

## VI. SOME ORGANISATIONAL ELEMENTS

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*“New circumscriptions will be attentive to the importance of lay associates and will support their development” (Torre d’Aguilha 4.12).*

**6.1** The internal organisation of various groups of laity depends on circumscriptions or Unions.<sup>24</sup> It will be the result of a dialogue between the laity and the professed.

**6.2** It is the responsibility of those in charge of circumscriptions and Unions to offer possibilities for association with the Spiritan family and to make these known; to identify professed accompaniers and reference communities; to plan a programme of formation; to provide information to all members (professed and lay); to promote involvement in circumscription life; to make publications and resources available; to take part regularly in meetings with the lay people.

**6.3** It is also down to those in charge to provide information to the General Council about the setting up of groups, their statutes, statistics, annual directory, a copy of each Agreement, and all other useful documents.

**6.4** In its internal organisation and particularly in what concerns leadership, it should be remembered that there is a greater need for guides or animators than structures of authority to stimulate creativity, to maintain unity and ensure solidarity among the members.

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<sup>24</sup> “A Guide (...) to be implemented or confirmed at the level of each circumscription and/or Union of Circumscriptions” (Bagamoyo 2.14).

**6.5** Juridically, only those who have made profession can be “members of the Congregation” (SRL 129). But to belong to the ‘Spiritans family’ always requires loyalty, solidarity and responsibility towards all members of this family and towards the Congregation in general.

**6.6** The laity take part in the life of the circumscription; they can be invited to meetings, retreats and assemblies. They can also take part in chapters as observers. Here, they take part in the discussions but without the right to vote, neither in elections, nor in chapter decisions.

**6.7** The circumscription ensures that the laity can take part effectively or be represented at meetings of their respective categories which may be organised at Union level, or possibly at Congregation level.

**6.8** The laity are integrated in the missionary strategy of the circumscription by their involvement in apostolic commitments, in reflection groups, and in commissions. In some circumscriptions, missionary projects depend completely on collaboration with the laity. In this case, extra care will be taken to ensure that they are integrated into the process of discernment and decision-making.

**6.9** Regarding Lay Spiritans particularly:

**6.9.1** If the group of Lay Spiritans is either large, or where they play a significant role in the circumscription mission, a delegate represents them in council when the agenda concerns that particularly.

**6.9.2** Acceptance of a Lay Spiritan has no financial implications for either party.<sup>25</sup> Besides, it is recommended that we verify and specify that such a form of association has no legal standing in the country. If a Lay Spiritan is employed by a Congregation group in any capacity, the social and legal laws of the country must be respected, without any ambiguity and in full justice.

**6.9.3** In the case of a “mixed” Community, where professed and Lay Spiritans live together, in the service of the same mission, the details of this coexistence should be the object of a detailed contractual agreement, involving the different aspects of the common life: responsibilities, prayer, work, rest, leisure, finance, social security etc.

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<sup>25</sup> Except the case where the Lay Spiritan is appointed by contract to a particular mission and for a period of time, outside his place of origin (Cf. 6.9.3).