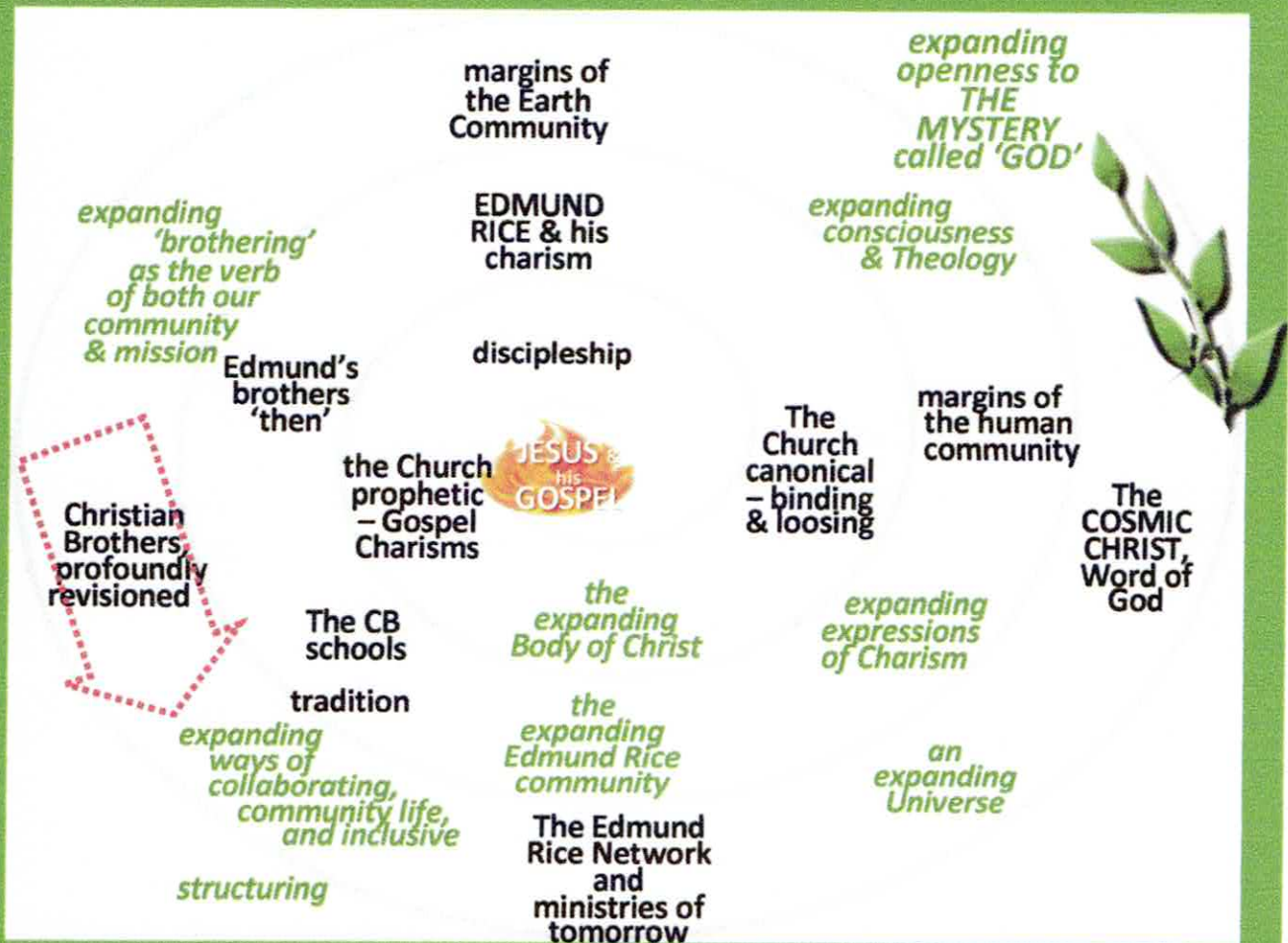


# Speak, Lord,



Your servants are listening

Edmund Rice Christian Brothers  
Congregation Chapter 2020-2022



### 1. International Prayer and Integration Groups

An international group of 6-8 Brothers meeting monthly for one hour to pray together, and integrate what they are going through in their lives, as well as what is coming up from the conversational spaces in # 2 below.

### 2. International Generative Conversation through Zoom

A monthly Zoom meeting on a chosen topic, with 80 - 100 participants maximum, for 2 hours.

The format may include videos about a particular topic (or a live guest speaker sometimes), and generative, contemplative conversations about my lived experience in relation to the topic. These conversations will include plenty of small group time, to allow for in-depth sharing, as well as plenaries.



### 3. Province based Generative conversations

You will be encouraged to participate, as you would normally, in the generative conversations happening in your community/province.

Those conversations will address needs/topics of interest more specific to you as a community/province, but no doubt they will also be places where you can make links with what you are connecting to in the Prayer and Integration Group and the International Generative Conversations.

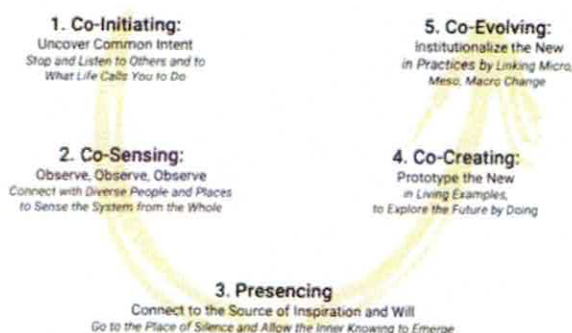
## The Congregation Chapter Story 2020-2022

In June 2018 the CLT, together with the Province Leaders and their Deputies, gathered in Rome for the Congregation Leadership Group's annual two-week meeting. As a result of a desire for inclusive ways of creating the future of our Brotherhood, planning began towards developing participative processes to involve all Brothers. These processes would see the 2020 Congregation Chapter as a step on a longer journey.

*Generation Conversations* were introduced as a way of listening to each other, of reflecting on what we were hearing and of clarifying our understandings. Conversations around *Fanning the Flames of Brotherhood* added to what was being gathered for the Congregation Chapter.

At the Chapter which opened on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020 and was scheduled to last four weeks, a process called *Theory U* was used. The first two weeks in Lima focused on the *Initiating* and *Sensing* stages of listening to story, considering Reports, and getting a picture of the larger Congregation reality. As the *Sensing* stage was nearing the end, the world around us changed, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Our Congregation Chapter was suspended on its 13<sup>th</sup> day.

### Theory U: 1 Process, 5 Movements



A group called *Sustaining Our Momentum* was then established to help connect the Chapter Delegates with the Brothers of the Congregation, so that we might explore how to continue our journey together. Several Brothers from the Chapter were invited to write reflections on their experience. These reflections were collated and circulated throughout the Provinces. The next step introduced us to Congregation-wide Zoom communication. Three international Zoom calls were organized in July 2020, to enable Brothers to interact with some of the Lima Delegates.



These Zoom calls showed that many Brothers had a real interest in connecting across the Congregation. This led to an invitation to *Rekindle Our Brotherhood*, an endeavour which included international prayer groups, a series of international Zooms, and encouragement to continue the *Generative Conversations* at Province and local levels. International Zoom calls took place during the last three months of 2020 and during the first four months of 2021. 24 international prayer groups were formed. Many of these still continue to meet.

In anticipation of the eventual resumption of the Congregation Chapter, the focus of the international Zooms moved to a *Scenario Building* process as a further step in co-creating the future of our Brotherhood.



Four international Zooms were held in the last four months of 2021. The CLT and Province Chapter Reports were shared with all Brothers, who distilled them into the *Four C's*, which presented a snapshot of our Current reality, Concerns, Challenges and Concrete actions.

Brothers were then invited to imagine what our future could look like and were offered the opportunity to represent their vision creatively as *book covers*. Over eighty *book covers* were produced. Using these, Brothers formed working groups. Each group built a *Scenario* around themes that energized them. The 28 *Scenarios* that emerged were shared around the Congregation. It became evident that there is significant energy amongst us to profoundly re-vision our Brotherhood.

The Congregation Chapter reconvened at the Emmaus Centre in Dublin from January 23<sup>rd</sup> to February 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Returning to the *Sensing* phase of *Theory U*, the Capitulants revisited the Lima experience, shared stories around the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, and reviewed the processes that had taken place since March 2020. This led into the more contemplative *Presencing* phase.

Significant time was given to contemplative listening to discern where the Spirit is leading us, since from *Presencing* comes the movement towards the phases of *Co-creating* and *Co-evolving*.



*Congregation Leadership Team: Hugo Cáceres, John Casey, Peter Clinch, Senan D'Souza and David Ryan Silva*

Chapter 2020-2022, a significant event in our ongoing journey together,

- highlighted Care of the Earth as the major issue on the world's agenda.
- endorsed the continuation of processes engaging all Brothers in co-creating the future of our religious Brotherhood
- accepted three pairs of statements that can form a lens through which we view all that we are and do as Brothers

The following material, which comes directly from the Chapter, relates to each of these three points. It will form the basis of interactive processes into which you will be invited.

## The Cry of Mother Earth: Care for Our Common Home

As far as we know, the only planet in an immense universe on which life has emerged is our wonderful, blue planet Earth. Earth is home to myriad creatures, ourselves included.

Today, Earth is severely diminished by human ignorance and greed. We Brothers join with Earth as She cries out in protest.

In his encyclical **Laudato Si'**, Pope Francis calls each one of us to a transformation of heart and soul with a growing awareness of the ecological challenges facing our home, Mother Earth.



The Congregation Chapter calls each of our Brothers to embrace the Pope's call to love and protect our planet through contemplation, prayer, and action,

The Chapter commits the Congregation to support the **Laudato Si' Action Platform**, as invited by Pope Francis.

Province Leadership Team are asked to engage with their communities in these four main directions:

- Animating and accompanying local communities in their efforts towards an integral ecology.
- Promoting opportunities for the personal formation of Brothers in this area.
- Providing financial resources and support to engage in, for example, alternative energy plans and new investment strategies.
- Developing policies and guidelines essential to sustainable ecology.



### Urgent Call to the Brothers

The Chapter calls us all into a deeper love for Mother Earth, leading to a fundamental conversion of heart, expressed in our daily life choices.

# LAUDATO SI'

## Christian Brothers Profoundly Re-visioned

In the light of our diversity, our heritage, and the challenges facing us and our world today, we believe that the Spirit is calling us to continue co-creating our future. Each Brother's story is sacred and part of a whole. The Chapter calls all Brothers to engage in writing our collective story, imagining our future together.



*Brothers from the Africa Province during the Opening Ceremony at the Chapter*

Through the recent experience of Brothers connecting with each other across the Congregation, we are sensing the Spirit inviting us to a renewed appreciation and exploration of many essential issues including;

- Our foundational stories
- Brotherhood in the 21st Century
- Contemplative living
- The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor
- The evolving Edmund Rice charism
- Future, governance structures and resources

The Chapter urges each Province Leadership Team to develop processes that will engage every Brother in this co-creative journey.



## Where is the Spirit leading?

In Emmaus, after initially re-connecting with the *Sensing* phase of Theory U, we moved into a more contemplative space, for *Presencing*. We were to be *present* to the material, to what we had heard, to what we felt, and to stillness.

After each of us spent time in quiet reflection, groups of three were formed to share what was stirring in us. What was the Spirit saying? Could we put this into one or two simple phrases?

The groups of three later became groups of 6 and then 12.

Independently, each of these three larger groups of 12 expressed what was being heard and where the Spirit seemed to be leading us, in two simple statements.



When these three pairs of statements were shared in the plenary session, there was truly a sense that we were standing on holy ground.

On the right side of the following page are these 3 pairs of statements. To the left are the 12 statements from which they evolved.

These statements from the Congregation Chapter have not been edited because each pair is a product of a discernment process which continues.



### Statements from the Groups of six Brothers

### Statements from the Groups of twelve Brothers

1. Through acknowledging our fears and embracing our diversity, we release energy for life and mission.	1. The Spirit is calling us to journey together through contemplative experiences leading us to ongoing transformation.
2. As we learn to be more contemplative in action, we become more life-giving.	
3. The Spirit is calling us to be open to an experience of God that invites us to a deep transformation into being fully human.	
4. The Spirit is inviting us to appreciate that diversity is a key aspect of all life giving processes.	
1. Through embracing diversity, led by the spirit we grow in oneness.	2. The Spirit is calling us to acknowledge our fears and embrace our diversity in order to release energy for life and mission.
2. Central to our Brotherhood is our ongoing search for Jesus our brother.	
3. Listening with the Spirit of God leads to understanding and acceptance of diversity.	3. Led by the Spirit we embrace diversity as the gift of life.
4. God is love, in love there is no fear.	

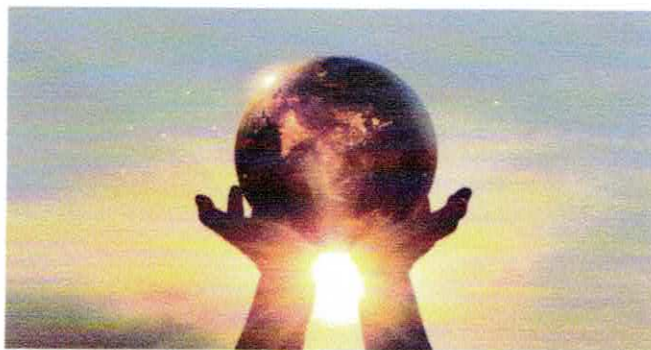
1. We are called to recognize God at work through the feminine energy to bring about healing and wholeness in our world.	5. You are called to rebirth your brotherhood by personal transformations.
2. How is God inviting us to embrace this energy in facing our brokenness and acknowledging our diversity.	
3. With my (as the calling of the Holy Spirit) power working within you, risk transforming yourselves, and through your Brotherhood, accept and embrace each other and all my creation, with its brokenness, diversity, and dignity.	
7. Christian Brothers embrace brotherhood as the way forward in a broken, turbulent world. Diversity is their gift, Presence is their stance, Fragility is their struggle and Transformation is their mission.	6. You are called to recognise God at work through feminine energy allowing you to see your brokenness and diversity.

1. Through embracing diversity, led by the spirit we grow in oneness.	3. Led by the Spirit we embrace diversity as the gift of life.
2. Central to our Brotherhood is our ongoing search for Jesus our brother.	
3. Listening with the Spirit of God leads to understanding and acceptance of diversity.	
4. God is love, in love there is no fear.	
1. We are called to recognize God at work through the feminine energy to bring about healing and wholeness in our world.	5. You are called to rebirth your brotherhood by personal transformations.
2. How is God inviting us to embrace this energy in facing our brokenness and acknowledging our diversity.	
3. With my (as the calling of the Holy Spirit) power working within you, risk transforming yourselves, and through your Brotherhood, accept and embrace each other and all my creation, with its brokenness, diversity, and dignity.	
7. Christian Brothers embrace brotherhood as the way forward in a broken, turbulent world. Diversity is their gift, Presence is their stance, Fragility is their struggle and Transformation is their mission.	6. You are called to recognise God at work through feminine energy allowing you to see your brokenness and diversity.

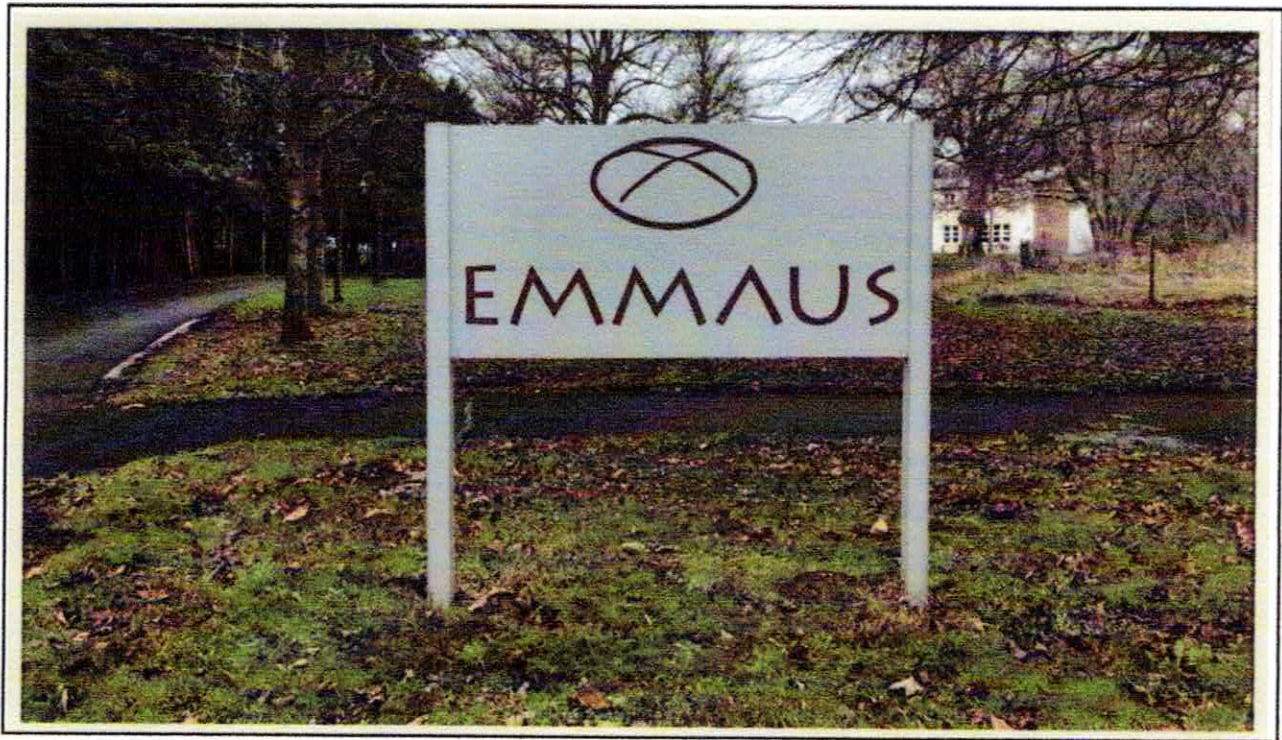


## **A new kind of Chapter calls for a new kind of post-Chapter.**

You are invited to give yourself some contemplative space to interact with the statements. You might like to combine them or rearrange them to see how they might act as a lens for us to view our journey of *Co-creating* and *Co-evolving*



1. *In my contemplative journey, how can I engage with these statements as a lens which helps me to see what is burning in my heart?*
2. *In the light of the Chapter's endorsement of processes inviting all Brothers to participate in co-creating our future, what are my hopes for how this will become a reality for me and for Brothers everywhere?*
3. *What is my response to the Chapter's urgent call to a deeper love for Mother Earth and to a fundamental conversion of heart?*
4. *What do I see as key elements of a Congregation 'profoundly re-visioned'?*



1



2





3

- *We journey together through contemplative experiences.*
- *We rebirth our brotherhood by personal transformations.*
- *We acknowledge our fears and embrace our diversity, in order to release energy for life and mission.*
- *We embrace diversity as the gift of life.*
- *We recognize God at work through feminine energy allowing us to see our brokenness and diversity.*
- *God is love – in love there is no fear.*

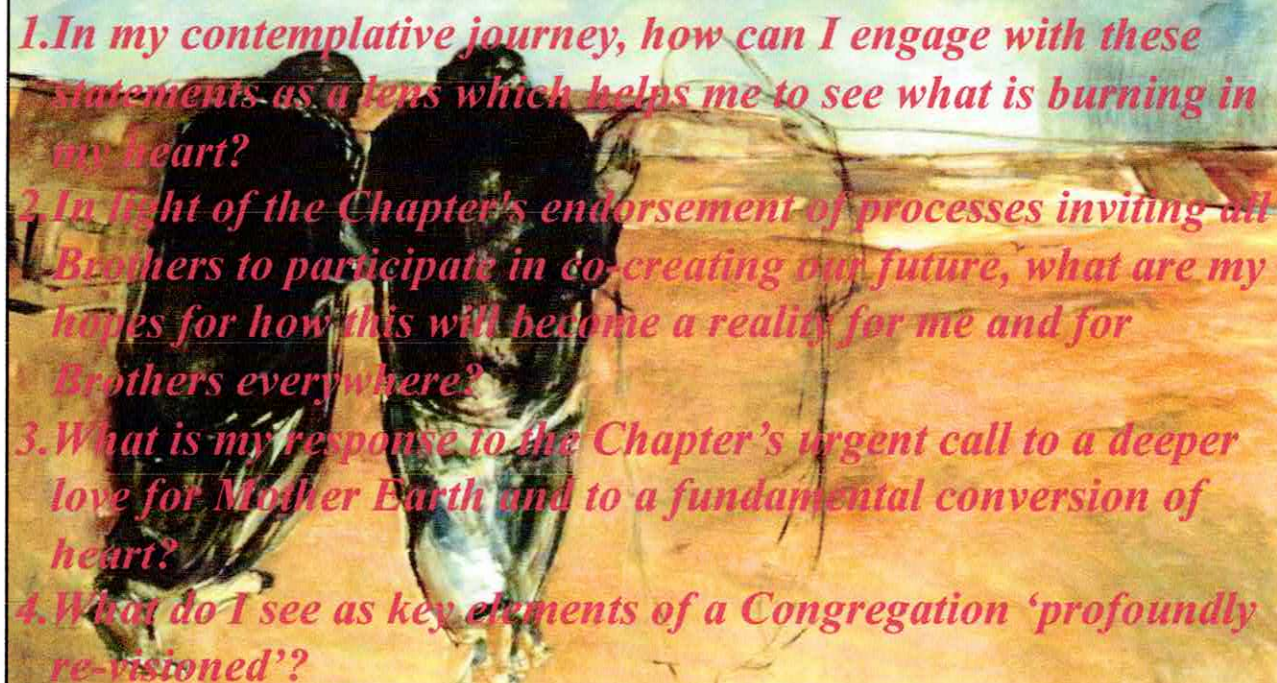
4



*These statements interact to offer a lens through which we are invited to look at all we are and do as Brothers. Give yourself some contemplative space and sit with these statements. Combine them, rearrange them, blend them, highlight sections that speak to you. See how they might form a lens for you.*

*Now, with your lens, you are invited to reflect on the following four questions.*

5

- 
- 1. In my contemplative journey, how can I engage with these statements as a lens which helps me to see what is burning in my heart?*
  - 2. In light of the Chapter's endorsement of processes inviting all Brothers to participate in co-creating our future, what are my hopes for how this will become a reality for me and for Brothers everywhere?*
  - 3. What is my response to the Chapter's urgent call to a deeper love for Mother Earth and to a fundamental conversion of heart?*
  - 4. What do I see as key elements of a Congregation 'profoundly re-visioned'?*

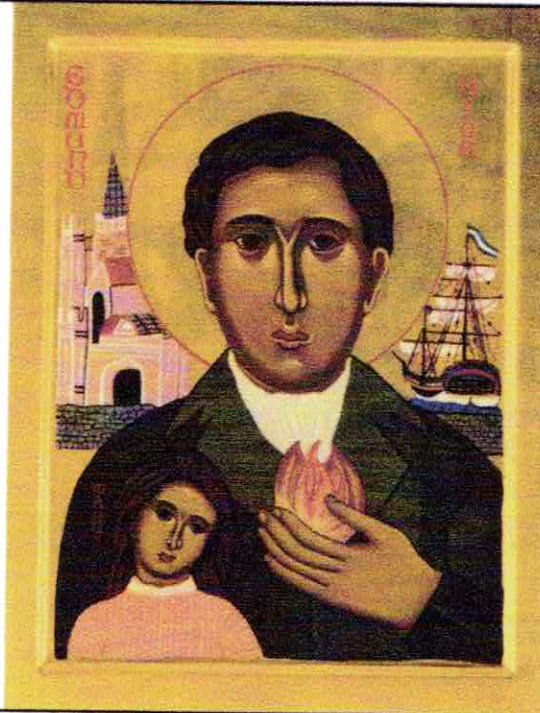
6



*May we remain committed to each other and continue to enliven our Brotherhood together.*

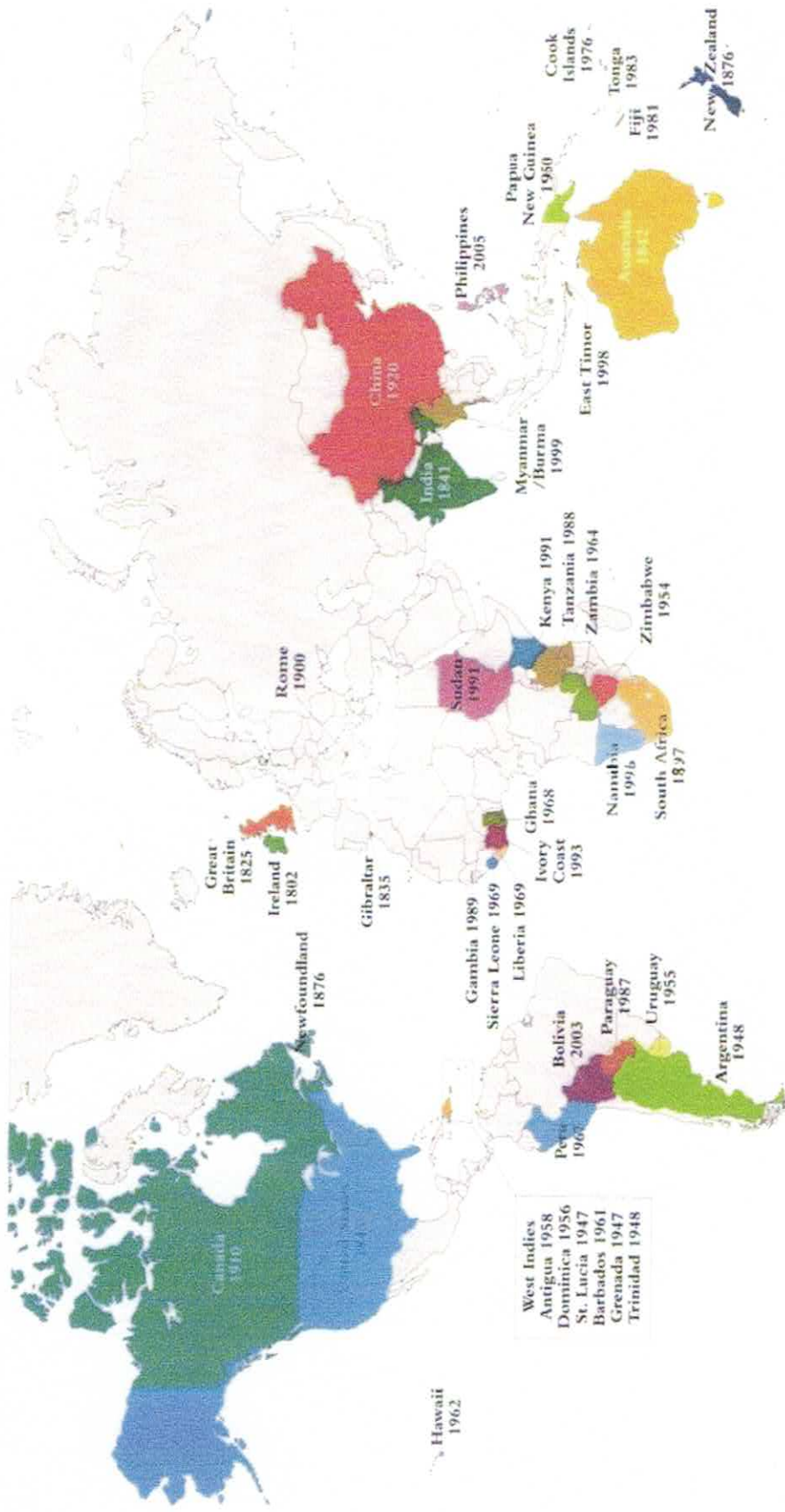
*May Jesus live in our hearts ... Forever*

7



8

# THE SPREAD OF EDMUND RICE'S BROTHERS AROUND THE WORLD





# Speak Lord, your servant is Listening.



Now the boy Samuel was attending to the service of the Lord before Eli. And word from the Lord was rare in those days; visions were infrequent.

But it happened at that time as Eli was lying down in his place (now his eyesight had begun to be poor and he could not see well), and the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the Lord where the ark of God was, that the Lord called Samuel; and he said, “Here I am.” Then he ran to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, go back and lie down.” So, he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, “Samuel!” So, Samuel got up and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” But he said, “I did not call, my son, go back and lie down.” Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord, nor had the word of the Lord yet been revealed to him. So, the Lord called Samuel again for the third time. And he got up and went to Eli and said, “Here I am, for you called me.” Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. And Eli said to Samuel, “Go lie down, and it shall be if He calls you, that you should say, ‘Speak, Lord, for Your servant is listening.’” So, Samuel went and lay down in his place.

Then the Lord came and stood and called as at the other times: “Samuel! Samuel!” and Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening.”

1 Samuel 3: 1-10



8