

**PROJECT EUROPE**  
**Report & Reflection on an Initiative of the**  
**SVD Missiological Institute, St. Augustin**

In October 2001 the “Project Europe” of the SVD Missiological Institute St. Augustin was launched at the Institute’s general meeting. The then director of the Institute, the late Fr. Heribert Bettscheider, had given an introduction to the theme of “Mission in Europe,” and the assembly discussed questions about the meaning of mission in Europe, the situation of the SVD in Europe today, and to whom mission in Europe should be addressed. Already at the very beginning it was clear that some basic research would have to be done: questions about mission in Europe in general and the SVD involvement in this mission in particular would have to be addressed. With this, the Missiological Institute was challenged to make decisions also about its future work and to clarify its own vision-mission.

*Why a “Project Europe”?*

In 2004 the German Bishops published the document “Among All Nations Your Salvation” about the mission of the universal church.<sup>1</sup> Here they present also the “new” understanding of mission and its consequences for their local church: “The Church is part and parcel of God’s mission, which took historical form in Jesus Christ and is inspired by God’s Spirit. This mission, emanating as it does from God, aims to establish the Kingdom of God. This is what the Church must give witness to, in our country and throughout the world.”

Already the earlier statement “Zeit zur Aussaat”<sup>2</sup> had tried to illustrate how the German church can be missionary in its own country.

For a long time, the Christian message was taken out from Europe to the entire world. “Today we know that all Local Churches that are rooted in their cultures have a missionary mandate which they are indeed carrying out. For this reason, as Germans and as Europeans, we must ask ourselves what challenges we face in the globalised world and in the Universal Church. Missionary activity in our own country and in the community of nations can only grow if it is shared, and will be mutually enriching in an exchange between the experience of the Local Churches and the countries of the South, in particular. The more we open our eyes, hearts and hands to the Universal Church among the nations, the more richly will we be rewarded and strengthened in faith as individuals and as congregations.”<sup>3</sup>

Together with other Christian denominations the bishops say that “the most important task of the churches in Europe is the common proclamation of the Gospel in both word and deed, for the salvation of all.”<sup>4</sup>

The bishops’ documents confirm well-known changes in the understanding of mission. An adaptation of such changes to the situation of the SVD in Europe had been made at a provincials’ meeting in Roscommon, Ireland: “The Society of the Divine Word in Europe sees its missionary function no longer exclusively in the mission *ad gentes* to other continents because there are many missionary situations in Europe itself which deserve the missionary services of the Society.”<sup>5</sup>

An intensive information and argumentation campaign was required to persuade those who had reservations or were critical of this new concept of SVD mission in Europe, which was then adopted by the XIV General Chapter of the Society of 1994. This declared: “The Society of the Divine Word in Europe, challenged by the reality of secularization, the opening up of Eastern Europe, the modern migration of peoples, and the decline of religious vocations, turns to the entire Society with the following request... To do justice to the mission situations in Europe, the European zone asks for the international cooperation from the other zones of the Society...”<sup>6</sup>

The XV General Chapter of 2000 introduced the term “Prophetic Dialogue” as the “deepest and best understanding” of SVD mission.<sup>7</sup> Discussions at the chapter confirmed that the SVD understanding of *ad gentes* mission has shifted from an exclusively geographical orientation to one that includes missionary situations. “From our constitutions, the work of recent Chapters, as well as the broader context in which our mission is carried out today, we identify four situations where we hear a special call to respond: primary evangelization and re-evangelization, commitment to the poor and marginalized, cross-cultural witness, and interreligious understanding.”<sup>8</sup> From a European perspective this understanding confirmed the Roscommon consensus, while at the same time challenging the SVD presence and mission in Europe and making it a concern of the whole Society. The tasks following were many: missionary situations to which the SVD feels called to respond were to be identified; ways for SVD specific responses to be explored, the concept of Prophetic Dialogue to be translated into European contexts and the internationalization of the European SVD to be continued.

While responsibility lies with the European Zone and Provinces, the Missiological Institute understood it as a new task to offer its services and to accompany the process critically and constructively. But the “Project Europe” soon became a challenge for the Institute

itself. There was not yet much experience in dealing with Europe (or mission in Europe) missiologically. Since the late 1990s there have been a good number of publications from both theologians (or missiologists) and bishops' conferences (as quoted above) about challenges and ways of mission in different European contexts, and we tried to familiarize ourselves with them.

In his circular letter to all confreres of Europe "In Gratitude and Hope" (April 15, 2003)<sup>9</sup> Fr. Superior General Antonio Pernia stresses the need for a "missionary spirituality." Based on the understanding of mission as "prophetic dialogue," missionaries are called to be in dialogue with God as the foundation of their very mission. "Although many Europeans no longer consider themselves Christian they still have a hunger for spiritual values... But today they 'put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching and in life and action than in theories' (*Redemptoris Missio*, 42). And if they listen to teachers, it is only because these teachers are first witnesses (cf. *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41)." Fr. Pernia calls the mediation of our experience of God to others the purpose of our religious missionary life. As the SVD Constitutions put it: "We propose to make the goodness and kindness of God visible in our life and service" (Prologue). "Indeed, we need to become missionaries who proclaim 'what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands' (1 Jn 1:1), the Word of Life, Jesus Christ."

A look into adaptations of recent SVD General Chapters in European provinces was also helpful. Reports for the XVI General Chapter in 2006 give an overview of what has happened:

In recent years the European Zone of the SVD has experienced a development which we could classify as "a change of season." The first visible effect of this change is seen in our numbers: from the more than 2,400 missionaries which the SVD had in Europe in 1965, the figure has dropped to less than 1,300. This decline of members, combined with the aging of those European confreres who are still active, has produced profound changes in our communities.

The fact that we were no longer able to continue some of our traditional activities has forced us to close or find new purposes for some of our houses and to consider merging some of the Provinces. All of this means saying goodbye to a certain model of religious life and missionary presence in Europe. Where we once saw the recruitment and preparation of missionaries for other continents as more or less our sole reason for existing in Europe, we have now come to understand that Europe, too, is as much a mission territory as is any other corner of the world.

Today, in all our provinces and formation houses we have confreres from all over the world. In Eastern Europe our confreres have great opportunities to engage in fruitful dialogue with our Orthodox brothers and sisters as well as with the world of Islam. In Western Europe it is urgent that we draw near to the world of faith seekers. Europe needs missionaries who are capable of entering into dialogue with these new companions on the road of life.

In order to get to know our real situation as well as to learn one of our languages and so be prepared to work with joy in Europe or in other parts of the world, it seems fitting that we should welcome into our formation houses young SVDs who are interested in having part of their formation in a multicultural context. Life in such formation houses is already a good preparation for their future work. Future small, living communities inserted in a multicultural Europe can be a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God amongst us. They should be “schools of authentic dialogue” in third millennium Europe.

Just as our Founder St. Arnold from the very beginning took an interest in the situation of the European emigrants in Latin America, today the SVD has also assigned some confreres to work with the emigrants in Europe. These confreres are normally well integrated in the Pastoral Plan of the Diocese. This task is a privileged field of activity; both for European confreres and for those who have come from other continents.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the XVI General Chapter of 2006 reconfirmed the understanding of mission as prophetic dialogue and stated: “Based on the insights of the 1988 and 1994 General Chapters (passing-over, frontiers, and mission at the service of communion), the 2000 General Chapter presented three key concepts to stimulate our thinking and to animate our practice of mission. These were: Witness to the Reign of God, Prophetic Dialogue and Characteristic Dimensions. If we compare our missionary commitment to a journey we could say that *our witness to the Reign of God* has to do with the aim of our journey; *prophetic dialogue* focuses on the partners with whom we share the journey and the way we relate to them; and the *characteristic dimensions* indicate the pathways we follow. We give witness to the Reign of God, through prophetic dialogue, marked by characteristic dimensions.”<sup>11</sup> The deepening of the understanding of witness to the Reign of God, Prophetic Dialogue and Characteristic Dimensions (Biblical Apostolate; Mission Animation; Justice – Peace – Integrity of Creation; Communication) as well as the presentation of five dimensions of our life as SVD religious missionaries (spirituality, community, leadership, finances, formation) offer a clearer perspective of the SVD understanding of mission and indicate some steps to be taken.

The XVI General Chapter continues what the XV had started and connects the missionary question with the religious (consecrated) identity of the SVD. The Spanish Claretian, Fr. Garcia Paredes, writes in an article about mission as the key to understand consecrated life today: “We find ourselves a little lost when our General and Provincial Chapters make the evaluation and balance of the previous years and try to plan the future. Likewise, we find ourselves a little lost when we religious come together for congresses, meetings, and courses of on-going formation. At times it gives the impression that we allow ourselves to be carried away by the tide of the moment. Other times, we give the impression of being more worried about our internal problems than by the external ones, which usually are the ones challenging our mission.

It is interesting to observe how in our Chapters we are so worried about our problems of internal functioning: authority, assignments, communitarian projects, individualism, lack of prayer life, poverty or chastity. And it is right! They are real problems which we cannot undervalue. However, these problems become worse and more serious, when the missionary spirit is weak and we have lost the missionary sense in our lives.

What takes place in our practical life, also happens in the theological field. A theology which does not start from the mission (and is at the service of the mission) is a theology without direction, without a goal, without passion, without feelings, which does not respond to the great questions of our world today.

Without a strong missionary awareness, the Church and the Consecrated Life within the Church, have no meaning, no *raison d'être*.

Mission is the key to understand the Church and everything happening within her, including Consecrated Life. Without the mission, as the basic and architectonic principle, everything could collapse. When the mission is the central and structuring principle, everything functions well and develops.”<sup>12</sup>

We may even understand the term “prophetic dialogue” as one that connects the consecrated and the missionary dimension of SVD life. Since the Second Vatican Council the prophetic dimension of consecrated life has been stressed. At the same time, mission has been understood in terms of dialogue.<sup>13</sup>

### ***SVD Mission in Europe***

Europe is the cradle of the SVD. We are bearers of a long and glorious tradition. On the other hand, we know that in present-day Eu-

rope God continues to speak to us and places before us new missionary challenges. We are conscious of the fact that in order to continue these missionary tasks, we depend on the solidarity of the whole Society.

- The most important task for a Divine Word Missionary in Europe is to be in contact with people and to reveal to them the beauty and grandeur of God's Kingdom. The parishes under our care must have a missionary face. We feel obliged to minister to immigrants, the poorest of the poor in Europe, and to enter into dialogue with other religions and cultures. This is present in our missionary charism and in the fact that we live in multicultural communities. The Provinces of Eastern Europe find themselves in contact with the world of the Orthodox, but also in the West it is possible to cultivate dialogue with secularized persons and with those searching for meaning in their lives.
- Despite present difficulties, Europe does not want to and cannot surrender to pessimism or to death. Each year, it becomes more difficult to procure the financial resources needed for our missionary work around the world. Our Mission Secretariats remain committed to promoting mission awareness among the more affluent churches of Europe. We must multiply contacts with our benefactors, with the promoters of our magazines and with the laity. The mission is not ours alone, it is of the entire Church.
- The European Provinces open their doors to those confreres whom the Spirit of God may wish to send us. Confreres, who wish to do part of their formation in a multicultural context, may do so in our houses of formation. Many Provinces also have the possibility of doing OTP/PFT. We believe that it is very important for us to build and maintain bridges of contact between different peoples and cultures.
- Our Founder knew a very different Europe. But in the Apostleship of Prayer, St. Arnold Janssen found ample opportunity to go in search of the lost sheep of the Gospel. Today there are millions of Europeans who are lost sheep, who have fallen away from the Church and who no longer find any meaning in either life or death. Our small communities of life and mission in the Europe of the future must be oases for all who are searching for "The Way, the Truth and the Life."<sup>14</sup>

### *The “Project Europe”*

The “Project Europe” is, on the one hand, a consequence of developments in the understanding of mission until 2000, on the other hand it has always been influenced by what happened since 2000. So far, there have been 11 special meetings: (1) in October 2001 in St. Augustin; (2) in June 2002 in Nysa, Poland; (3) in February/March 2003 in St. Gabriel’s, Austria; (4) in November 2003 in Munich, Germany; (5) in June 2004 in Berlin, Germany; (6) in November 2004 in St. Augustin; (7) in May 2005 in Nitra, Slovakia; (8) in November 2005 in St. Augustin; (9) in March 2006 in Budapest, Hungary; (10) in November 2006 in St. Augustin; (11) in March 2007 in St. Augustin. In German a collection of articles and reflections, “Mission in Europa,” was published in 2005.<sup>15</sup> In 2007 the brochure “Today’s Europe and the SVD” was published in English, German, and Spanish.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to these meetings and publications there have been regular discussions in the Institute’s board and some articles referring to the “Project Europe” in *Verbum SVD*. A short overview about the different meetings shall be given here.

#### *1. St. Augustin 2001*

The first meeting in St. Augustin dealt with very basic questions about the meaning of a “Project Europe,” understandings of European situations and missionary challenges/situations in different European contexts. At the end there was the agreement that the “Project Europe” should deal with: (1) the present European situation(s) – geography, society, church; (2) different areas – migration, cultures, religions; (3) mission and evangelization in Europe; (4) Europe and globalization; (5) SVD mission in Europe – specific contributions and formation for mission in Europe. The meeting closed with the invitation to all participants to reflect on these and other points and to present to the Institute’s staff in St. Augustin areas of special concern or interest each one would like to do research on.

#### *2. Nysa 2002*

The second meeting in Nysa, Poland had three sections: (1) Presentation and Collection; (2) Analysis and Interpretation; (3) Orientation and Application. The participants presented what they had prepared since the last meeting – topics, ideas, and suggestions. Among the themes presented were: An agenda for SVD mission research – being more responsive to present needs; mission and ecumenism; contacts between Islam and Christianity – suggestions for

collaboration with interreligious groups; pastoral structure for the future; proclamation of the gospel to non-Christians in Europe; Mission continent Europe and introduction of new missionaries; journeying together with the SVD – SVD and “friends”; “Project Europe“ and European missiology; God-talk in our time in a secularized world – new approaches to God for people of our time; different missionary situations in East and West; religious missionary formation in and for Europe...

After these and other themes had been presented, an analysis and interpretation of the presentations was made. It was stressed that our project is supposed to elaborate a concrete program – therefore the themes chosen for the project should be concrete. From the themes presented five main topics were selected, on which the project should focus: (1) God-talk today; (2) Mission in Europe (new approaches to evangelization); (3) Secularization; (4) Missionaries in Europe; (5) Contact among religions.

Finally, the question of concrete results of the discussions was raised. As a first concrete result the (controversial) decision was made to prepare a first publication with the themes discussed at this meeting.

### *3. St. Gabriel 2003*

At the meeting in St. Gabriel the topics prepared by the participants since Nysa were presented and discussed again. The Generalate had expressed its interest in the “Project Europe” and Fr. General suggested in a letter that in addition to a publication a concrete project that could be accompanied should be initiated. The discussions about such a project focused on the question of missionaries from other parts of the world assigned to Europe. Could the “Project Europe” help in the process of introduction of new missionaries to Europe? What are consequences of the internationalization of our provinces for our communities and for our mission? After discussions of these and similar question it was seen that the realization of such a concrete project would depend on communication and coordination of the Missiological Institute with the European zone and provinces.

### *4. Munich 2003*

At the meeting in Munich, final steps for a publication were taken and some concrete topics discussed. The assembly was aware that the publication would only be a first step – how would the project continue, what concrete missionary project in Europe would the Missiologi-

cal Institute get involved in? Two possible projects were presented and discussed: (1) Preparing and accompanying intercultural and international SVD communities in Europe; (2) A concept for missionary pastoral work in a parish. After initial discussions it was decided that materials on these (and other) projects should be collected.

#### *5. Berlin 2004*

The meeting of Berlin continued the themes of the Munich assembly. It still dealt with the publication and questions about the way to go. The meeting included an exposure to the “Chemin Neuf” community – an ecumenical Christian group in charge of a parish in the center of Berlin, trying new ways of an inculturated evangelization in Berlin.

To continue, it was decided to look into vision-mission statements of the European provinces, reports of the General Visitation in the zone, as well as other documents of the Society dealing with the situation of the SVD in Europe.

#### *6. St. Augustin 2004*

The publication is finished – it is available in German and deals with “Mission in Europe,” presenting in two parts articles on the theme. Part one is about basic aspects about the theme mission in Europe; part two about God-talk in secularized Europe.

In addition to this first publication, the board of the Missiological Institute proposed the publication of a short brochure on mission in Europe.

The main work of the meeting was the presentation and a critical analysis of vision-mission statements of European SVD provinces: Germany North and South, Austria, Italy, Spain, Irish-British Province, Ural Region, Poland, Slovakia and Netherlands/Belgium.

It was agreed that for the next meeting consequences or things learned from this analysis should be presented. What are the consequences for an understanding of mission in Europe? What are specific tasks of the SVD in Europe?

#### *7. Nitra 2005*

Questions about the understanding of mission and about the SVD tasks in Europe were placed at the beginning of this meeting. Some input was given, before discussing the questions in groups: (1) What goals for mission in Europe are mentioned in the vision-mission

statements? (2) What are the priorities for mission in Europe? (2) What are the concrete missionary tasks in Europe? The assembly found it hard to come up with common answers, and it was suggested to refer to the vision-mission statements themselves again and to the province reports for the XV General Chapter in 2000.

The main contents of the brochure on mission in Europe were already presented: in four chapters it would deal with (1) the history of the SVD in Europe; (2) Europe in a process of change; (3) missionary challenges, (4) attempts at a missionary response. The brochure was to be published in 2006. The contributions were to be finished by the next meeting, to be discussed there.

#### *8. St. Augustin 2005*

At this meeting there was a first discussion of the contributions for the brochure.

#### *9. Budapest 2006*

In Budapest again the brochure was the main topic of the meeting. It was finalized and decided that it should be published in English, German, Polish, and Spanish.

#### *10. St. Augustin 2006*

For the meeting in St. Augustin the theme “migration” had been chosen. Not only members of the Institute, but also representatives of the SVD Europe zone and of the German local church, as well as confreres working with migrants in Europe were present. After some basic reflections and discussions on the phenomenon of migration in present-day Europe, concrete projects and church policies, as well as SVD involvement in mission among migrants were presented. It was decided that SVD work among migrants requires some evaluation and further reflection. Pastoral care of migrants is surely a missionary challenge to the SVD, but it is necessary to clearly understand what the SVD wants and can do in this field. This should also be seen in the light of the understanding of our mission as “prophetic dialogue.”

#### *11. St. Augustin 2007*

The theme of the last meeting – migration – was continued. The meeting reflected again on an understanding of mission for work among migrants and on the SVD involvement in this ministry.

### ***Reflection***

The “Project Europe” started in 2001 and has gone a long way already. It was motivated by the SVD General Chapter of 2000; by developments in European local churches, placing “mission” again on their agenda and by the decision that the SVD should get involved in mission in Europe.

At the beginning, there was an exchange of ideas of missiologists and persons interested in the question of mission in Europe. As a project of the SVD Missiological Institute in St. Augustin it is also a controversial project – from the very beginning there were, for example, different understandings about the “academic” (missiological) work to be done by the Institute. In what way would the project Europe meet certain standards? But such “standards,” which at times appeared outdated and irrelevant, were also challenged. A more pragmatic and concrete approach was to be taken – the project Europe should not simply become an avenue to prepare some “academic” publications. The overview given above shows that much time at the different meetings has been spent with discussions on publications, while little or nothing has been done in the direction of concrete projects of the SVD in Europe, that could have been accompanied by the Institute. For most of the time during these past years the “Project Europe was limited to one or two meetings per year, while there was little follow-up or work on the project in the periods between the meetings. It was also not possible to establish regular ways of communication, let alone collaboration among the Missiological Institute and the European zone and/or provinces. The project brought together confreres from different European provinces and became a venue for the exchange of ideas and understandings of mission in Europe. Two booklets have been published, and migration was discussed as a concrete missionary challenge.

At this point it’s good to see that what has been done so far was only a beginning, and that – learning from the way gone so far – the real work is only now starting.

### ***The Future?***

The future of the “Project Europe” will largely depend on the future of the Missiological Institute itself. There has been a lot of encouragement from different sides to continue to deal with (SVD) mission in Europe from a missiological perspective. The “Project Europe” will have to become one of the priorities for the future work of the Missiological Institute. An evaluation of what has happened so far

should be made, but, more importantly, concrete plans for the next years should be prepared. For this it is necessary to establish a regular communication with the European zone and the provinces, as well as to decide on some missionary projects or initiatives of the European SVD that should be accompanied. It would be of great help to know more about expectations of the European zone and provinces

At present a workshop about the future work of the Missiological Institute is being prepared. The question of personnel for the Institute needs to be answered: who will be the staff of the Institute residing in St. Augustin? For example, an office for the “Project Europe” needs to be established with someone in charge for follow-up and communication with members of the Institute and the European SVD.

The concept – the vision-mission – of the Institute needs to be evaluated and adapted to present needs. The present statutes of the Institute already say that “the Institute does research on missionary situations in Europe.” This needs to be further developed and concretized.

The last two meetings of the “Project Europe” dealt with “migration,” which was understood as a missionary challenge. The topic is far from being exhausted. In *Redemptoris Missio* we read: “Among the great changes taking place in the contemporary world, migration has produced a new phenomenon: non-Christians are becoming very numerous in traditionally Christian countries, creating fresh opportunities for contacts and cultural exchanges, and calling the Church to hospitality, dialogue, assistance and, in a word, fraternity. Among migrants, refugees occupy a very special place and deserve the greatest attention. Today there are many millions of refugees in the world and their number is constantly increasing. They have fled from conditions of political oppression and inhuman misery, from famine and drought of catastrophic proportions. The Church must make them part of her overall apostolic concern” (RM 37). The “Project Europe” will have to continue dealing with this topic – looking at its missiological significance as well as practical consequences for missionary activities in Europe.

Other missionary challenges have been mentioned in the brochure “Today’s Europe and the SVD.” They are: the modern/postmodern world as a challenge for a missionary church; ethical questions and eurocentrism; Islam as a challenge in the European context; Buddhism and Hinduism in Europe as a missionary challenge.<sup>17</sup>

*Redemptoris Missio* stresses that the church’s mission is to every person, people and place on earth. It knows no boundaries, is one and

undivided, but does have different tasks and kinds of activity. The church pursues her mission in very difficult circumstances. The modern world is characterized by urbanization, mass migration, floods of refugees, the de-Christianization of countries with ancient Christian traditions, the proliferation of messianic cults and sects. Some formerly Christian cities and countries are being called “mission territories” today, while some “mission territories” have become well-established churches.<sup>18</sup> Looking at Europe missiologically always requires a contextual approach while looking at the universal church and a universal approach while taking seriously the various European contexts. As an international religious-missionary congregation we have a special contribution to make to the present-day missionary challenges in Europe. Also here the reality of urbanization has to be taken seriously – the cities are the places where the majority of people are living. Looking at the future, “we cannot forget the young, who in many countries comprise more than half the population. How do we bring the message of Christ to non-Christian young people who represent the future of entire continents? Clearly, the ordinary means of pastoral work are not sufficient: what are needed are associations, institutions, special centers and groups, and cultural and social initiatives for young people. This is a field where modern ecclesial movements have ample room for involvement” (RM 37). Also important new cultural sectors are to be addressed. These include primarily the world of communications, commitment to peace, the integral development and liberation of peoples, human rights, particularly those of minorities, women and children, and safeguarding the created world. Important also are the worlds of culture, scientific research and international relations. All of these must be attended to as part of the church’s mission.

While all these areas are important for the future agenda of the “Project Europe,” they have to be related to our own identity as SVD. Understanding the “fourfold prophetic dialogue” as our primary missionary commitment, we need to propose concrete steps in direction of our “dialogue partners” in Europe. How can the Missiological Institute be of assistance if the European zone wants to enter into a prophetic dialogue with people who have no faith community and with faith-seekers? With people, who are poor and marginalized? With people of different cultures and with people of different religious traditions and secular ideologies? We find all of them in today’s Europe – how do we understand mission in these contexts? In what ways can we animate, assist and critically accompany the work of the European SVD to be faithful to our missionary calling? Can the “Project Europe” be of use in the areas of Bible apostolate, mission animation, justice-peace-integrity of creation and communication?

These are some of the questions requiring a response by the “Project Europe” on its way in direction future. There are some new initiatives of European local churches, for example the plan to start an “Institute for World Church and Mission” by the German Bishops’ Conference. The institute is to promote missiology, support the dioceses and be in charge of a networking of missionary initiatives.<sup>19</sup> We welcome such initiatives and see them also as a positive challenge to our own work – we are looking for possible contributions of our SVD Missiological Institute to the challenges of mission in Europe. The SVD is a religious missionary congregation committed to prophetic dialogue – how do we respond to missionary situations in Europe? “The world needs to be both challenged and to be given hope. We are called to respond to these and other similar needs through prophetic witness and dialogue, to speak in our day with the boldness of those who have been with Jesus (Acts 4:13).”<sup>20</sup>

At present, the regular publications of the Institute are “Verbum SVD,” and “Steyler Missions-Chronik.” In addition to these, other regular publications (Internet, Print Media...) are needed to communicate the results of the Institute’s work and to offer “missiological assistance” (or challenges...) also to the European SVD provinces searching for new ways of the religious-missionary presence of the Society in Europe.

*Martin Üffing SVD*

---

<sup>1</sup> German Bishops’ Conference, *Among All Nations Your Salvation*, Aachen 2005.

<sup>2</sup> *Zeit zur Aussaat: Missionarisch Kirche sein* (Die Deutschen Bischöfe 68) Bonn 2000; see also (from the Protestant churches in Germany): *Das Evangelium unter die Leute bringen. Zum missionarischen Dienst der Kirche in unserem Land*, (EKD-Text 68), Hannover 2001.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>4</sup> *Charta Oecumenica*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Steyler Missionswissenschaftliches Institut, *Today’s Europe and the SVD*, Sankt Augustin 2007, 11-27: “A Historical Overview of the SVD in Europe.”

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *In Dialogue with the Word 1*, SVD Generalate Rome 2000, 53.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>9</sup> Published in: Divine Word Missionaries, *SVD Mission 2006*, SVD Generalate Rome 2006, 225 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Taken from: *ibid.*, 222 f.

<sup>11</sup> *In Dialogue with the Word 6*, Rome 2006, 3.

---

<sup>12</sup> In: *Religious Life Asia* 6 (2004), No. 1, 59.

<sup>13</sup> See: M. Üffing, “Prophetischer Dialog”: *Verbum SVD* 47 (2006) 7-26.

<sup>14</sup> “The vision-mission statement of the European SVD Zone,” in: *SVD Mission 2006*, 224.

<sup>15</sup> H. Bettscheider (ed.), *Mission in Europa – Überlegungen zu einem aktuellen Thema*, Nettetal 2005.

<sup>16</sup> The English text: *Today’s Europe and the SVD – Reflections on Mission*.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Today’s Europe and the SVD*, 57-78.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Redemptoris Missio*, Chapter IV, The vast horizon of mission *ad gentes*.

<sup>19</sup> As reported in [www.katholische-theologie.info](http://www.katholische-theologie.info).

<sup>20</sup> *In Dialogue with the Word* 6, 1.