

**LIVING WITH**

**THE MANDATE**

*Commitment to

People's Organizations

and

Constituency Education.*

Reflections on Agricultural Missions' approach

to development by its former executive director,

a representative from a church constituency,

and a third world church leader.

AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS

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CONTENTS

i

Introduction: Agricultural Missions'

Approach to Development iii

* Jun Atienza

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Living with the Mandate 1

* J. Benton Rhoades

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Agricultural Missions, 1961-1990

Constituency Education...A Success Story? 21

* Gerald Currens, Director for Overseas Operations and Long Range

Planning, Division for

Global Mission

Evangelical Lutheran Church

in America

Commitment to People's Organizations 28

* Sam Kobia

General Secretary

National Christian Council of Kenya

**Agricultural Missions'

Approach to Development**

iii

**The three** reflections contained in this booklet were part of the presentations at the 1991 Annual Board Meeting and Consultation of Agricultural Missions in Chevy Chase, Maryland on the theme "Agricultural Missions: Looking Back at 60 Years and Looking Forward to the 21st Century." They speak to two program mandates articulated in the 1970s — development through people's organizations and constituency education — which since then have become the cornerstone of its approach to development.

In the last two decades, commitment to people's organizations facilitated exchanges between Kenyan and Zimbabwan organic farmers, between Nicaraguan campesinos and U.S. farmworkers, between farmers from the Philippines and the indigenous Ibans of Sarawak, and between rural technicians of Senegal and small producers of Haiti. The list can go on. On the other hand, the mandate on constituency education allowed church constituency to see the development process from the eyes of the victims — whether they were the peasants of the Philippines demonstrating for agrarian reform, the landless workers of Brazil occupying unused lands, or U.S. black and family farmers hard-hit by the farm crisis of the 1980s.

For Agricultural Missions these two mandates remain as valid in the 1990s as when they were originally charted in the seventies — except for a slight change in perspective. That modification was made at the 1991 Annual Board Meeting when the board decided to link the mandates to the two central issues of the nineties: sustainability and democratization at the grassroots. It did this by identifying the role of Agricultural Missions in the 1990s as "facilitating sustainable frameworks and practices" within the context of people's organizations and the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that accompany them. I hope that the reflections on these pages will help the churches to have a fuller understanding of what we in Agricultural Missions believe is a unique approach to development.

Jun Atienza

Executive Director Agricultural Missions

**LIVING WITH THE MANDATE**

**1**

**Benton Rhoades**

**Executive Director, 1961-90 Agricultural Missions**

**I. THE JAYUYA CONSULTATION**

**The planners of this consultation have asked me to reflect personally on my experiences of working under the twin mandates that were articulated by Agricultural Missions at the 1979 consultation on the theme: THE CHRISTIAN RURAL MISSION IN THE 1980'S - A CALL TO LIBERATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLES. The formal language of the mandates are the following:**

**"1. That Agricultural Missions add to its**

**mandates the task of constituency education in the U.S. and Canada, that it assist in bringing critical information from Third World peoples, including those in the U.S.A. and Canada to the churches and any other groups for the purpose of consciousness-raising and bringing about action.**

**2. That Agricultural Missions deepen its**

**commitment to people's movements at home and abroad through increasing financial and other forms of assistance such as support for networking, communication, exchange of persons and training."**

**Jayuya Consultation Report**