Palms Australia: Missionaries, International Development Volunteers and Beyond: Prophetic Wisdom for Cross-Cultural Engagement.

Introduction

This paper examines the evolution of a program, from its birth in 1961 as the Paulian Association Lay Missionary Secretariat (PALMS) to the eve of its Jubilee (50th year) where some characterise it as an International Development Volunteer (IDV) program. I consider influences on the vision, mission, values, philosophy, policies, process, and practice that have taken the program beyond simply being either a missionary service, or an international development program. Emphasis will be given to the influences during a key transition period from the 1990s until 2010 with a particular spotlight on the refinement of the program in the decade 1995-2005.

The paper draws largely on the author's experience over 18 years as a volunteer in the field, employee, President and Executive Director of the association that runs the program. Most of the analysis is reliant on that experience and of all who in that time have shared the experience of their involvement. The paper also outlines external pressures for change in organisational practice, invites the reader to explore ideas from literature and research that inspired transformational thinking in both mission and development and refers to subsequent research that has examined results of change and suggests further organisational refinement.

This is in essence a case study by a practitioner (the current Executive Director) taking stock and looking back. I'm not sure it always avoids the failings of a self-serving biography, which may put the academic integrity of the paper in doubt. However, being an advocate of action research, and I hope, the facilitator of a learning organisation, I trust there is within it at least some genesis of a hypothesis worthy of further research.

The Paulian Association came into existence as a Sydney based lay movement within the Catholic Church in 1956 (Paulian Association, 1981). The first meeting of PALMS was held in July 1961 and the first lay missionaries sent in January 1962. For at least the first 30 years it would be fair to characterise these lay missionaries as Catholics volunteering to be sent (qualified or not) to help in education, health, building and other

programs and to reinforce the evangelistic and proselytising mission of the Catholic Church to "natives" in the developing world.[1]

By 2002, in light of the fact that PALMS had become the central program and the only name of the association recognised outside Sydney, the membership renamed and reconstituted the Paulian Association as Palms Australia (Palms). In the subsequent desire to articulate a clear emphasis on development Palms produced the following:

> "An economic, social, cultural, spiritual and ecological process which encourages the empowerment and wellbeing of individuals, communities and organisations to reduce poverty, enjoy basic human rights and work towards a future of interdependent and ecological sustainability."(Palms 2010a)

It remains the introduction to Palms Australia's development philosophy today.

Academic literature, government policy, the organisational policies of International Volunteer Sending Agencies (IVSAs), development volunteers themselves and host communities understand the role of development and development volunteers from their own perspective. In her study of Palms' volunteers' engagement in development volunteering, Georgeou (2010, 7-17) cites scholars of development (Long 1992, 9; Rossi 2006, 175; Moore McBride et al. 2003, 176) and volunteering (Haddad 2007, 18; Petriwskyj et al. 2007, 9; Moore McBride et al. 2003; Zappala 2000; Spicker 2000, 38; Ehrichs 2000, 2; Davis Smith et al. 2005) and others to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of development volunteers. I recommend her discussion for a complete appreciation of the concept.

For the purposes of this paper I use a more succinct description, which I first put as a response to what I found to be an inadequate definition by AusAID (the Australian Government program for international development) in 2003. The development to which it refers is as described above.

> "An international volunteer seeks to achieve just and sustainable development by giving themselves and their skills to achieving development outcomes identified by a local community and consistent with the development objectives of the host country. Volunteers enhance justice, sustainability and localisation by accepting the remuneration that would be

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[1] The first lay missionaries went to Papua New Guinea and later other parts of the Pacific, and the world.

available if there were a local person to fill the position. A volunteer's reward is therefore not financial, but comes through being open to engagement in the local culture and learning from the local community, which also contributes to the effectiveness of their work." (Palms 2010b)

The essence of development volunteering in this description, along with Palms' development philosophy, highlights the contrast between an IDV and the description of a Paulian Association lay missionary. It provides a basic conception of PALMS' origins and what Palms Australia purports to foster today. Later I will highlight key points in this evolution, but now I will outline just what Palms believes has been achieved in the transition.

Prophetic Wisdom Enlightens Development: Some Basics

While Palms Australia has abandoned its missionary roots as those of a bygone era, the contemporary prophetic wisdom of missiologists, theologians and other prophets continues to animate a "dynamic" (Georgeou 2010 p.7) IDV program. Those who engage cross-culturally with a narrow focus (many missionaries, development "professionals" and academics) find Palms' extraordinarily eclectic or conceptually complicated. Volunteers and host communities and others more intimately engaged with Palms suggest it embodies the successful integration of developments in mission with the mission of development.

This paper will highlight the intellectual thought and scholarship of missionaries, theologians and other contemporary prophets, whose reflections on cross-cultural engagement have reinforced Palms' understanding that development is inseparable from culture and beliefs, and show how this principle underscores Palms' entire approach. This approach that means the priority for Palms' IDVs is to build relationship and learn from their hosts rather than operating out of a narrow focus, such as a Western neo-liberal development focus, (Georgeou pp.44-51) uncritically adopted by most North-South volunteers by virtue of their enculturation.

It probably needs to be understood that Palms has a vision to achieve much more than one-way host-community development.   The integration into the program of contemporary prophetic thinking on building cross-cultural relationship creates a unique opportunity for IDVs to achieve superior mutual benefits. In fact it is an approach suitable for those in government, environment, economic and other sectors seeking

authentic cross-cultural dialogue and may be the only way to advance peaceful and sustainable global solutions in any cross-cultural engagement.

While the Palms' development philosophy above suggests this, it is even more broadly embodied in Palms' Vision Statement:

> "To participate in and develop networks that link and engage people across cultures in order to cooperate in reducing poverty and achieve a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world." (Palms 2010c)

The paper's heart: '*Palms Australia: Where Prophetic Wisdom Enlightens Development'* examines just how this wisdom influences Palms' Values, Vision, Mission, and the resultant preparation and ongoing formation and support of IDVs.

Why this particular wisdom informs Palms Australia's approach

Unfortunately there is an absence of rigorous study demonstrating how successfully any IDV programs achieve their outcomes over the longer term. There is however a long tradition of cross-cultural missionary movement from churches in the North to the South, and in that sphere there has been a significant reflection on outcomes. Palms has found that tapping into this rich source of understanding has provided comprehensive insights into the dynamics of cross-cultural relationships and some very sound underpinnings for effective development practice.

The faith outcomes that missionaries have attempted to achieve might be dismissed as very different to the more economic and social, or more recently, ecological and governance outcomes, set for IDVs. However, with the mission of both conceived out of Western tradition and thinking and applied using processes and symbols from that starting place, the barriers to success are fundamentally the same. An ill-prepared IDV from a completely different culture is as much without knowledge of critical success factors as will be missionaries from the same tradition.

Another reason for Palms turning to the particular prophetic pilgrims that they have is that these are missionaries who have frequently stayed longer in host communities than any IDVs or anthropologists. Furthermore they are also not missionaries who have let their zeal to plant their faith override their reflection on the merits of their approach.

Indeed, true to the call of their faith, they are deeply reflective on their experience of relationship with people of a culture different from their own.

As indicated I will later identify the particular prophets and the influence their thinking on cross-cultural relationships has had on the Values, Vision, and Mission statements, which express the key concepts at the heart of Palms' procedures, particularly in the preparation and support of Palms' IDVs. Next, however, it is worth putting some of the catalysts for change into perspective.

Catalysts for Change: Incongruence and External Pressures.

By the 1990s PALMS had sent around 1000 missionary volunteers, primarily to teach, build, nurse and help administer Catholic Church missions in some 35 countries. It was, no doubt, a proud achievement. It may have differed little from other international volunteer sending agencies (IVSAs) operating in the "development age"[2] except that, as a lay missionary organisation, PALMS had the added dimension of serving the interests of the Catholic Church.

> *"The Paulian Association is a work of the Lay Apostolate established under the authority of His Eminence Cardinal Gilroy. The task that P.A.L.M.S. has set itself is…(3) To place P.A.L.M.S. at the disposal of Monsignor Thomas (National Director, Catholic Mission), The Vicars Apostolic and all Missionary Orders"* (Boylan 1961 p.1)

In the early 1980s PALMS began receiving a small annual grant from the Australian Government, persuaded perhaps that PALMS' volunteers, while named lay missionaries, were fulfilling similar objectives to the fully funded Australian Volunteers Abroad. PALMS subsequently also joined the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA)[3], the peak body for all agencies engaging in overseas aid and development. Was PALMS beginning to consider assignments beyond the jobs in Catholic missions unable to be filled by locals? Was it considering a mission more significant and better able to exploit the capacity of qualified professionals now presenting for mission? Not yet.

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[2] Georgeou's (2010, pp.32-44) discussion of an historical overview of development volunteering from the development age to the end of the Cold War is recommended reading for providing the "fashionable" global development models influencing the approach of Palms and other IVSAs at this time.
[3] Later renamed Australian Council for International Development (ACFID)

Despite being at the forefront globally of lay missionary movements and volunteer sending in 1961, in 1990's Australia, PALMS began to appear somewhat anachronistic even to some within its Catholic Church base. Much anecdotal evidence suggests that after the death in 1979 of the Paulian Association's creative and inspiring founding Director, Roy Boylan, significant directional conflict had arisen. While some volunteers were still indicating a rewarding individual experience, the PALMS' vision, and the living out of it, did not evolve much beyond a vague "doing good" to help the church provide for the "oppressed and dispossessed" living in "third world" communities.

Right through until the 1990's PALMS struggled to deal with internal unease regarding the ability of an increasingly dated and compromised mission philosophy to provide direction in a new era. The understanding of the terms in the acronym, let alone the acceptance of the message, was very different 30 years after the founding. Part-time chaplains and other associated religious missionaries, like Fr. Cyril Hally, would suggest new mission paradigms for cross-cultural dialogue within changing cultural contexts such as globalisation. Unfortunately a sustained attempt to map a path forward seemed to be beyond the capacity of the voluntary executive, management (with other programs dominating attention) and a small staff stretched to implement the recruitment, preparation, sending and resourcing of volunteers under the existing framework.

By this time the Australian Government, which had become the key funder, did begin to seek the articulation of a clearer and more relevant development message. Until this time they had been satisfied with rhetoric in PALMS' acquittal of funds indicating volunteer placements were relieving poverty, but AusAID had begun to shift emphasis to volunteers sustainably achieving poverty reduction through the transfer of skills. In most PALMS' volunteer placements, if the capacity of individuals and local communities was being developed, it was unintentional, as if by osmosis, and, no effective audit was done in country to see that the rhetoric matched practice.

Perhaps inspired by the Government's new interest in monitoring the activities of volunteer agencies, or maybe seeing the need to relieve some stress of the staff workload, in the early 1990s, the PALMS' co-ordinator implemented a renewal of

organisational procedures. While valuable, it was more about systems than direction. Discussion of the relevance, scope and intention of PALMS' mission still only really occurred through presentations by missionary religious at PALMS' courses for preparation of departing missionaries. Speakers from Australian Catholic Relief (later Caritas) did give a brief introduction to their work (including ideas around Catholic Social Teaching and development) at the same courses, however PALMS, as such, did not have a documented development philosophy, nor a set of strategies with a clear direction to volunteers about how such might be achieved.

The Church "missions" being served overseas, primarily in the Pacific, and in particular in Papua New Guinea, understood PALMS' volunteers as missionaries faithfully building, teaching, nursing, or whatever it took to grow the reach of the institutional church. Clearly education and health facilities being developed by the church demonstrated an interest in the welfare[4] of its flock. However, it could at best be described as 'loving welfare' rather than the capacity building of which AusAID were beginning to conceive.

While the communities being served were undoubtedly better off for having replicas of first world clinics and schools and even general stores, in a few cases, they did not have the capacity or cultural predisposition to run them. Such facilities were "successful" to the extent that religious missionary congregations and PALMS and other lay volunteer missionaries were available to fill all the major positions, and funds from the Church in the North poured in to help achieve the missionary effort. Among a number of the missionary leaders who set up the facilities there appeared to be an accepted wisdom that embarking on a training program to develop the capacity of the local community would be a waste of time, or worse, eventually lead to movement of locals so trained away from the service of the mission.

PALMS was being pulled in different directions by AusAID, the expectations of church hierarchies in Australia and overseas and a growing scepticism within the Australian church and society about the efficacy of traditional mission practice. Until this period, expression of a need to change had been met with strong resistance internally, characterising any change as pulling PALMS away from the mission for which it was established. This might be explained by the fact that the Director of the Paulian

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[4] Georgeou, (2010) pp.35-37 characterises this model as the Charity / Welfare Model of development.

Association at the time, had worked for, or been a volunteer with PALMS, since inception in 1956 and still had a strong passion for the inspiration of the charismatic first Director who had died in the job in 1979.

Perhaps weariness with resistance to change coincided with the appointment of this author as PALMS' Coordinator late in 1995. Recognising the need for change by the beginning of 1996 and citing the question: "What new directions do you think Palms might take?" (O'Halloran, Summer 1996, p.3) from his job interview, the new Coordinator launched a "Review of Life for PALMS" in the quarterly PALMS POST, which was distributed to all host communities, volunteers, returned volunteers and others in the Australian network. It built a case to "renew and revitalise" PALMS' approach to mission opening with the words of Franciscan theologian Richard Rohr:

> "How many times must one turn around? How can the Gospel ask for repeated, ongoing turning around? The answer lies in our very human tendency to find another comfort zone. We faced one shadow, we're proud of our effort, and we think we're converted for good…Then the Gospel orders us again, turn around. Again? We're addicted to this self-image we worked so hard on and want to keep it. All right so we build another castle and settle down. Then the Gospel says once more, turn around. It's always about letting go, a perpetual series of turning around." (Rohr 1994 pp.131-132)

By mid 1996, Jim Knight (SVD), a former PALMS' chaplain, arranged a visit to Australia by missionary priest, Fr. Anthony Gittins (CSsP). He inspired an intimate group of the Paulian Association Executive and staff that PALMS' mission needed to be about the radical ministry of Jesus to remove cultural structures of sin. Assisting the oppressed had been Palms' rhetoric for some time, however Gittins provided a theory offering a new inspiration for thinking about mission that could also underpin an important rational for engagement in more effective community development.

Gittins was the first of many from the Chicago Theological Union (CTU) to give a spine to PALMS' mission that assisted those within, previously resisting change, to see him as providing a link to their mission. It also inspired others internally with a direction forward that better clarified some of the rhetoric floating around PALMS. It opened the door to increased congruence with AusAID, although it fitted perhaps more than they

would be comfortable with the dynamic politicisation model of development (Georgeou 2010 pp39-42). As well, volunteers exposed to Gittins' concept would start to experience less congruence in some more traditional mission placements. In Gittins' model the traditional mission placement could be more easily interpreted as being part of a structure that was reinforcing oppression, rather than being an opportunity for authentic sustainable community development, as Palms would come to define it.

Gittins' model also challenged PALMS to educate the Australian Church, particularly the more conservative in the institutional hierarchy, who only perceived lay missionaries as serving the mission of the institution. Jim Knight also had expressed a view that as laity it might be more appropriate for PALMS' volunteers to be working out of community based organisations rather than directly for the institutional church. Tension about such was always evident, but without a robust rationale for another model, PALMS had been reluctant and lacked capacity to have an open conversation about where they stood.

Being muted in this way made it difficult to clearly promote the mission to those interested to participate in mutual development[5] rather than conventional and patronising models of mission or development. The qualified and experienced professionals in their fields now ready to volunteer were coming from a social milieu that was less tolerant of traditional religious-lay hierarchy. There were alternative secular agencies able to place them where they might make a relevant contribution to community development.

This fitted with Bishop Geoffrey Robinson's claim (May 1996) that many Catholics no longer shared a common imagining. Leading up to and after Vatican II there was fresh discussion by theologians and members of the Church about different conceptions of their Church. The Catholic Church had become different things to different people.

To better appreciate PALMS' dilemma vis-à-vis its approach to mission it will be useful now, as it was for the organisation after the Gittins visit, to locate PALMS within a framework or model of mission. The next section draws largely on a paper by this author (O'Halloran 1996 pp3-5) and a presentation by Jim Knight (SVD) at a Palms' Orientation Course.

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[5] Georgeou, (2010) pp39-42 characterises this as an aspect of the Politicisation Model of development

Models of Mission and Church: Where Palms Fits

A decade after Vatican II, Avery Dulles (1974), using a similar approach to Marcello De C. Azevedo, S.J.(1985 pp.601-620), provided a classifying system for distinguishing various models of church. Church as: "Institution", "Herald", "Servant", "Sacrament", or "Communion". In Table 1 Jim Knight's comparable classification identifies Gospel passages, the central sacrament, implied action and spatial implications of each. Like all theoretical conceptions, none existed exclusively at any point in time.

Table 1 (Knight 1997 p.5):

Models of Missionary Activity

Each of the following columns contains the particular characteristics which historical models of missionary activity based on the Scriptural passage listed at the head of the column have developed.

	Matthew 28:16-20	Luke 14:16-19	John 17:18-23	Mark 6:7-12
Addressed by	The Risen Lord	Earthly Jesus, servant & prophet	The only Son of the Heavenly Father (Cosmic Christ)	Jesus, the missionary
Addressed to	The Apostles • Pope & Bishops	Jesus' own vision • addressed to his own people and followers	The Community of the Disciples	The Twelve, or a missionary group or individual
Central Sacrament	Holy Orders	Baptisim	Eucharist	Poverty
Action Implied	Preach, baptise, teach	Proclaim the Good News, liberate, heal celebrate	Contemplation; a communion of faith, love and witness	Proclamation; exorcism; healing - repentance & conversion
Spatial Implications	Universal mission • ends of the earth • territorial	Local and social 'the leaven in the mass'	Macrocosm Cosmic Microcosm	A wandering missionary preacher
Model of Church	Institutional Church	The Church as a sign of The Kingdom	The Church as the Sacrament of Unity	A pilgrim Church

Mission supporting Church as Institution

This model was dominant in the Catholic Church globally until the 1960's. It implies a vertical relationship from God and Christ through Pope, bishops and priests to the laity. It is a model characterised by the notion that "Father is always right". Leadership is represented by strong intervention, a high degree of direction and correction, and high dependence by followers.

At the beginning of the above section '*Catalysts for Change: …*' I have used a quotation from Roy Boylan from the first Palms Post indicating that PALMS certainly began its life with absolute deference to church hierarchy. PALMS being established in 1961, within a Catholic ethos before Vatican II, this is not surprising.

While some claimed the Paulian Association was leading the laity to a new model of church such rhetoric was unconvincing with evidence in 1997 still pointing to an obsequious relationship with the hierarchy. There was a perceived need for the support and recognition of the Australian Catholic Bishops, many of whom remained conservative in their expectation of deference to the institution. To some degree this explains why for many years PALMS' evolution seemed somewhat caught or paralysed between encouraging an authentic mission for laity and the mission of the institution.

In sending people into the field, PALMS had always worked within institutional church structures establishing links between the Catholic diocese from which the volunteer had come and the one within which they go to live. The Paulian Director's claim in 1997 that "…rather than encouraging institutional power over the organisation, or its volunteers, this procedure was designed to build faith across cultures and provide a network of support for volunteers..."[6] may not have been understood by all within the institution. On one occasion in 1997, after hearing that PALMS had sent a volunteer to work in a refugee program run by a Buddhist organisation on the Thai/Burma boarder, the Director of Catholic Mission challenged that the funding provided by them might be threatened.   This was despite the fact that the substantial funding for PALMS' placements, and all funding for this one, came from AusAID.

PALMS had always selected a missionary priest as chaplain because it was mainly priests who had the opportunity to study and gain experience in theology, pastoral ministry and mission. In one sense this gave priests power, but rather than attempting to exercise control, it would seem that most have provided PALMS with selfless service. One outcome of the 1996 PALMS' 'Review of Life' was that not only priests might serve as spiritual advisers, however, it was interesting that when the Paulian Association tried to appoint a lay Chaplain a few years later, the Archbishop of Sydney advised that this would not be acceptable.

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[6] Mary Gilchrist in conversation with the author.

Concerned not to perpetuate a model in which it felt stymied, this author's 1996 paper announced that while PALMS remained keen to maintain association with individual clerics and Bishops and organisations of the church, such relationships should be seen as akin to the fellowship described in Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:44-46), rather than as supporting a vertical concept of power or a wish to reinforce a model of institutional church.

Mission as Herald

This model suggests a role as herald or messenger of the word of God. Lay Catholic access to theological colleges and biblical interpretation was not greatly encouraged until well after Vatican II. Lay heralds proclaiming the word by street corner preaching was not a tradition with which either the laity itself, or the hierarchy was comfortable.

Paulians had however practiced the more circumspect 'See, Judge, Act' process of Joseph Cardinal Cardijn and the Belgium Workers movement. This process encouraged members to identify issues in their society where people appeared to be disadvantaged, to seek discernment through theological reflection and to take relevant action within the community in relationship to the word of God. In doing so, one would express values and a position vis-à-vis the culture of the world within which we live and through such action may be seen as a herald.

Boylan's commitment to *"...place P.A.L.M.S. at the disposal of Monsignor Thomas The Vicars Apostolic..."* did support the Church as herald model. There was evidence in a number of missions, still in 1997, that expatriate lay missionaries were there to simply strengthen the infrastructure of the institution, which in some cases supported little other activity in the community than preaching. In one case at an Australian mission a volunteer's attempted engagement with the local community, outside of the mission, was criticised by the priest on the grounds that that was not the volunteer's purpose for being there. In 2001, a volunteer at a mission in PNG where no training was provided, discovered that his free labour as a printer, threatened the viability of a local enterprise.

Simply supporting church enterprise, without community engagement, or through unfair advantage at the expense of a community enterprise, is not a model of mission as herald supported by Palms. Azevedo identifies that: *"The word and its proclamation are not meant to reinforce confessional, institutional, social or political positions, or to abet the*

expansion of the Church as society." (Azevedo 1985 p.611)   While empowered to animate the word through Cardijn methodology, Palms understood its work by 1997 to be much bigger than mission as herald.

Mission as Servant

This model at least opens one to the world more than the above models, which are inclined to see the church as an exclusive society. We allow ourselves to be challenged by, and in turn challenge the world in our example of service. It fits somewhat with the social teaching of the church around the preferential option for the poor.

> *"The disposition of the whole Church is one of universal service to humanity as such, which is now seen as one big family or indeed as the People of God"* (Azevedo 1985 p.615).

This position taken by Vatican II represents a positive outlook on the capacity of the church to save the world. However, given the paternalistic institutional model by which the Catholic Church has been known, it becomes a difficult model to adopt convincingly. In this author's 1996 paper it was said: "Providing members are willing to acknowledge their human frailty, the ideal, which this model represents should sit very comfortably with the work undertaken by PALMS" (O'Halloran 1997 p3).

A booklet sent to PALMS' applicants in 1997, stated, "… lay people (have) as important a role to play as religious, and could add an extra dimension to the service of developing communities". It was referring to volunteers having a variety of other qualifications, put at the service of communities, to train local people where they may want training and so develop capacities beyond simply spiritual needs. This is a good model of mission as servant provided we are careful to ensure that it is the local community that identifies such needs.

PALMS had experienced similar difficulties to the rest of the Catholic Church in offering service not conceived as a need by the local community. While keen to serve, the only model of church that early PALMS' missionaries knew, and took with them into the field, was institutional and Western. In many cases it was a religious missionary from Europe or Australia, also grounded in the model of institutional Western church, who had requested and welcomed them.

If the request is not one made because of a need recognised by the local community, it may be no more than paternalistic and probably inappropriate thinking about saving the world with 'developed world' knowledge and proficiency. Whilst it may be well intended, service is at risk of meeting the agenda of the giver's need to be needed and resultant paternalism may produce unintended outcomes. Dependence rather than interdependence can be encouraged, which is does not fit with the principles of sustainable development.

In 1997 Palms was already clear that if this method alone were to provide the theological basis for the work of PALMS, volunteers could easily oppress the "objects" of their service 'working for' rather than 'working with' the poor.[7]

Mission supporting church as sacrament

Traditionally, the clergy have been predominately responsible for administration of sacraments.

> *"Already in the second half of the second century, a relationship between*
> *the bishop and the eucharist was fixed in many places; henceforth, priest's*
> *function will be gradually determined by his relationship to the eucharist."*
> Schillebeeckx (1983-4)

Like the model of church as institution "…the focus is on the ordained, on those whose primary duty is towards service of the community of believers through liturgical and other ministries…"(Lennan 1995 p.11). As laity, volunteers have limited authority to administer sacraments and as such are limited in their ability to reinforce this model of church as sacrament if this is how church as sacrament is accepted.

Vatican II expressed a broader position: "Church exists in Christ as a sacrament or sign and an instrument of intimate union with God and of the unity of the whole human race" (Paul VI 1964 p.1). Many volunteers work in ways that will be seen as a sign of the visible presence of Christ and in 1997 PALMS' guidelines spoke of seeking the unity of the earth community. While PALMS' members are not ordained priests and can only administer some sacraments in "…special and grave circumstances…" (John Paul II 1989 Footnote 72) it was identified in 1997 that PALMS' work in light of Lumen Gentium, was very much in keeping with this model.

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[7] Georgeou (2010) pp40-41 for a discussion of 'working for' vis-à-vis 'working with'

Mission for Community

Jim Knight's framework at the beginning of the section integrates this model with the one above. It suggests that church is the unity with God, through the Holy Spirit, of all people, Christians and non-Christian, who search for love, truth and justice. It sees these as the People of God who have co-responsibility for service to meet the needs of the community. In this service all ministries and vocations, the gifts of all, are in communion equally.

This model of 'church in communion' would appreciate diversity in its unity, but clearly is not achieved while there is oppressive poverty destroying human dignity. Structural poverty; the "structure of sin" (John Paul II 1991)[8] created by human beings yet to be liberated from their worldly focus, must be removed before this model of church is complete. In 1997 it was stated thus:

"It is the model of church (and mission) in which PALMS most strongly identifies its theology and development philosophy. For PALMS to play its part in achieving this model of church as acclaimed by Vatican II, it will require, what has been identified as: 'a counter cultural example with those who seek the same communion.' (Gittins March 4, 1996)" (O'Halloran Autumn 1996, pp.1-3)

By this model volunteers do not work "at the disposal" of a church hierarchy; they take part in the ultimate sacrament of communion with the earth community; they do not arrogantly simply preach the word as heralds and they avoid serving the needs of the culturally oppressed paternalistically. To see everyone as sons and daughters of God, sharing the bounty of the earth responsibly, makes a significant difference that enables solidarity and appropriate sustainable development in all communities. Indeed it is a model of mission intrinsically linked to a mission of mutual sustainable development.

This model, where mission and development are one, provides authentic and fitting engagement for lay volunteers. It is a collective search for love, justice, and peace where no one is more or less important and as such requires prophetic formation. In particular it requires that volunteers used to Western lifestyles be prepared for greater vulnerability (O'Halloran 2001) (Joyce 2009) than if they were engaged in other models of mission and this is where contemporary missiologists provide such good guidance.

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[8] Also see Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference, (1992)

Beyond 2000: Building Foundations, Managing further funding threats

With at least 60% of PALMS' funds derived from the government and less that 10% from church sources a real temptation (given the vague, questionable, missionary framework) was to abandon mission altogether in favour of total compliance with the aid and development objectives of AusAID. Some asked at the time if this is what PALMS' 1996 review was really all about? Georgeou's research (2010) suggests that engagement with AusAID did see managerialism and instrumental processes introduced at the expense of dynamic mutual relationships with host communities.

Palms may have given over to some AusAID procedures to advance dialogue with government. However, after exploring the healthier, less paternalistic, less colonial, more mutual mission framework, it was becoming clear at PALMS, if not yet to AusAID, that a new ethos which encouraged solidarity, provided outstanding potential to motivate and prepare volunteers for a more grounded sharing of skills in development placements. Unfortunately AusAID were starting to work from a different development song sheet and seeking agencies to be service providers in what Georgeou identifies as "the ascendency of a neoliberal theory of development to a hegemonic ideology" (Georgeou 2010 pp.47-92)

After the first review (AusAID 1996) two larger secular agencies were moved onto contracts with quotas while PALMS and another faith based agency (Interserve) were left on small grants that bore no relationship with the number of volunteers engaged in their programs. There was some thought that new generations of AusAID bureaucrats were suspicious that faith based agencies were fundamentally missionary in a traditional sense, with volunteers more about promoting faith and building the Church than being motivated by their faith to achieve poverty reduction. PALMS' lay missionaries in the late 90s were still lay missionaries in name and AusAID were unaware of different models of mission. PALMS needed to find a language that would assist AusAID and others to appreciate the potential of PALMS' evolving model of mission to bring profound contributions to the way IDVs might do development.

In 2000 the Paulian Association appointed this author (after over two years with Caritas Australia) as its new director. I was keen to apply the new mission framework and make PALMS accessible to a broader public, perhaps naively including AusAID. Firstly the Association needed to be restructured under one constitution. At that time

there was a legal entity (Paulian Association ltd) managing the affairs of an Aid Through Trade business (New Guinea Arts), however the governance and management of other programs, including PALMS, were not protected by the limited liability of that company.

It took until June 2002 for the membership to have the chance to elect their first Palms Australia Board, integrating as one legal entity under a name with most resonance, nationally and internationally (Palms). By that time discussions with AusAID were well under way around the questions: Why did PALMS not receive funding per volunteer? Why were other volunteering agencies shifted onto contracts?

AusAID made it clear they were looking for ways to move away from open-ended grant agreements, but before going to a funding-per-volunteer model they would need Palms to submit to an accreditation process. Seeing the opportunity for greater rationality and fairness in the funding system and maybe a system-wide review where the purpose and process of placing volunteers could be influenced, Palms argued if it was good enough for one, all agencies receiving funding should be subject to whatever rigour an accreditation process might entail. After taking an opportunity to invite the Foreign Minister to the celebrations of Palms 40th, and sharing that idea with him, a process that would take the best part of three years was born.

No one at AusAID, charged with managing the accreditation process, had even been a long-term international volunteer. Despite what became unrelenting efforts to have Volunteer Sending Agencies (VSAs) achieve what they understood to be "best practice" in international development, they had very little evidence-based theory about the work of IDVs. However, with AusAID's mandate coming out of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the achievement of development was an activity unashamedly imbued with achieving Australia's national interests, including security and trade objectives[9].

It was clear at the time that Australia was taking a "what's-good-for-us-will-be-good-for-you" approach to the development of Australia's nearest neighbours. While this conveniently left development in some of the poorest parts of the world as the

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[9] Georgeou, (2010) pp37-39 identifies it as the 'Ideological Tool Model' of the 50s and 60s that saw the US Peace Corps set up. The Australian Government only made this their priority in the mid 90s.

responsibility of Europe and North America, the closest neighbours, Papua New Guinea, other parts of the Pacific, and the newly independent Timor Leste would be well served by a good IDV program. Palms was cautiously optimistic that it could bring some of the principles behind it's identified mission for community model, which had now shaped its Vision Statement, to an accreditation process involving all AusAID funded IVSAs and so accepted the invitation to engage.

Palms believed that it might be able to help the accreditation process create a link between achieving Australia's security interests and achieving Palms' vision of "a just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful world". Both gave emphasis to reducing poverty as a means to their ends, and by engaging with AusAID, "participating in and developing networks that link and engage people across cultures" also might be achieved. Hanging on to AusAID funding was an equally compelling reason for Palms to continue in the process of ongoing discussions and audits over nearly three years.

While there may have been a vacuum in experience of IDV programs AusAID did have considerable systems for monitoring and measuring development program outcomes and was keen to apply these to IDV programs. Its accreditation review of Palms' administrative systems promoted a revision and documentation of Palms' procedures resulting in an organisational manual, clarifying processes of evaluating requests for volunteers through to recruitment, preparation, placement and support of volunteers; a raft of policies from gender and development to environmental impacts; country strategies outlining goals and approaches appropriate to particular countries and Palms' capacity and evaluation of risk across all activities at home and abroad. An in-country review highlighted that under a sustainable development spotlight a number of Palms' placements would no longer fit.

Georgeou says that such processes caused "institutionalisation (and Palms) has been increasingly colonised by a corporatist instrumentalist framework." Or did the process assist Palms to develop a "… professional framework that development volunteers operate within (which) account(s) for the broad diversity of the experiences and individuals"? As Georgeou says Palms was "… consistently being surveyed and monitored by the instruments of the state" which certainly produced some tension "... between dynamic and political models of volunteering, and corporatist models…" but Palms was not "riddled with tensions." (Georgeou 2010 pp.229-230).

In 2002 the newly constituted company with a newly elected Palms Australia executive undertook an Organisational Review. A committee structure that would involve staff and members were all involved in drafting and then in refining the Vision statement and Development Philosophy cited earlier. Redrafting Mission[10] and Values[11] statements and writing and reviewing all documentation outlined above followed thereafter. While the engagement with AusAID was driving the process, a reading of the statements reveals they were not the only ones informing the approaches to development.

Palms Australia: Where Prophetic Wisdom Enlightens Development.

In this section I will highlight Palms' documents and procedures, and the particular thinking and reflection of the missiologists and other prophets that was brought to bear on them, as well as examining the subsequent ways in which we expect an IDVs approach to development to be influenced. The reader might like to read any of the available documents provided in the appendix before the discussion of each.

Values Statement: Solidarity has been a key expression of Palms for probably as long as it has existed, but was only ever documented clearly since the organisational restructure. What was a vague notion, that no doubt meant different things to different people, became a comprehensive statement and diagram on the basis of a presentation by Donal Dorr (1991 p.62) where he interprets Micah (6:6-8) to underline a Christian mission. Solidarity is the ideal, but Dorr's statement and representation highlight the values that one must strive to achieve if one is to approach that ideal.

The values statement accords with the position PALMS took in 1997 when identifying most closely with a model of mission as a sacrament of unity in the world. It should underpin for IDVs that volunteering is not an opportunity to teach others, but an opportunity to interdependently achieve solidarity. If the vision statement describes the place we want to reach and the mission statement says what we are doing to get there, the values tell us the attitude of mind we need to have to do that mission and achieve that goal.

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[10] Appendix 2 and http://www.palms.org.au/about/
[11] Appendix 3

Formation of IDVs in the enabling values spelt out in the statement is "… a formation in solidarity and readiness to offer others not simply material aid but their very selves."(Benedict XVI 2006 Sec.30b) What Palms attempts to achieve with the formation of IDVs in these values (which also underpin the volunteer ethos on page three) is an attitude of mind that accepts that: "The one who serves does not consider himself superior to the one served, however miserable his situation at the moment may be." (ibid Sec.35) Paulo Freire provides the link from these values to the way in which Palms encourages IDVs to undertake their mission of development:

> "Education must begin with the solution of the teacher-student contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously students and teachers" (Freire 1970 p.72).

Mission Statement:(Palms 2010d)[12] Palms' mission statement is in three parts. There is no order of importance, but there is sequence for IDVs, which should assist to achieve the reconciliation of the contradiction identified in Freire's pedagogy. The first aspect of the mission is expressed in a direct quotation from CTU missiologist Roger Schroeder:

> "*Advance mutually enriching and challenging relationships of understanding, acceptance and care, to the point of sharing worlds of meaning in the deepest sense, with people of a culture different from one's own.*" (Schroeder 2000 pp147-161)

This suggests that the relationship between volunteer and host become one of deep reciprocity and Palms recognises this as the building block to the second part of its mission identifying what AusAID would recognise as the development mission:

> "*Build the capacity of individuals and strengthen institutions through knowledge and skill exchange between Palms' global volunteers and communities seeking their assistance.*"

An authentic sacrament of unity, requiring mutual relationship, is difficult to achieve while parts of the same body are prevented from developing their full capacity. Many Catholic missions where PALMS went to work did not use knowledge and skill "exchange" to build the capacity of both the volunteers and hosts community, and building institutional capacity was often more about building the institution of a Western church, and associated infrastructure, rather than identifying that dialogue and

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[12] Also see Appendix 2

exchange provided opportunities for learning where all might "become human together".[13] Palms offers two advantages over religious missionaries for being able to achieve the development mission.

Firstly it is able to offer to lay volunteers with a broad variety of qualifications, skills and experience. Indeed Palms engages an even broader range of talent for this important aspect of its mission by following Papal teaching:

"In proclaiming the principles for a solution of the worker question, Pope Leo XIII wrote: 'This most serious question demands the attention and the efforts of others'… This affirmation has become a permanent element of the Church's social teaching, and also explains why Pope John XXIII addressed his Encyclical on peace to 'all people of good will' … and, as I have written in the Encyclical *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, there is a reasonable hope that the many people who profess no religion will also contribute to providing the social question with the necessary ethical foundation. … Indeed, openness to dialogue and to cooperation is required of all people of good will, and in particular of individuals and groups with specific responsibilities in the areas of politics, economics and social life, at both the national and international levels." (John Paul II 1991 Para.60)

Secondly, as Jim Knight points out, lay volunteers, not identified as part of the Institutional Church, live closer to the experience of the host community and are able to be identified more easily by local communities as sharing similar joys and struggles. Religious in many host communities, where life is more hierarchical, are frequently deemed to be on a higher plane, making unity and mutuality more difficult to achieve. While this provides a rationale for Palms' IDVs living more closely with communities, and working in community based organisations, rather than in institutional church structures, it is not all that needs to be done to achieve the desired <u>mutual</u> "skill and knowledge exchange".

In 2003 AusAID were using the term skill transfer as a means of development assistance. As Freire indicates if skill transfer is the mission, there is a significant imbalance of power; a temptation to egotism, which Georgeou's paper pointed towards as a significant motivating factor of volunteers:

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[13] Columban missionary Fr. Noel Connolly developed this idea at Palms Orientation courses 2001-2004.

"In imparting technical skills and knowledge, volunteers tended to take on the role of "leader" and expressed a desire for control in relationships with locals." (Georgeou 2010 p.167)

It was within the 2003 debates around accreditation that Palms introduced "knowledge and skill exchange" as preferable given the mutuality it believed was important in cross-cultural volunteering. Skill exchange is a process where the volunteer and host community explore possibilities together, without the implication of "transfer" suggesting that the volunteer has superior understanding. In Freire's words:

> "No pedagogy which is truly liberating can remain distant from the oppressed by treating them as unfortunates and by presenting for their emulation models from among the oppressors. The oppressed must be their own example in the struggle for their redemption." (Freire 1970 p.54)

Secondly "exchange" implies that volunteers have something valuable to learn. Emphasising "knowledge and skill exchange", and only after slowly building relationships, gives the volunteer the opportunity to learn:

1) Language and culture that helps one to a) understand the structures (Why are conditions this way?), and b) earns one the respect in the local community required for the host to trust a stranger (volunteer); (Gittins 2002 Ch 2)

2) That technologies and approaches employed in the West may not be development solutions in the host community;

   > "… the only Christian solution I can see is the adoption of a different model of development from the one which lies at the heart of the present Western way of life…" (Dorr 1992 p.59)

3) Humility, as one comes to recognise that the hosts may have a lifestyle incorporating skills and knowledge needed by the West in order to pursue a more sustainable and peaceful future.

> "Development volunteers commented that what they gained from their experience abroad affected their attitudes and behaviour towards others once they returned to Australia. Lisa said that she had gained a better appreciation of living in another culture and empathy for the experiences of migrants in Australia" (Georgeou 2010 p.222)

Also reliant on the success of the first is the third aspect of Palms' Mission:

> "*Engage Australian communities and host communities through Palms' global volunteers so that each increases their awareness and enthusiasm to encourage just, sustainable, interdependent and peaceful development.*"

Georgeou's research found that:

> "Volunteers are pivotal in linking the Australian community to the volunteer's host community. In line with Spence (2001; 2005), this study also found that volunteers contributed to friendship networks which cross cultural divides, contributing to different understandings of being which are important to peace building." (Georgeou 2010 p.225)

Peace is identified in Palms' Vision, and Deep Peace (Shalom) in Palms' Values, as the ultimate realisation of mission as a sacrament of unity in the world. Georgeou's research and Australian Government Volunteer Program (AGVP) Review (Kwitko & McDonald 2009) both point to the need to assist friends and families to develop a conceptual framework and understand the day-to-day life of a volunteer in placement as well as formalise opportunities after returning home for the volunteer to share the learnings from their experience.

It is the combination of the three aspects of Palms' Mission that underscores why the model of Church as a Sacrament of Unity is where Palms best fits. Being a sacrament of unity cannot be achieved, where structures of sin, as explained by Gittins, exist. Firstly justice requires that opportunity is shared so that all can develop their capacities. This can only happen if mutual and trusting relationships are developed and understanding across cultures is facilitated. Missiologists and other prophets clearly have plenty of wisdom to offer here.

Development Philosophy: (Palms 2010a)[14] This is an extension of Palms' definition of development cited early in this paper. It again reveals consistency with Freire's pedagogy in his belief that "All people contribute to their own development and we can contribute to the development of others only when invited to do so."

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[14] See also Appendix 4

Palms knew before 2000 that it needed a new language to speak to the diverse post-modern Australian community about mission. Clearly documented values, vision, mission and development philosophy enlightened by missiologists, theologians and other prophets now began to provide that language. The next step was to communicate the wisdom of these prophets to potential volunteers.

The Interplay of Mission and Development in Continuous Formation:

While Palms' documents are accessible on its web site the wisdom is generally first tapped through a face-to-face engagement.

Cross-Cultural Workshops held annually in each State of Australia provide an opportunity to discuss Gittins' cultural framework and position Palms' IDV mission in light of it. The wisdom of Dermot Dorgan's experience is also shared to assist an understanding of some of the "dilemmas of development". (Dorgan 1979) Inquirers are assisted to measure development effectiveness using criteria from Dorgan's definition to analyse placement updates from volunteers in the field.

Palms has always understood that living and working across cultures required significant reflection on the cultural paradigms likely to impact relationship building and working in host communities. Georgeou reflecting on Moylan's sentiments says that:

> "Palms' training reflects its philosophical view that cross-cultural relationship building is the core of sustainable development outcomes. A view also central to sustainable development approaches, which require recognition of interdependence between the North and South (Moylan 1991, 83). (Georgeou 2010 p210)

Correspondence Program: Preparation was once done almost entirely at residential orientation courses, of up to twenty days, prior to departure. Cost constraints resulted in the development of correspondence units, leading instead to a nine-day course. These enhance the opportunity for exposure to a broader range of cross-cultural wisdom and enable ongoing formation to support volunteers while in placement and so enhance further learning from hosts in placement.

Again the wisdom of contemporary prophets assists a broader appreciation of Palms' development mission as a sacrament of unity in the world. Their language is used in the

introductory correspondence unit to rework the PALMS' acronym.[15] Applicants are first provided with a short insight into the baggage accumulated by the original PALMS' acronym, before being directed to <u>Reading the Clouds: Mission Spirituality for New Times</u> (Gittins 1999). Following is an abbreviated version of the introductory unit.

*'**P** is for People'* makes the point that PALMS' mission is about the dignity of all people as indicated in Catholic Social Teaching. Seeing mission as a sacrament of unity in the world as a mission of mutual development is explained thus:

> "… being transformed into a united body happens when we recognize that the talents of <u>all</u> of the people of God are needed to produce the leadership necessary for the growth of the whole." (Palms Australia 2006 p.4) [16]

Palms also uses a quotation attributed to a respected prophet, that provides a context and liberating limitation on Palms' mission of development: "We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work." (from the prayer of Oscar Romero)

*'**P** is for Pilgrims'* identifies some secular prophets, organisational psychologists Dunphy & Stace, Charles Handy and writer George Bernard Shaw. These all recognise that in a rapidly changing world those who are open to transition and transformation, as we would expect to be as pilgrims, are the ones who will be open to important learning from the other in much the same way as Schroeder describes. In the mode of pilgrims we celebrate the sacrament of unity in the world as we engage in dialogue to share our collective search for meaning.

*'**P** is for Prophets'* "… who dream of alternative futures … to the destructive elements of globalisation; alternatives that will rebuild the positive essentials of community; alternatives to poverty that will put people at the centre of human development." (Palms Australia 2006 p.4) Palms indicate here that volunteers must be these prophets.

*'**A** is for Animation'* suggests we need to be animated to achieve the alternative futures, for which we dream as prophets. "This requires becoming involved in consciousness

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[15] See Appendix 5
[16] Also see Appendix 5 Introductory Unit

raising, community reflection and action". This is where Palms' applicants are introduced to the Cardijn methodology of See, Judge, Act.[17]

'L is for Liberation' "… from the artificial human divisions imposed by cultural rules or lies, liberation from the structures of sin. This introduces Palms' applicants to the cultural framework of missiologist Anthony Gittins.

'M is for Movement' The movement encouraged by Richard Rohr (Rohr 1994 pp.131-132) is introduced to applicants, as is a construct provided by Jim Knight[18] for assisting volunteers to appreciate how they might understand culture. A quotation from Australian theologian David Tacey indicates agreement with Gittins.

> "There is both a moral and spiritual responsibility attaching to these experiences of foreign cultures, and if nothing awakens in our own soul, making claims and demands upon us, calling us to challenge the way we live then we have been merely parasites and intruders." (Tacey ReEnchantment, p.183)

'S is for Solidarity' tells potential volunteers, in keeping with Palms' volunteer ethos that "… sacrificing material "wants" more available to 'volunteers' from other agencies assists you to live in greater solidarity with the local community." Or from the wisdom of an indigenous prophet, visual artist, activist and educator Lilla Watson:

> "If you have come to help me, you are wasting your time.
> But, if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine,
> Then let us work together." (Watson 1985)

The second correspondence unit is more practical, dealing with one's responses to people and cultures that differ from the one's own. It focuses on cultural differences in attitude to time, judgement, patterns of thinking, and self worth.

The Orientation Course provides the opportunity for detailed scrutiny of the dynamics of cross-cultural relationships and how they might underpin effective development practice. Through nine days of simulation, academic presentation and discussion those preparing for a two-year mission test the efficacy of the wisdom of the missiologists and

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[17] See Appendix 6
[18] See Appendix 7 for a diagram of this construct.

other prophets. Evaluations testing the achievement of outcomes[19] immediately after the course and six and eighteen months into each volunteer's placement consistently give very high ratings to all of the activities used to unpack this wisdom.

One of the most important sessions was presented by Cyril Hally, Palms' most loyal prophet who came back annually for over 40 years, from 1961, to share his latest theories on culture before becoming too frail in his mid 80s to continue. Ten years on, his ideas around cultural breakdown, perhaps heralding some cosmic global "sacrament of unity in the world", are still explored. The notion that the simultaneous crisis of cultures and faiths we are witnessing, might have the world on the cusp of achieving global solidarity, can't help but stimulate volunteers to further explore the beliefs that lie at the core of cultures.

Indeed the potential resolution of global and interpersonal conflict (peace building) sees the volunteer also inspired in the orientation course to contextualise the influence of personality and human nature itself. All of which better positions a volunteer to work with a host community to identify and develop appropriate programs to address poverty and disadvantage within the culture. In addition, a conscientious volunteer will more readily appreciate the barriers, within his/her own faith and culture that impact on sustainable global development.

I have space for just one example of how this can work. A discussion in the course of an article (Schroeder 2002)[20] provides a comprehensive consideration of building cross-cultural relationships, which examines the following: "In entering another's garden one will encounter surprises; plants that are weeds in one's own garden are a valuable crop in the host's garden and the value is to be understood before gardening can be properly undertaken." While this is a metaphor, Barry Hinton, one of Palms' volunteers coordinating the building of an eco-tourist village in East Timor, clearly understood the metaphor as directing him to apply the first aspect of Palms' mission. He writes: "The learning curve I experienced during this time (early months in placement) was enormous as I exchanged friendships and culture with a group of approximately 30 workers who had had limited or no contact with foreigners. Being fluent in the language of Tetun gave me obvious advantages including the tool to learn the builders' local

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[19] See Appendix 8 - Orientation Course Evaluation form
[20] The CTU missiologists who gave Palms the first aspect of its mission statement

village languages. Often during a day a language lesson would stop work on site while pronunciation and grammatical areas in my speech were addressed or a cultural importance taught. This always took priority over work and was a magical doorway into which I entered at every opportunity. Their patience and persistence once again gave me many insights into their life and cultural ways." (Hinton 2002 p.7)

Conclusion

The founding of PALMS was somewhat ground-breaking in the Catholic Church of 1961, prior to Vatican II identifying a greater engagement of the laity in the mission of the church. However, at the time, individual lay people were going off to the missions without training and formation "and many received a tremendous shock", so the obvious need was similar to what it still is today. At that time of course it was not at all surprising that Roy Boylan as the founding director subjugated the activities of P.A.L.M.S to the hierarchy of institutional church.

From time to time there were tensions around how much authority the hierarchy was exercising, but up until the time of Roy's death in 1979 there was no significant pressure for change in the original mandate, or how it was implemented. In the 80s when Palms needed to respond to significant social change and changes in the way the mission of the church was being interpreted, it struggled. By the mid 90s its mission for the 60s that took it comfortably enough through the 70s was irrelevant to almost all stakeholders.

Palms would only find relevance again when pressure from the major funder, AusAID, forced it to identify and seriously consider the model of mission by which it could undertake authentic mutual development. Spending time considering the wisdom of the missiologists in the second half of the 1990s brought about the realization that the mission they were describing was integral to, or even the same as the development in which IDVs could appropriately engage. And although its major funder was starting to push along a different path of development at the beginning of the new millennium, Palms had become inspired and confident in the expression of its development mission.

Palms uses the wisdom emanating from all sources cited in the paper above. These are the missiologists, theologians and other prophets who assist to prepare IDVs to be vulnerable, so that they might take their ego off the tower we in the West are

encouraged to erect for it, and achieve the solidarity required. For it is only in such solidarity that we can be liberated together.

These missionaries, theologians and other prophets assist the preparation of pilgrims, able to negotiate transition and open to transformation. Observance of their messages, identified in Palms' values, vision, mission, volunteer ethos and development philosophy puts IDVs in touch with their own creative spirit and prophetic self, assisting them to question the taken-for-granted in their own cultural tradition, and not to leave a careless footprint on the sacred ground of others. Volunteers open to the wisdom of these prophets are prepared to be humbly animated by the insights of those with whom they go to work; and share, again with humility, skills that they have had the good fortune to develop, knowing that this mutual animation is the substance of collective liberation.

Palms is the intermediary endeavouring to bring the message through a more secular language to the broader public because as Popes for over 100 years have noted all are a part of the solution. This is why more fundamental religious will be heard to comment that much of the language of Palms does not clearly state anything to do with Mission. Indeed it is hard to say that many in the church appreciate a mission that integrates poverty reduction and sustainable global development as necessary adjuncts to achieving the Vatican II model of church as a sacrament of unity in the world. In Australia, as in many countries mission and development are still divided between two church bodies. The Pontifical Mission Societies do mission (in its various models) and Caritas with a rationale from Catholic Social Teaching takes on the various constructs of development as they evolve over time.

Equally many in secular society are still to appreciate what contemporary missiologists, theologians and other prophets have identified. A consultant engaged for AusAID once remarked that Palms' vision was not something AusAID had instruments for measuring. He would be recognised by Georgeou as having a managerial/instrumental approach to development. However, while Georgeou identified some of the conceptual influence of prophets like Freire, cited above, and is able to suggest this is the reason for Palms fitting somewhat within a dynamic politicisian model of development, her secular academic perspective, also fails to identify the missiologists, theologians and other prophets who enlighten Palms' approach to development.

For the development academics and clerics such separation is the norm and, as said by way of introduction, any who engage cross-culturally, with a narrow focus, will find Palms' extraordinarily eclectic or conceptually complicated. On the other hand those who choose Palms as volunteers, or supporters, while identifying some of the tensions mentioned by Georgeou's research, also find in Palms' expression of the integration of mission and development a strong calling to solidarity. A solidarity that is more than "a vague sort of compassion, or shallow distress at others' misfortune, but involves a liberation of victims, oppressors and 'innocent' bystanders, allowing all life to live to the full. This is why I conclude that Palms embodies the successful integration of developments in mission with the mission of development.

Palms, as a learning organisation, does need to address a number of tensions identified by Georgeou.[21] Doing so will create an even stronger program. And given that, Palms might well be correct, that a program integrating their processes for achieving authentic cross-cultural dialogue is required for the success of all, in every sector, who seek sustainable solutions to address global challenges.

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[21] See Appendix 8 - Palms' Director's response to Georgeou's research after the first skim reading of the final draft.

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