened. I have no way of knowing; but if it did, it just goes to show how the Holy Spirit presiding over the Council could turn errors to good advantage – to my advantage at any rate.

However unqualified I felt as an ordinary member of the Council I felt immeasurably more unqualified and out of my depth among the gifted and dedicated men who worked with Cardinal Bea in his Secretariat. [During 1962–75 he was a member of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. Ed.] As everyone now realizes this was a most influential, sensitive and newly established body in the Church, with wide-ranging interests but specifically orientated towards the aims of the Ecumenical Council. Simply to be a member of the Secretariat, to attend the regular and hard-working meetings, to have one's mind sharpened and enlarged by the subjects discussed

with such brilliant men as Bea, Willebrands, de Smedt, Congar, Duprey, Pavan, Courtney Murray, Barnabas Aherne and others was an education *sans pareil*, a formation for life and for this Council in particular. Who could associate with such men without something rubbing off?

As a result of all this I grew in my understanding of the Council and of the way its work was being organized. I began to become aware of the wheels within wheels, which made things go forward smoothly or slowed them down discreetly and which could put the machine into reverse or even bring it to a halt if it were so desired. However, I became absorbed in the work of the Unity Secretariat and so separated from the other mission bishops by living in our own Carmelite College, that I lost touch with what was going on behind the scenes, in the preparation of a Council document on the subject of the missionary work of the Church.

It was about this time that I attended a meeting of the English-speaking bishops of Southern Africa and came to realize that the official organization of the Council did not intend to produce a comprehensive Schema on the work of the missions at all. Instead, after considering many attempts to prepare a suitable document, it had been decided that an elaborate statement on the subject was not really necessary, because in fact, although perhaps 'summarily, the essential matters concerning the mission apostolate of the Church were already incorporated in other Council documents which were awaiting approbation. Duplication was to be avoided and time was short. It would be sufficient, (so 'they' believed) to compress into a number of concise and weighty Propositions all that this ecumenical Council had to say on the subject. In this way the discussion could be brought authoritatively and expeditiously to a close. I was dumbfounded and could scarcely believe my ears.

Remember, we were already in our Third Session and away from our dioceses and the end of the Council was not yet in sight. To compound difficulties, the old Pope had died and had been followed by Pope Paul VI, who newly at the helm, was grimly holding on to the task bequeathed him of directing the Council to a fitting conclusion. It was a daunting task. Powerful new and prophetic voices were now being heard at official meetings of Commissions and were increasingly influential in moulding opinions in the Aula. The Pope wished to hear these opinions and at the same time he had to handle diplomatically the old guard and the curial officials who in large measure controlled the proceedings. Many of them had worked for years in the Curia and were known to him personally. He had his hands full.

Back at the meeting of the bishops of Southern Africa when I heard that we were to get no full Mission document but were to be asked instead to approve a series of Propositions, I spoke up and protested. Others present had spoken before me with great vehemence and even with bitterness. We were resolved not to be fobbed off with such a substitute, but to reject it and to make our feelings known in the Aula. We also agreed to join with all the other mission bishops of whatever provenance and to approach some of the now acknowledged 'big guns' of the Council, people like Cardinals Bea and Suenens and get them to speak on our behalf as well, demanding a proper document worthy of the occasion.

In my protest at our meeting I had referred scathingly to the Propositions, as the 'dry bones' of Ezekiel's prophecy. Leaving the hall, someone (I think Archbishop, now

Cardinal, McCann of Cape Town) said: 'Why don't you prepare an intervention and speak in the Aula and repeat what you have just said here?' I replied that other people had already agreed to speak and that that should be enough. 'No', he replied, 'the stronger our protest the better. Get something ready. The more objections the merrier!'

Encouraged by this advice and furious that the work of the Missions should seem to have been worthy of such scant consideration, I went back to our College and sat down to compose my intervention, realizing that I would have only a tight ten minutes to speak in the Aula if by any stroke of good fortune I were to be called at all from among the great number of those who wished to be heard.

Obviously the 'big guns' whom we hoped to enlist on our side would provide the most powerful opening assault. They would be heard attentively and their arguments would not lightly be set aside. These friends of our cause could sway the undecided. On the other hand, once our selected speakers of established reputation were seen to reject the Propositions and to demand a proper Mission Decree, there would certainly arise influential, experienced and astute conservatives who had the ear of the Council Secretariat and would demand to be heard too and would oppose any change.

Realizing that all the weighty and coercive arguments would already have been delivered by previous speakers I prepared my brief intervention confining myself almost entirely to the dry bones analogy. As I wrote, the concept showed that it permitted of further development and quite soon amusing ideas for the speech began to appear to me and seemed happily to fall into place. On the other hand I realized that my proposed intervention, (like Ezekiel's bones themselves), lacked weight; it was not 'meaty' enough; it might even appear skittish and be rejected out of hand. However, I handed to the General Secretary the summary of what I wished to say in the Aula. It was simply this: the propositions were like dry bones and should be rejected. An Italian Carmelite colleague polished up my own hesitant Latin text and I waited for the opening of the Mission debate and for the possibility that my name might be among those chosen to speak. It was like having a ticket in a lottery and waiting for the luck of the draw.

In the first week of November while the theme of the Church in the modern world was being discussed in the Aula, the proceedings were suddenly interrupted and we were informed that the debate on Mission activity would be introduced next day. When we assembled full of expectancy on that Friday morning (6 November 1964) we were given the surprising news that the Holy Father would be present and would personally preside. It was the first time since the Council of Trent that a Pope had done so. This time he was taking his place at the head of the table of the Council Presidents and so manifesting the principle of collegiality with his fellow bishops.

It was also appropriate for the subject to be discussed that the thoughts of the assembly should be turned to the missionary world by the celebration of the long and impressive Liturgy of the Ethiopian rite.

The ordinary work of the day then began with the Secretary General of the Council Archbishop Felici reading out the names of those who had been chosen to speak. Five cardinals and fourteen bishops were to be heard. My name was among them, down towards the end. I was shattered. How could I rise in the presence of the Holy Father and speak what I had written with such irony? I could not change it. My

summary had been accepted by the Council authority and I had to stick to it. I would not be permitted to vary my argument. I was ruined.

When Pope Paul himself began to speak introducing the mission theme, we strained to hear. He spoke briefly, not longer than the ten minutes permitted the other bishops. But to our amazement he seemed to approve of the Propositions. He thought that 'the document contained many things worthy of praise'; it emphasized that 'the whole Church not just parts of it was obliged to be missionary'; it dearly established that 'the missionary apostolate was the most excellent of all in importance and efficacy'. The more we heard the more we shuddered in disbelief. This was simply an approval and a preparation for a final vote in favour of the wretched Propositions which the missionary bishops had agreed were totally unacceptable. The Holy Father's words sounded almost like a directive: 'We believe, therefore that the text will be easily approved by you even after having noted the necessity of final improvements.'

When he sat down I am sure he received a generous round of applause but I cannot remember. My mind was topsy turvy. We all admired and loved Pope Paul and sympathized with the awesome burden of responsibility he carried. Anyone who had ever known him and spoken to him in private recognized how much he consumed one with deep concern as he listened. How had he formed this strange idea about the Propositions, so much at variance with the opinions of the bishops in the front line? Who was behind this unimaginative and old-fashioned view of the present day pagan world now unbelievably accessible and with untold readiness for the Gospel? Pope Paul of all people, with his long experience at the Secretariat of State; who had travelled widely in the Third World (he had even come to Rhodesia to visit his own Milanese people constructing the Kariba Dam), how could he have come to believe that the mission activity of the universal Church could ever be summarized and satisfied with what to us were thirteen lifeless platitudes culled from some worm-cankered textbook on Missiology? Who was behind all this?

The answer seemed to be found in the next speaker who went to the microphone when the Pope had finished. This was Cardinal G. P. Agagianian, Prefect of the Sacred Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith and the one to whom all missionary bishops were most immediately responsible. Speaking as President of the conciliar commission on the missionary apostolate he delivered his official report on the disputed document, thanked the Holy Father for his presence in the Aula and finally announced that the Pope would shortly make a practical gesture of his concern for the missionary world by visiting India. This brought immediate applause, more sustained than before. When that was over the Pope then rose and walked out of the Aula, greeting all as he left and reserving a particular and affectionate acknowledgement of the presence among us of the big, emaciated and craggy-looking Archbishop Josyf Slipyi of the Ukrainian rite who had been released from long imprisonment by the Soviet regime the year before.

As soon as the Holy Father left and the normal day's proceedings began again, the first of the speakers to the subject was called to the microphone. In my place I sat with my typed intervention and began to consider how I might change it before I was called. I would have to alter and modify what I had written so as not to appear to contradict the Holy Father in public or in any other way to show him disrespect. When I took out my pen and began to amend the script my hand shook. I turned to the bishop sitting on my

left, Bishop Olivotti, Auxiliary of Venice (I think it was) hoping that as I might dictate the changes he would write them in for me. He was helpful but it wouldn't work. There were things of greater importance to be done, voices to be heard in the Aula as the 'big guns' began to be called to the microphone and commanded attention. Cardinal Léger of Montreal was speaking in our favour, so was Cardinal Doi of Tokyo and the tall and regal Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa of Tanzania was speaking up for Africa. The list was coming closer to my name. I watched the clock as the minutes dragged on. Then thankfully there was a pause in between the speeches while votes on earlier documents were distributed and collated. If this kept up, time might run out before I was called. I might be saved by the bell. I was. The closure was announced just as I was soon to be summoned to speak. Never were my prayers so opportunely answered.

Thankful beyond measure for my last minute reprieve, I returned to my College and straight away set about solving the problem of adhering in principle to the outline of the intervention already submitted to the General Secretary, and how not to appear brazenly and publicly to contradict the Pope himself at an ecumenical Council. I would probably be called to speak next day. The manner of my presentation would be important if I were to influence the minds of those Council Fathers who did not see eye to eye with the mission bishops. A spoonful of honey rather than a barrel full of vinegar was the only thing that might work. Fortunately, the good will shown us by Pope Paul's choosing the mission debate to break with tradition and appear in the Aula would help. I could refer to that in my intervention and no one would reasonably object that I was departing from the outline which I had submitted to the Secretary General and about which I had been given permission to address the assembly.

Next morning, Saturday 7 November, Cardinal Julius Döpfner of Munich presided in the Aula and opened the working session by announcing the day's list of speakers. My name was among them, seventh on the list. It was a good omen. Seven is my lucky number - so superstitious are we bishops! It was the one hundred and seventeenth session of Vatican II; it was the seventh of November. Although I had not known all this until long afterwards, it looks a propitious omen.

It is an ordeal to be called to the microphone in the great Roman basilica and to address the Church in Council. Fortunately the address system was excellent and the acoustics remarkably good. My voice sounded strange to me as I spoke the traditional opening words: *'Venerabiles Patres'*. After that, with my text shaking in my hand, the words came easily. The first paragraph straight away rejected the Propositions: *'Episcopi aliquid aliud expectabant; non nudas et simplices propositiones, sed Schema doctrina et propositis plenum capax generandi in missionariis vires apostolatu dignas.'* There was a slight ripple of applause. The missionary bishops at least were listening and were with me.

It was the moment to say something favourable about the Propositions. After all, the Holy Father had not totally rejected them. They had a lot to offer but they were not perfect. They could be improved. They were at least the props on which something useful could be mounted. Here the image of an electricity system with great pylons holding up cables or wires suggested itself. The analogy appealed to the audience who were already listening and found amusing and easy to understand, simple Latin words for things like 'infrastructure', 'pylons', 'electric wires' which like the Propositions were good in themselves but of little use if the wires were not connected or the motor not yet

switched on. One sensed a sort of background reaction from the assembly as they heard: *'Propositiones utiles sunt, necessariae sunt, sed non sufficiunt. Aequiparari possunt infrastructurae systematis electricae quae comprehendit columnas, lucifera fila et alia adjumenta technica, cum motore tamen nondum conjuncta vel a motore nondum excitata.'* All this was of course spoken with grave emphasis and with the Latin pronunciation used by old theology professors known in Rome thirty years earlier.

Now it was time to turn to the opposition and soften them up offering generous acknowledgement of the Holy Father's appearing in the Aula the previous day, sitting among us as the chief missionary. This I declared was a consolation far beyond our expectations and deserved our unqualified gratitude. The applause greeting these words spoken with warm affection came at once loud and sustained from all parts of the basilica. The initial tension eased. The assembly at once was noticeably relaxed. The bishops were listening. In the language of the theatre, it was 'a warm house'.

Speaking at the microphone was relatively easy from that moment on, and it required no particular courage to declare that the unfortunate Propositions had even failed to satisfy the Holy Father. They should be rejected. They were lifeless and simply resembled the sunbaked bones that lay strewn along the valley of the prophet Ezekiel's vision (cf. Ezekiel 37:1–10). Calling them *Ossa sicca!* and articulating the words with sibilant and emphatic *disprezzo*, the phrase had an immediate impact and brought more laughter from the assembly. It was the most natural thing in the world to follow this up with the powerful rhetoric of Ezekiel himself, addressing it to the Council Fathers: *'Putasne vivent ossa ista?'* They replied at once in a babble of accents: 'Non! Non!' followed by general laughter. It was the high moment of the morning. People were enjoying the session – so was I!

On other days there had been enthusiastic applause for great speeches made by acknowledged orators like Cardinal Suenens or Bishop de Smedt. This was something different – no profound theological insight had been enunciated, no new and fundamental programme of action proposed, no strange Pentecostal hush had come down upon the assembly. In fact just the very opposite. Man's innate sense of humour seemed to have been touched, and hard cerebral attitudes melted. The Holy Spirit acts that way. Thoroughly mature and integrated men cannot remain too serious for too long. The Council began to be a happy place.

The opportune moment had come to hammer home our rejection of the wretched Propositions. They would have to go. 'Have these Propositions inspired any of you Venerable Fathers to make new sacrifices on behalf of the missions? If they have not moved you, how can you expect them to have any impact on the religious Orders and Missionary Congregations of men? – or, what probably is much more important, on any Mother General of a Congregation of Sisters?' The Fathers assembled took the point and chuckled their agreement.

'Would these Propositions reverberate to the far corners of the pagan world and change it?', I challenged. No! They would no more do that than would my voice fill this vast basilica without the aid of this microphone – which I was tapping. We missionary bishops were completely frustrated by these thirteen dry bones. We had come from all over the world, to the Council looking for the Pentecostal fire which the late lamented Pope John XXIII had asked for. What did we get in the Propositions? – 'This penny

candle! — *haec candela!* We had asked for modern weapons to conquer the world for Christ in this critical age: We were being offered instead bows and arrows — *'arcus et sagittae'*. As in the Gospel story we asked for bread and we were given, I would not say a stone, but these thirteen cold sentences extracted from some antiquated tract on missiology!

Time was running out on me. This cheeky intervention might easily be switched off by the Cardinal President if he became irritated, and I could be left there standing like a fool before the Council and speaking to a dead microphone. However, my luck held out for me: I survived. I had a right to my full ten minutes and I had not exceeded the limit. There was just time to appeal to the bishops again, using that magnificent invocation which Ezekiel addressed to the bones in the valley: 'Come from the four winds, breath; breathe on these dead; let them live... and the breath entered them; they came to life again and stood up on their feet, a great, an immense army!' (vv. 9, 10). It was, if I may say so myself, a great moment when I pronounced the final *'haec spes mea, ecce labor noster'*, then stopped with the customary curt *'Dixi'* and went back to my place.

All around me bishops moved to allow me to return to my seat. I heard applause from the Aula and cries of 'Bravo! Bravo!' but as I sat down I also heard the dull gravelly accent of the President, Cardinal Döpfner calling for order in the Aula and for silence so that the next speaker could begin. I recognized that he was telling the bishops that he did not wish to listen to any more demonstrations of the art of oratory. It was fair comment I suppose, but in spite of the reprimand I would not have missed the experience for anything.

At the end of the morning's business I was delighted that I had done everything I could to prevent the Propositions being foisted on us. Outside the basilica many of the bishops had come over and warmly congratulated me. The 'dry bones' motif seemed to have made a particular impression on them and smiling broadly and with great good humour they were already making jokes on the theme quoting from the Psalmist: *'Exultabunt ossa humiliata!'*

For me however, the most memorable comment came from a friend, the late Bishop Petit of Menevia. He came over to me as we made our way through the crowd of bishops leaving the basilica and greeted me with undisguised pleasure saying: 'Splendid my friend! Marvellous! The last of the great Irish orators!' I purred with pleasure. I could not have asked for a finer compliment. But then he straight away properly and completely punctured my self-esteem by adding: 'But of course, you didn't really say anything, did you?' He was perfectly correct. I had not really said anything; but whatever I did say had worked.

When the debate on the missions opened on the following Monday the Propositions were in effect rejected. After that morning the subject was dropped and it was decided that although it would involve increased labour and therefore the prolongation of the Council into the following year, a totally new and comprehensive document on the missionary activity of the Church should be prepared and presented to the Council in time for what was hoped would be the final session.

That Fourth and final Session of Vatican II opened formally on 14 September 1965. Soon we began to recognize that the vast and laborious endeavours of the past years were really now showing concrete and positive results. The Constitution on the

Liturgy and the Decree on Communications Media had been solemnly promulgated by Pope Paul in 1963 at the end of the Second Session. The great Constitution on the Church and the Decrees on Ecumenism and on the Eastern Churches had been similarly approved at the close of the Public Congregation of November 1964. Other important Council documents were already debated and completed and were now only awaiting the formal public vote in the Aula. Things had really made headway.

The new document on the missions had still some way to go and had yet to be debated. The Propositions of the previous year, the old dry bones had been quietly interred and a promising, new, and vibrant work on the Church's missionary apostolate was now in the hands of the Council Fathers. Full of enthusiasm for this new Decree, I prepared an intervention and hoped to be allowed to speak again at the Council. Many other bishops had in this final session come to me and urged me to do so, and to ensure that the new document would be approved.

The matter was introduced to the Council on 7 October 1965 by Cardinal Agagianian who was followed by the Superior General of the Divine Word Fathers, a prominent member of the Commission for the Missions. This man, Father J. Schütte, described in considerable detail the format and content of the future *Ad Gentes* and noted that it had been completely rewritten out of concern for the hundreds of Council Fathers who had been so disappointed by the previous Propositions. In further elucidating the substance of the document he mentioned something which was soon to have a very personal and decisive factor in my own missionary career. This was that genuine preaching of the Gospel should never leave itself open to the accusation that it was in any way chauvinistic or concerned with imperialistic ambitions.

The debate proceeded and continued the following day with interventions in favour of the new document delivered by such authorities as Cardinals Frings, Journet, Alfrink and even on 11 October by the formidable Cardinal Ruffini of Palermo. There were others too, mostly missionary bishops who were showering their praise on the new work. There was still no sign of my own name on the list of those who would be called to speak. I began to think of someone in the centre of organization saying to himself: 'Who will rid me of this troublesome prelate?' but I was in actual fact not greatly worried, The new Decree was sure to go through.

Other bishops seemed to have the same thought that I might be prevented from speaking again in the Aula, and they spoke to me about it. I told them not to do anything. I might be called when the debate continued. However, they insisted and a deputation of missionary bishops came to me and persuaded me that I should insist (if I were not called in the ordinary way) on my right to be heard in Council when I had the support of at least seventy Council Fathers. They said: 'If you who so notoriously condemned the old Propositions can now be heard in the Aula, to approve of the new Schema we will be sure to get lots of support.'

At the assembly on 12 October, the debate on the missions continued, seventeen speakers being heard with most of them in favour of the new document. Then suddenly as if bored with the monotonous and repetitive approval, a closure was called on the discussion and authority sought for this action by a standing vote. This action, intended to speed up the proceedings was later sanctioned by a written paper vote.

The assembly then took up other business; matters concerning other subjects which had to be voted and approved. The work went on for some time and then suddenly to my surprise I heard my name called by the Cardinal President of the day and I was introduced by his saying I was to speak in the name of at least seventy other Council Fathers.

The speech which I then delivered had a great deal more substance to it than my 'dry bones' effort of the previous year. It was quietly received but with some applause at the end. Apart from the enthusiastic support I gave the new Schema the only thing commentators remembered from the intervention was a simple Latin sentence which seemed to justify all the work of the Council and summarize in pithy fashion the purpose of the Decree Ad Gentes. It read: '*Nulla gens tam fera est ut Christi Evangelii capax non sit, neque tam culta Ut Evangelio non indigeat,*' – 'No people are so primitive as to be unfit for the Gospel; none are so civilized as not to need it.' It is worth remembering. Ad Gentes received a final vote of: Placet 2,394; Non Placet 5; Nulla 0.