

CHAPTER XI

A DESCRIPTION OF RECENT EVENTS

The preceding summary indicates that in recent years we have reached a new stage in the history of the Church in Latin America. This experience has affected the empirical and personal life of all Christians who were already adults in 1961 and who were involved in some Christian endeavor. All asked, "What has happened? What do these events mean?" Some of course were against any change, while others supported change wholeheartedly. But virtually no one has had a comprehensive idea as to the meaning of what has taken place. And it is the search for the meaning of these developments that has prompted us to give this lengthy description of the history of the Latin American Church. *The past has no value whatsoever if it does not illuminate and help us to discover some meaning for the present.* Obviously, to find some meaning for the present by reflecting on the past involves both the past and present in an understanding of the future. We cannot avoid the question of the future, for it is a hope against all hopelessness that supports our interpretation, and it is hope in the last analysis that is the foundation of the history of salvation as an eschatological event.

THE TENTH STAGE: A NEW BEGINNING (1962-1979)

We have thus arrived at the crucial issue, namely, the *why* of the present. Our interpretation is really archeological (*arjé* signifies origin: an understanding of the origin of the events and of their meaning). We are all acquainted with the many partial descriptions of what is occurring in the contemporary Latin American Church, but none of these descriptions fulfills the twofold condition of explaining all of what took place throughout the continent from 1962 until 1970, nor do they represent the actual events in the light of all the history of the Latin American Church. Apart from this dual approach it is impossible to have an adequate understanding of what has occurred or to integrate the events into the history of salvation, which is the basis of our present commitment. Therefore, as we attempted in Chapter VIII, the Sixth Stage (1808-1825), we will set forth a description of each of the various levels. The economic and political events were most important during the period of 1808 to 1825. But since 1962 the decisive events in Latin America have occurred on the ecclesiastical level. If a single person symbolized paradigmatically colonial Christendom, it would be Toribio de Mogrovejo, the heroic Archbishop of Lima during the sixteenth century. And if we had to select a symbol of the era of the crisis of Christendom, two archbishops would come to mind, Monseñor Valdivieso (1845-1878) and Monseñor Casanova (1887-1911), both archbishops of Santiago, Chile. Likewise it would be a Chilean, Monseñor Manuel Larraín, who in the twentieth century serves as an example of the attempt to establish a new Christendom. But in regard to the current epoch, contemporary attitudes are very much akin to those of a previous era, and it would appear that our historical moment has as its best antecedent the events of the sixteenth century. The most exemplary of that period was the indefatigable combatant, the

expelled Bishop of Chiapas, Bartholomé de Las Casas, defender and universal procurator of the Indian, who prefigures certain bishops of the twentieth century, Dom Hélder Camara, for example. For this reason we want to describe briefly an unknown exploit that liberated from their origins the outstanding American bishops of the sixteenth century in order to compare them with the most committed bishops of the present century. Though history does not repeat itself, it does offer us perspectives for understanding the present. Likewise one can make a comparison between the involvement of the clergy in the revolution of 1808-1825 and the commitment of many of the clergy to the national and oligarchical liberation of the popular Latin American revolution. Many overlook the fact, for example, that the instructor and constructor of the artillery for the Army of the Andes, the person who manufactured the cannons from the bells of the Church in Mendoza, was Friar Luís Beltrán, OFM. Beltrán is a national hero who is honored today by monuments in villages and by avenues named for him because he fought against the Spanish despite his cultural heritage and ecclesiastical orientation, both of which condemned the revolution. How will yet-to-be-written history judge the Colombian priest Camilo Torres, Licentiate in sociology from Louvain, university chaplain, and finally a guerrilla who gave his life in opposition to violence?

I. THE CHURCH AND ITS GREAT CHALLENGES

1. Fundamental Collegial Moments

We have already dealt with the first moments of collegiality in Chapter V, section 3, the Third Stage, in the discussion of the Apostolic Commission of 1524, the various commissions of bishops in Mexico, the provincial councils in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and the councils in the eighteenth century, the last of which was the second Council of Santa Fe de Bogotá, which was called by Archbishop Agustín Camacho y Rojas in 1774. There were other councils and numerous diocesan synods in the nineteenth century, as well as the first Latin American Plenary Council in 1899. During the present century there has been a growing number of general conferences as well as provincial meetings of the Latin American episcopacy.

Had it not been for the provincial or continental councils and the diocesan synods, few if any would have participated in the ecumenical councils of the Church. Alejandro de Geraldini, for example, was named Bishop of Santo Domingo on November 23, 1516. Less than a month later, December 15, Geraldini attended the eleventh Session of the Ecumenical Council of Letrán in Rome.¹ He was the first American bishop to participate in an ecumenical gathering. It is noteworthy however, that Geraldini had never been to America at the time and did not arrive in Santo Domingo until 1519.

The Council of Trent was called on June 2, 1536, but the papal bull announcing it did not reach Mexico until early in 1537.² The Commission of Bishops finally met in November of the same year and decided to attend the General Council. Zumárraga wanted to participate and wrote to the King stating that “if His Majesty will permit me to go, neither the sea nor my advanced age will deter me. But if it is better that I work here with what little strength I have that these souls continue in the right direction, will you direct me in such a way that I may be excused from the Holy Council.”³ The Monarchy requested that Rome issue an Apostolic Brief permitting the absence of the bishops given their obligations in America and the long distance. The fact is that no such Brief has yet been discovered— if indeed it ever existed — but the King proceeded as if he had obtained it and indicated to the bishops that they were excused from the Council. Vasco de Quiroga had made plans to attend the

Council in 1542, but a royal warrant forbidding it reached him at the port of Vera Cruz. Years later the courageous Juan del Valle attempted to present the issue of the Indians to the Council of Trent, but unfortunately he died in France in 1561 before reaching his destination. The King of Spain, therefore, was able to prevent any contact by the Spanish American episcopacy with Rome or with any European Council.

A small number of Latin American prelates was permitted to attend the First Vatican Council called by Pius IX on June 29, 1868, which began on December 8, 1869. Because of the nature of the matters treated by the Council, the presence or absence of the Latin Americans was of little consequence. Vatican I dealt exclusively with European dogmatic issues and gave no consideration to the Latin American pastoral experience. More than a thousand prelates were given permission to attend the sessions of 1870, but only seven hundred and two were present. Of these, two hundred and twenty-three were from the Americas, and sixty-five of these were from Latin America, that is, barely nine percent of the total. The Latin Americans did participate in the votes that defined papal infallibility, participation which gained them the reproach of the “old Catholics.” For their part, these traditional Catholics erred in thinking that the Church in Latin America was as recent a Church as those of Africa or Asia “whose testimony lacks any significance for Catholic tradition.”⁴ The truth is that the Latin American bishops supported Rome against the great European churches: the Roman universality was a guarantee of the survival of a *catholic* Church.

Meanwhile the Second Vatican Council, unexpected in Europe and in Latin America, had an effect that no one could have imagined when John XXIII announced the possibility of such a meeting to Cardinal Tardini in December 1958. By January 19 the idea had begun to take form, and on the 25th of that month the Pope announced in St. Paul’s Basilica that he had thought of convening a council for “the spiritual well-being of the people of God and the search for unity.” The extended process of planning for the Council began. On July 15, 1961, the encyclical *Mater et Magistra* was issued, and on June 30, 1962, there appeared the *monitum* regarding Teilhard de Chardin, which seemed to indicate that the process was moving rather timorously. The announcement of a convocation was received with little enthusiasm in Latin America except by certain enlightened bishops.⁵ Only three collective episcopal letters were written, and these by the bishops of Chile, Brazil, and Colombia. Some twenty bishops in Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela wrote pastoral letters to their faithful. It would appear that the almost single theme of these communications was the danger of Communism. Nothing was mentioned in regard to the serious theological questions that were approaching, nor of the possibility of pastoral or administrative collaboration with laymen. There was very little stated regarding theologians and presbyters. It was as if we were again in Trent.

When the Council began, however, on October 1, 1962, the Latin American Church was numerically present as follows:

Number of Latin American Bishops and Experts
Present at Vatican Council II

| | Latin America | Europe | Rome |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|------|
| Participating Bishops | 601 (22.33%) | 849 (31.6%) | 65 |
| Members of Commissions | 52 | 219 | 318 |
| Percent of World Catholic Population | 35% | 33% | |
| Percent of World Population | 7% | 11% | |

A Latin American cardinal, Monseñor Antonio Caggiano, was a part of the presidential committee whose participation approximated that of a prelate committed to the ideal of Christendom. It was, however, Cardinal Achilles Lienart who on October 3, 1962, declared: *Mihi non placet*, which opened Vatican II.

It would be impossible to name each of the various bishops who participated in the deliberations. Some supported the inclinations of their conscience and the Curia while others labored independently and placed before the Council issues to be discussed. One figure, however, stands out for the historian, that of Don Manuel Larrain who in 1963 was elected president of CELAM. In a sense the Council had been predicted by Don Manuel in his now dated pastoral letter of 1946: “We are now in the middle of the road reviewing the errors of one era while looking toward the future.”⁶

It was not so much the contributions of the Latin American bishops as it was the immense numbers of contacts, discoveries, coordination, personal knowledge, institutions, and theological reflection—when the era and theology already studied allowed for this. The Council signaled a global conversion, although as is currently demonstrated, in the majority of cases there was not a personal change of orientation.

Meanwhile the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (“To All Men of Good Will”) appeared. John XXIII died on June 3, 1963, and Paul VI was elected Pope on June 21 by the College of Cardinals in which twelve Latin Americans participated. From 1963 to 1965, CELAM had three regular meetings—the seventh, eighth, and ninth. National conferences of bishops met in Rome as well as in their respective countries.⁷ These meetings had occurred primarily because the bishops believed that a new era was beginning. But it was soon obvious that the situation in Latin America was not the same as in Europe, and that our bishops, who were more pastors than they were theologians, had voted many decrees and constitutions whose application would involve a prolonged process and not a few struggles. But the direction initiated by Pope John even for Latin America was effective and irreversible. “John XXIII, it was said, would be a transitional Pope. But in fact, he opened consciously a passageway.”⁸

When the Council closed on December 8, 1965, an encyclical dealing with social questions, *Populorum Progressio*, was already being discussed and has continued to have profound repercussions in Latin America. We are in the dawn of a new age; the Church has become conscious of the fact that “the human race has passed from a rather static concept of reality to a more dynamic, evolutionary one. In consequence, there has arisen a new series of problems, a series as important as any and which calls for new efforts of analysis and synthesis.”⁹ Paul VI had written directly to the Latin American bishops on November 23, 1965, at the tenth anniversary of the formation of CELAM, and he referred “to the responsibilities of the sacred pastors in the postconciliar period.”¹⁰ We will discuss this period which is of major importance on various levels, beginning by repeating what was said above in the sense that the Council was the place of encounter. If it had not been called, the ideas and concepts of the seventeen bishops from the three underdeveloped continents, Asia, Africa, and Latin America, that is, from the Third World, would not have been exchanged nor would they have signed a document that expressed one of the basic teachings of the Council. The document appeared for the first time in *Témoignage Chrétien* and was published in Paris on July 31, 1966. The first bishop to sign the declaration was Dom Hélder Camara who, although he did not speak during the sessions of the Council itself, was actively involved in the question of “the Church and the poor.” The bishops declared: “The peoples of the Third World constitute the proletariat of the contemporary world.”

The document further stated that the Church does not condemn revolution in principle, that revolution is acceptable when it serves the cause of justice, and that frequently it is the rich and not the poor who begin class struggle and violence.¹¹ We will see the importance of this postconciliar interpretation.

Returning to Latin America, each bishop began a program of action. Monseñor Mendiárat, Bishop of Salto, Uruguay, manifested an exemplary spirit by stating, "I believe that each baptized person in this postconciliar era will find himself in the position of being awakened from a long and profound sleep in a strange place and will ask himself sincerely and with a spirit of openness and generosity, "Where am I? Why am I here? What should I do?" "

Almost immediately consideration was given to ways and means of applying the findings and implications of the Council on a national level. In Brazil, for example, the bishops launched the "Joint Pastoral Plan" in January 1966, which was to continue until 1970, replacing the "Emergency Plan of 1962-1966." It was said that those baptized in Brazil had only an "implicit faith." Also ways whereby Catholic unity could be manifested were outlined, and missionary and catechetical programs were promoted, as well as the renewal of the liturgy and ecumenical efforts.

In Argentina the bishops met on May 3, 1966, to study ways to apply the conclusions of the Council, and on May 15 they issued a "Declaration" affirming their desire to put into practice the findings of Vatican II. They spoke of a new spirit, a new language, of what community implied, and of the necessity for dialogue and for Christian service. The pronouncement was, however, couched in very general terms. Then on November 25, following nine days of work, the Argentine episcopacy published a "National Plan for Joint Pastoral Action."

In Uruguay the bishops began preparation in May 1966 for a synod in Montevideo for the same purpose, namely, the application of Vatican II, and in Colombia the bishops met during June and July to discuss how the conclusions of the Council could be carried out in their country. In Ecuador 418 delegates, including bishops, priests, religious, and laymen, met from July 31 until August 6 for the purpose of studying a plan for applying the teachings of the Council. Priests and laymen met together in Lima from August 1 to 11 to reflect on the same question. Liturgical reform was initiated in Bolivia in 1966, and two years later, from January 28 to February 3, 1968, sessions designed to actualize the changes were held in Cochabamba. All of these meetings indicate the profound change of spirit that Vatican II had produced. It would be possible to continue with examples from every country in Latin America, but suffice it to say, the attempt at application was universal. Unfortunately, however, the application proceeded along lines of the "new Christendom." Hardly anyone had an inkling of the meaning of what was to come. The first session of the synod, held in Santiago, Chile, from September 8 to 18, demonstrated a much greater insight and maturity. To put it simply, there was a different attitude among the 419 priests, religious, and lay people who attended.

A thorough understanding and application of Vatican II on a collegial level did not take place nationally, but rather continentally with the second General Conference of Latin American Bishops held in Medellín in August, 1968.

In Chapter VIII we touched on the beginnings of CELAM. From the first General Conference in 1955 until the second in 1968, there were eleven regular meetings, which we will sketch briefly. The first preconciliar assemblies followed the direction and ideal of the "new Christendom." The first regular meeting took place in Bogotá in 1956 and basically was devoted to the initial organization of CELAM.¹² The second

regular meeting, in Fômeque, Colombia, in 1957, continued the process of organization especially in relationship to the religious orders. Also at the Fômeque meeting the bishops publicly gave their support to the work of UNESCO.¹³ The third regular meeting took place in Rome in 1958 where the prelates insisted on the need to “preserve and defend the faith.” Discussions centered on the activities of the three organizations: OSLAM (seminaries), CLAR (religious), and CAL (Commission for Latin America located in Rome).¹⁴ The following year (1959) the fourth regular meeting convened again in Fômeque and dealt with a theme characteristic of the period: “An apostolic plan of action for the Church in regard to the problem of Communist infiltration in Latin America.”¹⁵ The fifth regular meeting in 1960 in Buenos Aires portended a new direction, reluctant to be sure, but indicative of a new interest.¹⁶ Primarily because of the instigation of Monseñor Larraín, the Buenos Aires meeting dealt with the pastoral question. Religious sociology was freely utilized by the bishops, but not a theology, a history, or a hermeneutical investigation of culture. The meeting resulted in the organization of the Latin American Pastoral Institute (IPLA), at first itinerant as we will see, and also of the Latin American Catechetical Institute (ICLA). In the sixth regular assembly in Mexico in 1961 the bishops gave themselves to the development of an adequate pastoral for the Latin American family. Again socioeconomic data were utilized but with a hermeneutical bias.¹⁷ There was no indication of support for rapid or radical change, neither was there any apparent awareness of the presence and power of neocolonialism in Latin America. The Mexico meeting represented a new departure, but one within the scope of a “new Christendom,” including even Dom Hélder Camara at that time.¹⁸

In 1962 the Latin American bishops met for the first time in Rome, occasioned by the Second Vatican Council. There was no regular meeting of CELAM that year, but given the assembly of the episcopacy in its totality, together with the import of the Council, a new era began for CELAM. The seventh, eighth, and ninth regular assemblies of the Latin American bishops took place in Rome between 1963 and 1965, and Monseñor Larraín was able to state that “CELAM is the first group in the history of the Church to develop the concept of episcopal collegiality”¹⁹ in a permanent and organic way. During these meetings the total reorganization of CELAM resulted, basically because of the experiences stemming from Vatican II.

The whole panorama changed completely, and the Church began to move with a different rhythm in Latin America. For this reason the tenth regular meeting of CELAM and the extraordinary assembly in Mar del Plata in 1966 were a kind of Medellín somewhat aborted by the prevailing conditions in Argentina and because of the lingering presence of the ideal of a new Christendom stemming primarily from the economic interpretations of CEPAL and from the political philosophy of Christian Democracy. The document representing the work of the Mar del Plata meeting, nevertheless, was a “theology of the temporal” together with “a Christian anthropology” —published under the title of “Theological Reflection on Development” —and was indicative of the new spirit.²⁰ CELAM was unquestionably moving in the direction of “developmentalism.” The meeting continued from October 9 to 16, and Dom Hélder Camara acted as the coordinator of the studies. He had said on September 19, “I have my own method of fighting against Communism, namely, by fighting against underdevelopment” because “a greater danger than Communism threatens the world. It is the capitalist system.” The Bishop of Santo André, Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, had recently declared to university students, “Do not be intimidated. The current cruel repression reveals simply that the military is afraid of you. ...Remain united

and strengthen your presence in the political arena. ...The men who today are directing Brazil have never been the true leaders, and it is because of the desire of certain foreign powers that these men are in power today.” But the attitudes of Câmara and Oliveira are not evident in any way in the Declaration of Mar del Plata. There were too many compromises, too many half-tones. Also, Monseñor Larraín had died on June 22, 1966, and his absence was severely felt in CELAM.²¹ The influence of Larraín’s pastorals affected the meeting, however, even though theologically they reflected much of the spirit of the “new Christendom.”²² If the Mar del Plata assembly represented a short step forward rather than a leap, the eleventh regular meeting in Lima, which took place November 19-26, 1967, was of even lesser significance. A transition was in the offing, nevertheless, as the emphasis began to shift from that of “development” to one of “liberation.” The following year at Medellín was of imponderable importance for Latin America. It was not only the moment of the “application” of the Second Vatican Council but also of the discovery of the real Latin America and the transition to a clear commitment to liberation. Liberation had been supported for several years by a small number of priests and bishops, and Medellín evidenced that the number had grown to significant proportions.

In the Medellín meeting, because of the presence of a large number of journalists, Europe as well as the rest of the world was informed as to what was taking place in Latin America.

Early in 1968 when Pope Paul VI indicated that he would travel to Bogotá for the International Eucharistic Congress and for the meeting of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, a feeling of universality began to circulate. The events had repercussions far beyond what any one imagined at the time.²³ Prior to the meeting in Medellín, hundreds of letters were sent by groups of lay persons, trade unionists, and priests to the bishops, to the national conferences, to CELAM, to the Pope, and to the Church in general. Many of these letters are included in the works of Gheerbrant, Laurentin, and in other documents related to the Medellín Conference. All of them contained the leaven of what was taking place among the masses. In preparation for the meeting, CELAM prepared a “Basic Document” in which the Latin American reality together with theological reflection and possible pastoral projections were included. Monseñor Aníbal Muñoz Duque, Apostolic Administrator in Bogotá regarded the document as far too negative, while Bishop Botero Salazar of Medellín stated that it had to be negative in view of the fact that a true diagnosis of the Latin American situation could hardly have been positive. The president of CELAM, Bishop Brandão Vilela, also believed that “a false optimism would be even more dangerous.” The Argentine episcopacy regarded the document as too advanced, negative, and even dangerous, but the theological judgment of Father Joseph Comblin began a ground swell. On June 14, 1968, the Brazilian *O Jornal* of Rio published an article written by a group of theologians in Recife which Dom Hélder Câmara would later utilize personally in the second General Conference. *O Jornal*, however, branded Comblin as a “Leninist theologian,” and this label was repeated in other Latin American newspapers, especially in *La República* of Bogotá. Comblin responded by circulating the Recife document in its entirety. In it one can see a theological interpretation based not on sociological statistics, but rather on an historical and political foundation in which the question of the gaining and wielding of power is analyzed. The “Basic Document” he asserted, was really quite general and deductive, and though it has value as a sociocultural analysis, it avoids dealing with the question of imperialism and with what is even more serious, the issue of autocolonialism.²⁴

In Brazil, Monseñor Padim, Bishop of Lorena, published an article describing the

meaning of what is usually referred to as “national security” in which he expounded on the contemporary militarist ideology and contended that in many respects it was comparable to what one might imagine existed in Nazi Germany.²⁵ In contrast, Monseñor Sigaud, Bishop of Diamantina, Bishop Moraes of Niteroi, and Bishop Castro Mayer of Campos circulated a violent denunciation of Father Comblin that included the accusation that “the Communists have infiltrated the ecclesiastical hierarchy.” These bishops, twelve in all, were supported by the “Brazilian Association for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property,” which a short time later opened branches in Argentina and Chile. In the meantime, Dom Hélder Câmara along with thirty-two other Brazilian bishops founded the “Movement for Moral and Liberating Influence.”

Preparations continued for the second General Conference in Medellín. In Rome the Commission for Latin America, whose president was Monseñor Samoré, had in 1964 begun a new organism, the General Council of the Pontifical Commission for Latin America (COGECAL) composed of delegates from CELAM together with certain European bishops. The design of the Commission was to provide help for Latin America from Spain, France, Germany, and Belgium as well as from other European countries. This Roman superstructure named the president for the Commission for Latin America (CAL) as well as the copresident for the second General Conference in Medellín. The Commission even considered various concrete details such as expositions, themes, and internal regulations, and insisted that the last word in regard to all the questions dealt with in Medellín would be that of Rome. It was announced that the conference would be held in Medellín from August 26 to September 6, 1968, following the International Eucharistic Congress, which was to take place in Bogotá from August 20 to 24.

On the opening day of the Eucharistic Congress, Monseñor Lercano, representing the Pope, stated that “the Congress concludes an era which began with the colonization of Latin America with its fierce and radical Catholic religiosity and opens a new era nurtured by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council which was singularly mindful of the most profound exigencies of the Gospel.” On August 22 Pope Paul VI arrived in Bogotá, the first Pope in history to come to America. During the three days that he was in the Colombian capital, he read four discourses that should be seen from the perspective of the previously issued encyclicals. “The bishops did not deviate from papal thought, but they did extract from it more profound and lasting dimensions. Medellín demonstrated that the discourses of Paul VI in Bogotá did not exhaust his understanding regarding the Latin American situation. But this regional situation had already been judged by the bishops themselves and not only by the Bishop of Rome.”²⁶

On his first day in Bogotá the Pope spoke to the priests and urged them to have “the clarity and the courage of the Spirit in promoting social justice and in loving and defending the poor.”²⁷ On August 23 he spoke to the Colombian peasants and concluded by exhorting them “not to put their confidence in violence nor in revolution; such an attitude is contrary to the Christian spirit and can also retard and not promote social progress.”²⁸ These words produced diverse reactions depending on the attitudes already manifested regarding the Latin American historical commitment. For certain observers they appeared to indicate that Medellín would be merely another meeting such as that of Mar del Plata. That same day, already proclaimed as the “Day of Development,” the Pontiff declared that “some conclude that the basic problem of Latin America cannot be resolved without violence. ... We must say and reaffirm that violence is neither evangelical nor Christian.”²⁹

Then on August 24, the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops symbolically began with the Pope addressing the bishops and calling attention to the theologians and Christian thinkers who in abandoning the *philosophia perennis* “introduce into the field of faith a spirit of subversive criticism,”³⁰ exhorting the prelates to be obedient to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*,³¹ that together they might achieve “the formation of a new modern and Christian civilization.”³² In general the discourses of the Pope sounded in the ears of the Latin American people, with all respect that His Holiness deserves, as a call to patience on the part of the poor—which doubtless produced an immediate sigh of relief for the rich and the oppressors. It was as if the Pope had said, “We should now resign ourselves to suffer violence and injustice in peace.” But he said nothing regarding the extent of the first kind of violence, “violence number 1,” as Hélder Camara expressed it. “You will find that everywhere injustices are a form of violence. One can and must say that they are everywhere the basic violence, violence number 1.”³³

Two days later, August 26, 146 cardinals, archbishops and bishops, 14 brothers, 6 nuns, and 15 laypersons, only four of whom were women, together with the various consultants met in Medellín. The theme of the Conference was “The Church in Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council.” There were numerous position papers reacting to the “Basic Document” given by Bishops Marcos McGrath of Panama; Eduardo F. Pironio, President of CELAM; Eugenio de Araújo Sales of Brazil who spoke on “The Church in Latin America and Human Promotion” in which the question of revolution and violence was debated; Samuel Ruiz García of México; Pablo Muñoz Vegas of Ecuador; Luís E. Henriquez of Venezuela; and Leonidas E. Proaño of Ecuador. The four original issues dealt with by the position papers were augmented by order of Rome to include four others. Some of the proposed consultants such as François Houtart, Michael Schooyans, Augusto Vanistendael, Gonzalo Arroyo, and Manuel Velásquez were rejected by Rome.

The “Basic Document,” which had been proposed for the first time in December 1966, took form between January 19 and 26, 1968, in a meeting of CELAM, and was submitted to Rome and to various episcopal conferences. It was revised considerably by the nine commissions that finally issued it as a part of sixteen fundamental documents.

Three little-known incidents characterized the Medellín Conference. The first was the intercommunion experienced on September 5 with the “separated brethren” from other Christian Churches and observers at the Conference. The second was the meeting of 200 university students and workers that took place each evening in the café La Castilla to discuss the same issues and problems that the bishops were debating, meetings that night after night were broken up by the police. The third incident was that the text of the conclusions was published and distributed before it was given final approval by Rome. Each of these events had its consequences.

The conclusions themselves centered on questions of varying importance. We will discuss only the essentials here. In general they manifested an awareness “that we are on the threshold of a new epoch in the history of our continent. It appears to be a time full of zeal for full emancipation, of liberation from every form of servitude, of personal maturity and of collective integration. In these signs we perceive the first indications of the painful birth of a new civilization” (Introduction).

In the section “Human Promotion,” the issue of *justice* clearly resounds in the “doctrinal bases,” surpassing the partial focus of the theology of development (McGrath) or of revolution (promoted in Protestant circles by Richard Schaul) and opting for

a “theology of liberation” which, as we shall see, has primarily a biblical and political foundation. “It is the same God who, in the fullness of time, sent his son in the flesh so that He might come to *liberate* all men from the slavery to which sin has subjected them: hunger, misery, oppression, and ignorance, in a word, that injustice and hatred which have their origin in human selfishness.”³⁴ The discussion of justice also included the observation that “in the economy of salvation the divine work is an action of integral human development and liberation which has love for its sole motive.”³⁵

In the discussion on *Peace* a new language resounded: the “power unjustly exercised by certain dominant sectors,” “international tensions and external neocolonialism,” “the growing distortion of international commerce,” the “rapid flight of economic and human capital,” the “international monopolies and international imperialism of money,” and an “exacerbated nationalism” in some countries. In view of all these problems the bishops recognized

that in many instances Latin America finds itself faced with a situation of injustice that can be called *institutionalized violence*... We should not be surprised therefore that the ‘temptation to violence’ is surfacing in Latin America. One should not abuse the patience of a people that for years has borne a situation that would not be acceptable to anyone with any degree of awareness of human rights.³⁶

Addressing the question of the *Family and Demography*, the bishops gave a sociopolitical interpretation to the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, and it was viewed not merely in an individual moral sense, but historically and within the perspectives of the “vicious cycle of underdevelopment.” The bishops insisted, however, that in view of the fact that the majority of the Latin American countries were underpopulated, demographic growth was a prerequisite to development, but not at so pronounced a rate, because uncontrolled population growth impeded the so-called socioeconomic takeoff.³⁷ Regarding *Education* the Conference proposed

a vision of education more in conformity with the integral development which we are seeking on our continent. We could call it “liberating education,” that is, that which converts the student into the subject of his own development. Furthermore, “because all liberation is in anticipation of the complete redemption of Christ, the Church in Latin America is particularly in favor of all educational efforts which tend to free our people.”³⁸

All of the section “Evangelization and Growth in the Faith” reflects a new spirit and a more realistic analysis. We will refer especially to this in the final reflections in the next chapter.

In the third section of the conclusions, “The Visible Church and its Structures,” the discussion of *Lay Movements* makes no reference whatever to Catholic Action but rather permits and even encourages the creation of new lay institutions, remembering that “the lay apostolate will have greater sign value and greater ecclesial weight when promoted through teams or communities of faith, to whom Christ specifically promised his cohesive presence”³⁹

The conclusions regarding *Priests* allowed great latitude for new commitments and new styles more in keeping with the ideal of service, but lacked perhaps at this point a deeper and more comprehensive interpretation of the ecclesial institution and the way in which it should endure the blow and the transformation from an agonizing Christendom to a missionary Christianity in a universal, secular, and pluralistic civilization. The Conference reached no conclusion in regard to the conferring of holy orders on the faithful who are married, which, incidentally, has nothing to do with the debate on the marriage of priests, for the Church has always ordained faithful who are

married, but never have priests been allowed to marry and continue in their office. Married deacons do not resolve the pastoral question that the Latin American Church faces, and the day will come in the not-too-distant future when the married adult, together with the natural leaders in the basic Christian communities, will be ordained, as was always the case in the oldest of Catholic traditions, namely, in the Oriental Church.⁴⁰

The Conclusions of the Conference represent the most important document in the history of the Church in Latin America, and they manifest the same spirit which prompted and animated the Third Provincial Council of Lima, which Toribio de Mogrovejo celebrated in 1582-1583. The major difference is that the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops was continental, and the Council of Lima was only for the immense archdiocese of Mogrovejo. Further, the third Council of Lima was the "American Trent" with a Tridentine theology and pastoral, while the second General Conference of Medellín was the "Vatican II of Latin America" with a theology of liberation and a missionary pastoral. Medellín has had and will continue to have enormous influence in Latin America. In the twelfth regular assembly of CELAM, held November 24-28, 1969, in São Paulo, it was declared that the agreements and resolutions of the second General Conference would be "the norm for inspiration and action in the coming years."⁴¹ Other reactions were, however, discordant but unanimous in judging the Conference as the most significant event in the history of the Latin American Church and perhaps in the continent as a whole during the twentieth century.⁴² The Chilean episcopacy meeting as a synod⁴³ on October 4, 1968, called laypersons, priests, and members of the Church to practice reconciliation and peace and cited Medellín as the authoritative basis.⁴⁴ The document issued from this synod spoke of the necessity of overcoming the opposition that existed between the so-called churches of the poor, the young Church, the clandestine Church, and the rebel Church. Various episcopacies followed in their attempts to apply the conclusions of the Medellín Conference. The Argentine bishops issued their "Declaration of the Argentine Episcopacy" in San Miguel where they met from April 21 to 26, 1969.⁴⁵ On July 2 of the same year a meeting of the Colombian episcopacy was held. In August the Mexican bishops met together with laypersons and religious in an open spirit of fraternity and dialogue.⁴⁶ The bishops of Paraguay met from August 11 to 14, and the Venezuelan episcopacy met during the same month. In Guatemala a meeting of the Episcopal Council of Central America and Panama met on August 17-22 with the same purpose of applying the conclusions of Medellín.⁴⁷ The Brazilian episcopacy was one of the first to meet.

It is evident, therefore, that within a year of Medellín all the Latin American episcopacies had reaffirmed the *Conclusions* of the second General Conference. The new spirit prompted a joint meeting between CELAM and the National Catholic Conference of Bishops of the United States, which took place June 3-5, 1969, in Caracas. In the final communique of this interamerican meeting the bishops declared their support of "the principal outline of the pastoral contained in the Conclusions of the II General Conference of Latin American Bishops." A second meeting followed in Miami in February 1970.

The fourteenth regular assembly of CELAM convened in Sucre in November 1972, in what appeared to be a new epoch for the organization. These collegial meetings of the bishops represent only a single facet of a phenomenon that we will consider in the following sections.

2. *The Church and the Militarist, Bourgeois, or Reformist State*

During the period from 1962 to 1972 the Church passed through a momentous, precarious stage of its history. At times it was a history of torturous zigzags wherein the testimony that could have been expected from her was totally discredited. The situation was quite dissimilar from country to country depending of the foresight of the bishops —frequently there were Church leaders who adopted prophetic positions — of the priests, and of the laity. In this section we will outline the attitude of the Church in regard to certain bourgeois states and the prevailing social situation. Then in the following two sections we will see the change in attitude regarding violence, socialism, and agrarian reform.

The Church received blows from the “Herodians,” just as Herod the Great attempted to eliminate Jesus Christ, the Child of Bethlehem.⁴⁸ We will discuss the situation by countries and by areas but will give more attention to the regions where reaction to the political pressure applied by the military helped to shape the developing attitude of the Church.

(1) The coup d’etat in Brazil in 1964

Following the government of Juscelino Kubitschek (1955-1961), Jânio da Silva Quadros was elected President. He resigned unexpectedly on August 25, 1961, leaving the presidency to João Goulart, the Vice-President who lacked genuine national support and who was unanimously opposed by the military as well as by a majority of Brazil's governors. Goulart promised reforms but did not deliver. Earlier, in 1961, the Brazilian episcopacy had founded the Basic Education Movement utilizing the methodology of Paulo Freire.⁴⁹ By 1963 there were some 7,353 schools using 15,000 radio receivers with 180,000 pupils and 7,500 teachers. The motto was “To Live is to Struggle,” the title of one of the primers that, after the military takeover, was condemned by Carlos Lacerda, the Governor of Guanabara (State of Rio), who ordered 3,000 copies confiscated on the basis that they were subversive. The governor also ordered the police, according to the *Jornal do Brasil* of February 24, 1964, to enter the publishing office of the bishops and to seize their alphabet charts. Monseñor Tavora, Bishop of Aracaju and Director of the Basic Education Movement, objected to the accusations by asking, “Are the papal encyclicals also subversive?” In the Northeast, Monseñor Eugenio Sales, founder of the “Natal Movement,” proposed a cultural and social reform for urban dwellers and peasants that was a forerunner to the work of the government agency SUDENE (Superintendency of the Development of the Northeast), which since 1959 was responsible for stimulating and planning development for that area of Brazil. Sales also suggested beginning a rural workers union akin to the peasant leagues that had been organized earlier by Francisco Julião, and cooperatives for colonization. Only a small minority involved in these movements was pro-Communist or even pro-Cuban, and Monseñor Padim, Auxiliary Bishop of Rio, declined to condemn them. In 1963, Cardinal Motta of São Paulo blessed a group of cement workers who for nine months had been on strike. There followed a Message issued by the Brazilian Bishops Conference regarding the situation in the country that, they said, indicated the need for a thoroughgoing agrarian, banking, fiscal, administrative, and electoral reform.⁵⁰ This episcopal message was published on April 30 under the title “*Pacem in Terris* and the Brazilian Reality.” It condemned the *status quo* and declared that “expropriation in the people’s interest is not contrary to the social teachings of the Church.” Almost immediately there appeared the “Association for Tradition, Family, and Property,” composed in part of many conservative Catholics who with rosaries in hand met in a

rally under the aegis of Monseñor Sigaud, Bishop of Diamantina, to oppose the plans for agrarian reform. Monseñor Sales, in contrast, described “a pastoral experience in the underdeveloped regio” of Northeast Brazil that indicated the new way in which the Church was facing up to its pastoral responsibilities.⁵¹

The weakness and ineptitude of Goulart together with the renewed aspirations of the military to be involved in the political situation prompted a coup d’etat on the night of March 31, 1964, led by General Castello Branco who on April 15 officially inaugurated the seventh Brazilian Republic. Rapidly there followed imprisonments, expulsions from the country, censure, withdrawal of citizenship, and the beginning of political tortures. These were the most important events in the decade of the 1960s in regard to the politics of the oligarchy that supported the military in conjunction with the North American strategy, all together forming a perfectly organized system of oppression.

The reaction of the Church was anything but unanimous. Monseñor Warmeling, Bishop of Joinville, wrote in *O Luzeiro Mariano* that “the vast majority of the Brazilian people are Christians, and for this reason we support the courageous members of the Congregation of Mariana against Catholic Action in this diocese” (of Belo Horizonte). “It is common knowledge,” stated the Bishop, “that Catholic Action has been infiltrated by Communists.” “The social doctrine of the revolution led by Castello Branco,” asserted the Prelate, “coincides with the social doctrine of the Church.”

A few days before this declaration of April 2 by Monseñor Warmeling, the Secretary General of the Brazilian Bishops Conference, Dom Hélder Camara, had been named to and had occupied the Archdiocese of Olinda and Recife in the state of Pernambuco. He indicated that he took advantage of the occasion to set forth with clarity his thinking because he knew that if God did not give him the courage to speak out in that moment of entering the diocese, later he would possibly lack it.⁵² In prophetic as well as poetic words, Dom Hélder began his oration stating,

I am a native of the Northeast who speaks to other natives of the Northeast with our eyes on Brazil. ... I am a human being who is regarded as human with the same weaknesses and sin as all men of all races and in all areas of the world. I am a Christian who is speaking to Christians but with an ecumenically open heart to all men of all creeds and all ideologies. I am a Bishop of the Catholic Church who attempting to imitate Christ comes not to be served but to serve. Catholics and non-Catholics, believers and unbelievers, hear my fraternal greeting: Praise to our Lord Jesus Christ.⁵³

Thus the Bishop of Recife began his prophetic path: “It would be an error to assume that because we struggle against atheistic Communism that we are defenders of liberal capitalism. And it would be incorrect to conclude that we are Communists simply because we criticize with Christian courage the egoistic position of economic liberalism.” Câmara continued by condemning the imprisonments of the directors of the MEB, of the JUC, of the Popular Action movement of laymen, and of the Fraternal Confederation of Rural Workers.

Fathers Senna, Alméry, and others were already living in exile, and hundreds of other priests had been imprisoned. The Marplan Company, similar to the Gallup organization in the United States, reported that some sixty-three percent of the Brazilian population were against the military takeover but virtually no one, not even the bishops, desired the return of Goulart.

On May 7, 1964, Tristão de Atayde (Amoroso Lima) wrote in the *Folha de São Paulo*,

When men of world renown in the field of education such as Anísio Teixeira, in the field of sociology as Josué de Castro, in the field of economics as Celso Furtado are suspect simply because their thinking is different from that of the new dominant theology, we face a plan of cultural terrorism. When philosophers and pure metaphysicians such as Ubaldo Puppi or young intellectual leaders such as Luis Alberto Gómes de Souza and others are thrown into prison without being charged, or simply because their methods of literacy training are considered to be subversive, we face a plan of cultural terrorism. When the police of the country distribute instructions to clean up the nation and prescribe the following: “We warn the groups of Catholic Action ...that they separate themselves from and abstain from activities incompatible not only with their own program, but also with the permanent interest of the Nation and of the people,” as Mussolini attempted to do in regard to Italian Catholic Action, as if the Church in Brazil were under the tutelage of a totalitarian State, we face a plan of cultural terrorism.

All this prompted the Brazilian episcopacy to reach a decision, somewhat ambiguous, and to make a statement or declaration entitled “Regarding the Events which Took Place as a Consequence of the Fall of Goulart.”⁵⁴ More courageous was the document of the bishops of the Northeast, which stated, “It is essential to establish Christian order in the country.”⁵⁵

The position of the bishops, however, was not unanimous. Cardinal Rossi of São Paulo, who replaced Monseñor Motta who had voluntarily retired, celebrated a mass stating that by “the mercy of God and the courage, piety, and strength of his children, the imminent Communist plot had been thwarted,” apparently a reference to Goulart, “which proposed to change this Christian nation to a zone of silence.” Meanwhile Monseñor Scherer, Bishop of Porto Alegre, protested the persecution of Professor Erani Fiori, an intellectual leader in Rio Grande who was a well-known disciple of Jacques Maritain, ...tended toward existential and Hegelian thinking. The clash between the military government and the Church, however, was not public. Only in 1965 did the tension and disagreement become known, and it has continued to ebb and flow since that time. These have been some of the major events in the relations between the Church and state in this century, and they have prophetic significance for the history of the Latin American Church whose antecedents can be seen in the struggle of the bishops in the sixteenth century in defense of the Indians, as well as in that of the Mexican *Cristeros* within a doctrine of Christendom in the early years of the twentieth century, though this last example is highly equivocal and certainly not prophetic except as a conservative sign.

On May 11, 1965, Dom Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, Bishop of Santo André, wrote an open letter to Castello Branco stating,

We love Brazil and its people, but how long will it be before the widespread hunger will unleash a civil war? We are against war. We condemn it, and we fear it as contrary to our Christian training and to the nature of the Brazilian people. How happy we would be if, when we look up into the skies of our country, rather than seeing planes carrying our armed soldiers to a neighboring country (Santo Domingo) we could see the most diligent means being employed for the solution of the very serious Brazilian crisis!⁵⁶

This did not, however, prevent Cardinal Rossi’s declaring in New York that “Brazil is moving in the right direction” and that the government desired what the Church desired. Ironically, when Rossi returned to São Paulo he was faced with the problems of staggering unemployment and lack of food, contradictions that resulted in the loss of much of his authority. In the meantime, Dom Hélder was harassed by a breaking and entering into the episcopal palace in Recife, but he continued to preach. In March

1965 he spoke on the subject of “A Dialogue Between the Developed World and the World in Development.”⁵⁷ Then on March 31, 1966, he refused to celebrate a mass commemorating the military coup d’état of 1964. He wrote the Commandant of the Fourth Army that the mass would signify a “civic-military reunion with political overtones.”⁵⁸ Between July 12 and 14 when, as a result of reports by the ACO (Workers Catholic Action of the Northeast) and of the JAC (Catholic Agrarian Youth), which had met in February, the bishops of the area met in Recife and issued their “Manifesto of the Bishops of the Northeast.”⁵⁹ This courageous declaration sparked a serious conflict between the Church and the state.

“The ambition and the uncontrolled egoism of some,” stated the bishops, “has created the current situation in which the poor are sacrificed for the benefit of the privileged.” Immediately Dom Hélder was accused of organizing a plot against the government. On July 27 the *Diário da Noite* of São Paulo announced that the military government had prohibited the circulation of the “Manifesto.” Friar Chico, a French Dominican in São Paulo, had declared a few days earlier that the government was torturing student leaders and that there existed in Brazil “a police state which showed no respect for the sacred principle of basic freedom.” Then General Gouveia do Amaral, Commandant of the Fourth Army, without discussion with or securing the authorization of the bishops, ordered the distribution of, among the parish priests and other Church leaders of the Northeast, a vilifying circular against Dom Hélder. The campaign to discredit him expanded throughout the country. In an article published in the *Jornal de Comercio* of Recife on August 21 written by the famous Gilberto Freyre and Gustavo Corção —prestige-wise their position in Brazil was analogous to Maritain and von Hildebrand in Europe —along with Bishop Castro Mayer of Campos in the State of São Paulo, criticized the “Manifesto” because it impeded a country that “desires to repel Communism in a decisive way.”

In an editorial published in the *Estado de São Paulo* on August 6, the position of Bishop Castro Mayer was supported. Meanwhile, Castello Branco changed commandants for the Fourth Army, naming General Souza Aguiar, which was interpreted by some as a triumph for Dom Hélder. Dom Fragoso, Bishop of Crateus, Valdir Calheiros, Auxiliary Bishop of Rio, and Vicente Scherer of Porto Alegre, together with many others, came out publicly in defense of Dom Hélder.

Cardinal Rossi issued a statement on August 18 deploring those who were “pitting the Church against the government,” obviously a veiled defense of the *status quo*. The same day, however, Alceu Amoroso Lima published in *A Folha de São Paulo* an article comparing Dom Hélder with Dom Vital who during the time of the Empire defended the Church against the state. “Now,” wrote Amoroso, “Dom Hélder represents a change from a polemical Church to a missionary Church.” It should be noted that during this period —the tenth stage in the history of the Church in Latin America, 1962 to the present —the Church was not attempting to defend its privileges or rights acquired during the period of Christendom, but rather to risk and sacrifice itself in service to the oppressed and ravaged peoples. Brazil is, therefore, a key, a paradigmatic country.

The National Union of Students had scheduled its twenty-eighth Congress for Belo Horizonte, but a police order prohibited the meeting and warned everyone against allowing the students to use their premises. The Congress was held secretly, however, in the Franciscan convent.⁶⁰ On August 4, Franciscan Friar Guido Vlasman of Rio stated the reason why asylum was being given to the students. “The government desires to maintain the Church in a subservient position while attempting to impose

upon the country a type of liberal Christianity wherein there will be a divorce between the Christian and the secular life.” Father Corazza, adviser to the JUC, was threatened with imprisonment. On August 1, Friar Chico, OP, defended the students, and the following day he was jailed. Catholic Action, the JEC, JUC, and JAC became virtually clandestine organizations. In September student demonstrations were brutally broken up by the police, which in turn prompted an immediate reaction on the part of bishops, priests, and laypersons. Dom Angier led a student demonstration in Piracicaba on September 22, and in October Dom José Newton, Archbishop of Brasília, was accused of subversion.

The following year (1967) brought new tensions between the Church and the state in Brazil. When the bishops attempted to apply the teachings of the papal encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, and when Friar Chico, inaugurating the “Movement for Peace” in the Church of Santo Domingo on June 11, appealed to the faithful (who were standing), “Those who are in favor of protesting against the war, please remain standing” no one sat down. No less unsettling for the government and the defenders of public order were the declarations of some of the Brazilian bishops in regard to Cuba, as well as the Manifesto of the ACO of the Northeast issued on May 1 under the title, “The Northeast: Development Without Justice,” which declared that “a capitalist structure” had been substituted for the feudal structure in that area of Brazil. On November 6 an ex-government minister, Raimundo de Brito, accused the priests of the Northeast of sowing seeds of subversion. These events, of course, brought the conflict out into the open and are only examples of many that could be cited. During 1967 Costa e Silva succeeded Castello Branco as head of the government, and on July 3 the police violently entered the joint student residences of the University of São Paulo, expelled the students, injured some of them, and arrested a priest. Cardinal Rossi, along with 127 professors and 50 priests, issued a strong protest against the police violence. A month later the National Union of Students secretly met again in the Benedictine convent of Campinas, São Paulo. On August 2 the police (SNI) jailed eleven North American Benedictines who were working in Vinhedo and Campinas, as well as the Dominican Friar Chico. The reaction of the Church was again unanimous. Cardinal Rossi issued a protest the same day to the governor. Two days later the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* published an editorial entitled “Religious Orders and National Security,” in which the Cardinal was personally attacked. The clergy of the Archdiocese responded by defending the Bishop on August 6: “His Eminence, Cardinal Motta, was many times called a Communist by the press. His Excellency Dom Hélder Câmara has been accused of heresy ... and now, this same newspaper begins to accuse His Eminence Cardinal Rossi.” A group of women members of Catholic Action in São Paulo, and later Monseñor Scherer of Porto Alegre criticized priests whom they said were utilizing the prestige of the Cardinal for the promotion of personal ideas.

A second important conflict developed in the diocese of São Luis regarding the “Educational Radio of Maranhão,” which operated under the authority of Bishop de Motta e Albuquerque. The station was shut down for eight days for having broadcast on September 6, the Day of Independence, a text that began by stating: “Is this truly independence that we are celebrating? Is a country that has more than thirty millions of undernourished people independent? ...Brazil is a rich country, but what is happening to our riches?” The Bishop also protested against the police by exclaiming, “In a region of death it is necessary to work in order that people might live.”

A new conflict developed as a result of a discourse given by Dom Hélder before

the Legislative Assembly of Pernambuco on the occasion of his being declared an honorary citizen. Even though General Souza Aguiar was present, Câmara asked, “If tomorrow Joaquín Nabuco were to come to Recife and were to visit, for example, our sugar production zone, would he not feel impelled to renew the abolitionist campaign? ... Without an effective understanding in the Third World we will never be able to pass from being beggars to equals.” When on November 30 the General was accorded the same honor, he responded quite obviously to Câmara’s earlier statement by saying, “It is necessary to fight against the Communist invaders and against their allies including their cretin tools.”

On November 5 four Catholic young people were arrested and jailed by the police on orders from the military for distributing pamphlets produced by the Catholic Diocesan youth (JUDICA) in Volta Redonda. Six days later, November 11, the episcopal palace of Dom Valdir Calheiros was surreptitiously entered. The bishop gave a statement to the *Jornal do Brasil*, copies of which were seized by the army on November 14. Calheiros responded by issuing a public document that was read in the churches on November 19 and that stated: “Colonel Armenio is worried about ferreting out subversives. I am worried about: (1) the wage negotiations which have dragged on for five months; (2) the difference the increase in cost of living means for many.” The same newspaper, *Jornal do Brasil*, published on November 23 an editorial entitled “Red Vestments.” General Aragão, a representative of the hard-liners, declared on November 27 that “the Church has become an asylum of the enemies of God and of men. ... Popular Action is confused with Catholic Action” — both of which, he said, were led by subversives. The same day Representative Moreira Alves presented in the House of Deputies a list of fifty-two priests who were then either prisoners or who had been expelled from the country, indicted, or prosecuted in Brazil since March 1964. On November 29 the Central Commission of the Brazilian Bishops Conference, composed of twenty-two bishops representing the entire country, examined the case of Dom Valdir and issued a declaration on December 1 entitled “The Mission of the Hierarchy in Today’s World.” The declaration stated that

it is our responsibility to explain more fully what is our mission, a mission unknown to some, misunderstood by others, and deliberately falsified by certain groups who pretend to serve the Church by promoting their own interests. Neither misunderstanding nor distortion will prevent us from continuing the function given us by divine command and which has marked the presence of the Church in our history. ... Their assertion that they are defending *Christian civilization*, while at the same time they deny the Church’s mission of defending human values, is nothing more than the defense of a disguised paganism. We are surprised by the miraculous transformation of violent liberals and agnostics into defenders of an other-worldly Christianity far removed from the gospel.⁶¹

In 1968, the year of the Medellín Conference, an authentic “silent Church” existed dramatically in Brazil. Dom Antonio Batista Fragoso, Bishop of Crateus, stated in a report given in Belo Horizonte in January on “The Gospel and Social Justice”:

Christ did not come merely to liberate man from his sins. Christ came to liberate him from the consequences of sin. These consequences are seen in our houses, in our streets, in our cities, in the interior of our country, and they are called prostitution, racial discrimination, marginalization of the peasants, the lack of roads and highways, and the scarcity and inadequacy of housing. ... To those who accuse the defenders of justice as being Communists, as struggling to superimpose a subversive regime on Brazil, we raise the question, Why? For the poor do not expect anything from those who illegally wield the economic power.⁶²

In July, Bishop Batista issued his courageous document entitled “The Doctrine of National Security,” mentioned above, in which he demonstrated that the basic ideology of the Brazilian military could be compared with the doctrine of Adolf Hitler and his predecessors by way of Hegel, Fichte, and Gobineau. The Brazilian military, however, had —according to Batista —substituted Christ either “for the myth of blood and race” or for a paganized view of “Western Christian civilization.”

Dom Hélder, meanwhile, having returned from Europe, began his crusade for nonviolence in Rio on July 19, the “Movement of Liberating Moral Persuasion,” which was supported by many bishops and which prepared the way for Medellín. There followed a new intensive campaign to persuade Rome to remove Dom Hélder from office, as had occurred earlier with Monseñor Podestá, Bishop of Avellaneda in Argentina. The campaign against Father Comblin was more “grist for the mill.” But the Brazilian episcopacy issued a declaration on July 20 entitled “Evangelical Imperatives for Integral Development in our Country.”⁶³ Then in August, shortly before the Medellín Conference, a letter from 350 priests was sent to their bishops, many of whom would be going to Medellín,⁶⁴ in which the Brazilian people were described as an “assassinated people.”

The year 1969 was one of violence. Police tortures of political prisoners multiplied. Priests, religious, and laypersons became the objects of brutal and inhumane treatment. Father Juan Talpe testified after fleeing to Chile that he had on several occasions “seen a cadaver with the nails of both the hands and the feet pulled out, the eyes punched out, and the body shamefully and horribly mutilated. This [Talpe declared] was what had happened to Juan Lucas Alvez of Río de Janeiro.”⁶⁵ Thirty-nine priests of Belo Horizonte sent to the Medellín Conference a document describing the tortures perpetrated against the Brazilian people, and accused three of the cardinals of having consented to the government’s imposition of the death penalty. Because of the illness of Costa e Silva, a Junta took charge of the government and decreed the death penalty for subversion. The episcopacy responded publicly on November 21, 1968, when Dom Valdir of Volta Redonda accused the government of using torture against political prisoners. The government responded by opening a new investigation of Valdir. Cardinal Sales then denounced the abuses and violence, especially those of the “Death Squadron” —a body of anonymous vigilantes who were responsible for more than one thousand assassinations in Brazil. Paul VI spoke on March 25, 1970, regarding the tortures in Brazil, but the government appeared to be insensitive to all of his criticisms. Later, the Pope refused to receive a special envoy to the Vatican, Colonel Manso Neto, and as a result of these international repercussions the Brazilian government accused the bishops of national treason and of discrediting the country. Finally, there was some consideration given by the government to trying seventeen bishops of the Northeast before a military tribunal on the basis that their activity was contrary to the “security of the State,” a plan that, according to the Dutch news agency KNP, originated with the CIA. The tortures continued,⁶⁶ but the Church did not abandon its opposition. The death of a priest in Recife, as we will subsequently note, gave the Brazilian Church an authentic Christian and priestly martyr.

(2) The coup d’etat in Argentina in 1966

In Brazil the determined attitude of the Church was manifested primarily by the bishops, while in *Argentina* the prophetic position in regard to social and political questions was adopted by the laity and the priests. The Argentine episcopacy simply lacked the foresight. The revolution of Onganía in 1966 was analogous to the military

overthrow of Brazil in 1964.⁶⁷ The opposition of Argentine Catholics therein began from below, that is, with the laity. With Perón, Catholicism was rightist, nationalistic, and integrist in theology; but beginning in 1954 there was a social Catholicism — democratic in policy — that opposed Perón and that was alert to social problems but at the same time espoused the ideal of a “new Christendom,” that is, Christian Democracy, philosophically Maritainian, which was concretized in the political party by the same name, in university “humanism,” and in Catholic Action of 1955. This form of Catholicism was suppressed by Perón and therefore became *antiperonista*. Thus, an autonomy of the temporal and an almost dualistic relationship between the Church and the State developed during this period. Only in 1960 did there appear a force with a new awareness, the JUC, in the meeting of Lavallol. The later meetings in Santa Fe (1961), in Embalse (1962), and in Tandil (1963) indicated that the experiences of university “humanism” and of Christian Democracy were a kind of social Christianity, but the Christian left was an “integristism of the left” and was a continuation of “the myth of a new Christendom.” By 1962 it became evident that new directions were demanded. The Peronists won the national elections on March 18. John XXIII injected a new spirit into world Catholicism, and in October the Second Vatican Council began. The Argentine bishops had published a declaration “On the National Situation” on June 29 describing the institutional chaos in the country.⁶⁸

In 1963 the “Social Christianity” of Christian Democracy became open to populism and to Peronism, the group known as “Human Economy” was organized, and many of the followers of Perón became involved in leftist groups. Meanwhile Cardinal Antonio Caggiano acted as conciliator between sectors of the army, and José María Guido — a puppet of the military — exercised the presidential functions.

In 1964 the CGT (General Federation of Labor) launched its “Plan of Struggle,” which was preceded by a very unusual act for that time when Father José Ruperto led the “March of the Unemployed” of the meatpackers guild of Berisso who worked for Swift and Armour. The demonstration was dispersed by a police order, and Father Ruperto continued alone walking the six miles from Berisso to La Plata where he presented to the Legislature a memorial that declared, “The time has come to work.”

The renewal of Peronism in Argentina produced the first serious conflict among priests in Latin America. Father Viscovich, Dean of the Faculty of Economic Sciences, Nelson Dellaferrera, and José Gaido y Vaudagna issued two public statements entitled “New Pharisees See the Church as an Industrial Company” and “Between the Church of the Stock Market and the Church of the CGT, I Remain with the Latter.” Archbishop Ramón Castellanos reacted negatively, and the conflict between the two opposing sides became widespread. The younger clergy had become politically and socially aware, as we will describe in a special section on the evolution of this basic question for the Latin American Church. The Cardinal again became a mediator between President-elect Arturo Illía and the CGT, which was supported by 1,900,000 workers on strike in some 4,000 industries. The Catholic attitude became more radicalized between integristism on the right and progressive reformism on the left.⁶⁹

From June 28 until July 9, 1965, eighty priests, together with Monseñor Podestá, Bishop of Avellaneda and Quarracino, met in Quilmes. A new image of the Church began to emerge.⁷⁰ On June 28, 1966, the Brazilian situation was repeated. The inept government of Illía was deposed by a military takeover led by General Juan Carlos Onganía. There followed the rise of the traditional groups, especially those Catholics who represented the old leaders of “Humanism” and Christian Democracy who together with the political and economic liberals were willing to work with the new

government. The purpose of the “Revolution of 1966” was to unite the Church and the military as the foundation for the defense of the “Western Christian civilization.” The relations between the government and the Church, therefore, were very close, and on October 10 the government renounced its opportunity to present candidates for various bishoprics. The old system of the *Patronato* thereby ended in Argentina.

On July 28, however, Monseñor Devoto, Bishop of Goya, manifested his anxiety in what he regarded as the appearance of a “compromise” between the hierarchy and the government. Monseñor Podestá declared that “identification with any political regime would be prejudicial to the Church” (August 16). Conflicts immediately resulted. First, there was the confrontation over the editing of the periodical *Tierra Nueva* (*New World*), that is, between the previous directors of the JUC and Cardinal Caggiano who was the founder of Catholic Action in Argentina and who demanded unconditional obedience on the part of priests and parishoners. The editors of *Tierra Nueva* desired to rethink the theological and historical foundations of Christians praxis, and the Cardinal objected, saying that the periodical “used a language half historical and half prophetic.”⁷¹

More important was the conflict in the Córdoba parish Cristo Obrero (Christ the Worker), where seventy university students went on a fast protesting the situation in the country. The two parish priests, José Gaido and Nelson Dellaferrera, supported the students and were thus forced to resign. In their farewell letter of October 1966, Gaido and Dellaferrera declared that their “pastoral experience in Cristo Obrero had been violently aborted.”⁷²

The third conflict developed around Monseñor Podestá who was the object of continual criticism by the government, the hierarchy, and the Apostolic Nuncio. On December 4, 1967, Podestá was relieved of the post that he had assumed in 1962, and since that time he has known how to create a populist response. On November 2, 1967, he declared publicly, “I am personally responsible to the Apostolic Nuncio for the deterioration which has been produced.” He even said, “Contrary to all that I could have believed or thought, the defamation and calumny have become public including that from high ecclesiastical circles.”⁷³ The Bishop of San Luis, Carlos Cafferata, condemned the government on May 8, 1968. On January 7, Monseñor Víctor Gómez Aragón, Bishop of Tucumán, came out in defense of the priest, Father Sánchez, and thereby clashed with the governor. Monseñor Iriarte, Bishop of Reconquista, issued a pastoral letter regarding the “shameful exploitation” of the inhabitants of the northeast region of Argentina.⁷⁴ In Mendoza, Córdoba, Tucumán, San Isidro, and Rosario the conflict between the priests and the government created a climate of confrontation, and on July 17, 1968, the parishoners prevented the new priest named by Archbishop Bolatti from assuming pastoral responsibilities. An escort of seventy uniformed police clashed with the persons who were protesting the appointment of the new pastor, and five persons from Cañada Gómez were wounded, all of them shot with .45 caliber bullets.

Finally, there was the event that brought about the downfall of Onganía: the *Cordobazo* (the Córdoba event). On May 29, 1969, workers who were out on strike from the industrial plants in Córdoba were demonstrating in the central part of the city. There were barricades, shootings, and demonstrations that reproduced in Argentina the veritable “May” of Paris. Committed Christians united in expressing their opposition to the government. Workers and students alike violently protested what was taking place in the country. The Bishop of President R. Sáenz Peña, Monseñor Italo Di Stefano, came out in defense of the youth. “I can attest to the fact,” stated the

bishop, “that their motives are pure, authentic, renewed and renewing. ...A great deal of the spirit of the Gospel resides in them.” Meanwhile, seventeen priests in Mendoza stated that “the attitude of our students cannot be taken lightly. ...Our comfortable attachment to tranquility ...is what condemns us to successive military regimes. In no way should our reflection encourage the old professional politicians. ...It is the people and only the people who are mobilized.”⁷⁵ The government, nevertheless, continued to present itself as Catholic.

The difficulties that the workers were having in Chocón-Río Colorado prompted the Bishop of Neuquén, Monseñor Francisco de Nevaes, to issue a statement regarding “the socioeconomic situation in northern Neuquén”⁷⁶ and to say in a news conference⁷⁷ that what appeared to be “the greatest Argentine work of the twentieth century could become the greatest Argentine disgrace of the twentieth century.”

Finally, the government proposed to consecrate Argentina to the Virgin of Luján. The president made the announcement on November 12, 1969, stating that “as President of the Nation” he would offer the country to the Virgin. The “Priests for the Third World” publicly replied, saying that “we expect that the people will not respond to such an invitation in which religion is used in this way,” that is, to smother opposition. The episcopacy, however, met between November 18 and 26, and the consecration took place on December 8.

The year 1970 witnessed the beginnings of urban guerrilla extremism. The kidnapping of former President Pedro Eugenio Aramburu and his subsequent execution have not been clarified, nor has the attempt to involve the Third World priest Alberto Carbone in the incident. Suffice it to say, Carbone was accused of being implicated, and following a prolonged trial he was released. The government attempted in every way to discredit the priests of the Third World movement. During the period that the excommunication of the *Correntino* priest Marturet was announced in Rome, the Argentine episcopacy issued a declaration that was exhortive and critical but not condemnatory. The disagreement between the government and the priests continued.⁷⁸ To mark the beginning of the new year, 1971, Monseñor Zazpe, Archbishop of Santa Fe and President of the Department of the Pastoral of CELAM, wrote a courageous pastoral regarding conditions in the country, the injustices, and the position of the Church. The Bishop of Paraná, Monseñor Tórtolo, President of the Bishops Conference, noted that the prelates should not refrain from offering guidance by expressing their “personal opinion” regarding events. All of this tends to point up the fact that in Argentina it has been the priests who have given testimony to the people of the Christian faith.

“Recent history shows us that until the end of the II Vatican Council the Church was conservative; in the period immediately following the Council, a liberal and progressive spirit of modernization and renewal prevailed. Ultimately, currents of socio-political, revolutionary, and popular orientation have begun to increase.”⁷⁹

The overwhelming triumph of Peronism on March 11 and on September 23, 1973, provided a *raison d'être* for the “Priests for the Third World.”

(3) The 1968 coup d'état in Peru

From all indications Peru would have witnessed in 1962 the election to the presidency of Raul Haya de la Torre, but the military aborted the electoral process. When a new election was held the government was under the control of a coalition headed by Fernando Belaunde Terry. The episcopacy had issued a pastoral letter entitled “Politics: a Social Responsibility,” which emphasized the need for Christians to participate

in the elections of 1963. That same year guerrilla centers began to spring up and later were confused with a process of expropriation of land, which was accelerated in 1964.

Belaunde decreed the death penalty and launched a bloody repression in the Amazon areas of the Sierra against the mountain strongholds of the peasants. The loss of confidence in and the deterioration of the government, however, brought about a military takeover on the night of October 2, 1968— similar to the Brazilian and Argentine coups—but with characteristics far more nationalistic and with tendencies more and more popular. Cardinal Landázuri Ricketts stated that he rejoiced in the “affirmation of national sovereignty and economic independence which the complete recovery of the petroleum complex at Talara represented. ...” At the same time he expressed his “sincere desire that the nation return as soon as possible to the sound exercise of democratic suffrage and constitutional normality.”⁸⁰

The Peruvian military has avoided for the most part any confrontation with either the laity or the clergy. The episcopacy approved in 1970 the “Law of Industrial Communities,” an important plan for development. This did not signify, however, that Peru had become the best of all possible worlds. On the contrary, already in March 1968 an important group of priests met in Cieneguilla, and later with the support of the Cardinal they issued a “Declaration of Peruvian Priests,” which stated that “Peru is a proletarian nation in the world,” and “the majority of Peruvians are proletarians in Peru.”⁸¹ This sociopolitical interpretation apparently upset some people in the country, and, according to the priests, their statements were distorted and condemned. But they insisted that “the history of the Church and the history of the world are mutually influential.”

The Peruvian bishops concluded a meeting of the National Conference on January 25, 1969, with a declaration entitled “The Church Denounces this Sinful Situation” Church buildings were occupied by workers, especially the Cathedral of Trujillo, and the increasing sociopolitical awareness of the Peruvian Church became evident. The National Office of Social Investigation (ONIS), directed by Peruvian clergy, issued a statement supporting the workers who had been discharged by the Triumph Metallurgical Industries. The ONIS statement was strongly worded: “We do not want industries nor industrial parks if they are to serve no other purpose than making the rich richer and poor poorer.”⁸² It is noteworthy that on June 24, 1969, when President (General) Velasco Alvarado publicly decreed the law of agrarian reform, he cited a paragraph from a declaration of June 20 by ONIS on the subject of agrarian reform.

(4) The situation in Paraguay

General Alfredo Stroessner has governed Paraguay since September 1954. He has been able to dominate the Church and to avoid any direct conflict, although a courageous priest, Father Ramón Talavera, once incited a reaction from the government because of his declarations, sermons, hunger strikes, and mobilizations. Talavera was finally expelled from Paraguay. In 1958 there was a general workers strike, but it was broken up by government police. The bishops have remained silent with few exceptions. On June 28, 1963, a pastoral was issued regarding development and the problem of the “flight of national capital which constitutes a grave sin of egoism,” according to the bishops.⁸³ The following year (1964) a collective pastoral was circulated stating that fifty percent of the couples in Paraguay lived in common-law relationships, and that at least fifty percent of the children were illegitimate. It is necessary, declared the bishops, to give the family a vital, physical, economic, juridical, moral, and religious

place in the life of the country. In 1969, however, a direct conflict developed between the Church and the Stroessner government. Monseñor Felipe Santiago Benítez, Bishop of Villarica, gave his public support to the workers of the Rosado Company who had witnessed their houses reduced to rubble. This as well as other activities of the Bishop prompted the government to launch an orchestrated campaign against him, The Jesuits were also harassed, and an official periodical published a “slandorous accusation against three of the bishops of Paraguay of being implicated in the plans of the guerillas.”⁸⁴

On April 23 the priests of Villarica, seventy-five in all, issued a carefully worded but prophetic declaration. Student unrest increased, and there were strikes and demonstrations, The bishops meanwhile interceded for the nearly one hundred men and women who were being held in solitary confinement by the Stroessner government, people who had been neither formally charged nor tried. The culmination of the growing tension came when the bishops protested angrily against the projected law of “defense of democracy and the political and social order,” a law that in one form or another emanated from the CIA and that inspired some measures taken by the Brazilian and Argentine military governments.⁸⁵

On October 22 the government began a series of repressive measures. First, the Jesuit Father Francisco de Paulo Oliva, professor at the Catholic University, together with the members of a religious procession of The Way of the Cross were attacked and brutally beaten, and the priests, religious, and laity were subjected to numerous insults. The Archbishop of Asunción, Monseñor Aníbal Mena Porta, excommunicated the authorities responsible for this atrocity in a Message given on October 26.⁸⁶ A short time later the police seized copies of *Comunidad (Community)*, an official publication of the Paraguayan bishops, The General Secretariat of the episcopacy protested in an open letter of October 31 to the Ministry of Education and Worship. On December 7 the bishops denounced the Stroessner plan to form a national Church.

(5) The Caribbean area

Conflicts between the Church and the state have increased in this area since 1962, François Duvalier, dictator of *Haiti* from 1957 to 1971, provided other republics in the Caribbean with a vivid example of repression against the Church. Several priests in Gonaïves were expelled from the country in November 1962.⁸⁷ A short time later Father Milán was jailed in Port-au-Prince for subversive activities, and the episcopacy responded by excommunicating Duvalier. In 1964 the Jesuits, twelve in all, were expelled from the country. Duvalier would not allow the Church to function as a parallel power but used all his force to eliminate the Church's influence, even though the Church as such had little influence in view of the fact that ninety percent of the people in Haiti are illiterate. The years passed but the situation remained the same. In 1969 ten priests were expelled from the country. The government claimed to be fighting Communism by following the line of the Department of State of the United States. Another nine priests were expelled, others tortured, and some were imprisoned. Duvalier, nevertheless, was supported as a champion of the Christian faith, and his “revolution” was described as a “human and Christian revolution”⁸⁸.

In neighboring Dominican Republic, since the fall of Trujillo in 1961 and the overthrow of Juan Bosch in September of 1963, the people lived under a military Junta that was supported by the direct intervention of the United States in 1965. The Church has continued to function very close to this institutional and political chaos. In 1963 Monseñor Beras stated the need for urgent social reform in a pastoral that was read in all the churches and in which the directives of the encyclical *Mater et*

Magistra were applied to Santo Domingo. Following the military intervention by the United States, the bishops insisted that Christians had a responsibility in regard to political issues, but in the elections of June 1, 1966, the episcopacy declared itself politically neutral.

There followed expulsions of priests in 1969, but the conflict became extremely serious when the government denied Father Sergio Figueredo, SJ, and Father Grati-niano Varona, OP, the right to reenter the country on June 13. The bishops and the superiors of the two religious orders appealed to the government. Figueredo, speaking to his superiors in Rome, declared that “while our TV programs were limited to religious issues or sexual guidance, as is the case ordinarily, we had no problem. But from the moment when we began to publicize the social documents of the Church and to reflect on our concrete reality ...” we were refused reentrance into the country.⁸⁹ On June 29, 1970, two religious of La Salle were expelled from the Republic. The following Sunday all the churches in the country were closed as a sign of protest.

In Puerto Rico the Church at times has assumed a political-prophetic responsibility for the Latin American cause. In 1963, for example, Bishop Aponte, Auxiliary Bishop of Ponce, spoke against the teaching of English in the schools. There has never resounded in the Island, however, a voice as clear as that of Monseñor Parrilla Bonilla, a bishop without a diocese, who was leader in the public demonstrations favoring independence. On the day of the “Shout of Lares,” September 23, 1970, Bishop Parrilla publicly burned the draft cards of five thousand Puerto Rican young men. He declared, “It is Christ whom we should see behind all the movements for liberation. ...How can we understand such compromises on the part of an institution [the Church] called by vocation to be prophetic?” He added,

To achieve political and socioeconomic liberation is to achieve what Moses and Jesus achieved. It is the ministers of the Lord who should commit themselves to liberation. In the next few years there will be a growing number of priests, religious, and lay persons in prisons and in torture chambers. ...It would be a disgrace for the Church of Jesus Christ not to offer its testimony in the immense work of liberating the world from slavery in all its forms.⁹⁰

In March 1969 Bishop Parrilla issued a call to all the clergy of the Island, concluding, “The capitalist system with its characteristic of unlimited profit, its distressing compromising of spiritual values, and its absolutist character of property without social content must step aside for a popular socialist system of democratic making in which man and society will be primordial.”⁹¹

As one can readily see, the attitude of the Church regarding repressive regimes — we could also mention at this point those of Nicaragua, Panama, Guatemala, and others—is not that of the mere defense of privileges that it has enjoyed since the time of colonial Christendom. The Church now creates conflicts because it comes forth in the defense of humanity, because it is moving forward prophetically in the process of liberation. “We ask also for the abandonment of reprehensible methods such as torture, illegal imprisonment, exile, and the suppression of human life. ...We want to indicate that the most profound cause —according to the declaration of Nicaraguan priests headed by Ernesto Cardenal, the Rubén Darío of Latin American Christian liberation —of all social unrest is the lack of justice.”⁹²

3. The Church, the Socialist Movement, and Violence

If Brazil is an example of a military government, Cuba may be seen as the opposite where the people have elected the way of socialism.

(1) The Situation in Cuba

Cuba's history is distinct from that of the other Caribbean islands. It was discovered on October 27, 1492, and was a colony of Spain until 1898 when, after thirty years of fighting for independence, the Liberals constituted the Republic. In the twentieth century the Church has had a very active role in national life. Catholic Action began early in Cuba, and in 1933 Father Manuel Arteaga—who would be Cardinal at the time of the confrontation with Castro—presented to President Ramón Grau the social encyclicals of the Church, and their influence is evident in the Constitution of 1940. In 1941 Christian Social Democracy emerged. The Catholic University of Santo Tomás of Villanueva became a prestigious institution in the Cuban culture. In 1954 Fulgencio Batista was elected President and continued to govern the island directly and indirectly until 1956 when Fidel Castro, lawyer and former university student leader and activist in Latin American guerrilla movements, began the struggle against Batista from the Sierra Maestra. With Castro was the Argentine medical doctor, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, a very active “reformer” in the university movement in Argentina and a declared Marxist.

In July 1953 Monseñor Pérez Serantes, Archbishop of Santiago, sent a letter to Colonel Del Río interceding for the fugitives who had attacked the Moncada Barracks. Fidel Castro was among those attackers, and he owes his life to the prelate (who later opposed Castro) about whom, at the time of his death, he said, “All that is now taking place is providential. ... We believe more in our schools than in Jesus Christ.”⁹³ On January 2, 1959, Castro entered Santiago, and on January 8 marched triumphantly into Havana.

The achievements of Castro in 1959 could be regarded as “democratic and humanist” despite that fact that the Archbishop of Santiago on January 29 issued a strongly worded circular “against the executions.”⁹⁴ The episcopacy openly intervened again between January 13 and 18, defending the private schools. The agrarian reform law of May 17, 1959, alerted the bishops to the fact that there was an incipient Communism within the new government. The “Catholic Congress” of November 1959—attended by Castro—brought together a large number of Cubans who declared, “We want Cuba Catholic.” “Cuba Yes, Russia No.”

From December 1959—with the condemnation of Commandant Húber Matos—until April 1961 there was a progressive move in Cuba towards Marxism. A trade treaty was signed between Cuba and Russia in February of 1960, and on June 27 Castro declared in an address, “Whoever is anticommunist is antirevolutionary.”

On April 17, 1961, Cuban exiles invaded the island at the Bay of Pigs. Though supported by the United States, the invaders were crushed, and Castro was more firmly entrenched than ever.

The Church had no other recourse during this time than to oppose openly the regime. On August 7, 1960, the Cuban episcopacy declared that “it has not occurred to anyone to come and ask Catholics, in the name of a misunderstood patriotism, that we desist in our opposition to these doctrines, because we could never accede to them without betraying our most profound principles against materialistic and atheistic Communism. The absolute majority of the Cuban people, who are Catholic, could only by deception be led by a Communist regime.”⁹⁵ During the Fiesta of Our Lady of Charity, the patron saint of Cuba, on September 8, 1960, a Catholic demonstration was violently suppressed and the government unleashed a series of persecutions, expulsions of priests, nuns, and influential laypersons from the country. Then in March

1961 Castro accused the Cuban clergy of being “allies of theft, crime, and deception.” “They are today,” he said, “the fifth column of the counterrevolution.”⁹⁶

Consequently, between 1961 and 1968 the Church was transformed from a cultic institution to “a silent Church.” Even in this period, however, there were signs of change. First, there was the paternal attitude manifested by John XXIII in November 1961, when he wished for the Cuban people “Christian prosperity” and allowed Cuba to name Dr. Amado Blanco as Ambassador to the Vatican. In 1960 there were 745 diocesan priests in Cuba and 2,225 religious. By 1970 the numbers had been reduced to 230 and 200, respectively. In 1962 Monseñor César Zacchi came as Papal Nuncio to the island. Zacchi had extensive experience in socialist countries, and as a result the relations between Rome and Havana began to improve. Castro declared in an address in 1963 that “the imperialists have wanted to turn the Church against the revolution, but they have failed.” That same year the Premier requested the Nuncio to send Belgian or Canadian missionaries. In the meantime Vatican II had begun, and the Cuban bishops were allowed to attend. In 1968 the Latin American bishops met in Medellín, and the Catholic clergy evidenced some revolutionary attitudes themselves.

A new era began in Cuba in 1968. Castro, speaking to the Intellectual Congress meeting in Havana, said to the more than five hundred in attendance, “We find ourselves undeniably facing new situations. ...These are the paradoxes of history. How is it that we see sectors of the clergy becoming revolutionary forces? Are we going to resign ourselves to seeing sectors of Marxism becoming ecclesiastical forces?”⁹⁷ When the Canadian Nuncio conferred upon Cuba the episcopal order on December 14, Castro was present in the Nunciature to indicate publicly a new governmental attitude. The Brazilian Bishop, Monseñor Eugenio Sales, made a visit to Cuba in 1967 which, as will be noted, was an important step in improving relations. The Cuban Nuncio stated to the Inter-Press Service of Christian Democracy that “the Church should begin to consider the place it should occupy in the new society (socialist).”⁹⁸

All these events helped to explain the communique issued by the Cuban episcopacy on April 10, 1969.⁹⁹ The bishops, in the light of Medellín, proposed to reflect on the new situation. The originality of the situation in Cuba, according to the bishops, “resided in the renewed vision” of their moral and social responsibilities in regard to “the problem of development.” With this perspective they affirmed that it was then possible for the Cuban Church to move in a different direction by defending the Cuban people against the economic blockade imposed by the United States. “Seeking the well-being of our people and faithful to the service of the poor, in conformity to the command of Jesus Christ and the commitment proclaimed again in Medellín, we denounce this unjust situation of the blockade which contributes to the unnecessary and increased sufferings and makes more difficult the program of development.” The communique was not accepted unanimously by all Catholics in Cuba, but the ASO (the new Cuban form of Catholic Action) in its annual meeting of August 16 and 17, 1969, recognized the communique “as a valid point of departure for undertaking pastoral renewal.”¹⁰⁰

On September 3, 1969, the bishops issued another communique in regard to the problem and growth of the faith, in which they called attention to the fact that in contemporary atheism “in promoting all people and the whole person there is an enormous area of common involvement among all people of good will, be they atheists or believers.”¹⁰¹ The communique continued, “This is the time in which, as in all times, we need to discover the presence of the kingdom of God in the midst of those

positive aspects of the crisis through which our world is now passing in this time of its history.”¹⁰²

The Church had obviously changed its attitude toward Cuban socialism. The government of the Socialist Republic of Cuba also changed in its response and attitude toward the Church. In the early 1960s the Church in all of Latin America condemned Communism in every form. The Peruvian episcopacy, for example, in 1960 spoke of Communism as “the negation of society.”¹⁰³ The Venezuelan bishops spoke in 1962 regarding the difficult social situation in their country and of the “fateful Communist infiltration and atheism which are one and the same.”¹⁰⁴ The episcopacy of Central America and Panama issued a joint pastoral “On Communism,”¹⁰⁵ an issue that was also stressed by the bishops of Guatemala in their pastoral “On Social Problems and the Communist Menace.”¹⁰⁶ During these years, nevertheless, there was one discordant voice, the Bishop of Guinea, Monseñor Tchidimbo, who stated that it was possible for “African socialism to have God as its center.” The issue was addressed in the Second Vatican Council only by very small groups and in conversations in the halls.

During February 1964 the “Week of Marxist Intellectuals” was held in Paris with the presence of Yves Jolif, and the dialogue was continued in Barcelona later in the year. In Latin America Dom Hélder Camara began to talk of the possibility of a “personalistic socialism.” But the change was very slow. Monseñor Raul Silva Henríquez, the leading Chilean cardinal, declared that “it is necessary to change the structures without capitalism or Communism. ...What we desire is a Christian solution.” The same spirit was manifested in Peru when a minister, Miró Quesada, wanted to begin classes in Marxism in a secondary school.

It was not until 1967, however, that the issue of socialism became generally prominent in Latin America, and the way was effectively prepared by the commitment of university students in Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, and Mexico. Monseñor Eugenio Fragoso, Bishop of Crateus, in an address given on October 9, 1967, explained the reasons for his making a trip to Cuba and his reactions after returning.¹⁰⁷ “Why has the Bishop of Crateus said that Cuba, that the courage of little Cuba was a symbol and a call for Latin America...?” He gave four reasons: first, because Castro fought against the military dictatorship of Batista and against the imposition of the United States, and because when plans were made for agrarian reform “forty percent of the land belonged to North Americans.” They protested, and the Department of State said, “This will not happen.” Therefore, in the name of a small island of six million inhabitants, Fidel Castro said to the richest and best-armed giant in the world with two hundred million inhabitants, “We will not give in. We will not retreat. The reform will proceed. ...Who was guilty? I am not the one to respond.” Rather, it was John Fitzgerald Kennedy who explicitly declared in the course of his electoral campaign that the reason for and the responsibility of Cuba’s abandoning the continental unity and entering the Soviet orbit is that of the United States who did not know how to support the aspirations of the Cuban people in their struggle to liberate that small island. The Bishop continued by speaking of the situation in Brazil saying, “Why has the government not had the courage to close the universities and the secondary schools here and lead a million professors to teach and conscientize in four months the forty million Brazilians who have absolutely no education? Why has Brazil not done what Castro has done in Cuba?” A short time later—March 11, 1968—Dom Hélder, in an address given at the Catholic Institute of Recife, stated that the Christian need not fear that the world is moving toward socialism in view of the fact that Christians “can offer a mystique of universal fraternity and incomparable hope far more comprehensive

than the narrow mystique of historic materialism. ...The Marxists, conversely, feel the need of revising their concept of religion.”¹⁰⁸

The year 1969 brought new surprises. The Venezuelan bishops, for example, according to Cardinal José Quintero of Caracas, were ready to serve as intermediaries between the government and the guerrillas. At that time the government was led by the COPEI party, the Venezuelan form of Christian Democracy, which had been in power since December 1968. In Colombia, Monseñor Botero Salazar of Medellín raised the question as to whether collaboration between Marxists and Christians was possible in the pastoral and social apostolate.¹⁰⁹ The successor of Monseñor Larraín, Carlos González of Talca, declared in a pastoral “Constructing in Hope” that it would be permissible to support a certain kind of socialism. “It is not possible at the present time,” he said, “to ignore that right of Christian laity to search for a form of modified socialism, a socialism whose goal would be to construct a society based on mankind, human values, and with the dear aim of transforming people as human beings and children of God.”¹¹⁰ The situation in regard to the Chilean Christian Democratic Youth, which separated itself from the Christian Democrats —Christian Democracy had separated from the Conservative party (the Falange) —motivated the Bishop of Talca to face this serious question. It is certain that socialism was being viewed by many Christians as a possibility within their political, economic, and humanistic options.

(2) The revolutions in Mexico and Chile

An interesting comparison can be made in the attitude of the Church in two Latin American revolutions. A half century before Castro, Mexico began the revolution of 1910. But only in 1964 did the Church there recognize the positive aspects of that revolution in the “Document of San Luis de Potosí” emanating from the organs of Catholic Action. Monseñor Méndez Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca, had anticipated the notice in an interview with a representative of *Life* magazine on April 13. The Mexican Church should have faced the crisis during the time of the agony of colonial Christendom, for by 1964 it did not have the possibility of responding creatively or prophetically as it was able to do later in Cuba. And the life of Mexican Catholicism in 1970 conditioned the way in which the Church could respond to the revolution. In effect, in the time of President Calles (1924- 1934) a kind of social Catholicism began to develop¹¹¹ that made possible the National Catholic Workers Congress, the National Catholic Peasant League, and the Middle Class National Catholic League. But all these organizations disappeared during the time of the religious conflict of 1926 to 1929 when the “critiques” continued to incarnate the ideals of a nonexistent Christendom. The “revolution” in Mexico was not Marxist, but it was a real revolution. The structures of Mexico changed. It was not a proletarian revolution, for there was no industry; nor was it a peasant revolution. Rather, it was a revolution of a small bourgeois against the high bourgeois oligarchy of the nineteenth century, reformist in regard to agrarian questions, liberal and anticlerical culturally, and socialistic in spirit. The Church, however, received a staggering blow and remained basically enclosed within the temples. Freedom of worship was permitted within the buildings, but religious demonstrations in the street were prohibited. The Church has not yet recuperated a social, cultural, decisive, liberating presence, although it appears that this is possible in the future.

“In certain circles, unfortunately limited, the Council and the encyclicals have awakened interest, but much less than they deserve, because the hierarchy in general has not put a great emphasis on these,” according to Father Alberto de Ezcurdia. He adds, alluding to the ecclesial documents regarding social issues and responding to the

question as to whether hierarchy deals with concrete issues, “No, they always remain in the area of the abstract.”¹¹²

In Chile the change was quite different. The triumph of Eduardo Frei in 1964, candidate of the Christian Democratic Party, was an important time in the history of the temporal commitment of the Church in Latin America and was the result of thirty long years of social action in Chile, a lesson that was later utilized by COPEI in Venezuela. But more important was the fact that Frei’s election allowed for the surpassing of the ideal of a “new Christendom,” which Christian Democracy had proposed in its beginning.

In 1962 the Chilean bishops issued a collective pastoral regarding the “Social and Political Responsibility at Present,” which was widely circulated and had significant impact in all of Latin America. The pastoral insisted that collaboration between Christians and Communists was an impossibility.¹¹³ Earlier Monseñor Larraín, Bishop of Talca, published his “Economic Development in the Light of *Mater et Magistra*.”¹¹⁴ That same year the famous issue—one dedicated to revolution—of the periodical *Mensaje (Message)* appeared. (*Mensaje* was founded by Father Alberto Hurtado and edited by the Bellarmino Center.) In October 1963 a second issue dedicated to the Christian perspective on the “Revolutionary Reforms in Latin America” appeared. The Christian Democratic Party, however, which had only thirteen percent of the votes in Chile in the 1957 elections, won fifty-four percent on September 4, 1964, when Frei’s party with its motto of “Revolution in Freedom” came to power. Immediately, however, the proposals of the Christian Democrats were frustrated by Conservative forces on the right and the Radicals on the left. Monseñor Larraín wrote another pastoral in October 1965 on “Development: Success or Failure in Latin America.”¹¹⁵ “The most serious problem for us Latin Americans,” stated Don Manuel, “more than the atomic bomb, is the material and spiritual underdevelopment of the people who form the Third World. ...Underdevelopment is an evil. It should be condemned as an enemy of humanity. ...Furthermore, wasteful spending should be halted. The greatest waste is in armaments which absorb incredible sums of money. The problem of development, therefore, and the problem of disarmament are interrelated.”

Other indications of the change in Chile were evident in the ecclesial agrarian reform program that began in 1961, the “Social Weeks” that began in 1963, the crisis in the Catholic universities from 1967, and the actions of the synod beginning in 1967, all of which indicated the vitality of the Church in that country. The deterioration that the Christian Democratic Party suffered in Chile, however, led to the election of Dr. Salvador Allende, candidate of the Popular Front, as the President of the nation on September 4, 1970. The Church reacted favorably to the situation and demonstrated a positive attitude toward the socialist government. Cardinal Silva Henríquez said in 1970 that the Church was partially responsible for the unjust order that existed in Latin America,¹¹⁶ a statement that indicated the high level of awareness among the bishops. Also, the Cardinal was one of the first public figures in Chile to congratulate Allende on his election, and the Popular Front had within its ranks aggressive groups of Christian youth, socialist in principle and revolutionary in concrete attitudes.

(3) The Church and subversive violence in Colombia, Bolivia, and other regions.

We will describe the environments in which there has existed violence of both kinds: subversive violence that reacts to oppressive violence, and, following the dialectic, the renewed coercive violence that is of greater importance and significance.¹¹⁷

Colombia has been a land of violence since its colonization in the sixteenth century.

One should remember that on February 7, 1948, when the Panamerican Conference met in Bogotá, hundreds of thousands of Colombians marched through the streets of downtown Bogotá decrying and repudiating the Conservative Party. During the Conference, the popular Liberal leader, Jorge E. Gaitán, was assassinated on the street, and within hours a decade of violence erupted. From the time of Gaitán's assassination until June 1953 when General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla came to power in a military overthrow of the government, there were some 200,000 deaths in the country. The Liberals were killing in reaction to the murder of Gaitán, while the Conservatives were slaughtering in the name of Jesus Christ. A general strike paralyzed the country in May 1957, and Rojas was forced to leave the country. The Conservatives and Liberals proceeded to sign a treaty instituting the National Front and agreed to alternate the presidency and the power for periods of four years until 1974. The first president elected under this arrangement was Alberto Lleras Camargo in 1958; Guillermo León Valencia followed in 1962 and Carlos Lleras Restrepo in 1966. The oligarchy, therefore, continued to govern the country under the cloak of a popular majority and violently suppressed any opposition. Taking Castro as a model, some Colombians defended subversive revolution and were able to organize a guerrilla movement with the armed bands dispersed throughout the rural areas of Colombia. Several "socialist republics" sprang up, but by 1964 they had been reduced to the areas of Marquetalia and Pato.

A work by Germán Guzmán, Orlando Fals Borda, and Eduardo Umaña Luna, *La violencia en Colombia (Violence in Colombia)*,¹¹⁸ traced the history and the extent of internecine conflict in the nation. In 1961 the Colombian episcopacy issued a condemnation of violence and urged peace.¹¹⁹ But the document was in fact the Church's approval of the Conservative-Liberal pact forming the National Front government which at the time was attempting to suppress subversive violence. This subversive violence was, however, the fruit of the oppressive violence of the institutionalized injustice of the oligarchy. In a study on "Violence and Sociocultural Changes in the Rural Areas of Colombia," Father Camilo Torres, Licentiate in political science from the University of Louvain (1958), and at the time Professor of Sociology in the National University in Bogotá,¹²⁰ insisted that the peasant violence was the result of the "lack of divergent work, social isolation, conflicts with entities outside the group, feelings of inferiority, lack of vertical social mobility, latent hostility, and political sectarianism." Torres analyzed each of these factors, employing the techniques of the sociology of European education and frequently citing Durkheim, Weber, Parsons, Redfield, and Wiese. He manifested a reflective, scientific, and intellectual bent, and concluded saying, "Violence has forced all these changes through pathological canals and without any harmony in respect to the process of economic development in the country."¹²¹ Torres' study was published in 1963 in the *Minutes* of the First National Congress of Sociology, which had been organized by the Colombian Association of Sociology.

Camilo Torres Restrepo, besides belonging to one of the traditional families of Colombia, was part of a cultural elite, a scientist whose university career was guaranteed. Three years later, February 15, 1966, his body was found in rural area near Bucaramanga. Camilo's subversive violence was crushed by the coercive military violence. In his last "Proclamation to the Colombian People" he had written, "When the people sought a leader and found him in Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, the oligarchy killed him. When the people sought peace, the oligarchy sowed violence in the country. When the people could no longer resist this violence and organized themselves into guerrillas in order to take power, the oligarchy fabricated a military coup d'état in order

to entice the guerrillas to surrender. When the people asked for democracy, they were deceived again with a plebiscite [December 1957], and the National Front imposed a dictatorship of the oligarchy.” Torres concluded saying, “The people know that the only way left to them is that of armed insurrection.”¹²² How did he arrive at this decision? As historians it is our task to understand more than to defend. For this reason we will return briefly to some of his previous writings.

From Louvain, Torres had sent in 1956 a report to the First Seminar of University Chaplains¹²³ on “The Social Problems in the Contemporary University.” The paper revealed Camilo's character in its totality. The entire analysis was written not only from a scientific but also from an ethical perspective. He stated that it is by divine revelation that we know the supreme commandment is that of charity —*agape* love for our neighbor—but that we also know that even Christ was tempted to utilize inappropriate means in order to manifest this charity. Already he was laying the foundation for his ultimate commitment in his search for an “efficacious charity.” He advocated no abstract love; not an ideal, but a real, concrete love that would grasp the opportunity. For his Licentiate in political science at Louvain, Camilo wrote a thesis entitled “Approximations of the Socioeconomic Reality in the City of Bogotá,” and he had several papers published in the *Cuadernos latinoamericanos de economía humana (Latin American Notebooks in Human Economy)* of Montevideo on “The Problem of Structuring an Authentic Latin American Sociology,” “The Social Disintegration in Colombia,” and “The Revolution: A Christian Imperative”; the latter also was published in French in *Pro mundi vita* (1965). These writings reveal a person who desired to understand the real, the concrete, namely, the grass roots situation. As a scientist he warned of the danger of “Latin American cultural colonialism,”¹²⁴ and as a priest he cautioned against counterfeit, uncommitted spiritualism. He said that although the mission of a priest was specifically supernatural, there existed for him the imperative of charity. Charity, he said, “is that which motivates us, and charity can be measured by our response to the needs of our neighbor.” “For this reason,” he declared, “many priests must assume temporal functions.”¹²⁵ Moreover, “as a sociologist I have desired that this love be effectively expressed.” The theme of “efficacious love” was the foundation of Camilo's Christian ethic, and it was implemented by technology and science. “By analyzing the Colombian society,” he wrote, “I have realized the necessity of a revolution in order to give food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, clothing to the naked, and assure the well-being of the majority of our people. ...The supreme measure of human decisions should be charity, it should be supernatural love. I will take all the risks that this measure demands of me.”¹²⁶

It is difficult to conceive of a choice or a decision more responsible, preceded by study and analysis during almost ten years of investigation and commitment. Camilo's final decision was really a priestly choice.

I opted for Christianity because I consider it the purest form of loving my neighbor. I was chosen by Christ to be a priest eternally, and I was motivated by the desire to give myself in full-time love for my fellow man. ...The Mass, which is the final objective of priestly activity, is fundamentally an act of the community. But the Christian community is unable to offer in an authentic way the sacrifice if in an effective way the precept of love has not been expressed for one's neighbor.¹²⁷

It is important to note that for Camilo the possible means of changing the structure were gradual. There was the *status quo* in Uruguay, repression in Venezuela, the rightist coup d'état in Brazil, reformism in Colombia, violent revolution in Cuba, and peaceful revolution in Chile. For Camilo the best of all these options without doubt

was the ideal of a “peaceful revolution” with a maximum of desire, foresight, and social pressure.¹²⁸ He considered subversive violence an evil, but the time came when he viewed it as a lesser, necessary evil. It is clear that at the beginning he gave no thought to violence as a political option, for in the “Platform” of the United Front, the political party that he founded, it was declared: “At the present time the *necessary* decisions for Colombian politics to be oriented for the benefit of the majority ...must originate with those who hold the power.”¹²⁹ The power, it was said, was held by three trustees: “Military power in our country serves basically to support the present structure. ... Ecclesiastical power in our country is united with economic and political power in order to pursue common interests.”¹³⁰ This conclusion stirred Camilo to enter politics as a Christian. He was immediately accused of being a Communist, to which he responded in his “Message to the Communists” saying that although they search sincerely for the truth and love their “neighbor in an efficacious way..., they should clearly understand that I am not allying myself with them. I am not nor can I ever be a Communist neither as a Colombian, as a sociologist, as a Christian, nor as a priest.” He said this on September 2, 1965. He added, however, “I am disposed to join in the struggle with those who have the same objectives as I: against the oligarchy and the domination by the United States. ...John XXIII authorized me to work with those who attempt to improve our world. And the example of Poland shows us that a socialist system is possible without destroying what is essential in Christianity.”¹³¹

Shortly before Camilo made the preceding statement, Cardinal Luis Concha on August 10 had publicly condemned violent revolution. Five days earlier he had issued a pastoral in which he said, “An attack against a legitimate government is to be condemned on the basis of natural law, and if one doubts the natural law, the authority of Sacred Scripture adhered to by the Church will demonstrate—as the Holy Fathers have constantly taught—that an assault against the legitimate government is illicit because it signifies disobedience, rebellion, or the overthrow of legitimately constituted power.”¹³²

It is lamentable that in this major event in the history of the Latin American Church there was a lack of theological understanding which could have guided Camilo to a commitment within the bounds of prophetic but not armed violence. Even so, the position of the Cardinal can hardly be defended in view of the fact that the government in Colombia at the time resulted from a pact between the Conservatives and Liberals and was less than legitimate. For analogous reasons Rome had condemned the revolutions of independence in the beginning of the nineteenth century but soon recognized them as legitimate.

The year 1965 was decisive. On April 19, Cardinal Concha, Archbishop of Bogotá, issued a declaration regarding social instability and the Communist danger in the country. President Guillermo Valencia meanwhile accused the Church of concealing Communists—evidently hoping to discredit Camilo Torres who at the time was organizing the Popular Front in opposition to the government. Concha also said, “The Church exercises its influence in the temporal order for the personal transformation of the man who freely accepts the message of the gospel,” clearly an individualistic and privatized understanding of the Christian faith. The Cardinal continued, “The influence of the Church in the temporal order is the direct responsibility of the laity,” an apparent reference to a theology of Christendom.

On June 9, Camilo was prohibited from taking part in any political activity. He responded by renouncing his priestly office and asking the Cardinal to reduce him to lay status. The Cardinal responded on June 18 by issuing a statement to the effect

that “Father Camilo Torres has deliberately rejected the doctrines and ordinances of the Catholic Church.” Father Efraín Gaitán then resigned from a Catholic publication in order to support Camilo. When Gaitán organized a demonstration in Medellín for the Popular Front, Bishop Botero Salazar publicly condemned subversive violence. On September 7, Cardinal Concha in a interview with a group of Catholic intellectuals in Bogotá passionately defended the right of private property. One of the delegation sharpened the issue by stating:

Since, as Your Eminence has stated, the Church is the defender of private property, I would like to know exactly which type of property ownership is defended by the Church. For example, is it land acquired by expropriation? Or is it money earned in shady deals, or by devaluation which forces the poor to sell and leave the land piling up in the hands of a few? After all, these are the most common forms of acquiring land in Colombia.¹³³

The Cardinal was awestruck and visibly agitated. He stood up and said, “I am not disposed to continue this conversation.” In less than six months Camilo Torres was dead and soon was transformed into a universal symbol.

Tension within the Church increased, and on September 9, 1966, Mario Bravo and Hernán Jiménez were dismissed from their posts at the diocesan newspaper *El Catolicismo* because the Cardinal believed that they were sowing seeds of dissension. In an editorial entitled “The Church and Development,” Bravo and Jiménez had indicated that “a vast reform of the institutions is necessary.”¹³⁴ More than a hundred Colombian priests protested the dismissal of the editors, and the Cardinal responded by saying, “The prescriptions of the Council do not obligate the Cardinal nor the Colombian Church to begin immediate action in the social field, but only in regard to the liturgy.”¹³⁵ Clearly it was the “cultural Church” that Camilo had wanted to surpass, as can be seen in a letter that he wrote to Monseñor Rubén Isaza in 1965: “If the pastoral is one of conservation, it will be difficult for me to collaborate in an effective way. ...If the priority of love is accepted above everything else, and preaching above worship activities, then the hierarchy has to come to a pastoral of mission. ...By pastoral, I understand the total activity which should be exercised in order to plant and increase the kingdom of God in society and in a specific historical epoch.”¹³⁶ What alienated Camilo Torres from Cardinal Concha was that the latter was dedicated to the defense of Christendom while the former, because of his studies, saw a new era and stage in the history of the Church that had already begun and for which ultimately he gave his life. Although subversive violence is not as evangelical as prophetic violence, Camilo offered his life, and this is the supreme indication of love —effectual love — which was the motto of his life, and it is in effectual love that all Christian perfection is expressed.

Shortly before the Medellín Bishops Conference, a group of priests met together in a rural *hacienda* called “Golconda.” They were closely watched by the DAS (Administrative Department of Security). Father René García revived the idea again in 1970 of a “Popular Front of Opposition,” and Father Laín joined the guerrillas in the Colombian Sierra.¹³⁷ The impact of these events has not subsided and is clearly material for future theological reflection.

Bolivia is the land from which the first resident bishop of La Plata wrote a letter to the Spanish king dated July 1, 1550, which read: “Four years ago when Spain was ready to abandon this area, a mouth of hell was discovered in which there enters every year a great number of people (Indians) sacrificed to the god of greed by the Spaniards. It is a silver mine that is called Potosí.”¹³⁸ Short of a detailed history of the violences which the Bolivian people have been forced to endure, one should note that

the year 1964 brought the end to the MNR (National Revolutionary Movement) and the exile of President Paz Estensoro, when a military coup overthrew the government. Two years earlier the Bolivian bishops had asked the government to take measures to reduce Communist influence among the miners, and on November 15, 1964, the Committee for Christian Democracy was organized for the purpose of uniting all Christian political forces.¹³⁹ On October 6, 1965, the Archbishop of La Paz, Monseñor Abel Antezana, along with 126 Bolivian priests, sent a communication to the Military Junta defending the miners of COMIBOL (the national organization that administered the state mines). The communique demonstrated the ways in which the Bolivian miner was exploited: his daily salary was less than the equivalent of one United States dollar, and this salary was controlled by the state in order to maintain an unjust price for tin. Bolivia sold its products for ten cents (U.S.) per work-hour and bought products from the United States for three dollars per work-hour.

General René Barrientos was elected president in 1966, and on September 14 he proposed a new Constitution in which “the State recognizes and supports the Catholic, Apostolic, and Roman religion.” The southeast part of the country was declared a “military zone” on April 11, 1967, because of the activity of various guerrilla groups there.

The Argentine medical doctor, Ernesto “Che” Guevara, had begun his *Diary* on November 7, 1966, writing, “A new state began today.”¹⁴⁰ Subversive violence clashed with coercive violence. Meanwhile, Monseñor Gutiérrez Granier, Bishop of Cochabamba, condemned the guerrilla activity in a pastoral saying, “The Church has always condemned hatred and violence in human and social relations and equally repudiates in our time the guerrillas who represent a new kind of war” Gutiérrez also indicated that the Bolivian government had the responsibility and the right to “repel force with force.”¹⁴¹ The subversive violence was, however, the result of the widespread injustices in the country. The situation in Bolivia was not unlike that in Peru, and it reminds one of the protests of Monseñor Dammert, Peruvian Bishop of the Sierra, who in 1965 censured the upper classes for having bought bonds to support antiguerrilla activity—that is, the occupying of land by armed peasants—but who refused to finance the rural infrastructure that would have eliminated the injustices and made peasant violence unnecessary.¹⁴²

On October 8, 1967, “Che” Guevara was captured and executed. Don Antonio Fragoso said on October 27, “We pray for our brother Guevara who has tragically died in Bolivia,” and *Le Poty*, the Natal, Brazil daily newspaper, carried the statement: “The courage of little Cuba can be a symbol and a call for the liberation of Latin America. ...If one is not capable of seeing the good in one’s enemies there is a question as to whether that one is Christian. ...We are not, however, in accord with the dictatorship in Cuba. ...nor in Brazil.” Alceu Amoroso Lima, philosopher and member of the pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, wrote in the *Jornal do Brasil*:

I am able to reverence without fear the heroism of three men who had little in common, The priest (Camilo Torres), the philosopher (Régis Debray), and the doctor (“Che” Guevara), because the more I see violence (subversive) the more I repudiate and detest it as a means of social change and progress. But I cannot deny the fact that these victims of violence (coercive) represent in our epoch of technological pragmatism an example of what is most pure in human nature, namely, the capacity to sacrifice oneself for a just cause, a desperate protest in behalf of human dignity and against pessimism, against a false contentment, against the injustice of civilization, and against prosperity founded on injustice. ...The meaning of

the death of saints and heroes resides precisely in the fact that suffering and death have meaning. To die for a just cause, although by means of condemnable violent methods, has more value than agreements made with the defenders of the worst kinds of violence, those which hide behind the mask of peace, of legality and democracy, but who in fact are the very causes of the unjust social order.¹⁴³

The injustices, however, continued in Bolivia, and the guerrilla groups reorganized. In August 1970, the Archbishop of La Paz, Jorge Manrique, issued a pastoral pleading for a radical transformation of the country and charging the government with “economic strangulation” and social oppression which, he insisted, made possible and stimulated the existence of guerrilla centers. In September four clergymen who were serving as professors in the National University were dismissed. The students went on strike September 16 and “took to the streets.” The government retaliated by expelling the four former professors from the country for “subversive political activity.” One of the four was a member of the Oblate Order, and another was a Protestant pastor. Priests in the mining region of Llalagua called for a thoroughgoing study of the revolutionary process. Shortly thereafter the government of General Alfredo Ovando fell when on October 6 General Juan José Torres took charge. On December 24 the French guerrilla Régis Debray was released and celebrated Christmas in Santiago, Chile. This history has not yet concluded.¹⁴⁴

Before continuing to examine other Christians who have chosen the way of subversive violence, even armed violence, we need to make a very important clarification. On January 1, 1971, the French newspaper *La Croix* (Paris) published a declaration by Monseñor Brandao Vilela, President of CELAM, indicating that “the Church maintains its position against violence” —although the Monseñor did not specify against which kind of violence — “in the necessary transformation of the structures in Latin America. ...It is necessary, however, to distinguish the case of Camilo Torres from that of “Che” Guevara and Régis Debray. Camilo Torres, although he was wrong in regard to the methods, was a Christian. The other two, in contrast, were Marxists.” We would not want the examples we will give to be considered on the same level as the “olive green revolution” launched by the OLAS.¹⁴⁵ There is a basic difference in the motivation of a “Che” and the Maryknoll Fathers, which we will attempt to describe.

During the week of June 18, 1954, Guatemala suffered a bombing by North American planes. That same week Colonel Castillo Armas crossed the border and presided over a Military Junta that deposed the elected President, Jacobo Arbenz, whom they accused of being a Communist.¹⁴⁶ This military takeover of the Guatemalan government had the complete support of the United States. Consequently, the United Fruit Company was able to continue its exploitation of the workers without further difficulty. In light of these events, the conflict resulting from the work of three North American Maryknoll priests and a Maryknoll sister dedicated to help the Indians in the northern part of Guatemala is of special significance. One of them, Thomas Melville, published in the *National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City) of January 31, 1968, an article that described the nature of the violence in Guatemala.

The National Liberation Movement was initiated by General and later President Castillo Armas who was assassinated in July 1957, and the movement was continued by his successor who makes no move to control the rightist terrorists called the *Mano Blanca* [the White Hand]. Another rightist terrorist band is the NOA [New Anticommunist Organization] directed by an army colonel, Máximo Zepeda Martínez.... A Third group of rightist terrorists, the CADEG, is composed of ruffians.... During the last eighteen months these

three groups together have assassinated more than 2,800 intellectuals, students, union leaders, and peasants who in one form or another have attempted to organize and combat the evils of the Guatemalan society.¹⁴⁷

Speaking of his own personal experience, Melville continued,

I know personally a good friend and benefactor of the Maryknoll Fathers who receives communion daily and who accused a Christian guild leader of being a Communist because he was trying to organize a union on a large sugar plantation. As a result of the accusation the organizer was executed by the army. ...When the cooperative that I began among the destitute Indians in Quezaltenango was finally able to buy its own truck, the rich attempted to bribe the chauffeur to drive the vehicle off a cliff. When he refused to cooperate, they made at least four attempts to force the truck off the road, and the last one of these was successful. In the parish of San Antonio Huista where my brother, who is also a Maryknoll priest, was pastor, the president of an agrarian cooperative was assassinated by some of the town's wealthy leaders—a group that included the mayor. When the case reached the capital of Huehuetenango, the judge had already been bribed, and we could do nothing. The three leaders of the parish cooperative in La Libertad, Huehuetenango, were accused of being Communists and were threatened with death as a consequence of their attempts to raise the economic level of their neighbors. The American government has sent jets, helicopters, arms, money, and military advisers to the Guatemalan government, which only gives them more power to control the peasant masses. Last year, 1967, the salaries, uniforms, arms and vehicles for two thousand new police were paid for by the Alliance for Progress.¹⁴⁸

On December 23, 1967, Thomas and Arthur Melville, along with Father Blase Bonpane and Sister Marian Peter Bradford, were suspended and a short time later expelled from the congregation and the country. The Vice-president of Guatemala, Marroquí Rojas, accused the Church of “fomenting Communist activities,” an accusation that was printed in the capital city newspaper *Impacto*. Thomas Melville responded to the charge by saying, “It is not the hungry who initiate the violence, rather it is the rich and the powerful who are not content to live with their excessive and ill-gotten wealth, but who always want to have more.”¹⁴⁹ Melville added, “I with two other priests and a sister were accused of helping the guerrillas in Guatemala, and we were expelled from the country without being given any opportunity to defend ourselves.” “As Christians we only desire peaceful change. ...It is the rich, together with those who have the same interests, who have the power to decide if the process will be peaceful or violent.” John F. Kennedy said, declared Melville, that “those who make peaceful revolution impossible, make violent revolution inevitable.” Apparently this small group of clergy desired to join the guerrillas in the northern part of Guatemala, but they returned to the United States and began a crusade against North American militarism in the Third World.¹⁵⁰

There are many others who, because of their Christian faith, have decided to become actively involved in subversive violence. The case of Father Antonio Soligo is well known in Brazil. He was imprisoned for six months and tortured by the police without ever being charged with a crime. Upon leaving the prison, Soligo joined a clandestine group and never returned to his order nor to his parish. Father Tito de Alencar attempted suicide by slashing his wrists after being tortured with an electric goad and having to observe the torture of nuns in “obscene parodies” perpetrated by police dressed in sacred vestments.¹⁵¹ Sister Maurina Borges de Silveira, Superior in the Santa Ana Home, tells how she was tortured on October 24, 1969, in the Ribeirao Preto Prison, how she was beaten, insulted, blasphemed, and finally how one of the eight agents of the civil police said to her, “Dear Sister—I can call you Sister, can

I not? —I love you very much.” He then said to her, “It pains me to have to leave you here all night nude before everyone....” Then he “took me by the neck and attempted to caress me.”¹⁵² Together with the Dominicans of São Paulo there were several prisoners who were peasants. They declared, “We workers from the rural area belong to the most exploited class in our country. ...We see Christ as a man who has died on the Cross to liberate us from tyrannical regimes. ...And, behind these bars, we vividly sense his presence.”

Those who practice coercive violence want to involve the Church in the chaos. In Uruguay, for example, two ecclesiastics attempted to mediate between the government and the Tupamaros and were ultimately accused of being members of the urban guerrilla group. In Argentina the government did everything possible to link the two priests Alberto Carbone and Fulgencio Rojas to the assassination of ex-President Aramburu. The defense attorney showed that the entire maneuver was a scheme to create confusion and a means by which the movement of the Priests for the Third World could be implicated in the case. A body assumed to be that of Aramburu was found on July 16, 1970.¹⁵³

The situation at present is as follows: the great powers, the developed and dominating countries, have ended their “Cold War” and embarked upon a relationship of peaceful coexistence. Premier Khrushchev sent to John XXIII on his eightieth birthday a message of congratulations wishing for the pontiff “success in the noble aspiration of contributing to the consolidation of peace in the world.”¹⁵⁴ But while the powerful enjoy peace, the Bishop of Tacuarembó, Uruguay, said in a pastoral letter of 1961, “The animals here are treated better than the children. ...These people, [speaking of the farm workers] suffer in their flesh injustice. ...We should remember that those responsible for the evils endured in those countries that have become Communist are the same ones who maintain the social system that forces the people to choose either bread without liberty or liberty without bread.”¹⁵⁵

Dom Hélder Câmara, in a address given in the Mutulaité of Paris on April 25, 1968, stated that as Asia has its Bangkok and Africa its Algiers, Latin America has its Tequendama. The entire Third World suffers violence. The violence of oppression exists in the developed countries and in the underdeveloped countries (with the difference being that in the latter the oligarchies are at the service of the dominator). Moreover, the developed countries live off the underdeveloped, oppressed, and dominated countries. In a document presented to Nelson Rockefeller when he visited Bolivia, a group of Bolivian priests and nuns stated:

According to CEPAL in its last report to the Special Commission of Latin American Coordination (CECLA), the United States earned more than three billion dollars between 1965 and 1967, but it has reinvested only two hundred million annually, and what is worse, this aid is always tied to a series of economic and political conditions. We are a country not poor but exploited. The United States buys our raw materials —tin, for example —at the price of ten cents U.S. per man-hour of work. We in turn must buy their manufactured articles at a price of between two dollars and three dollars U.S. per man-hour of work.¹⁵⁶

This is the violence of the dominator .

The Church has spoken with greater frequency on the question of violence, but it appears that there is no awareness of the fact that violence is *equivocal* and not analogical.¹⁵⁷ Dom Hélder Câmara together with Pastor Ralph David Abernathy signed the “Declaration of Recife”¹⁵⁸ in which nonviolence such as that practiced by Mahatma Gandhi was defended. Personally, however, I do not believe that nonviolence is a viable option for Latin Americans who want to effect change. The ontological and

even theological basis of nonviolence is well expressed in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (the *Song of the Blessed*), chapter 18, 2: “The wise call exterior renunciation the abandonment of actions engendered by desire, and call interior renunciation the abandonment of the interest in the fruit of one’s labors.” In the ontological understanding of the Indo-European world, especially that of India, positive action, and much more violent action, is intrinsically evil because it is directed toward the fulfilling of a desire, and it is desire that enslaves us to the plurality and that impedes our returning to the Brahman unity. Nonviolence is psychologically a masochistic movement that voluntarily has for its objective the enduring of pain through discipline, suffering, and oppression in order to call attention to those who control the political power. In the Judeo-Christian ontology and theology the question has always been faced in another way.¹⁵⁹

It should be clearly stated that neither in the Old nor the New Testament, neither by the Church nor tradition has violence as such been condemned. What has been condemned is the *unjust* use of violence. Violence as passion, for example, is a meditative attitude that is justified by its purpose. When a father, let us say, violently snatches a knife from his son who is about to injure his small sister, no one would say that the father did wrong. “Violence” comes from the Latin word *vis*, that is, force. The question is, therefore, what is the reason for force being used, and what kind of force is used? The seed germ, when in search of light, pushes up through the ground thus employing violence. In the same way, “Since John the Baptist came, up to this present time, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence and the violent are taking it by storm” (Matt. 11: 12).¹⁶⁰ The New Testament does not condemn violence, but rather proposes “prophetic violence” as the supreme way of being a person.¹⁶¹ This violence is a subversive type, but it has its own character. Subversion—from the Latin *subvertere*, to put below what is above and vice versa—is exactly what Jesus was referring to when he said, “How happy are you who are poor.... But alas for you who are rich” (Luke 6: 10, 14); and Mary sang in the *Magnificat*, “He has pulled down princes from their thrones and exalted the lowly” (Luke 1:52), that is, he pulls down (*sub-*) those who are above (*-vertere*). To say before the people, before the powerful, before the Romans, and before the Empire that God will put down the mighty, are examples of prophetic force, courage, valor, and even audacity. And the prophet pledged this by his life, by his unmasking of injustice, unto death, but without the use of arms, without killing, although he himself was killed. “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you!” (Matt. 23:37). Jesus had no desire to enter into the dialectic of mutual annihilation: “Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword” (Matt. 26:52). These two passages, however, should be examined individually.

The first and most inhuman violence that exists is that which destroys millions of people, whole generations: the violence of the oppressors, of the dominators, of the empires which is objectified in the unjust and oppressive structures that do not allow a human being to be human. And, what is worse, it makes the oppressed, because of their desperation, into oppressors themselves—as is seen in the foreman over the worker, the police over the people, and the middle class over the lower classes. Those historically responsible before God—in a universal humanity as represented in the history of salvation—are the dominating powers, that is, the developed countries that live off the exploitation of the underdeveloped countries.

Reacting to this oppressive violence is the violence of a small number who courageously challenge egoistic conformity, risk their own well-being and even their lives in order to transform the oppressor-oppressed dialectic into a relationship of brother-

with-brother. Some are desperate or ideologically convinced that there is no other way but to take up arms (*subversive armed violence*). The Christian does have in this regard the example of such saints as Bernard of Clairvaux who in the twelfth century preached in favor of a Crusade to wrest the holy places from the Arabs, and heroes such as Friar Luís Beltrán, OFM, who manufactured the cannons for the army of San Martín in the nineteenth century. The situation in which armed subversive violence is justified was enunciated by Paul VI and by the Medellín bishops who said that “revolutionary insurrection can be legitimate in the case of evident and prolonged tyranny that seriously works against the fundamental rights of man, and which damages the common good of the country!”¹⁶² And Father Thomas Melville was correct when he said, “If this situation does not exist today in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Brazil, Panama, and probably in all the Latin American countries, then the possibility that it exists anywhere is purely theoretical.”¹⁶³ It would be difficult to find a single Catholic moral theologian who would deny that in this case even armed violence is justified. But in the growth of the Kingdom of God violence is an equivocal sign, and there exists a sign that is unequivocal, but it is a sign based upon certain conditions.

In response to the oppressive violence of the bourgeois-militarists, neocolonial state—the worst kind of violence—there exists the *prophetic subversive violence*, which utilizes neither offensive nor defensive arms. It is the violence of the “Word of God” that is directed to those who hurl insults at the Cross, and that raises oppressed people to an awareness of their value and initiates the process of liberation. Jesus died on the Cross with neither the support nor the defense of the Zealots, those armed subversives, those anti-Roman Jews. Jesus died despite the “good will” of Pilate whom the Empire allowed the luxury of appearing to his victims as one having compassion but who in reality represented the real cause of the injustices suffered by the oppressed. Jesus died after having been arraigned before the Herodians or priests who internally oppressed the humble people in the name of the Empire, and it was these internal oppressors who utilized the means of oppressive violence and who made possible the coercive violence against Jesus and the people. But Jesus, as did the prophets, proposed a subversive prophetic violence without the use of arms. His method was that of the “pedagogy of the oppressed.”¹⁶⁴ Subversive armed violence prepares one for domination. The dominator, however, is always eliminated, and his place is occupied by a new dominator. Subversive prophetic violence, conversely, prepares one for liberation: the dominator will be humanized in the liberation of the dominated.

The conditions for subversive prophetic violence are distinct from those advocated by the proponents of nonviolence as well as being different from those advocated by the supporters of armed violence. Subversive *prophetic* violence is “violent,” and this distinguishes it from nonviolence in that it confronts, shocks, and harasses those who live as part of the oppressive structures. The intent is to destroy these structures, not to eliminate the oppressor; it is to humanize him in order that he will be transformed. Subversive prophetic violence will, furthermore, reveal the evil of the manufacture of arms and the wrong which the lowering of international prices of raw materials entails. It will denounce the “good conscience” of those who steal millions and who later return crumbs as “aid to the Third World.” Moreover, this violence is *subversive* because it puts down the universally held values such as money, prestige, and “having more,” and exalts the basic values of equality among people, justice, and liberty for all. But the means advocated are not guns, grenades, and bombs, but rather the pen and the committed life. Both commitments, armed subversive violence and prophetic subversive violence, often result in death. Jesus went to the Cross for having utilized

prophetic subversive violence as did Antonio de Valdivieso, Bishop of Nicaragua, and Father Pereira Neto of Recife. Their deaths, however, are intrinsically different from a victim of the Crusades against the Arabs in the Middle Ages, or of Camilo Torres against the Colombian army. These latter examples are heroes of subversive armed violence involved in a “holy war.” The death of the prophet is martyrdom —unequivocal “testimony” that liberates the oppressor, the police, or the army that assassinates him. The death of the hero for a cause, even a just cause, is not the death of a saint. Between the hero and the saint lies the distance of the equivocal sign of the struggle that attempts to annihilate the dominator and the unequivocal sign of the struggle to liberate the dominator and the dominated in a historical process which in the last analysis is eschatological because no stage of history is absolute, ultimate, or the Kingdom of God on earth.

Finally, we would say, the prophet should be *poor* in order to be completely free from the oppressive structures of violence. The prophet should be *wise*, aware of the possible scope and depth of the sin of oppression. He should be *courageous* and not fear being violent. He should be *astute* in order to show authentically what he uncovers and what the oppressors desire to hide. He should be *ready to die* because life (*vis*, force and violence, both are derived from the word *life*) and liberation grow and are watered with “the blood of the martyrs.” Jesus did not stain his hands with Roman blood, neither did his blood stain the Romans. He saved them; he liberated them because “the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to *give his life* as a ransom for *many*” (Matt.20:28). Our Lord had a “populist” vocation.

4. The Church and Racial Minorities

A minority of the African race live in Latin America, primarily in certain countries such as Brazil, Haiti, and other areas of the Caribbean. Latin Americans, on the other hand —Chicanos, Latinos, and Hispanic Americans —represent a large minority living in the United States.

(1) The Latin American Black

Negroes were brought in increasingly large numbers to the Americas beginning in the sixteenth century. They were sold as slaves by the English and Portuguese. (The Spaniards, incidentally, never sold slaves; they merely bought them). Toward the end of the sixteenth century there were certain regions of the Caribbean that had no Indian population, and the land was worked exclusively by Negro slaves. In the Synod of 1610, for example, Bishop Cristóbal y Rodríguez y Suárez spoke only of Negro slaves, and there were no constitutions written regarding the Indians. During the colonial era at least six to twelve million Negro slaves were brought to the Americas. The *Negro Year Book* of 1931- 1932 gives the following figures for two epochs:

| | | |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 1666- 1776 | Slaves sold only by the English in the British, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies..... | 3,000,000 |
| 1776- 1800 | An average of 74,000 slaves per year brought to the Americas: 38,000 by the English, 20,000 by the French, 10,000 by the Portuguese, and 6,000 by others, for a total of..... | 1,850,000 |

The slaves who were brought to the Hispanic American colonies came primarily from the Congo and Angola,¹⁶⁵ although the Guinea Coast provided the majority of slaves for Bahía, Brazil, during the sixteenth century, Angola during the seventeenth century, and the Gold Coast in the eighteenth century. The Africans were consequently from multiple tribes such as the Wolof, Mandingo, Bambara, Yoruba, and Ashanti. The most recent arrivals were called *Bossales*; those born in America were called *Creoles*; and fugitives and runaways were called *Cimarrones*. The blacks were organized into “nations” or councils with their own kings and governments. From their meetings, dances, and deformed religious services there sprang up their *santarias*, their *candomblés* (dances), and their voodoo. In Brazil “the division by nations appeared at diverse institutional levels: in the army where the colored soldiers formed four separate battalions, the Minas, Ardras, Angolas, and Criollos, and in the Catholic religious confraternities. In Bahía, for example, the confraternity of Our Lady of Rosario attracted primarily the Angolas while the Yorubas grouped themselves in a Church in the lower part of the city.”¹⁶⁶ In Haiti the different “nations” transformed themselves symbolically into gods or “mysteries”: thus the Congo gods Mayombe, Madrague, Ibo, and Maki were mixed with those of the Dahomy region and became subordinated to the Fon culture. In Central America a highly syncretized Afro-American cultural zone existed. The Yoruba civilization predominated in Cuba, Trinidad, and Northeast Brazil while the Dahomey and Fon cultures prevailed in Haiti and North Brazil. The Kromanti culture was predominant in Jamaica, Barbados, and Santa Lucía.

In 1840 there were more Negroes in Cuba than whites, but today only twenty-four percent of the population is black. Haiti is almost totally black. Some sixty-eight percent of the population in the Dominican Republic are mulattoes, and nineteen percent are pure Negro. Puerto Rico has a twenty-three percent population of mulattoes and four percent pure Negro. Panama is predominantly black. In North Brazil—in Acre, the Amazonas, and Pará—more than sixty percent of the population is Negro, while in the Northeast—in Maranhão and Alagoas—forty-eight percent of the people are black. In the East—from Sergipe to the Federal District—forty-six percent of the people are black, while in the South—from São Paulo to Río Grande do Sul—only eleven percent are Negroes. In the West Central states of Mato Grosso and Goiás, thirty-five percent of the people are black.

Christianity has deeply penetrated the consciousness of the black worship services but primarily as a syncretistic element from their previous traditions, which were very deformed because of the oppression that the Negroes suffered. In reality their cults and traditions were preserved through their dances, which their owners naively permitted.

Thus there grew up, for example, the *macumba* of Río de Janeiro—a mixture of *Fon* gege, *Yoruba* nago, the musulmi of *Islam*, Bantú, the *Indian* cambocle together with Catholic elements and spiritism—a syncretistic cult very powerful in the rural areas as well as the slums of the urban centers.

The Negro culture has also had a political dimension. There were numerous slave revolts—they could be numbered in the hundreds; for example, in Santo Domingo in the early years of the sixteenth century there were slave revolts in 1523, 1537, 1548, etc.—but only in Haiti, beginning on the night of August 14, 1791, were the Negroes successful in gaining their political independence. The revolution began with a voodoo ceremony presided over by Boukman in a clearing in the Caimán forest during a severe rainstorm. Negritude as a movement—analogical to indigeneity—has only begun in Latin America with a reflection on the meaning of voodoo itself. The intellectuals of the Antilles have manifested a special interest in this question, not for

The Black and Mulatto Population In Latin America (1940)

| | Negroes | Percent | Mulattoes | Percent |
|------------------|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|
| Mexico | 80,000 | 0.41 | 40,000 | 2.04 |
| Antilles | 5,500,000 | 39.29 | 3,000,000 | 21.43 |
| Guatemala | 4,011 | 0.12 | 2,000 | 0.06 |
| British Honduras | 15,000 | 25.55 | 20,000 | 34.03 |
| Honduras | 55,275 | 4.99 | 10,000 | 0.90 |
| El Salvador | 100 | 0.0001 | 100 | 0.0001 |
| Nicaragua | 90,000 | 6.52 | 40,000 | 2.88 |
| Costa Rica | 26,900 | 4.09 | 20,000 | 0.14 |
| Colombia | 405,076 | 4.50 | 2,205,382 | 24.32 |
| Venezuela | 100,000 | 2.79 | 1,000,000 | 27.93 |
| British Guiana | 100,000 | 29.30 | 80,000 | 23.44 |
| Dutch Guiana | 17,000 | 9.55 | 20,000 | 11.23 |
| French Guiana | 1,000 | 0.25 | 1,000 | 0.25 |
| Ecuador | 50,000 | 2.00 | 150,000 | 6.00 |
| Peru | 29,054 | 0.41 | 80,000 | 0.71 |
| Bolivia | 7,800 | 0.26 | 5,000 | 0.15 |
| Brazil | 5,789,924 | 14.00 | 8,276,321 | 20.01 |
| Paraguay | 5,000 | 0.52 | 5,000 | 0.52 |
| Uruguay | 10,000 | 0.46 | 50,000 | 2.30 |
| Chile | 1,000 | 0.02 | 3,000 | 0.06 |
| Argentina | 5,000 | 0.038 | 10,000 | 0.076 |

the purpose of “returning to Africa” or recreating the African culture, but rather to emphasize the honor of being black and of conserving their cultural traditions and discovering their political commitments. The Church in Latin America has done little in the way of the black pastoral.

(2) Latin America in North American Catholicism

More than fifteen million *Chicanos* or Mexican Americans, to which we must add the *Latinos* (Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Cubans and recently people from virtually every country in Latin America) constitute already thirty percent of North American Roman Catholics.

Since 1973 pastoral letters in the United States have been bilingual, that is, written in both English and Spanish. By the year 2000, fifty percent of all North American Catholics will be of Latin American origin if the demographic growth by birth and immigration continues.

Since the end of the Second World War and especially since 1962, the *Chicanos* have become aware of conditions in which they live, as evidenced by this poem:

I'm Joaquín,
lost in a world of confusion,
caught up in the whirl of a gringo society,
confused by the rules,
scorned by attitudes,
suppressed by manipulation.¹⁶⁷

The year that the Second Vatican Council began, César Chávez, leader of the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), began his work among rural farm workers in California. In 1963 Reyes López Tijerina began the *Alianza Federal de*

Mercedes (Federal Alliance of Mercy) in New Mexico. Thus began the confrontation between the Chicanos and the established economic powers which resulted in the police repression, the jailing, and the assassination of the Chicano leaders. In 1965 the “long *huelga*” (long strike) in California began in the San Joaquín Valley with the dramatic march of three hundred thousand workers and sympathizers from Delano to Sacramento. Other movements followed such as Rodolfo “Corky” González's Denver Crusade for Justice, the political party *La Raza Unida* (The United Race) which began in Texas in 1967 under the leadership of José Angel Gutiérrez and other activists, and an effort to mobilize Hispanic Americans in schools, communities, and universities which led to the founding of the United Mexican American Students (UMAS). These activities grew, and with the naming of Monseñor Patrick Flores as Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio, Texas, the Chicanos had their first Hispanic American bishop. The imbalance can yet be seen, however, in the fact that even though Spanish Americans represented nearly thirty percent of North American Roman Catholics, they had only one bishop of their race. In contrast, fifty percent of North American bishops are of Irish descent despite the fact that Irish represent no more than twelve percent of the Catholics in the country. In 1971 the Mexican-American Cultural Center was founded in San Antonio, Texas, where apostles are being prepared to work with Spanish American people in the United States. Shortly before, a group of priests and sisters — Chicano priests and nuns — organized to begin to unify their pastoral. The Latin American clergy in North America are becoming aware of their mission.

5. *Support for Agrarian Reform*

The issue of agrarian reform is of supreme theological and historical importance in Latin America. One should not forget that as a part of the conquest the lands were divided among the conquerors. The Indians in turn were “given” to the conquerors and colonists to work the land. The land owners, the *terratenientes* (those who “have” the land), constituted the oligarchy that was in power until 1929, the date which, according to our analysis, can be cited as the time when the incipient industrial bourgeois originated. To change the system of land tenure was in effect to eliminate the power of the oligarchic-agrarian class, and this became a major political, economic, cultural, and religious issue.

One may take a more recent date as a point of departure. In 1961, for example, Father Antonio Melo, twenty-eight years of age, led two thousand peasants assisted by some Catholic university students from the Brazilian region of Pernambuco to occupy some land. When the government of Goulart ceded the land to the new occupants, the military deposed the president.¹⁶⁸ Dom Hélder Camara, at that time Secretary of the Brazilian episcopacy, as a member of a special commission signed the approval of the agrarian reform project that was to be discussed in the parliament. The Archbishop of São Paulo, Cardinal C. c. de Vasconcelos Motta, proposed to President Goulart a meeting in the Catholic Institute *Frente Agrario* (Agrarian Front) in order to discuss the distribution of land to those who had none. The episcopacy in its “The Agrarian Reform Faces Communism”¹⁶⁹ indicated that the proposed reform was a dike erected against the Communist infiltration in that it represented an advance in and shaping of the movement around generalized property questions but not at the state level. At the same time the episcopacy was critical of the Communism of those who were invading the land because “their abuses constitute a suicidal attitude.”

Monseñor Geraldo de Proença Sigaud, Archbishop of Diamantina in Minas Gerais, and Monseñor Antonio de Castro Mayer disagreed with Cardinal Motta and declared

that “the expropriations of lands are illegal.” Dom Sigaud then published his “Anti-communist Catechism” at the same time that the Bishop of Santo André, Monseñor Jorge Marcos de Oliveira, was defending a group of strikers. The episcopacy, the clergy, and the laity—in fact all of the Church—adopted differing points of view to the point of being antithetical in regard to the question of agrarian reform, which remains a sign. The Brazilian episcopacy, nevertheless, issued a message on April 3, 1963, on the necessity of a threefold reform—agrarian, fiscal, and electoral—as a way of applying the teachings of the encyclical *Pacem in Terris*. The message was signed by the three Brazilian cardinals.

Northeast Brazil has suffered periodic and devastating droughts, and the *sertão* has been progressively abandoned by a growing number of peasants. In 1955 the Peasant Leagues of Julião adopted the motto, “The land for the peasants.” (Some seventy percent of the inhabitants of the Northeast are illiterate, and their annual income per capita is less than one hundred dollars U.S.)

The Catholic right, however, influenced by French groups such as “Verbe” and “La cité catholique,” has become more influential all over Latin America. In Mexico the periodical *Puño (Fist)* of the University Movement for Renewed Orientation (MURO), following the ideological direction of Víctor Manuel Sánchez, published an ultra-integrist article by Father Castellanos. A response was written by Father Allaz, OP, who was supported by his own Dominican Order as well as by the Archbishop of Mexico, Monseñor Miranda. These events took place in 1963. Articles were published in *El Día* by González Pedrero on “John XXIII and Primo de Rivera” and by López Cámara, Professor of Political Science in the Autonomous University, on “The Two Chuiches.” The reactions to the article by Allaz were favorable, and Father Castellanos was obliged to leave the country. Monseñor Miranda prohibited the MURO in the religious schools in 1964. The position of the Archbishop was reaffirmed by the “Committee of Catholic Organizations,” which issued a communique in 1964 in which for the first time the Mexican revolution of 1910 was referred to in positive terms.

Meanwhile, Brazil had experienced its military takeover, and Monseñor Padim protested when Catholic Action was accused of being infiltrated by Communists. “In a time when even Pope John XXIII has been called a Communist,” wrote Padim, “we should not be surprised that faithful Catholics, true to their spiritual leader, receive the same treatment.” In Belo Horizonte, however, numerous Catholics, rosary in hand, staged a public march in opposition to the agrarian reform program, a march that was organized by Lionel Brizzola. Catholic Action manifested its disapproval of the march.

In Chile, Christians had adopted a much more positive attitude, but there existed also in this Andean country a group of laypersons closely tied to the rightists in Brazil, and who called themselves the *Fiducia* (Trustees). They accused President Frei of being a Chilean Kerensky¹⁷⁰ because the Christian Democratic government, according to these critics, proposed a system in which private property would be eliminated. Following the same line, the periodical *Cruzada* (Crosade), published in Argentina by the “Organization for the Defense of Tradition, Family, and Property,” began in 1965 a vigorous campaign against the CGT stating, “We want to know if they are Christians and anti-Communists or anti-Christians and Marxists,” an interrogatory that, according to the article, stemmed from the fact that the reforms proposed by the CGT coincided with the Marxist view of private property and opposition to Catholicism and Western civilization.¹⁷¹ The periodical *Mensaje* (Message) stated, “A few days ago we read in *El Mercurio* an advertisement placed by the *Fiducia* group which contained eight

hundreded sixty signatures of ‘peasants and workers of Curavi,’ “ which purported to be a protest against “the agrarian reform” and asserted that the reform program was of “no advantage to the working class.” The origin of the advertisement can be traced to the fact that a country estate belonging to the President of the *Fiducia* had just been expropriated by the government. The *Mensaje* article concluded, “We pray that Our Lady will liberate Chile from socialism which is the bane of Christian civilization.”¹⁷²

One cannot say *indiscriminately*, however, that the Church always defends private property. The right to property that has been stolen, for example, cannot be defended. But what of an inheritance that was previously stolen? Are the lands that have been taken by armed violence now Spanish lands, asked the theologians of Salamanca in the sixteenth century, those lands wrested from the American Indians? When General Roca in his expedition into the Argentine Pampas in the nineteenth century gave to his lieutenants the Indian lands that the Spanish were pillaging, did they by right belong more to the Spanish than to the primitive inhabitants who were violently expelled? Furthermore, one should remember that there is more than one type of property. In the secular doctrine of the Church, in the Scriptures, in the writings of the Fathers, and in tradition, property is analogous. In the first place, “common ownership and universal liberty are said to be of natural law, because private property and slavery exist by human contrivance for the convenience of social life, and not by natural law.”¹⁷³ The “distinction of possessions,”¹⁷⁴ therefore, is a secondary natural right which is traditionally referred to as one of the “human rights,” that is, the right of private property.¹⁷⁵ The Cenobite monk, Saint Basil of Caesarea, said that “the community of goods [practiced by his order] is a norm of existence more appropriate than private property, and it only conforms to nature,”¹⁷⁶ Today we are shocked by such a statement, and if we are, it is because of our ignorance of “tradition,” even when we think we are following tradition. Furthermore, this is not all that can be said, for not all ownership of private property is a natural right. In the first place, private or exclusive property can be that belonging to a person or to a group. A corporation or a jointly owned company is an example. But also, property can belong to the citizens of a country who have for their use the resources or goods of that country to the exclusion of other countries.

Furthermore, private property can be a positive right. In the example given above, the Indians—that is, the tribe—possessed the land as their private property, and though Roca’s lieutenants took the land by force, their possession of it was merely positive, that is, “by means of the determination” of General Roca.¹⁷⁷ Two other clarifications need to be made. First, natural property rights are a *necessary* means for the organization of human life materially, culturally, and religiously. But the natural right to property cannot be absolute if by the exclusive use of that property my being human is frustrated. *I have no natural right* over any property that is not absolutely necessary for my perfection. I have only a positive right. Furthermore, one of the oldest Christian traditions—and this is the second clarification—is that “in case of extreme necessity, everything is common.”¹⁷⁸

Besides referring to these traditional principles in Catholicism, one can also affirm the following: private property is not illegitimate in principle, that is, by nature, but it can be illegitimate *in fact*. For example, property obtained by armed violence is illegitimate—such as the lands taken from the Indians either at the time of the Conquest or later by the national armies in behalf of the oligarchies. Property that is bought too cheaply or obtained through fraud is illegitimate. And even in cases

where property is gained legitimately, one cannot assert that all such property is one's natural right. Only that which is necessary for the development of the person can be defended as property by natural right. United Fruit, therefore, does not have a natural right to the thousands of acres that it possesses in Central America, nor does the land owner who lives in the city have any natural right to the hundreds of acres worked by someone else for him. He possesses by *natural* right only what is necessary for him and his family to live honestly and decently. All the rest he has by *positive* right, and the *remainder* is the *natural* right of those who work the land even though they do not possess the positive right over it. Moreover, in virtually all the countries in Latin America, one encounters "the case of extreme necessity, where all is common." It was on these traditional principles of Catholic Scholastic theology that Chile began to be aware of the need for "agrarian reform."

The appeals of the Bishop of Matanzas, who opposed the agrarian reform program in Cuba in 1959, really belonged to another stage in history,¹⁷⁹ as did the opinions of the Cardinal of Bogotá, Monseñor Luis Concha, when he asked in 1961, "Why talk about an agrarian reform?"¹⁸⁰ The Chilean episcopacy, guided by the foresight of Monseñor Manuel Larraín, issued a pastoral letter on March 11, 1962, regarding the Chilean peasants who struggled under the yoke of Liberalism and for whom the Church committed itself to develop a plan of agrarian reform of those properties belonging to the Church.¹⁸¹ The letter declared: "Conscious of the situation of the peasant and desirous to collaborate not only with the fundamental doctrine, but also as an example of concrete acts, we in the Plenary Assembly agree this year to begin a study of an eventual colonization of the agricultural properties which belong to the hierarchy."¹⁸² Monseñor Larraín had begun in 1961 a division of some 342 hectares of irrigated lands of the "Alto Las Cruces" property by dividing them among 12 families. Cardinal Silva Henríquez of Santiago almost simultaneously followed the same procedure by dividing over 1200 hectares of "Las Pataguas" among 80 families.¹⁸³ The Church then created the Institute for Agrarian Promotion (INPROA) because it wanted not only to provide land but also to educate the farmers in the establishment of cooperatives, in the accumulation of capital, in the technology needed for the exploitation of the land, and in the sale of their products. *Misereor*, a West German Catholic aid foundation, and the Taizé Community made possible the formation of the initial capital of INPROA. In 1965 the Chilean Jesuits offered to the Institute farms of 1,128 and 5,256 hectares. When the Christian Democratic government of Eduardo Frei came to power a more extensive agrarian reform program was proposed, and the lands belonging to the Church were confiscated in order to continue the program already begun.¹⁸⁴ As late as 1967 Monseñor Sánchez Beguiristain, Bishop of Concepción, ceded to the Agrarian Reform Institute an estate of 2,700 hectares.

Other Latin American bishops have also supported agrarian reform. Monseñor Domingo Roa, Bishop of Maracaibo, spoke out in defense of the Indians of the Yupa tribe whose chief, Abel Ramírez, was killed on December 21, 1961, by hired gunmen of the land owners. The bishop defended the Indians and their "right to possess their land." We would add that they had the *natural* right, but they were assassinated in the name of *positive* right. In Peru Bishops Pineda of Huánuco, Valdivia of Huancayo, and Ortiz y Coronado of Huancavélica began distributing their ecclesial lands among the peasants in 1962. Doubtless these acts by the bishops prompted many landless peasants to invade other lands, incidents which occurred later in Peru and Bolivia. In June 1962 the land owners accused two priests who were working with the Indians in Huancavélica of theft and also of having violated minors. The priests were jailed, and

when the bishops came to their defense and demonstrated that they were being falsely accused in order to discredit their social work among the Indians, the Lima newspaper *El Comercio* published the story, and the two priests were freed—much to the dismay of the land owners. In 1963 the Bishop of Cuzco, Monseñor Jurgens Byrne, distributed the lands belonging to the Church among the peasants. When they began to occupy those lands, Father Pardo, Vicar General of the Diocese of Huacho, defended the agrarian reform program that was violently being criticized by the Lima newspaper *La Prensa* during December 1963. The Indians continued to occupy the lands around Cuzco and in other areas. After observing the results of this program, Monseñor Byrne distributed the last 15,000 hectares of the archdiocese to the colonists in 1964. When the Belaunde government fell—in large part because of the brutal repression of the peasants—and the military Junta came to power, a group of priests working with ONIS sent a declaration regarding the agrarian reform program to General Velasco Alvarado, President of the Junta. The declaration was dated June 20, 1969,¹⁸⁵ and cited the Pastoral Constitution of the Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, which stated: “God intended the earth and all that it contains for the use of every human being and people” (n. 69). Four days later when General Velasco decreed the Agrarian Reform Law he cited this document from ONIS. But as late as 1970 Father Neptali Liceta, a priest in Cajatambo, was accused of having incited the peasants to rebellion. He responded to the accusation saying, “I am the son of peasants. I know this system of oppression. To liberate my neighbor is part of my vocation as a priest.”¹⁸⁶

In Ecuador the Church has been more indifferent to the agrarian reform question, as can be seen in the pastoral letter of the episcopacy written in 1963.¹⁸⁷ It was not until 1969 that Monseñor Leonidas Proaño, Bishop of Riobamba, signed an agreement with the Ecuadorian Education Center of Agricultural Services (CESA) on March 13 giving to the Reform Institute the 3,000-hectare Hacienda “Tepeyac.” This project was also financed by *Misereor* of West Germany. The Center for Studies and Social Action (CEAS) began to work in close coordination with CESA, the former having a strong program of education by radio as well as the Institute for the Formation of Peasant Leaders. As one might expect, Monseñor Proaño has had a great deal of opposition in view of the fact that nearly one-third of all the land in Ecuador belongs to the Church, that is, to the dioceses, religious orders, and congregations rooted in colonial traditions.

In Argentina Monseñor Iriarte and his priests of Reconquista signed a declaration in defense of the peasants illustrating that the poverty of those in the Northeast, and especially of the wood-gatherers in the Chaco of Santa Fe, was a result of agrarian injustices. Monseñor Cafferata of San Luis, after a pastoral visit of eighteen months, stated that “the people of the rural area were prevented from gaining property rights over the land which they worked, and no one had any interest in their cause whatsoever. ...Social and economic liberalism,” the Bishop declared, “has created an unjust order.”¹⁸⁸ But this did not impede Monseñor Buteler, Archbishop of Mendoza, from celebrating a Mass for the Association for Tradition, Family, and Property, which encouraged these self-styled defenders of Catholic tradition.

In Colombia the Church gave to the Agrarian Reform Institute (INCORA) 800 hectares shortly before they were to be expropriated by the government. And the Bishop of Honduras, Marcelo Gerin Boulax, spoke disparagingly of the invasion of land, criticizing those involved for their violent methods,¹⁸⁹ and forgetting the violence

and oppression of those whose use of the land was founded on positive property rights while the exploited had the *natural* rights over the lands they worked in all of Honduras.

II. THE MINISTRIES AT PRESENT

1. The Attitude of the Bishops

The work of the sociologist and of the historian is difficult when the effort is made to discover meaning in recent phenomena. There is the risk of overlooking important facts and of failing to recognize persons who have played essential roles. In this section, however, I will describe only a few bishops about whom much is already known through public articles and through their own books and pastorals. Only God truly knows who is working in the history of salvation. There are many who occupy humble posts on the frontier of the advance of the Kingdom, and there are many more than those who are apparent. It would be well if we could indicate the different attitudes of the Latin American episcopacy, and in an earlier work we did examine the perspective of the bishops of the sixteenth century—the century of great renewal within Christendom, especially in Spain.¹⁹⁰ There was an ideal as to what a bishop should be: poor (although not in Europe), one who visited his diocese, wise, saintly, and in Spanish America, a missionary—though in the latter role there was a certain kind of paternalism in regard to the Indian whom the bishops wanted to incorporate into Christendom. In the twentieth century, since the time of Vatican II and the Medellín Conference, the ideal regarding the bishop has changed dramatically. *Some* continue with the idea of a Christendom wherein the bishop is a Father who demands obedience, who is a doctor in Latin Scholastic theology, who defends above all else the good relations with the state, and who defends the rights of the Church in regard to teaching, the *Patronato*, divorce, and good customs. In general he is a canonist, and he thinks of Communism as the antithesis of Christianity, often confusing Christianity with Western civilization. Many of the Latin American bishops have this attitude, but few of them are as consistent theologically as Monseñor Geraldo Sigaud, Bishop of Diamantina, Brazil, who defended this point of view by his acts and in his writings—though in fairness to him, it should be recognized that in July 1970 while in Rome, he condemned the injustices such as torture being perpetrated by his government.¹⁹¹ Many of these traditionalist bishops have had serious conflicts with their priests, bishops such as Monseñor Buteler of Mendoza, Bishop Bolatti of Rosario, Cardinal Caggiano of Buenos Aires, Cardinal Concha of Bogotá, and Archbishop Casariego of Guatemala.

There are others, however, who have adopted the attitude of desiring to do away altogether with the idea of Christendom and who are looking for new ways for the Church to be missionary and to become more knowledgeable in regard to the changes that are taking place in the world. In Latin America this implies the discovery of the commitment of the Church in political, economic, and cultural structures of our underdeveloped and oppressed continent in the struggle for the liberation of the poor. These bishops, like Bartolomé de Las Casas who desired obedience to the *New Laws*, are intent on applying the teachings of the Constitutions and Decrees of the Second Vatican Council and of the resolutions of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín. Besides these major documents, the bishops have other authoritative statements to which they can appeal in the development of a new episcopal ideal. One is the address Paul VI gave to the Latin American episcopacy on November 23, 1965, in which he said, “There is no lack, unfortunately, of those who remain

closed to the renewing winds of the times,”¹⁹² or, “The Church has always used its goods for the community, and if not, it has been weighed down with unproductive temporal goods, especially of lands, which today do not have the importance as in other times and which it would be wise now to employ in a better way.”¹⁹³ The bishops could also appeal to the Decree on the Bishops Pastoral Office in the Church, *Christus Dominus*, in which the bishops are urged to respond to “the difficulties and problems by which people are most vexatiously burdened and troubled ...with a special concern ...[for] the poor and the lower classes to whom the Lord sent them to preach the gospel”¹⁹⁴ and “welcome priests with a special love ...and thus by his readiness to listen to them and by his trusting familiarity, a bishop can work to promote the whole pastoral work of the entire diocese.”¹⁹⁵ Also available is the supremely important Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*), which reminds the bishops that mission is not only exterior but also interior and reminds them that “the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature. For it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she takes her origin, in accordance with the decree of God the Father.”¹⁹⁶ Furthermore, “this mission is a continuing one. In the course of history it unfolds as the mission of Christ Himself who was sent to preach the gospel to the poor. Hence, prompted by the Holy Spirit, the Church must walk the same road which Christ walked: a road of poverty and obedience, of service and self-sacrifice....This duty must be fulfilled by the order of bishops ...and is one and the same everywhere and in every situation, even though the variety of situations keeps it from being exercised in the same way.”¹⁹⁷ “If this goal is to be achieved, theological investigation must necessarily be stirred up in each major socio-cultural area [as in Latin America, we would add]....Thus it will be more clearly seen in what ways faith can seek for understanding in the philosophy and wisdom of these peoples.”¹⁹⁸

In Latin America, where one can observe generally a certain partiality in the exercise of the episcopal functions —each bishop is bishop in his diocese, and no one can interfere with his manner or function —it should be remembered that “as members of the body of bishops which succeeds the College of Apostles, all bishops are consecrated not just for some one diocese, but for the salvation of the entire world.”¹⁹⁹ This is the theological foundation of CELAM, a providential institution in Latin America. Finally, the bishops could appeal to the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*), which stresses an “intimate bond between the Church and mankind ...especially those who are poor or are in any way afflicted.”²⁰⁰

The opening address of Paul VI to the General Conference in Medellín as well as the final document entitled “The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council” have been studied in a dialogical way by bishops, priests, and laity in very few dioceses.. Everything, however, could be summarized in the Pastoral Conclusions of the Medellín Conference, which state: “To us, the Pastors of the Church, belong the duty to educate the Christian conscience, to inspire, stimulate, and help orient all the initiatives that contribute to the formation of man. It is also up to us to denounce everything which, opposing justice, destroys peace.”²⁰¹ These are the principles by which an historian may judge the action of the bishops, and we will select a few examples, according to the information available, which indicate the direction of commitment.

Without doubt there is today in Brazil a group of bishops who know how to witness in this difficult period through which they must live. Among them are Dom José

Távora of Aracaju, Waldir Calheiros of Volta Redonda, Antonio Fragoso of Crateus, Cândido Padim of Lorena, Hélder Câmara of Olinda and Recife, Jorge Marcos de Oliveira of Santo André, João da Mota e Albuquerque of São Luís do Maranhão, Avelar Brandão Vilela of Teresina, José Pires of João Pessoa, Aloisio Lorscheider of Santo Angelo, and David Picão of Santos. Outstanding among these is the Archbishop of Recife and Olinda, Dom Hélder Câmara, of whom Amoroso Lima has written, in response to the attempt to defame him, “I see a *sign* much greater than his personal greatness and his destiny which is of international renown currently acquired.”²⁰² In reality, Dom Hélder has been marked from his childhood, from his formation, from his first priestly commitments and even earlier by a certain vocation which at this time is a sufficient *sign* for our time. His conduct approaches the ecclesial praxis that Christians and the world demand of the Latin American Church, namely, *prophetic commitment* to the oppressed people who are beginning a process of liberation. Dom Hélder has written a poem in which he says:

When I was a youngster
 I wanted to go out running
 Among the mountain peaks.
 And when, between two summits
 A gap appeared,
 Why not leap
 Across the chasm?
 Led by the angel’s hand,
 All my life long
 This is what happened,
 This, exactly.²⁰³

He tells us, “I was born February 7, 1909, in a primary school of Fortaleza, the capital of Ceará, in Brazil, where my mother was a government teacher.”²⁰⁴ Câmara was born into a world of simple poverty, in an educational environment, in a position open to the world, for to be a teacher in a government school is quite distinct from serving in this capacity in a religious institution. He entered the seminary, but his classical scholastic training did not prepare him for theological renewal. Dom Hélder was not to be, however, a theologian, but a pastor. He was ordained on August 15, 1931, at the age of twenty-two. He was sent to Fortaleza, the provincial capital, and shortly thereafter became involved with the *Legion of October*, a rightist movement inspired by the Portuguese leader Antonio Salazar. By order of his bishop, Câmara accepted the responsibility of Secretary of Education in the *Legion* movement in Ceará. In 1934 when the Archbishop founded the “Electoral League,” a pressure group to promote the political candidates who were responsive to the desires of the Brazilian Church, Dom Hélder was transformed into a very active propagandist. A short time later he was named Secretary of Education for the State of Ceará and was later transferred to the Secretariat of Federal Education in Rio. He learned very early, therefore, to work directly with political and administrative functionaries totally outside the Church. Since 1933, therefore, Dom Hélder has learned personally something of the Church-world relation about which Vatican II and the Medellín Conference had so much to say. In 1936 Câmara was appointed to the task of Technical Assistant for the Ministry of Education of the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, then the capital of Brazil. He subsequently was asked to work in the Institute for Educational Research as head of a department that was developing programs and tests for pupils in the public schools

of R o which at the time had approximately 120,000 students.²⁰⁵ While in R o he led in the organization of the National Conference of the Bishops of Brazil (CNBB), and he was named Secretary General, a post he held for twelve years. He was also responsible for preparing for and organizing the International Eucharistic Congress in R o as well as the First General Conference of Latin American Bishops. Both of these meetings took place in R o in 1955.

Following the Eucharistic Congress, Cardinal Gerlier of Lyons called on C mara. The purpose for the visit was not social, for Gerlier said to him,

I have had some experience in organization, and since taking part in this Eucharistic Congress I must tell you that you have exceptional capacities as an organizer. This is not a compliment I am paying you. I say it instead to awaken you to a sense of responsibility. Now I ask you, why do you not put those capacities of yours to work at solving the problems of the slums, what you call the *favelas*?²⁰⁶

This was probably one of the most important incidents in the history of the Church in Latin America. A committed European prophet who had long been concerned with social problems passed the torch to his Latin America brother. "Thus," says C mara, "Cardinal Gerlier was the one who gave me the push that plunged me into this action. Formerly I had felt the problem but had not been involved in the battle."²⁰⁷ But the path of protest and social work eventually alienated Dom H lder from his Cardinal, and the day came when the Cardinal himself indicated that they must separate. It was the time of Vatican II, and after some consideration was given to sending C mara to the diocese of S o Luis de Maranh o, he was named instead as Archbishop of Olinda and Recife in March 1964, the same month of the military takeover of the government in Brazil. "On April 12," he says, "I took possession of the diocesan center of Recife."²⁰⁸ This multifaceted personality is difficult to describe in a few sentences. He "sees far beyond the limits of his own experience. He has the eyes of a poet, of a prophet who reads the analysis of a Father Lebreton with the eyes of a Teilhard de Chardin and who interprets the pontifical encyclicals in the fiery language of a Saint James." "I am not an expert," he says, "either in economics or sociology or politics. I am a pastor and see my people suffering."²⁰⁹

Dom H lder is not a politician, and he has rejected all suggestions that he accept a political appointment, though on one occasion he was even offered the vice-presidency of the country. His commitment is to be a "prophetic politico." He of course does not refrain from speaking about political issues. In a report prepared for the CELAM meeting at Mar del Plata in October 1966, C mara wrote: "The social revolution that the world needs is not an armed coup d'etat, nor guerrilla fighting, nor war. It is a profound and radical change which presupposes divine grace and a transformation of public opinion which can and must be aided by the Church of Latin America and of the entire world."²¹⁰ Nevertheless, he believes that "the revolution will not be fought either by the students or the priests or the artists or the intellectuals; it will be fought by the masses, the oppressed, and they will be the victims of that repressive action of power."²¹¹

Later C mara confided,

I dream of a Latin American integration confronting the capitalist empire which is headed by the United States, and confronting the socialist empire which is headed by Soviet Russia, and confronting the Common Market. The nations of South America must draw together, must become integrated. But not in the way that Latin America has up to the present carried out integration. I dream of an integration that will accept neither external imperialisms nor

internal imperialisms. ...We must therefore be very careful: Latin American integration, yes; but without mini-imperialism, whether Brazilian or Argentinean or Chilean.²¹²

Imperialism obviously troubles Câmara greatly, and he often speaks of it. "Let us be finished with the illusion that we can overcome underdevelopment," he contends, "by accepting aid which has proved to be deceitful and even counterproductive; let us align ourselves resolutely with those who demand a complete reform of international commerce. Let us be finished with the false dichotomy of capitalism versus communism, as if the fact of being in disagreement with capitalist solutions implied adherence to communism, and as if to criticize the United States were synonymous with a liaison with Russia or Red China."²¹³ But though he speaks of politics and political issues, Câmara insists that he is not attempting to be a politician.

I am a man of the Church. I am here to serve the people, and what I can do as bishop I would never do if I agreed to follow a political line and accepted a government position. ...I am persuaded that the Church in Latin America can still be of service to the people. And so, ...I am making the most of a certain clerical advantage. There! That is what I am doing! Because, in this country today and in the present conditions, a bishop can say what a student or a workman or an intellectual-even a professor-could not risk saying.²¹⁴

Dom Hélder is not an economist, but he understands and preaches that the "underdeveloped world takes note that its desire for a thorough and rapid renovation of the socioeconomic structures which keep it in poverty is opposed by one or the other of those two power blocs as being 'subversive and Communistic' and sees that it is being exploited by one or the other power blocs eager for new satellites." Clearly he is speaking of the United States and the Soviet Union.²¹⁵

Câmara does not give the impression of being an intellectual, but he proposed a total program for the regional seminary in Camaragibe. At the seminary's inauguration, Dom Hélder insisted that it be an institution in which "the old theological and philosophical themes will be examined along with the new, against the background of ecumenism and the Second Vatican Council, and in the light of the Third World's experience."²¹⁶ He included as a part of the curriculum the "reexamination of the principle of subsidiarity ...studies of the attempts at a new socialism ...clergy and laity in the developed and developing world, and automation and its human problems."²¹⁷ Câmara believes that "we might profit by the Marxist analytical method which is still viable today."²¹⁸ If we leave aside the materialistic concept of life and history bound up with that method in the beginning, we could complete the Marxist analysis with a true vision of Christianity which presents no obstacle to human advancement, but quite the contrary.²¹⁹

"Why not recognize that there is no such thing as a unique type of socialism?" he asks...Why not demand, for the Christian, the free use of the word socialism? It is not necessarily linked with materialism, nor does it have to designate a system that destroys the individual or the community."²²⁰ This becomes all the more important when one comprehends that "Latin America is the Christian portion of the underdeveloped world."²²¹

As an expert in pedagogy, he asks, "Is there any other nation in the world that is so completely alienating itself in a domain as vital and sacred as education? We will never attain a harmonious and responsible civilization at the price of the spiritual annihilation of one people by another."²²² Here he is referring to the political influences and control exercised by the United States over Brazil.

As a pastor he confesses that "I believe we will always need priests with long years

of formation, but in order to respond to the needs of the communities we shall also have to ordain men from those same basic communities. I will never do so without the approval of Rome, but I will try to find the means to show that there is no other solution.”²²³ Câmara is influenced greatly by Gandhi and Martin Luther King, and he has been the outstanding proponent of nonviolence in Latin America. In 1968 he launched a world movement that was to begin on October 2 to awaken the “Abrahamic minorities” who “hope against all hopelessness,” with the purpose that these movements exercise a “moral pressure for liberation,” conscientizing not only the people but also the oligarchical oppressors. More than forty Brazilian bishops supported the movement, and in 1969 it was referred to as “Action, Justice, and Peace.” Along with Ralph Abernathy, a longtime associate of Martin Luther King, Câmara issued on March 21, 1970, the “Declaration of Recife” calling for nonviolence in the struggle against injustice. Shortly thereafter he was proposed by numerous entities for the Nobel Peace Prize. He would be a worthy recipient.

All of his personality is reflected in this statement: “I accuse the true instigators of violence, all those on the right or left, who impair justice and impede peace.... Personally, I prefer a thousand times to be killed than to kill.”²²⁴

Dom Hélder is not alone. In a Mass celebrated on May 8, 1968, to commemorate those lost in the Second World War, Dom Edmilson da Cruz, Auxiliary Bishop of São Luis do Maranhão, asked in a sermon, “Is there freedom in Brazil? If there is, why are we not permitted to have peaceful demonstrations?” The military representatives present were so incensed that they walked out of the service. Archbishop da Mota e Albuquerque said later, “The Church in Brazil at the present time profoundly senses her *prophetic mission* to denounce error and announce truth.”²²⁵ The Catholic periodical *Vozes* ceased publication on September 3, 1969, by order of the government because the editors had denounced the political tortures that had been going on in the country since 1968. For the same reason Monseñor Calheiros was jailed along with eleven of his priests, all of whom were accused of subversion because they had issued a pastoral letter denouncing the tortures. They were freed, however, after several days. Cardinal Rossi responded by saying, “We prefer men who will confront difficulties even when there is risk, and not those who hide behind an attitude of criminal indifference.” Cardinal Barros Câmara was also critical of the “war against the Church,” and by 1970 even Monseñor Sigaud, who had defended the military government, denounced on October 6 the frequent tortures. In these difficult times, therefore, the Brazilian episcopacy manifested a dramatic unity, although within the group there have been and are varying positions.

Since the nineteenth century the Chilean episcopacy has been one of the most homogeneous in Latin America. They have been blessed with great bishops who have manifested an advanced social and ecclesial awareness. Chile has given to Latin America one of the outstanding leaders, the late Bishop of Talca, Don Manuel Larraín, who was tragically killed in an automobile accident on June 22, 1966. Don Manuel (1900-1966) together with Father Alberto Hurtado (1901-1952) reflected all the optimism of the ideal of a New Christendom to be fashioned by Catholic Action and Christian Democracy. Don Manuel was a graduate of the Catholic University in Santiago with a degree in Law, and when he was twenty years of age he began his seminary studies. Later he was sent to the Gregorian University in Rome where he earned a doctorate in theology. He served as professor and director of the Theological Institute of Santiago and in 1938 was named Bishop of Talca. Until 1962 he was the national adviser of Catholic Action. Larraín conceived and proposed the founding of CELAM,

and he was president of the Conference when he died. He was a cultured person, a theologian of his time who had a vision of the Latin American Church as no one else in his era. He had a great influence over Rome and over the Papal Nuncio, and he achieved within the Chilean episcopacy an internal unity without equal. Curiously, he never became a cardinal.

The Archbishop of Santiago, Cardinal Raul Silva Henríquez, is likewise an example in his ministry. As already noted, he began in his diocese an agrarian reform program, and he has shown a readiness to speak out regarding the most difficult questions. Silva was one of the first national leaders to congratulate Salvador Allende upon his election as President of the country. One could continue by calling attention to other Chilean bishops such as Manuel Sánchez Beguiristain of Concepción, Carlos González Cruchaga of Talca, former spiritual director of the Catholic Seminary of Santiago, and several others.

In Argentina the situation is much more complex. It would appear that the commitment of outstanding priests is altered once they are incorporated into the episcopal body. There are, however, some striking exceptions. Cardinal Caggiano, about whom comments have already been made, was a typical prelate of his time. He was founder of Catholic Action in Argentina, serving as mediator between the government and the CGT on various occasions, defender of free teaching²²⁶ and of private property.²²⁷ Caggiano celebrated a Mass in 1970 in honor of the founding of the Federal Police, at which time he lauded them for their defense of our civilization and as a bulwark against subversion. Bishop Ildefonso Sansierra of San Juan has experienced a serious crisis with his priests, especially those in the Catholic University. Archbishop Alfonso Buteler of Mendoza has also been opposed by many of his priests. Monseñor Vicentín of Corrientes excommunicated Father Marturet in an attempt to control the unrest in the diocese. Monseñor Guillermo Bolatti had a severe problem with twenty-seven of his priests in Rosario.

The Archbishop of Reconquista, Juan Iriarte, represents a striking contrast. Even before the Second Vatican Council, Iriarte had begun a reform in his diocese. The same is true of Monseñor Alberto Devoto of Goya who was one of the first to support the XIV *Schema* committing himself to the episcopal life of poverty and simplicity. Monseñor Angelelli of Rioja declared in 1970, "We are weary of hearing that every attempt to raise the level of the people from inhuman conditions is solely by leftists and subversives." His pastoral regarding the conditions in the province of Rioja is a classic.²²⁸

Other bishops who should be recognized for their courage and efforts are Jaime de Nevaes of Neuquén for his role in the work of the Chocón-Río Colorado; Monseñor Carlos Cafferata of San Luís for his courageous stand against the governor of his province and his pastoral concern in regard to the poor; Monseñor Italo Di Stéfano of the province Presidente Roque Sáenz Peña who is a former president in the Department of the Pastoral of CELAM; Monseñor Vicente Zazpe, Archbishop of Sante Fe, for his social pastoral begun in 1971; Monseñor Podestá, former Bishop of Avellaneda; Monseñor Brasca of Rafaela; and Monseñor Quarracino of Nueve de Julio.²²⁹

In order to avoid prolonging this exposition, we will indicate some of the bishops who have distinguished themselves in recent years. In Mexico other than Cardinal Miguel Darío Miranda y Gómez, Archbishop of Mexico City, one thinks first of Monseñor Sergio Méndez Arceo, Bishop of Cuernavaca. A graduate of the Gregorian University in Rome with a doctorate in theology, Don Sergio served as professor in the Seminary of Mexico and at the time gave no indication of the fact that he would

later become a person of prophetic renewal. But Don Sergio has been molded by contemporary history —not by books, but by the history of salvation as an event. He is not blind to reality, nor is he reluctant to speak out and express his convictions. And he knows how to wait for results. Consequently, his “Mariachis” Mass, the renovation of the Cathedral in Cuemavaca, his courageous defense of the Benedictine convent of Don Lemercier, and of Monseñor Ivan Illich and CIDOC are the results not of an *a priori* calculation nor of a theological ideology, but of an awareness of what history is teaching. Don Sergio is a prophet because he is a good historian, a historian not of the past for the past’s sake, but of the past for the future, a future which he announces because he is truthful and because he says what he thinks.

In the Dominican Republic the episcopacy has known how to survive in a difficult situation. Examples can be seen in the unequivocal positions adopted by Monseñor Octavio Beras, Archbishop of Santo Domingo, and in the first pastoral letter of Monseñor Roque Adames of Santiago de Caballeros in 1966 in which he said, “The number of unemployed is serious and shocking. Hunger is the daily bread of many and anguish the permanent patrimony of all. Almost three hundred thousand children are without any schools.”²³⁰

The Apostolic Administrator, Monseñor Polanco Brito, the continual object of reactionary pressure and accused by some as being a Communist, was announced by the Papal Nuncio as the future Archbishop of Santo Domingo in 1970.

Noteworthy in Puerto Rico has been Monseñor Antulio Parrilla Bonilla, Bishop without territorial diocese, who in March 1969 stated that the Church should “liquidate its vast land holdings and inaugurate nonpaternalistic programs of social promotion as a means by which the Church could distinguish itself as a poor Church for the poor of Yahweh. The riches of the Christian Church,” Monseñor Parrilla declared, “are a stone of stumbling as much for the rich as for the poor. We must divest ourselves of power or of the appearance of power, of luxury and of the triumphalisms which remain. We must appear as a poor Church, humble and defenseless.”²³¹ Monseñor Aponte also should be mentioned because he is the first Puerto Rican to be consecrated as Archbishop of San Juan.

In Panama the young dynamic Bishop of Santiago de Veraguas, Monseñor Marcos McGrath, has distinguished himself not only in his own diocese but in all of Latin America. He was the former Director of the Catholic Seminary in Santiago, Chile, vice-president of CELAM, directly involved in the Document of Buga in regard to universities, took a courageous position against the Panamanian government in regard to the martyrdom of Father Héctor Gallego, and has inspired many efforts in the entire continent.

The episcopacy of Colombia is one of the most traditional in all of Latin America, but even here there are contrasting positions. At one extreme has been Cardinal Luís Concha, Archbishop of Bogotá, who was personally involved in the Camilo Torres tragedy. But there is also Monseñor Tulio Botero Salazar, Archbishop of Medellín, who in 1962 abandoned the Archbishop’s palace in order to live in a working-class community and who declared, “Nothing is more profoundly revolutionary than the gospel”²³² At the opposite extreme from Luís Concha was the Bishop of Buenaventura, Gerardo Valencia Cano, who was the only member of the Colombian episcopacy to sign the Declaration of Golconda in 1968. Bishop Valencia, however, was killed in 1971 when the aircraft on which he was a passenger crashed in the mountains of southwest Colombia.

In Ecuador Monseñor Leonidas Proaño Villalba, Bishop of Riobamba and former President of the Department of the Pastoral of CELAM, besides instituting an agrarian

reform program in his diocese, also began the “Pastoral Plan of Riobamba,” which projects the transformation of the parishes into diaconates in which the priests will work in teams in various capacities and receive voluntary donations from the faithful. The sacramental celebrations are by groups and not by individuals. This change was projected for the decade of 1970 to 1980, and in the following decade, 1980 to 1990, the parish sectors will be replaced by diaconates. According to the Plan the rural areas are to be served by itinerant apostles. Bishop Proaño has also led in the construction of the Santa Cruz Home for meetings, study, discussions, and prayer. In January 1970 he proposed that the priests leave their parishes and form communities, work alongside their neighbors, and thereby divide the parishes into smaller sectors.

In Peru Cardinal Juan Landázuri Ricketts, Archbishop of Lima, has always shown himself to be a Christian apostle from his participation in the second General Conference in Medellín, even leaving the Archbishop’s palace and moving into a small house in the working-class barrio of Vitoria in Lima. The Bishop of Cajamarca, Monseñor Dammert Bellido, recognized as an expert in canon law, has likewise taken a nontraditionalist position. For example, in 1963 he issued a pastoral letter expressing his appreciation for the government donation of a million soles for the restoration of the colonial cathedral, but he used the money to improve the living conditions in the prison, to dig a channel for the San Lucas River, and for repairing the new hospital and modernizing the old one. The cathedral, he indicated, could wait, but the poor could not.

In Bolivia the bishops have progressively adopted attitudes more clearly prophetic. On October 5, 1965, Monseñor Manrique, Archbishop of La Paz, together with his priests and several lay persons, sent a petition to President Barrientos in behalf of the Bolivian miners. In 1968 Manrique condemned all those who contemplated depriving union workers of the right to strike after the Minister of Education had fired striking teachers in the national schools. Cardinal José Maure of Sucre supported Manrique in protesting the action of the Minister of Education to the President. Another indication of the posture of the Bolivian bishops can be seen in the fact that in 1970 the Secretariat of Social Studies of the Bolivian episcopacy approved the measures directed toward the nationalization of the Bolivian Gulf Petroleum Company. And though Monseñor Armando Gutiérrez Granier, Bishop of Cochabamba, in his pastoral of August 3, 1967, did not approve of the guerrilla activity, he was not reluctant to call attention to the causes of revolution. He said, “Our people live in misery with insufficient salaries even to pay for the basic human necessities.”

In Paraguay, after years of silence, voices of protest have finally been heard. First was that of Felipe Benítez Avalos, Bishop of Villarrica, and then that of Monseñor Gerolamo Pechillo, Bishop of Coronel Oveido, who declared that “the Church cannot remain silent in the face of the continual violation of human rights” —note that he did not say “the rights of the Church” —but protested “the prohibition of priests, religious, and laity from working to relieve the misery of the people, from fulfilling the mission of the Church, and accusing the Church of being Communist.”²³³

We must also mention Monseñor Carlos Parteli, Archbishop Coadjutor of Montevideo, and Monseñor Luís Henríquez Jiménez, Auxiliary Bishop of Caracas, both prelates with enormous influence in their respective countries.²³⁴

As there were in the sixteenth century and during the period of independence bishops who opposed the *New Laws*, and royalists in the nineteenth century who opposed the reforms, there are today bishops who have resisted the renewal advocated by Vatican II and Medellín. Their opposition is existential, that is, more in their

conduct than in their words or theory. But as there were those who supported the *New Laws* in defense of the Indian and those more American than royalist, there are today bishops who took a leading part in the Council and Medellín, but who also go beyond what has been proposed in their attempts to create prophetically the image of a missionary Church that transcends the narrow limits of Christendom and extends the frontier to all persons of good will, be they Liberals or Communists, Christians or atheists. All bishops should be able to state, "My door and my heart are open to everyone, absolutely everyone. Christ died for all men, and no one should be excluded from fraternal dialogue."²³⁵

2. *The Attitude of the Priests*

No sector of the ecclesiastical institution receives as directly as the presbytery the shock of the crisis of growth that the Church is experiencing. The priests, especially when they are "involved in the key issues of the process of transformation,"²³⁶ should live a double life: as men of the Church and, as missionaries, men of the world. Traditionally the priest has been only a "man of the Church" following the schema of the seminary and of the priesthood of Trent. In a Christendom-type society the priest has occupied a temporal "office" —as others such as the soldier, the politician, the medical doctor, the goldsmith, or the peasant —of "cura," that is, priest (*cura animarum*). With the collapse of Christendom, the priest was placed in a sociocultural situation quite distinct. In the community of believers he is pastor, prophet, and priest. But in the daily life of the world that is no longer a part of the Christendom system, he is more a Christian as was Peter, Paul, and the other apostles in the Empire. It is thus the institution of the priesthood that must bear in a more direct and difficult manner²³⁷ the weight of the "renewal of the Church."²³⁸ The "clergy" is a social class within Christendom. What we contemplate is the disappearance of a "clerical social class," but not in the ecclesial function of the priesthood, which is adapted to the fulfillment of a necessary function within the Christian community as pastor and priest and outside the Christian community as prophet. This prophetic function in Latin America coincides with the concept of the Council when it was stated that "a priest has the poor and the lowly entrusted to him in a special way. The Lord Himself showed that He was united with them (cf. Matt. 25:34-35), and the fact that the gospel was preached to them is mentioned as a sign of Messianic activity (cf. Luke 4:18)."²³⁹

In a sense the Medellín Conference dealt with the Latin American situation more directly because negative as well as positive aspects of the priesthood were brought to light, especially in the "discussion about the role and image of the priest in society."²⁴⁰ "The Latin American world finds itself engaged in a gigantic effort of accelerating the process of continental development.... This requires of every priest a special solidarity of human service expressed in a living missionary orientation which enables him to put his ministerial apostolate at the service of the world with its magnificent future and its humiliating sinfulness.... In this process the priest has a specific and indispensable role."²⁴¹ The Conference assigned to the priest an indirect function, according to the ideal of Catholic Action and of the theology of Christendom, which was modified by the "new Christendom": "To promote the integral development of man, they will educate and encourage the laity to participate actively and with a Christian conscience in the technique and elaboration of progress. In the economic and social order, however, and especially in the political order where a variety of

concrete choices is offered, the priest, as priest, should not *directly* concern himself with decisions or leadership nor with the structuring of solutions.”²⁴² Now this theology makes it impossible for the priest to intervene prophetically in a direct way in history. The “mediation” of the laity is necessary because the priest is still thought of as “a man of the Church,” as a “social class,” as the clergy in Christendom or as the medical doctor. What of the medical doctor who works as a shoemaker or a clergymen who serves as a laborer or an accountant? In the present Latin American Church it would appear that the presbyterial order, especially those “younger members”²⁴³—look for a way to fulfill the spirit of the Second Vatican Council and of Medellín. But in order to do so they are obligated, at least from our Latin American sociocultural point of view, to go beyond the *letter* (and the theology) of these documents. In view of the facts as they are now revealed to us in the history of salvation as concrete events of the people of God, it will help us to rethink and restate the question of the priesthood.

One often hears of the “rebel” Church in Latin America. Commenting on the tensions, the Secretary General of CELAM, Monseñor Pironio, said in March 1969, “The issue is not so much that of rebellious priests as it is impatient priests, those who are authentic in their courage and desire to see change.”²⁴⁴ The fact is, it is not impatience but an openness to new experiences out of which there will arise a priestly but not clerical way of life for the Catholic priesthood in Latin America. The institution should not stifle the prophet, for if it does it will become a sclerotic structure. It is significant in this regard that the Spanish Organization for Collaboration (OCSHA) between the years 1959 and 1965 sent 1,016 Spanish priests to Latin America. And it has been these priests, in contrast with the traditional Spanish clerics, who have come to Latin America and taken places in the vanguard for liberation. It is they who in many cases have been jailed, tortured, and expelled from the countries. This is a testimony to the change in the times.

(1) The “Priests for the Third World”

Without question, the priestly issue has taken on more importance in Argentina than in any other country in Latin America, for two reasons: the high cultural level of the clergy and the lack of pastoral orientation given by the bishops. In Brazil the confrontations, with few exceptions, have been with the government. But in Argentina they have been, for the most part, with the episcopacy. This confirms something said above.²⁴⁵ In the last analysis the desire of the Argentine priest is that his experience be “not a response to theoretical and pre-established schema, but rather the repercussion and experiences of God” in him,²⁴⁶ and praxis—Christian existence indicating the way for reflection—which is, of course, the inversion of those factors that have been so bad for the Church and theology.

The beginning of this new sacerdotal awareness can be seen in a meeting of eighty priests together with Monseñor Podestá de Avellaneda and Antonio Quarracino of Nueve de Julio on June 28, 1965, in Buenos Aires to discuss their role in the light of the new spirit that had been generated by the Second Vatican Council. They asked: Who is God for us? What are we in the Church? What are we in the world? The responses to these questions formed the essence of a document that is of tremendous value as a Latin American view of the theology of the priesthood.²⁴⁷ “The experience of God is dynamic, concrete, historical: God is life. This reality should determine our own personal commitment to creation ...by the *direct* encounter and involvement with

men, be they Christians or not.”²⁴⁸ In the Church the priests feel “almost unanimously as orphans who lack the support of reflection and pastoral action. Consequently they have a sense of loneliness.”²⁴⁹ They followed with the question, “Is celibacy a sign or not? What are the biblical, theological, and historical bases which justify it?”²⁵⁰ In the world the priest “discovers values such as...the cosmos, technology, universal fraternity, marriage, the woman, work, and socialization.”²⁵¹ But the priest cannot live and function as a missionary because of “traditional theology which places no value on the world ...; because of the formation and bourgeois style of life of the seminary ...; because of the impossibility of living a common life together with the people.”²⁵² As a part of the solution to all of these questions, the priest advanced in historical praxis hoping that the theologians would discover the *explicit* meaning of what is necessary before the historian describes the *de facto* events.

It would appear that at times conflicts help to clarify situations and facilitate decisions. Some examples can be sighted in Argentina where in 1964 Father Milán Viscovich defended the “Plan of Struggle” of the CGT and later, together with Fathers Vadagna and Dellaferra, published three articles regarding the question of private teaching. The Bishop, Monseñor Filemón Castellanos, would not approve the terms of the proceedings. Twenty-eight other priests entered into the debate along with the seminary. The dispute was settled in May 1964 with the intervention and mediation of Monseñor Angelelli.

In Mendoza, however, a major conflict developed in early 1965 between a group of twenty-seven young priests, including the director of the archdiocesan seminary, who sent a manifesto to the Papal Nuncio on August 4, and in November directly to the Vatican. The document stated, “Since the beginning of the Council we have felt the need to bare our consciences: in Mendoza a conciliar spirit does not exist.”²⁵³ Monseñor Buteler, the Archbishop, was inflexible and rejected an appeal for dialogue. “The Pope put this pectoral cross on my chest,” he declared, “and no one is going to remove it.”²⁵⁴ A pastoral was issued to apply the Council in the Archdiocese, and a group of priests began a “sit-down” strike because, they insisted, the pastoral lacked any indication of Conciliar conversion. An Apostolic Administrator was named, and the dissension intensified. Then on January 21 a special Commission of the Argentine Episcopacy issued the following communique: “Interpreting the thinking and the will of the Argentine bishops, we deplore the conduct of these priests.”²⁵⁵ The priests in turn appealed to the Holy See and declared publicly that the Commission of the Episcopacy had refused to hear them, and that they had been denied a right given even to “the worst criminals.”²⁵⁶ The Vatican, however, did not accept the complaint of the priests, and by the expressed desire of the Archbishop, Father Viglino was expelled from his parish in Mendoza and further disciplined.

The following year a worker-priest, Paco Huidobro, originally of the “French Mission” and who had been working in an acrylic factory in Avellaneda, was elected personnel representative for the workers’ union. He was immediately discharged by the factory, and there ensued a strike of eighty employees. The Church, however, gave no support either to the union or to Huidobro.²⁵⁷

Shortly after the military takeover of the Argentine government by Onganía, three bishops —Devoto, Podestá, and Quarracino —sought to disassociate the Church from the government. On August 19, 1966, seventy priests meeting in Chapadmalal supported the position of the three bishops. Then in September the periodical *Christianismo y revolución* (*Christianity and Revolution*) directed by Juan García Elorrio charted the course for several months until the December 12 issue of *Tierra Nueva* (*New Earth*)

appeared, which publicized the feelings of the priests and Christian young people in regard to the revolution of 1966.

Meanwhile in Córdoba, a student, Santiago Pampillón, was killed by the police during a student demonstration. There followed a hunger strike led by Christian students and graduates in the University parish of Cristo el Obrero in September as a repudiation of the police action. Fathers Nelson Dellaferrera and José Gaido were dismissed from the parish and wrote their now-famous "Last Letter to the Christians of Cristo el Obrero."²⁵⁸

In Tucumán conditions worsened also when in January 1967 the police killed Hilda Guerrero in a demonstration by the workers in the Santa Lucía sugar refinery. On January 7, 1968, the Governor of Tucumán accused Rubén Sánchez, a priest who had led a demonstration in the San Pablo sugar refinery, of subversion against the government. The Capitular Vicar of the Archdiocese, Víctor Gómez Aragón, defended the priest and issued a strong public response to the governor. Sánchez in turn declared, "The only thing that I have done is apply the documents of the Church and the most elemental concepts of the gospel. What happens is that these documents are general, universal, and when they are recited everyone is usually in agreement. But when one attempts to apply them to reality, it is a different matter, and one is slandered with epithets and accused of subversion and inciting disorder."²⁵⁹ It is significant that Gómez Aragón, who defended Sánchez, was replaced by Blas Victorio Conrero who, when he arrived at his new post, said, "I know nothing about what has happened in Tucumán".

In the diocese of San Isidro, Father Fernández Naves of OCSHA was dismissed from his parish for "ecclesiastical disobedience." Fathers Parajón and Adame resigned as an indication of solidarity and protest with Fernández and Sánchez and returned to Spain. The group had already experienced several confrontations with their bishop over the question of pastoral orientation. They had wanted to become worker-priests. The conflict reached a climax on December 8, 1967, when the Intendant, a government administrator, proposed the continuation of the annual religious procession in El Tigre. Fernández, who was the parish priest, stated that there would be no procession because of the Intendant's order to three hundred very poor families to vacate the barrio where they were living. Bishop Aguirre stated that the conflict with the families was a serious problem, but that one should not attach such importance to it. "Otherwise," declared the bishop, "the Church would never be able to celebrate."²⁶⁰ Fernández refused to submit to the wishes of the bishop and ultimately was forced to abandon the parish. Eight other Argentine worker-priests left the diocese, and one of them later signed the "Document of Buenaventura" issued by the Golconda priests in Colombia.

In Rosario the dialogue between the bishops and the priests also reached a climax on October 18, 1968, when four priests gave to Archbishop Bolatti a list of conclusions reached by a renewal group. The tension between the prelate and his priests was common knowledge in Rosario, and on January 23, 1969, one of the newspapers of the city carried a response to a student enrolled in the short "Courses in Christianity" supporting Monseñor Bolatti. On March 15 thirty priests in Rosario presented their joint resignations, followed by the resignation of fifty-three others of the archdiocese on April 10. Ultimately three hundred priests from various dioceses in the country resigned. Their resignations were accepted on June 29, the same day that the laity of the Cañada de Gómez parish took possession of the Church building in support of their priest. On July 17, when the newly named priest, Friar Montevideo, came to take possession, he was accompanied by a squad of police. A riot ensued in which five

persons, all laity, were wounded by police gunshots, and twenty others were arrested. This is the first event of this kind in the history of the Latin American Church, and it indicated the state of mind of many of the people.

The first case of a building being taken over in defense of the parish priest occurred in Buenos Aires on April 4, 1966, when about twenty laypersons occupied the Church of Corpus Domini in Buenos Aires in protest of the removal of the parish priest, Father Néstor García Morro.

There was also a conflict between the Bishop of Corrientes, Monseñor Vicentín, and a group of priests committed to the poor people of the city. The clash resulted in the excommunication of Father Marturet and the removal of many priests from the diocese. Also there was the later confrontation in Neuquén between the construction company of the hydroelectric project of Chocón-Río Colorado and almost five thousand workers. The worker-priest Pascual Rodríguez was elected by the union members to lead a strike, but it was crushed by the army. The Bishop of Neuquén, however, did support Rodríguez and the workers. This took place in 1970.²⁶¹ Finally, as has already been mentioned, the government attempted to involve the movement of the Priests for the Third World in the assassination of ex-President Aramburu.

Together with these conflicts within the Church, there has developed a significant presbyterial movement. Already mentioned was the meeting of priests in Quilmes in 1965. The following year there was a second meeting in Chapadmalal with the theme "The Church and the World," and on May 11, 1967, intergroups of priests met in the same place. Another meeting took place May 25 and 26 in Buenos Aires with the theme "The Third World, Socialism, and the Gospel." Then on August 15 there was published the "Message from Eighteen Bishops for the Third World," but none of these was a native Argentine. Priests and laypersons from various areas in Argentina met together in Santa Fe on November 11-12, and in January 1968 a group of priests published an addendum to the "Declaration of the Bishops for the Third World." Then, surpassing the most optimistic estimates, 320 priests from all over the country signed the addendum. Plans then began for a meeting on a national scale.

The First National Meeting took place in Córdoba May 1-2, 1968, and used as the basic document the "Declaration of the Bishops for the Third World." Study and discussion centered on the problems of the various regions in Latin America, and the group agreed to publish a letter on violence to be sent to the Second General Conference of CELAM in Medellín.²⁶² The letter stated: "Every day we are more aware that the cause of the tremendous problems which the Latin American continent suffers is rooted primarily in the political, economic, and social system which is operative in almost all of our countries."²⁶³ There was a clear awareness of "the political" as the bishops had declared: "The Church is not married to any system, no system whatsoever, and even less to the 'international imperialism of money' (*Populorum Progressio*), as it was not married to the regalism or feudalism of the old regime, and as it will not be married tomorrow to one kind or another of socialism."²⁶⁴ On September 15, 1968, the first edition of *Enlace (Link)* was published by the Movement. Then the Second National Meeting took place May 1-3, 1969, also in Córdoba, attended by 80 priests from 27 dioceses. The third meeting was held in Santa Fe on May 1-2, 1970, with 117 present. From March 1968 the Movement has had representatives in all the provinces and has spoken out on the most serious social and political problems of the country and of the continent.²⁶⁵ Doubtless their prophetic presence has been a continual irritant to the military government in Argentina, and the attempt to implicate members of the Movement in the kidnapping and assassination of General

Aramburu finally forced the episcopacy to take a stand. The Permanent Commission of the Episcopacy issued a statement on August 12, 1970, entitled, "To the People of God." Speaking in somber tones regarding socialism, violence, and other related issues, the statement clearly rebuked the Movement. In October the "Response of the Movement for the Third World" to the Permanent Commission was published.²⁶⁶ The document manifested a meticulous elaboration and careful handling of the theological question, and the bishops were clearly surprised by the precision of this response, its orthodoxy, and clear defense of the institution, which allowed for a new missionary beginning in the Latin American spirit. Never had anyone responded in such a way. The truth is, the Permanent Commission realized that they had encountered an absolutely new situation, for the theologians of the Movement had done their homework. More importantly, this response provided the Movement with a clear "Declaration of Principles," and until the present there has been no other significant confrontation between the Movement and the Argentine episcopacy.

As is obvious, the presbyterial order now has institutions that make possible a dialogue with the episcopacy, and that allow the order to declare itself in regard to world questions, which perhaps the episcopacy itself would like to emulate, but because of tradition or pressure it is unable to do so. This represents a change from below for the people of God who are guided by the Spirit. The *presbyterium* is discovering its concrete role.

(2) Heroes and martyrs in Brazil

Because of the quality and number of excellent bishops in Brazil, the priests have had someone to follow. In January 1963, for example, prior to the second session of Vatican Council II, Dom Hélder Câmara sent to hundreds of bishops a document on "The Situation of the Priest."²⁶⁷ Then on May 2, 1965, at the inauguration of the Regional Seminary of Northeast Brazil in Camaragibe, Dom Hélder gave an address²⁶⁸ in which he proposed *direct* involvement of the priests in temporal issues.

This institution will prepare priests for preaching the gospel. But you cannot evangelize abstract creatures, atemporal, existing in a void. When our seminarians get to the churches and chapels and speak of divine grace, of the presence within us of the Holy Trinity, of the grace that enables us to share in divine life, how can they forget that they are proclaiming divine life to listeners who very often live in subhuman conditions? ...To persist in a purely spiritual evangelization would soon result in giving the impression that religion is something separate from life and powerless to touch it or overcome its absurd and erroneous aspects. It would even tend to support the view that religion is a great alienating influence, the opiate of the people. ...We, the bishops of the Northeast, are convinced that we should foster rural unionism as the only practical means for the rural workers to claim their rights from their *overlords*. ...If we feel obliged not to hand over to the laity an endeavor that would normally be the domain of these Christians in temporal matters, it is because we consider it necessary to give moral support to the elementary defense of human rights, given the blind and heartless abuse of authority by some of these *overlords*. And if certain people have the audacity to pin the label of Communist even on the bishops of the Holy Church who devote themselves to the imminently Christian mission of defending abused human beings, what will become of our priests and especially our laymen if we abandon them to their fate?²⁶⁹

The reaction to Câmara's statements was immediate. The widely distributed, influential newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo* declared that many of the Archbishop's statements were alarming. In fact, each succeeding one was "more deplorable than the others." Câmara was called an "illiterate", a "demagogue", an "unconscious tool of the Communists," one who desired to "incorporate Brazil into the Third World."

We have already referred to the large number of priests and religious who have been jailed, tortured, and otherwise intimidated but who have continued in their struggle to identify with the poor. The experience of Sister Irany Bastos must, however, also be recounted, for she has in her function as deacon assumed many parish responsibilities. She says, "My experience illustrates the fact that women can have as much success in human contacts as can men."²⁷⁰ It is very possible that this simple fact will open a new chapter in the history of the Church.

On October 24, 1967, the "Letter of Brazilian Priests to their Bishops" was published and carried the signatures of priests from nearly three hundred dioceses. The burden of the letter was clearly social and indicated the desire of the priests to communicate to their bishops "some of the crushing anxieties that burdened their consciences."²⁷¹ Brazil, they stated, was "an assassinated people" because of infant mortality, lack of daily bread, and miserable salaries. It was a "plundered people" of the unjust tax system and of an even worse political expenditure—six times more money was spent by the national government for military purposes than for education, and fifteen times more than for public health. The Church in turn maintained a paternalistic attitude and spectator role where faith was commercialized. We priests felt ourselves to be "prisoners," "separated from the life of the people," "far from the anxieties of the people," "prisoners of a pastoral machine" whose function was to "sacramentalize". We desired to "evangelize" and be "sensitive to the values of the people," to the "prophetic mission." And "does not the prophetic example of Christ, of fidelity to the truth not inevitably presuppose a political implication?"²⁷² The declaration concluded saying, "We persistently request that, in view of the eucharistic necessities of the present and future communities, married men from those communities be accepted for priestly ordination."²⁷³

On March 28, 1968, students demonstrated in Río demanding improvement in the university restaurant. The police attacked them, and an eighteen-year-old student, Edson Luis de Lima Soto, was killed. Masses were said in the cathedrals, but there were arrests even in the churches themselves. At times police mounted on horseback entered church buildings looking for and harassing students. Thirty priests in São Paulo and thirty-seven in Belo Horizonte made public protests against the government repression. Forty Brazilian Jesuits who were studying in Europe proposed to Father Arrupe a reform of the objectives of the Jesuit Order in Brazil.

There were other conflicts in Brazil as well. In Botucatu, twenty-three priests threatened to resign by April 17, 1968, if the new bishop named for the diocese, Monseñor Zioni, Director of the Seminary in São Paulo, was not revoked. The priests objected to Zioni on the basis that his pastoral manifested a "pre-Conciliar" orientation. Their protest was supported by a 2,000-automobile caravan in São Paulo. The Holy See acceded to the demand, and Dom Romeu Alberti was named instead. In August 1968 a worker-priest in São Paulo, Pierre Wauthiers, was deported for his participation in a strike, one of many European priests expelled from Latin American countries by right-wing governments as a part of a purging program coordinated by the CIA.²⁷⁴ Monseñor Fragozo declared at that time that "the struggle for liberation is a common objective of the bishops, priests, and laity."

The Episcopal Assembly, meeting July 20-30, 1969, refused to grant ordination to a married person, but Cardinal Rossi did announce on August 12 that the matter was not closed, that the day would possibly come when married priests could be ordained as they are in the Eastern Church, after it is evident "that lay apostles and deacons cannot resolve certain necessities."²⁷⁵

Then on the night of May 26, 1969, an unidentified group —perhaps the police — seized Father Antonio Henrique Pereira Neto, the young twenty-eight-year-old chaplain of Catholic Youth (JUC, JEC) in Recife who served also as secretary to Dom Hélder Câmara. The following day Father Antonio's body was found tied to a tree, almost nude and showing signs of being brutally dragged and beaten. The Archbishop's palace was plastered with abusive posters and messages. In the funeral mass for Father Antonio, said on May 27, Dom Hélder exclaimed, "May the holocaust of Father Antonio Henrique obtain from God the grace to continue the work for which he gave his life and the conversion of his executioners."²⁷⁶ The young priesthood in Brazil had a martyr, "for he had often been threatened with death but proceeded in his normal life and work."²⁷⁷ The episcopacy testified that the young priest had been tortured and tied to the tree shortly before he died. He had been shot at least three times. On September 24 the entire national executive committee of the JOC (Catholic Youth Workers) was jailed.

About a month earlier—August 25 and 26—the bishops of the Northeast issued a public denunciation of the torture that the government was using against Brazilian citizens, a protest that stemmed immediately from the arrest, imprisonment for four months, and brutal torturing of Fathers Soares da Amarai and José Antonio Monteiro, neither of whom was ever formally charged with a crime.

On January 5, 1971, a Brazilian Dominican residing in Chile, Tito de Alencar, one of seventy priests freed and expelled from Brazil, declared to the UPI that he had been in a Brazilian prison since July 1969, that he was tortured by the police, and otherwise harassed because he had sought to give spiritual help to students who were "being hounded by the military regime."²⁷⁸

(3) The "Golconda" group

The death of Father Camilo Torres in Colombia produced differing reactions. We have already referred to the suppression by the Cardinal of Colombia, Luis Concha, of the diocesan newspaper *El Catolicismo*. It was not until July 1968, however, that any formal organization of priests who desired a radical application of the social teachings of the Church could be held. Fifty of these priests met on the Golconda farm in the municipality of Viotá, Cundinamarca, to study the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*. This was hardly a month before the Second General Conference of Bishops in Medellín. The Golconda group met again in Buenaventura, December 9-13, 1968, under the aegis of Monseñor Gerardo Valencia Cano, Bishop of Buenaventura. Fifty-three priests from all over the country together with representatives from three other Latin American nations were present. From the meeting emanated the "Document of Buenaventura,"²⁷⁹ based almost exclusively on the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II and the Conclusions of the Medellín Conference. The text is formal and respectful. The "analysis of the Colombian situation" was synthesized in the assertion that the tragic state "of underdevelopment which our country suffers is the historical product of economic, political, cultural, and social dependency on foreign centers of power. These foreign entities manipulate our country through our ruling classes (cf Medellín 2, 9 a)."²⁸⁰ There followed a theological reflection "in the light of the Gospel" on two levels. First, there was the inclusion of "the temporal in the salvific design," and in the second place, consequently, the priests were able to assume directly "work and attitudes which allow for collaboration in the political formation of the citizens ...the necessity of supporting and aiding all the forces of the people to create and develop their own basic organizations, and the necessity for a work of

conscientization and social education.”²⁸¹ The “directions for action” also manifested a dual assignment: in regard to the “social, economic, and political field,” fundamentally, there is the emphasis on the necessity to “commit ourselves more and more to the different ways of revolutionary action against imperialism and bourgeois neocolonialism, avoiding attitudes that are merely contemplative and, for that reason, self-justifying,” and, in “our liturgical, evangelistic, and ecclesial conducting work” fulfill the priestly function “in the exercise of the ministry of the Word ...the participation in the liturgy by its character of anticipation and of the manifestation of eschatology ...by means of the unification of forces and of initiatives which encounter their maximum expression when done collegially.”²⁸²

As in other countries, the harassment of the Golconda priests began immediately. In 1969 one of them protested the government’s badgering, and a short time later four of them were accused of subversion. When they were arrested they stated that the reason was that they had spoken of the farce of the upcoming elections in which the candidates had already been selected by the National Front, the coalition of Liberals and Conservatives, without any participation whatsoever by the people. Another Golconda priest, Father Manuel Alzate, was suspended by the Archbishop of Cali, Monseñor Uribe Urdaneta, for having “offended the hierarchy.” Monseñor Valencia Cano of Buenaventura then issued his “Open Letter to the Priests,”²⁸³ and on a trip to New York in February 1970, declared: “We cannot remain indifferent to the capitalist structure which condemns the people of Colombia and Latin America to the most agonizing frustration and injustice.” “I am definitively a socialist and revolutionary,” he was quoted as saying by the news agencies.²⁸⁴ The Apostolic Administrator of Bogotá, later to be the Cardinal of Colombia, Monseñor Aníbal Muñoz Duque, referred to an article in the progovernment newspaper *El Tiempo* on January 29, 1970, in which Father Gustavo Pérez was reported to have organized a group of “rebel priests” in Usme. Monseñor Muñoz denied the report and insisted “that it was the responsibility of priests to denounce wrongdoing and to form the conscience of the faithful, and remember that those who worked with the poor in the barrios of Bogotá did so with his instructions.” A short time later a group of priests and lay persons meeting in Villavicencio accused the army of genocide in the death of the Indians of Guahiba who were accused of being guerillas and who were being tortured and killed.

Government repression against the Golconda group, however, virtually eradicated it, but a new priestly organization in Colombia emerged and is now referred to as SAL. It is said to be composed of more than three hundred priests from various sectors of the country. (The name SAL is an interesting acronym. The word in Spanish means “salt” and can represent the name “Sacerdotes a favor de Latinoamérica,” i.e., Priests in favor of Latin America, or “Sacerdotes a favor de la liberación,” i.e., Priests in favor of Liberation.)

(4) The organization ONIS and other priestly expressions

In Peru there was organized in 1968, as in other countries, a priestly group known as ONIS (National Office of Social Investigation), which continues to operate in Lima and in other regional offices.²⁸⁵ For nearly two decades now the Peruvian clergy has become increasingly involved in social and political questions. In 1964, for example, the vice-provincial of the Jesuits in Peru, Father Ricardo Durand, responding to accusations that the Peruvian clergy had been infiltrated by Communists, explained that it was being said that the clergy had accepted a materialistic and atheistic phi-

losophy because they were “demanding more justice.” In this case, insisted Durand, the gospel itself would be Communistic, and it would appear that —for the one making the accusation, a Señor Ravines —“what is not right-wing liberalism is Communism.”²⁸⁶ In March 1968 sixty priests signed a document later approved by the Cardinal which stated that “Peru is a proletarian nation in the world” in view of the fact that the per capita income is less than one-tenth of what it is in the United States. “But not only is Peru proletarian, the majority of Peruvians are even more proletarian” because the national income is distributed as follows: twenty-four thousand Peruvians receive forty-five percent of the national income (sixty million *soles* annually), while nearly twelve million Peruvians receive the remaining fifty-five percent (seventy-five million *soles* annually). Following an analysis of the most serious sociopolitical problems in the country, there was a petition that the hierarchy commit itself to the poor, for this would be “for us the maximum support against those who distort our attitude by referring to it as the *intromission* in the temporal.”²⁸⁷ There followed a plea to all “brother priests” that they “take very seriously our obligation to inculcate in the faithful, without subterfuge, that they cannot receive communion nor live an authentically Christian life when they are defrauding the salaries of the workers, evading taxes, enslaving the Indians, subjecting others to servitude and inhuman treatment, or when they are squandering ostentatiously their wealth in a world of misery.”²⁸⁸ The laity was asked to be in a “virtual state of war against suffering and exploitive oppression. This is an authentic second independence for Peru which will emancipate the children of God from all servitude.” “This war for independence should be waged without any reference to religious confession.”²⁸⁹

In January 1969, 330 priests from all the dioceses of Peru sent to the Episcopal Conference in their thirty-sixth meeting a letter in which they requested the opportunity to present to the bishops their “concerns and desires in a spirit of dialogue and collaboration.”²⁹⁰ The letter, although it had many suggestions applicable primarily to Peru, described the prevailing conditions in Latin America as a whole. The principal points treated were as follows: (1) Because the Church should liberate itself from compromising ties, the “separation of Church and state” is recommended. (2) At the same time, the “appearance of the Church should be simplified in dress, ornaments, titles, and military ranks.” (3) Furthermore, it is urgent and necessary to integrate in some way the major superiors of the religious in the reflection and decisions regarding ecclesiastical matters.” In contrast, the priests declared, “We consider that the Nunciature should have in our Church a much less preponderant role.” The formation of the secular apostolate was said to be fundamental because “our Church is clerical, and for this reason it is so conspicuously absent and silent in the history of the country.” A concern was manifested also that there were yet “dioceses where the isolation of the clergy is great. ...We must find new ways for supporting the clergy ...and secular work could be very healthy.” “It is urgent that the hierarchy denounce audaciously every kind of injustice. ...The problems which need to be attacked are multiple. ...We should be alert to concrete events (for example, a strike). ...We always run the risk of being identified with one or another political group, but this can be balanced if the just demands from different segments are successively supported. Let it be noted that abstention has already a political nuance.” The letter concluded with the statement that the bishops should include the priests “in the preparation of the mission” because they already have them “as necessary collaborators *and counselors in the ministry*” (*Presb. Ordinis*, n. 7). Why not have priests and lay counselors in the

episcopal conferences as in the Council? Would this not reveal a greater unity and convergence within the plenitude of the Church?²⁹¹

(5) Priests in Chile

The question regarding priests in Chile has become increasingly serious. The scarcity of Chilean clergy and the large percentage of foreign priests greatly affect the growing number of Latin American nationals who are trained in Europe. All of this takes place in a climate of great tension and deficiency, but, nevertheless, with adaptation to a changing reality many times economically impoverished. Monseñor Gabriel Larraín Valdivieso, Auxiliary Bishop of Santiago, however, stated in a news conference in November 1966 that married men would be ordained to the priesthood in Latin America after a very long period of reflection.²⁹² The tension increased until the “diocesan councils of priests” were constituted, and in the second dialogue between bishops and priests in 1968 the following questions for discussion were proposed: “Doctrinal insecurity” since Vatican II, the meaning of social reform, the emotional problems stemming from isolation and insufficient priestly recourse, and the question of authority and obedience. The Bishop of Temuco, Monseñor Bernardino Piñera Carvallo, vice-president of the Chilean Conference of Bishops, declared that “probably all of my colleagues will admit that as bishops we are not geniuses, saints, talented, or endowed with unlimited resources. Really the office is much greater than our capacities, and we are the first to suffer because of the many problems that appear to be insoluble.” That same year the conflict became generalized. Father Ignacio García, subsequently laicized, wrote in *La Nación* (Santiago) in August that

because of an almost global senility of the schema and norms of the Church there has resulted a tremendous crisis of authority, because in order to live, the people are functioning under their own criteria at the margin of the norms. This situation is evidently anarchical. ...Thus, the great mass has simply left the Church, and what we call the *clandestine* Church makes its own decisions and develops its own criteria. ...The imperial system of the Church proceeds undisturbed in regard to major issues. There are changes, but these are insufficient. At this rate the Church will be more and more alienated from a world that is moving at so great a velocity.

It was in regard to statements such as the preceding one, statements that came with increasing frequency during those days, that the Chilean episcopacy issued a declaration on October 4 which stated, “Much is said today of the Church of the poor, of the Church of the youth, of the traditional Church, of the official Church, of the clandestine Church, of the new Church—as if the Church of Christ were thus divided.”²⁹³ The tension continued, however, and in 1970 Cardinal Silva Henríquez excommunicated three Spanish priests who were accused of being involved in spiritist cults.²⁹⁴ The meeting of “Christians for Socialism” in 1972 and the military overthrow of the Allende government in 1973 radically altered the situation in Chile.

(6) The situation in Mexico

Mexico has witnessed multiple experiences and tensions among priests and the episcopacy. The case of the Benedictine convent founded by Don Gregorio Lemerrier (1912-) is well known. This Belgian bishop decided in 1961 that because of his previous experience he would introduce within his convent psychoanalysis (modifying the Freudian doctrine). In 1963-1964 the Benedictine Visitor, Don Benno Gut, approved the experiment. Yet in 1965 the Holy Office, which had already taken note

of the matter, ordered Lemerrier to retire to a convent in Belgium. The issue was discussed in the fourth session of the Second Vatican Council, and in 1966 a special tribunal was constituted. Long and painful dialogues followed and finally concluded on May 18, 1967, in which the tribunal passed judgment on the future of psychoanalysis among the brothers, namely, that to continue with its use would mean the closing of the monastery. On June 12 the monastery dissolved, and five days later Monseñor Méndez Arceo demonstrated his immense understanding and support for the brothers in helping them adjust to new positions as laymen or as priests in other dioceses. On August 11 the Cardinal Primate of the Benedictines closed the monastery. Lemerrier, admirable and firm in his position, declared, "I am neither an apostate nor a heretic. I will remain in the Church. I have not disobeyed in any way. ...I will always respect legitimate orders but not arbitrary ones."²⁹⁵ The historian, however, will recall that on February 24, 1616, the Tribunal of the Holy Inquisition likewise condemned "astronomy" in the person of Galileo because, it was declared, the idea that the earth moves was "foolish, philosophically absurd, and formally heretical."²⁹⁶ Also it will be remembered that "philology" was condemned in the person of Richard Simon when his book *Historical Criticism of the Old Testament* was put on the *Index* in 1678. In this present century "psychoanalysis" in the person of Lemerrier has been condemned. Will it be necessary that every science first be condemned in order subsequently to be approved or accepted? At any rate, Latin America has entered the *condemned history* of universal science as a means for its acceptance.

In Cuernavaca the Center of Documentation (CIDOC) directed by Monseñor Ivan Illich gained worldwide notoriety for its contribution to social and ecclesiastical issues. In two articles entitled "The Seamy Side of Charity" published in the Jesuit periodical *America*, Illich took a very negative position in regard to North American help for Latin America. He followed these articles with "Religious Imperialism in Latin America?" and another on "The Vanishing Clergyman," which first appeared in *Siempre* in Mexico. This last article appeared in a revised form in the periodical *Esprit* in Paris in 1967, and in it Illich distinguished between the clergy, ministers such as priests and deacons, monks, and theological professionals. He indicated that the clergy as a sociocultural class was disappearing and should disappear.²⁹⁷ The issue, according to Illich, was that in Christendom the priesthood was a temporal "profession." With the collapse of Christendom the priestly profession—which Illich correctly calls a *clericatura*—was eliminated. The contemporary priest, therefore, is aware of having multiple charismas that should be distinguished: the pastor and the liturgical eucharistic priest, the deacon or the one who serves the community, the celibate or monk, and the prophet or theologian. These four dimensions can be fulfilled by four different persons. In Latin America, nevertheless, it is more necessary each day to conserve one in whom the four dimensions are evident. This kind of person would serve as a *periepiscopeos* of the primitive Eastern Church, or the itinerant of the *Didaché* ("The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles"), that is, as one in whom the plenitude of all the charismas are evident and which together are represented in the bishop as a sign of unity. As so often happens, the position of Illich was not highly regarded, and on January 8, 1969, following an ecclesiastical trial that was publicized throughout the world, a decree against CIDOC was issued. Archbishop Méndez Arceo issued a pastoral on January 26 and again on May 24 in which the stipulated restrictions of the decree of January 8 were lifted, a development without precedent in the history of the Church.

Among the Mexican experiences the "Declaration of a Team of Priests" regarding manual labor should be noted. The "Declaration" was signed by fifteen priests in Mexico City where they had studied specific possibilities for priestly commitment in

the world of the laborer and the professional. They stated that “for many this means beginning with a limited schedule of work so that they will not have to abandon the ministry for which they are responsible.”²⁹⁸ There followed the organization of “Priests for the People.”

(7) Central America and the Caribbean

A new awareness is also evident in Central America and the Caribbean. Puerto Rico has experienced the unvarnished criticism of Father S. Freixedo, SJ, adviser for the JOC for thirteen years, who is not a theologian but rather a man of action. His polemical work *My Church is Asleep!*²⁹⁹ was censured immediately after it was published, but Monseñor Parrilla Bonilla stated, without approving the work as such, that it called for a “National Council.” Freixedo stated that he had written the book as “a cry of pain stemming from [my] love for the Church. ...I have no desire that this book be interpreted as a rebellion against the Church. Never.”³⁰⁰ But his open criticism should be kept in mind. In regard to the laity he said that there are two types: some who are like sleeping children and others who are children but who are awake. “These who are awake go here and there and are seen as capable of running errands.”³⁰¹ The book is somewhat satirical, but a little humor has its place. On a more serious note, the priesthood is seen as a “victim of a method, of a structure, of a concept of the Church.”³⁰²

In Guatemala ninety-four priests formed a “Confederation of Diocesan Priests of Guatemala” (COSDEGUA), and beginning in 1969 they issued frequent pronouncements in regard to regional and national conditions and events. On March 1, 1970, Cardinal Casariego imposed censure on all these priests, secular and religious, regarding what they had written and said. The Auxiliary Bishop, Monseñor Pellecer-Samayoa, announced that Father Méndez Hidalgo, editor of *El Quijote*, had been suspended *a divinis* for evading the censure. It is evident that the dialogue between bishops and priests sometimes becomes bitter.

In El Salvador the Cardinalship of Monseñor Casariego was challenged in April 1969 by a document that reflected on the right to express one’s opinion.³⁰³

In Nicaragua a group of priests issued a communique in which they said, “The authorities are more capable of bringing an end to the violence than anyone else,”³⁰⁴ but the Somoza government obviously took no heed. Adjacent to a humble village on a very small island in Lake Managua the monk Ernesto Cardenal has written some magnificent poetry—in some respects superior to that of Rubén Darío—regarding the Church of liberation. Cardenal’s “Psalms” have been translated into many languages and are a testimony of what is taking place in Latin America.

In Costa Rica when the major newspaper *La Nación* stated that the Church had no right to intervene in political and economic questions, fifty-one priests together with Ignacio Trejos, Auxiliary Bishop of San José, responded stating that “the so-called temporal order is not beyond redemption. ...The demands of a moral gospel include a social dimension. ... Following the repeated teachings of the Supreme Pontiffs we would stress that political and social questions are not strictly economic, but that they involve an issue that is above all else moral and religious.”³⁰⁵

The pastoral work of Father Leo Mahon³⁰⁶ in a suburb of the capital of Panama has been outstanding. Mahon began his work in San Miguelito in 1963. The combined efforts of the parishoners were so successful in revitalizing community life that various sectors were providing leaders capable of being ordained as deacons and even as priests if this had been possible. The experience of Mahon in San Miguelito is unique in Latin America and worthy of being studied as a pilot project. However, beginning in 1970

Father Leo was indirectly linked with the dictatorial government, and this produced a crisis within the directing body. There have been, as is well known, several priests who have had serious problems with the Panamanian government of General Omar Torrijos. Father Carlos Pérez Herrera was arrested and jailed on October 23, 1968, when he became a candidate of the Panamanian Party of Dr. Arnulfo Arias. The Party won the elections by an overwhelming majority, but their triumph was short-lived. The overthrow of the government occurred in 1968 when the National Guard, under the leadership of Torrijos, deposed the Arias regime. Father Luis Medrano, SJ, was expelled from Panama in 1969,³⁰⁷ and the Colombian priest Héctor Gallego disappeared in 1971, the result of his valiant efforts to organize cooperatives among the peasants in Panama.

(8) Other South American countries

The worker-priest, Father Francisco Wuytack, was expelled from Venezuela on June 20, 1970, for having demonstrated in front of the National Congress along with other striking workers representing the more than 600,000 poverty-stricken people of Caracas. Wuytack stated at the time of his deportation by the Christian Democratic government (COPEI), "I have attempted to live according to the principles and to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in Venezuela."³⁰⁸ A short time later, four Spanish priests were refused reentrance into the country.

In Ecuador Monseñor Proaño had already spoken in 1967 regarding the priestly commitment in his "¿Dudas? ¿Decepciones?" (Doubts? Deceptions?).³⁰⁹ Then on December 24, 1968, twenty-six priests in Quito presented a letter to the Archbishop of Ecuador indicating their uneasiness because of repeated autocratic decisions made by the episcopacy. They cited the fact that as priests they had been consulted in regard to the disposition of a seminary building, but not in regard to the naming of the Auxiliary Bishop. The letter was respectful but courageous and clear.³¹⁰

Two years later, Father Hemández, adviser to students and an activist in Riobamba, was expelled from the country by President Velasco Ibarra Hernández was the second Spanish priest to be deported from the country, and his became a *cause célèbre*. The National Council of Priests requested that the bishops consider the suppression of the nunciatures and that relations between the Ecuadorian government and the Papacy be a matter of responsibility for the resident bishops. After the death of Rafael Espín, however, the Council was virtually dissolved.

In Bolivia the priests have become increasingly involved in economic and political questions. Six priests were jailed after the military takeover of the government on September 26, 1969, but they were later released. Four worker-priests issued a severe criticism of COMIBOL (the National Corporation of Mines formed in 1952 when the government confiscated the industry) because the main concern, according to the priests, was profit and not the welfare of the miners. In 1970 four priests, three of the OCSHA, and a Protestant pastor were expelled from the country. The students took up their cause, and there were hunger strikes and demonstrations in La Paz. In a cathedral occupied by the students there was written on the throne, "Alas for you ..." (Matt. 23: 1-3). One of the Spanish priests of the OCSHA said, "There is a Church of the oppressed and another of the oppressors." Since October 1, 1965, the priests in Bolivia have issued numerous statements making their voices heard in regard to the defense of the poor.³¹¹

In Paraguay the Jesuits have been the object of severe criticism? but accusations of subversion have been stoutly denied by the bishops. Monseñor Aníbal Mena Porta, Archbishop of Asunción, issued a document in 1969 entitled "On the Violent Repres-

sion of Priests and Faithful in Asunción.”³¹² Then some seventy-five priests in the diocese of Villarrica defended their bishop saying, “We are proud to be able to refute publicly the calumny that the distinguished Bishop of Villarrica is an agitator and instigator of strikes. But neither the distinguished Bishop nor his clergy can help but view with sympathy all those who defend the rights of human beings.”³¹³

In Uruguay Father Juan Carlos Zaffaroni, SJ, trained in Louvain and Paris, following his experiences in 1966 and 1967, was invited as a delegate to the World Cultural Congress in Havana in January 1968. Upon returning, Zaffaroni led sugar cane cutters in a demonstration that spread throughout the country. Then after a harangue on national television, the order was given for Zaffaroni's arrest. He immediately disappeared and became a part of the clandestine movement in Uruguay. In May 1968 the priests in the northern part of the country, in Tacuarembó and Melo, along with their respective bishops issued a letter on “The Sufferings, Anguish, and Hope of the People of our Area.”³¹⁴

In regard to the above experiences and events, the words of the Brazilian priest Father Francisco Lage Pessoa, now living in Mexico, summarize the situation: “When very infrequently a true apostle appears who has the courage to remind us of what is authentic Christianity, he is considered to be a politician, a lunatic, imprudent, a Communist infiltrator, a subversive ...who must be imprisoned, condemned, and expelled from the country.”³¹⁵

Sociographically the situation is as follows:

The Number of Priests and Religious in Latin America in 1967³¹⁶

| | Nationals | Foreigners | Totals |
|-------------------|-----------|------------|---------|
| Diocesan Priests | 16,300 | 3,260 | 19,560 |
| Religious Priests | 10,908 | 12,121 | 23,029 |
| Religious | | | 116,102 |
| Lay Religious | | | 4,020 |

Some words are appropriate in regard to the seminaries. “The Decree on Priestly Formation” (*Optatam totius Ecclesiae*) of Vatican II, and Section 13 on the “Formation of the Clergy” of Medellín both deal with the question of the seminaries. As early as 1964 Monseñor Manuel Larraín stated that “all the Councils have urged the revival of the seminaries. ...It is necessary that the formation of future priests be more open to the world. ...The course of studies could be done in stages in the working world.”³¹⁷ The Medellín Conclusions recognized the difficulty encountered by the youth of today in regard to the old molds and standards, for example, the “tensions between authority and obedience” and the “rejection of certain traditional religious values” (13, 4). Various solutions were proposed such as a “more personalized formation based on teams and small communities” (13, 6, c). Thus little by little, all the seminaries have been directed toward a fundamental reform. In 1966, for example, the Mariana Seminary with 115 seminarians was closed in order to allow time for “reflection,” according to Monseñor Oscar Oliveira, indicating a thorough reform of the institution. In a survey made of seminarians, it was evident that the majority were strongly opposed to celibacy. The question was studied in the First Continental Congress of Vocations, which took place in Lima in November 1966, and was presided over by Monseñor Miguel Darío Miranda, the Archbishop of Mexico.

At times actions have been precipitous, and the confrontation has been open and

fierce. The Bishop of Trujillo, Peru, closed the seminary in his diocese in May 1969, and dismissed the governing board. The move came as a result of a public declaration made by the twenty-six seminarians on March 24 in which they defended Father Shanahan of the Sagrario Parish, which had been occupied by laypersons. The seminarians declared, "We will occupy the Seminary indefinitely."³¹⁸ Then in 1970 the Franciscan Seminary of Lima organized into small communities in order to establish and maintain contact with the people. An identical attempt was made in the Seminary of San Miguel de los Padres Jesuitas in Buenos Aires, as well as in other theological institutions in Latin America. In Cochabamba the bishops gave the Major Seminary to the young. Spanish priests of the OCSHA. When they organized the seminary into small communities, the bishops accused them of becoming "arrogant." In 1970 the seminary was closed and the directors assigned to the slum area of Villa Bush.

In Quito, Ecuador, forty-three of the fifty students left the seminary stating that they "had no desire to be a part of a Church which refused to change out-of-date structures and which is not committed to the defense of the poor."³¹⁹ The seminaries likewise need to face the crisis of growth and develop a course of study which will approximate the daily life of the people; to unify philosophy, exegesis, and theology; to shorten the period of study to five or six years; and to allow more latitude for priests to follow their vocation in nontraditional ways. The reform of the seminaries, however, has barely begun.

3. *The Attitude of the Monks and Nuns*

In this section we want to suggest some of the characteristics of the movement for renewal that is taking place among the religious in Latin America. A sociographical study published in 1971 reveals some interesting data in regard to religious institutions.

The Founding of Religious Institutions In Latin America³²⁰

| Dates | Masculine Institutions (Percentage) | Feminine Institutions (Percentage) |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| 15th and 16th centuries | 6.51 | 1.34 |
| 17th and 18th centuries | 3.35 | 4.24 |
| 19th century | 19.01 | 16.50 |
| 1900 to 1920 | 13.56 | 13.71 |
| 1921 to 1945 | 10.07 | 20.74 |
| 1946 to 1955 | 18.31 | 17.28 |
| 1956 to 1965 | 13.91 | 22.58 |
| 1966 to 1971 | <u>5.28</u> | <u>3.34</u> |
| | 100.00 | 100.00 |

The statistics indicate the rapid growth of religious institutions beginning in the nineteenth century. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries there were obviously many more monasteries for monks than there were for nuns. In the nineteenth century, given the flourishing of religious congregations in Europe, the increase in institutions both for monks and nuns is understandable. The data for this century, however, are approximations. The decline at the beginning of the twentieth was reversed by 1945 largely as a result of the emphasis given to Latin America in the world Church, and also, apparently, as a result of World War II. A more detailed sociological analysis would doubtless uncover other variables that have affected this situation.³²¹ As far as the numbers of religious working today in Latin America, they are more numerous than ever.

The Total Number of Religious in Latin America (1970)³²²

| Country | Masculine | Feminine |
|--------------------|-----------|----------|
| Argentina | 4,510 | 14,076 |
| Bolivia | 835 | 1,800 |
| Brazil | 11,524 | 41,998 |
| Colombia | 4,412 | 20,780 |
| Costa Rica | 220 | 968 |
| Cuba | -0- | -0- |
| Chile | 2,343 | 4,924 |
| Ecuador | 1,564 | 4,145 |
| El Salvador | 369 | 818 |
| Guatemala | 650 | 850 |
| Haiti | 420 | 1,000 |
| Honduras | 116 | 282 |
| Mexico | 1,909 | 23,630 |
| Nicaragua | 265 | 687 |
| Panama | 249 | 410 |
| Paraguay | 429 | 751 |
| Puerto Rico | 599 | 1,500 |
| Peru | 2,514 | 4,581 |
| Dominican Republic | 486 | 1,285 |
| Uruguay | 693 | 1,592 |
| Venezuela | 1,706 | 4,100 |
| TOTAL | 39,813 | 130,187 |

These numbers, nevertheless, indicate little unless they are compared with the total population of the countries and the level of missionary renewal taking place in the communities. It is for this reason that the Latin American Confederation of Religious (CLAR) founded in 1958 has been of major significance, because it represents the center of self-awareness in regard to the process of renewal. The First General Assembly of CLAR took place in Lima in May 1960. Conferences of the Major Superiors have also been organized in all the countries in Latin America, the last one in Haiti in 1964. When CLAR was organized there were only 113,000 nuns and 21,000 monks in the whole continent.³²³

Because of the outstanding work of the Cuban Jesuit Father Daniel Baldor, Secretary General of CLAR, the religious of Latin America overcame much of their theological and social obsolescence, and by the time of the Second General Assembly in Río in August 1963 —the same time as Vatican II —the organization had made significant progress. Preparation for the Río Assembly was made in Cuernavaca in June 1963. That same year Father Manuel Edward was elected president of the Chilean Conference of Religious, and two years later he was selected as president of CLAR. Contacts were established with the religious in Canada, the United States, and Europe, and Father Edward represented Latin America in the January 1965 meeting of the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP).

The Latin American Conference of Religious took multiple surveys for the Second Vatican Council and also sponsored meetings for reflection such as the one in Viamao, Porto Alegre, Brazil, in which both Comblin and Daniélou participated. It was in this latter retreat that discussion was held regarding a “theology of a joint pastoral.”

Latin American religious participated in the Second Vatican Council, and many of their suggestions became part of the decrees signaling a new day in which “an appropriate renewal of religious life would be undertaken,” and “the return to the sources of the total Christian life and of the primitive inspiration of the institutes” as well as “*an adaptation of these to the diverse conditions of the present.*”³²⁴

As soon as the Council concluded, innumerable evidences of commitment, the apostolate, and of the organization of the religious life became apparent. Even the formation of the novitiate and studies changed. The First Latin American Congress of Vocations, held in November 1966, recognized the declining number of postulates in Latin America, a decline that has continued in recent years. Seventy delegates met together for the Third Assembly of CLAR in December 1966, and an inclination toward Medellín was evident. A Colombian religious, Father Luis Patiño, OFM, was elected Secretary General, and Sister Agudelo, CM, also a Colombian, was chosen to head the nuns. Father Pedro Arrupe, SJ, met with CLAR, and later he began a profound revision of the Company of Jesus in Río de Janeiro concluding that the necessary “daring transformations which will radically renew the structures is the only means of promoting social peace” on the continent.³²⁵

Thirteen members of CLAR were present at the Medellín Conference in August 1968, and were directed by their President, Manuel Edward, SS, CC, and by Father Patiño, OFM. There were also among them three nuns.³²⁶ The language and inspiration of the final document on the “Religious” has a “developmentalist” tone, but it represents nonetheless a profound commitment to change. The religious in Latin America must, according to the document, “penetrate into the real world with greater daring today than ever before: he cannot consider himself a stranger to social problems, to democratic awareness, or to the pluralistic mentality of the society in which he lives,”³²⁷ principles in agreement with, for example, the Chilean experience of that time when the country was governed by the Christian Democrat, Eduardo Frei. In the section on the “Religious Life and Participation in Development,” the religious were said to be obligated to “expand and deepen their knowledge of theology and spirituality of the active life,”³²⁸ but advised that they were “not to interfere in the direction of temporal affairs.”³²⁹

During the time of the Medellín Conference, the First Franciscan Meeting in Latin America took place in Bogotá, August 15- 25, 1968. Friar Constantino Koser, the Minister General of the oldest order in Latin America, was present. There was issued a document that beautifully describes the obligations of the Franciscans and their “great influence in the life and history of the people of America from the time of its discovery and gestation.”³³⁰ The statement concluded: “We support well-planned experiments which are directed toward informing the religious and educating our youth in the proper use of liberty and of responsibility.”³³¹ Thus after a long period of theological, pastoral stagnation the Franciscan Order began to manifest important signs of a profound renewal, but it remains to be seen whether more evidence of the prophetic example of poverty of Francis of Assisi will be sufficiently adapted to the contemporary Latin American reality.

The second oldest order in the Americas, the Dominicans, had a Meeting of the Provincials and Vicars of South America in La Paz, Bolivia, from June 30 to July 5, 1969. From the meeting came the statement that the urgency of the situation in Latin America “impels us to adapt our action to the major indications of the Second Vatican Council, to the Conclusions of the Second General Conference of Latin American Bishops in Medellín, and to the decisions of the last General Chapter of the Order

expressed in the new Constitutions *if we are to involve ourselves in the current world.*³³² Little by little all the orders and congregations have attempted to comply to the decrees and conclusions of the Council and of Medellín.

A new note has sounded, however, during this time, namely, “the appreciation of the woman in the Church,”³³³ which in time will bring about a new understanding of the meaning, liberation, consecration, and contribution of women.

A new religious life-style was already evident in the Fourth General Assembly of CLAR, which took place in Santiago, Chile, December 3-13, 1969. The return to small communities was evident all over Latin America as were a growing political commitment by young religious, a concern for the poor, and a change in traditional roles such as in schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

Another important meeting of bishops and religious leaders in Central America and Panama was held March 16-20, 1970. Reference was made not only “to the lack of national vocations for religious,” but also “to the fact that the vast majority of vocations which exist are outside of Central America and Panama.” Furthermore, it was noted that “most of the religious congregations do not have national superiors. This makes the integration of the religious in the national pastoral difficult.”³³⁴

The First Course for Latin American Provincials was held in Medellín, January 25 to March 26, 1972, and the First Meeting of Religious Superiors of Central America was held in Guatemala, August 1-6, 1972.

Finally, the First Interamerican Meeting of Religious of Canada, the United States, and Latin America was held in Mexico City, February 7-12, 1971, in which the coordination of efforts for the whole hemisphere was begun.

Among the major documents that have prompted theological reflection, mention should be made of “The Life According to the Spirit,” which was the result of inspiration traditionally called “spirituality” and represented the conclusion of the first stage of the study done in Buenos Aires in February 1972. A second document, “Religious Life and the Sociopolitical Situation in Latin America,” was initially done in Montevideo in May 1972 and was edited and released by a group meeting in Mendoza, Argentina, in November 1973. The theme of this last document has provoked numerous commentaries, but it represents the most significant commitment of the religious to the present time.

A detailed description of the prophetic work done by many Latin American religious from those who have given their lives for Christ, as have some of the Dominicans of São Paulo, to those who have suffered the torture of electric shock and imprisonment, as have some of the Maryknoll Fathers, will be the theme of future works.

The Fifth General Assembly of CLAR elected as its new president Father Carlos Palmés, SJ, in its meeting on January 17-27, 1973, in Medellín.

4. The Attitude of the Christians

We have been hesitant to speak of the attitude of the “laity.” Our Church—not only in Latin America, but also in Europe and the whole world—is still predominantly “clerical” in the sense that it is directed almost exclusively by professional clergymen. Paradoxically, in the Second Vatican Council the influence of laypersons and even their numerical presence was less than in all the history of the Church. Previously, laypersons in Christendom were equivocally but effectively represented by the emperors, kings, and government delegates. The representatives of the European states in the First Vatican Council can be seen in the fact that the editing of certain documents bore their imprint. The Church has been liberated from this kind of political influ-

ence—which is a step forward—but has reduced the laity to nothing more than a docile mass who are taught, who obey, and who collaborate. They are allowed to participate in meetings as “observers” or “auditors”—and only then is it the directors of movements such as Catholic Action—but the great Christian university intellectuals, those committed Christians in the highest levels of political life, have not become a part of the executive organisms of the Church. Neither CELAM, nor the national episcopal conferences, nor the faculties of theology accept the baptized Christian as a fraternal equal if questions of theology, philosophy, sociology, or even the interpretation of daily life in the light of the faith is being considered. We have a long way to go in regard to incorporating the layperson into the full life of the Church. The truth is that neither in Vatican II nor in Medellín were baptized Christians, that is, the laity, represented.³³⁵

(1) The struggle and life in the basic communities

Doubtless influenced by the prevailing spirit of the times, the contemporary Christian has lost his previous passivity in certain areas. Monseñor Raimundo Caramuru, Secretary of the Conference of Bishops of Brazil, analyzing the current situation stated that “the tension between distinguished groups of laypersons and the hierarchy is more constant today than ever before, and it is possible that this problem will not be quickly resolved. Many laypersons are frankly scandalized by certain institutional aspects of the Church.”³³⁶ Frequently there are meetings for reflection—as the one in Moreno, Argentina, the final text of which was signed August 28, 1966³³⁷—but many times there are direct acts of protest.

In Uruguay, for example, on June 20, 1965, there was a demonstration of Catholic students against the actions of the Apostolic Nuncio, Monseñor Forni. According to the students, Forni “prevented the Church in Uruguay from fulfilling the decrees of the Council.” On April 4, 1966, at 200 Albariños Street in Buenos Aires, a young man stood at the iron gate of the Corpus Domini Church and shouted, “We will not lessen the struggle to obtain that which from the depth of our Christian consciences we ask of the Church of Christ: a Church without luxuries, without established interests, without hypocrisies, without bourgeois life-styles. We want in Argentina the *aggiornamento* called for by John XXIII.”³³⁸ At that time the church building was occupied by some twenty laypersons who were expressing their disconformity with the removal of Father Néstor García Morro. There were posters, and there was opposition to the naming of the new priest who had been designated without consulting anyone in the parish. This was the first time in the history of the Latin American Church that laymen had protested in this manner. On August 11, 1968, some 300 laypersons and a group of priests took over the Cathedral in Santiago, Chile, in the name of the movement, the “Young Church.” Their demand was for more dialogue and structural flexibility in the hierarchy.³³⁹ In Mexico the people of the Dulce Nombre de María Parish in the diocese of Tlalnepantla protested the change of their priest, and on January 5, 1970, when the new priest came to take possession of the Church, some thirty faithful dressed in mourning clothes went out to meet him.³⁴⁰ In the Dominican Republic, discharged workers of the Metaldom factory peacefully occupied the Cathedral of Santo Domingo in 1969 to protest and ask for help. In Nicaragua numerous laypersons occupied churches in Managua in 1970 to protest government tortures of prisoners. In Peru strikers of the textile factory Texoro, supported by their bishop and priest, moved into the Church of San Martín de Porres in Lima in December 1969. That same month Cardinal Landázuri Ricketts abandoned his palace in order to live in a

humble community in the city of Lima, and four canons in Trujillo renounced the salaries they were receiving from the government. Peaceful occupations of the churches in Lima continued in 1970: 300 workers of the Mayólica Nacional who were on strike lived in the San Sebastián Church; 250 of the Fénix employees lived for a time in the Jesús Obrero Church.³⁴¹ In Bolivia numerous Christians called for the resignation of the Archbishop and took over the cathedral in Cochabamba on April 17, 1970, in defense of the priests of the OCSHA. In Guatemala on July 4, 1970, the movement called "Christians for Renewal" staged processions in March 1968. These examples among many that could be cited indicate a new phenomenon: laypersons are beginning to express themselves, to mould public opinion, and to make themselves seen and heard either peacefully or otherwise. Also they are having to be taken into account more and more.

One should not conclude that all the movements utilizing force stem from groups that desire renewal. In the Church of Nuestra Señora del Socorro (Our Lady of Help) in La Plata, Argentina, a group of laypersons prevented the new priest from taking possession of the Church on January 4, 1971, because he was said to be a member of the "Priests for the Third World"; and even though a locksmith was called, the priest was unable to enter the building. Traditionalist groups in Colombia, meanwhile, began the anti-Golconda Movement and were directed by Father Jairo Mejía Gómez who was Secretary General of the Liturgical Commission of the Diocese of Medellín.³⁴² That same year in Uruguay groups of Christians called upon the Papal Nuncio to condemn every kind of violence. Right-wing proponents also began a vicious campaign against Monseñor Parteli, and the criticisms often came from his own priests and well-known Catholics of the country. Already mentioned were the groups organized in Brazil in 1968 against the "Action, Justice, and Peace" movement of Dom Hélder. Numerous pamphlets were distributed against the Archbishop of Recife, and some believe that certain priests were involved along with a member of the town council, Vanderkok Vanderlei.

Catholic Action has also suffered a profound crisis, and like the priesthood, it has been forced to rediscover its function in the present situation. Unspecialized or parish type Catholic Action has been unable to transcend a very menial function within the Church. In 1965 some fifty consultants and forty directors of Catholic Action met together and engaged in a heated debate regarding the meaning and the future of the organization.³⁴³ In a meeting in July of the same year in Cerro Alegre, Peru, an agreement was reached regarding the coordination of lay movements in Latin America.³⁴⁴ Specialized Catholic Action, in contrast, experiencing a similar crisis, has discovered in its historical commitments a direction to follow. The Argentine ACO, for example, on March 20, 1967, publicly denounced the antisocial attitude of the government saying that "in view of the fact that the government claims to be Christian ...we are obligated to state that its actions have nothing to do with the word of Jesus expressed in the gospel nor with the doctrine of the Church manifested recently in the Council."³⁴⁵ And the ACO of Northeast Brazil continually publicizes the injustices that are committed in that part of the country.

Meanwhile, Christian trade unionism has tended toward deconfessionalization and radicalization. Criticisms are made not only against North American imperialism, but also against those who cooperate with the imperialists. In 1970, for example, the Autonomous Confederation of Catholic Trade Unions (CASC) in Santo Domingo criticized the Vatican for attempting to help the underdeveloped countries by means of the BID (Inter-American Development Bank) and the OAS (Organization of

American States), because in the judgment of the union members both organisms were instruments of North American domination which was oppressing Latin America. Along the same line one should read the "Open Letter" written by CLASC, an organization representing five million workers, to Paul VI on the occasion of his visit to Bogotá, July 18, 1968. In the language of the worker, direct and sincere, the letter states:

We know, Brother Paul, that all the bishops of Latin America are going to meet at Medellín to discuss the Church's role in the Latin America world of today. At first we thought that a few laymen who are concretely committed to and involved in the daily work of advancing and developing people, men belonging to popular organizations, might participate in this assembly of all the princes of your Church. When some union leaders went to ask that representatives of the Workers' and Peasants' organizations be invited, these same princes of the Church replied that "they did not want any 'disturbing' elements at the Medellín meeting." And you know, the princes were right. We *are* "disturbing" elements, profoundly disturbing, because for a long time we have represented action that goes further than words.³⁴⁶

The letter continued,

Do you know what laymen will be invited to this ecclesiastical gathering? Members of the liberal professions, technologists, people who have made a name for themselves, primarily either members of the ruling class, or men who, in the schools, universities, and clubs frequented by the anti-people oligarchy have picked up the same habits and reactions as they. ...And everything will remain just as it was, for nothing in your Church has changed in this respect. ...It seems that nowadays the studies of sociology, economics, ideology, the political and administrative sciences and psychology are once again in vogue. So much so that theology, and especially ordinary pastoral theology, is being forgotten. ...There are today in your Church a great many "champions" of the poor who want to bring social salvation to the workers —without regard for the workers' own wishes, possibly even in spite of them.³⁴⁷

This letter should be taken very seriously because it represents a group of Christians who for more than twenty years have struggled day after day for their faith. It was written with love, clarity, and courage, and not as just another letter among many that were sent to the Pontiff.

Prior to the Medellín Conference, a group of responsible Latin Americans who were members of the Apostolic Movements of Lay Persons met for a seminar in Lima in July 1968 and subsequently sent to the president of CELAM a letter in which they criticized the "Basic Document" of the Conference. They said, "One feature seems to be wholly characteristic and basic within the economic, social, and cultural situation of Latin America. Our countries are economically, politically, and culturally dependent on the capitalist powers. ...We feel that we simply must look for solutions outside the ideological framework of capitalism."³⁴⁸

Another indication of the attitude of the Christians in Latin America can be seen in the reaction to the papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. A forum was held in Peru in 1966 for the purpose of discussing the Latin American Christian position regarding birth control. One of the first Latin American prelates to declare himself in regard to the encyclical was the Chilean Cardinal, Raul Silva Henríquez.³⁴⁹ His statement was followed shortly thereafter by one from the Mexican episcopacy.³⁵⁰ In Bogotá, *El Catolicismo*, the major news organ of the Church, attacked the government program of birth control despite the fact that the newspapers in general openly opposed the Church on this issue. Cardinal Luis Concha exercised some prudence by waiting, but

he finally condemned all forms of birth control except the rhythm method,³⁵¹ and shortly thereafter his position was supported by the other Colombian bishops.³⁵² In general, the attitude was that small groups of Christians with a more personal formation tended to reject the moralisms given by the Pope regarding the question—as occurred also in Europe—while the masses, lacking both instruction in enlightened Catholicism and in birth control methods, treated the whole matter with indifference. Certain groups of Catholics felt the traditional pressure imposed by the encyclical, but not being able to follow its teachings, they temporarily moved away from the Church. For the most part the hierarchy supported the encyclical for the explicit reasons outlined by the Pope. Groups of a more populist orientation tended to support the encyclical because of its historical importance and for reasons of political expediency, but a large number of people in the underdeveloped and dependent countries saw the situation as a possibility for future liberation. Demographic stabilization in these areas of the world could definitively alter the present situation.

In light of the frustration and crises of many of the pastoral experiences of the new Christendom such as the last attempt at mass evangelization by the use of urban radio,³⁵³ which was employed in many Latin American areas, a form of Christian community living has developed during the last decade which may indicate the direction of the future. The way of life followed by the small non-Christian religions, the spiritists and African syncretistic groups in Brazil, for example, or the non-Catholic communities such as the Pentecostals, indicate that the meeting of the faithful in groups where relations are personalized provides a concrete way by which the people can live the gospel. This has been the Catholic pastoral experience in the “basic Christian communities” in Brazil. The Second Vatican Council spoke to this issue in the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church,³⁵⁴ but it was in Medellín that an explicit formulation was given: “The Christian ought to find the living of the communion, in which he has been called, in his ‘base community,’ that is, in a community, local or environmental, which corresponds to the reality of a homogeneous group and whose size allows for personal fraternal contact among its members. ... Thus the Christian base community is the first and fundamental ecclesiastical nucleus.”³⁵⁵ Thus when Monseñor Antonio Fragoso states that in his diocese in Northeast Brazil there exist ten parishes, each with 150 communities, that is, a total of 1,500 in the diocese, one can understand that this experience could offer hope for the reconstruction of a mediation between the impersonal and anonymous parish community and the individual believer.³⁵⁶

In Northeast Brazil numerous experiments and experiences indicate possibilities for the future, experiences such as that of Father Gerardo in the Ponce Carvalhos Parish, that of Father Beltrán in Girardot, Colombia, and that of Father Leo Mahon in San Miguelito, Panama. There have been other movements such as the Christian Family and the Basic Education Movement initiated by Paulo Freire in Northeast Brazil, and after his exile to Chile, the BEM was utilized by many “basic Christian communities” in that country. Together, and even individually, these movements indicate a new beginning and the fact that “all is not lost.” Liberating, evangelizing, or liturgical, basic communities should be a primary concern of the Pastoral Department of CELAM as well as of the churches in the respective nations and dioceses. For it is at this level that the Church will make the transition from Christendom to religious communities in a pluralistic society where existential faith will prepare the Christian for daily, practical living, and where the catechumenate will recover its full meaning as in the primitive Christian communities of the Roman Empire prior to Constantine. The

Christian leader, the deacon, and new types of pastoral activities —renewed ministries even in the priestly order—will spring up from a life that develops *from below*, that is, from the Church of the people, from the people of God who are purged of all triumphalist attitudes of Christendom.

In Río Grande do Norte, Brazil, as early as 1964, nuns —like vicars-general— could direct prayers, lead in social work, catechize, and preside at services of worship. In Chile Cardinal Silva Henríquez allowed laypersons to preach in the Sunday masses in 1964. Nevertheless, the entire ecclesio-economic system should be changed and should follow the example in Chile where in 1970 twenty-four dioceses decided that the Church should depend only on gifts received systematically and voluntarily from the faithful, and not be supported directly or indirectly by the government. All these steps represent a mere tinkering with an institution and way of life that needs to be thoroughly revamped, but only the *basic Christian communities* and the new ministerial functions can remake the Church as it ought to be.

(2) The Christian: his political and social commitment

In a very brief period, Latin American Christianity has achieved an amazing maturity. The previous stage (1930-1961) was greatly influenced at the political level by the organization of Christian Democracy and the separation of youth groups from the Conservative political parties. Christian Democracy in Chile, for example, sprang up during the decade of the 1930s after having earlier been a part of the fascist Falange. In 1946 the Christian Social Party (COPEI) was organized in Venezuela, and the following year the Christian Democratic Organization of America was formed. In Argentina the Christian Democratic Party was founded in 1954 as was the Christian Social Party in Bolivia. Christian Democrats succeeded in organizing both in Peru and in Guatemala in 1956. Then in 1958 the Chilean Christian Democratic Party participated for the first time in national elections. The Christian Democratic Youth of America (JUDCA) was founded in 1959. In 1960 the Christian Democratic Party was created in El Salvador, Paraguay, and Panama, and during the next two years Christian Democrats organized successively in the Dominican Republic (PRSC) and in Uruguay as The Civic Union. Christian Democrats elected two senators and twenty-one deputies in Brazil in 1962. The Christian Democratic Party appeared in Costa Rica in 1963 and in Ecuador and Colombia (PSDC) in 1964. That same year two different parties united in Bolivia to form the Christian Democratic Party of that country. Then on September 4, 1964, Christian Democrats won the presidential election under the leadership of Eduardo Frei in Chile with the motto “Revolution with Freedom.”

These new parties actively participated at various levels and with differing attitudes in all of Latin America. In 1968 Rafael Caldera was elected President of Venezuela with twenty-nine percent of the votes. He became the second Christian Democrat to achieve this high office in Latin America. Unfortunately, however, the previous year a group in Chile led by Rafael Agustín Gumucio gained control of the Christian Democratic Party’s Directors Committee, which eventually brought about a split in the PDC. The rebellious wing constituted itself into a new political group, the MAPU, and in 1969 supported the candidacy of Salvador Allende, enabling him to gain the presidency on September 4, 1970. The appearance of Christian Democracy and Catholic Action beginning in 1930 represented a hope for a new Christendom and originated in part with Conservative groups. The organization of MAPU, however, which also originated within Christian Democracy, represents still another development in the

political commitment of Latin American Christians. Finally, one must note the growing separation between the Christian Democratic parties of Latin America and those of Europe, which seemed to indicate an awareness on the part of the Latin Americans of being situated in a colonial environment while the European Christian Democrats enjoyed the advantages of being a part of the metropolitan and imperialistic center.³⁵⁷

European Christian Democracy after the Second World War really represented a common political front against the People's Democracies, that is, Christian Democracy was a kind of ecumenical unity achieved on the religious level against the atheism of the government in the Communist countries. Latin American Christian Democracy in the dependent and neocolonial countries of this continent was made possible by the presence, although agonizing, of a colonial Christendom, by the nascent force of a new middle class—an extension of the incipient industrial development after the 1930s and the Second World War—the influence of European thinkers, especially Maritain, Lebreton, and Mounier, and by the example of the European Christian Democrats, especially the Italians and Germans. Christian Democracy was founded on a kind of abstract, international, and technocratic natural law—technocratic in the sense in which the Belgian Roger Vekemans is a prime example. (Vekemans began his work in Chile and now is located in Bogotá, Colombia.) Historically, Christian Democracy was first an ideology of minorities who lacked adequate understanding of the people. It was centrist (originally tending toward the right), reformist, and developmentalist—but not truly revolutionary—with a Latin American nascent internationalism insufficiently rooted in the nations as such. There were attempts to modify the positions of the parties in several Latin American countries. In Argentina, for example, there was an attempt to make the Christian Democrats a people's party, and the failure to do so indicated a structural limitation within the movement. In Chile, Christian Democracy developed into a kind of populism, but the incipient radicalism within the group eventually led to a formal schism. The same thing happened in Venezuela.

Since 1960, however, a new situation has developed which doubtless will affect the future not only of Christian Democracy but also of the political commitment of Latin American Christians in general. In the first place, the revolution in Cuba suggested to many Latin Americans a new possibility. Eduardo Frei in Chile, on the other hand, took a different tack: "Revolution with Freedom." But his rather disappointing results paved the way for a more radical approach with Allende. Europe and the United States, meanwhile, ended the Cold War with Russia and initiated a new stage in their relationship, namely, that of "peaceful coexistence." The ecumenical movement now includes the Russian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, trade agreements between the Soviet Union and Western countries have created a means of penetrating the Iron Curtain. The major conflict now appears to be between Russia and China and not between Russia and Western Europe. "Peaceful coexistence" has also permitted dialogue between Christians and Marxists. Latin America, meanwhile, has recognized the failure of the development program and has moved to a new level of sociopolitical understanding derived from an economic analysis that reveals the dialectic of imperialism and colonialism at all levels. And though Latin America did not participate directly in the 1955 Bandung Conference, it has been greatly influenced by its findings. A move toward the left has been evident since the early 1960s. The case of Camilo Torres, a developmentalist who became a revolutionary, is paradigmatic.

The new Christian generation faces this situation with a different sense of political vocation and sees a way in which the Popular Fronts can establish a relationship with populism, not centrist as in Argentinean "Irigoyenism" or "Peronism" or as in Brazilian

“Vargism,” but in a new kind of populism: revolutionary, nationalistic, but with a primary and international sense of vocation. The nationalism is not of the old nation-state type, but more Latin American with a multistate base, that is, composed of many state organisms in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, and others, and not from a single Latin American nation as such. At times this move toward the revolutionary left and toward populism will produce a division within the existing Christian Democratic parties. Some will simply dissolve as a party, and others will be transformed into a new political movement. What is important here is the evidence of a clear shift toward radicalization and separation from the Old Conservative-Fascist line, and the assuming of a position similar to “Guevarism” —armed violence or at least militantly revolutionary —to the Popular Front in view of a national populism. All this is not merely in prospect. At all levels one can observe a real beginning and commitment that is directed first toward the conscientization of the fundamental fact that we are dependent colonies, and that we have a common adversary: the imperialism of the dollar.

All this indicates that Christians have returned to the center of the political arena in Latin America in a manner less equivocal than during either the time of colonial Christendom or of the struggle for political independence (1808-1825). Now the struggle is for economic, cultural, and human independence in Latin America, not only in respect to the United States but in regard to all the superdeveloped powers. All of this presupposes a possibility of a Latin American socialism concurrent with a Christian existential understanding (we are not speaking of Marxism) which is ideologically founded on a political process that unites the American and Asiatic people who are no longer on developmental tracks but on the way or in the process of liberation from the oppressor-oppressed structure. It presupposes the possibility of alerting the leaders of the developed-oppressing countries who do not allow the organization of counterrevolution in the name of the struggle against subversion and the defense of the Western Christian civilization to the fact that there are many Christians who desire a liberated humanity composed of neither Occidental nor Oriental, of neither Greek nor Roman, neither Jews nor pagans, since Christ “is the peace between us, and has made the two into one and broken down the barrier which used to keep us apart, actually destroying in his own person the hostility” (Eph. 2:14). This biblical text is eschatological, but for this reason it is being fulfilled in order that the Kingdom will become more real, present, and historical.

(3) The Christian university student and intellectual

Since 1962 profound changes in the orientation of the Latin American Christian university students have taken place.³⁵⁸ To better understand the dramatic nature of these changes an historical resumé is necessary. The first model of higher education in Latin America was the old colonial “university of Christendom,” which originated in the first *Colegio Mayor* founded in Santo Domingo in 1537 and in the Universities of San Marcos of Lima and of Mexico. Their demise began in the early part of the nineteenth century, and they received the coup de grace in 1918 —to indicate a symbolic date —with the “University Reform” movement in Córdoba, Argentina, a movement that extended throughout Latin America and had international repercussions.³⁵⁹ The second model was that of the “liberal reformist university,” which stemmed from the Córdoba Manifesto that declared: “Men of a free republic, we have just broken the last chain which binds us in this twentieth century to the old monarchical and monastic domination.”³⁶⁰ Those “reformists,” nevertheless, were simply liberals representing a small bourgeois with abstract internationalist ideologies and tied to an

incipient industrialism. There were great Christian thinkers such as José Vasconcelos in Mexico, or positivists such as José Ingenieros in Argentina, but only Victor Raul Haya de la Torre, Rector of the People's Universities of Peru, was able to develop a coherent formulation of doctrine into a political movement, the APRA, with Indoamerican and antiimperialistic roots, but which, unfortunately, with time lost the best of its doctrine. Following the Second World War, as Guzmán Carriquiry stated in a paper presented to the Latin American Seminar on the University Pastoral, June 15-25, 1967, in Mexico City,³⁶¹ there appeared a third model: the "development university." It was neocapitalist, following the line of technological development and insisting that the university should produce technicians who would fit in with the scheme of integral development. The BID and the CEPAL, for example, enthusiastically promoted this model. Christians, therefore, responded to this "reformist" model with the creation of movements of the same type: "Humanism" in Argentina, Christian Democratic Youth in Brazil, and the JUC in various countries. The work of the Chilean team led by Roger Vekemans as well as the movement known as "Economy and Humanism" were a part of this development stage.

A fourth model, however, has appeared: the "critico-liberating university" —to give it a name. It is this nascent university, benefiting from recent experiences, that is critical of the oppression and the neocolonialism from which Latin America suffers, and that has assumed that liberation is a technico-humanistic mission. The curriculum followed is that of the "pedagogy of the oppressed," a system and philosophy developed by Paulo Freire.³⁶² This new university in Latin America already has a beginning history. In a different setting, the Technical University of Peking has had a novel experience: first the students, and then the workers proposed a new plan of studies for the administration and university government. The movement was supported by the government and became a part of the "Cultural Revolution" in China. Earlier in Cuba there was a similar experience. Then as an indirect result of what was taking place in Latin America, the May of 1968 occurred in Paris. The article written by Paul Ricoeur in *Esprit*, "The Dialectic of Teaching" (teacher-pupil), provided an interesting element for reflection. At the same time, Latin American Christian university students were having a similar experience, which was a part of the common process.

In Brazil, Popular Action was founded in 1962 and began the publication of its magazine by the same name. Following the military overthrow of the government, the students began to defend certain principles, and their reaction was interpreted by the military as being subversive. Monseñor Vicente Scherer made known his position in "The National Conference of Bishops and Popular Action."³⁶³ The university movement became committed to revolution. Shortly thereafter the JUC and the JEC abandoned the "directive" and ceased to be confessional movements, thereby accepting temporal commitments, living theologically in the Church without being a part of the ecclesial institution itself. The Brazilian episcopacy accepted their position, and the crisis extended throughout all of Catholic Action. The National Secretariat of the JEC resigned on December 4, 1966. Monseñor Scherer, who was responsible for the lay apostolate, reported the events by radio on January 9, 1967, and said that the young people not only could resign if their consciences so indicated, but they should do so. Catholic Action continued to be considered by the government as subversive, and the deconfessionalization extended to the Legion of Mary and the Apostolate of Prayer as well as to the Basic Education Movement (MEB). The Catholic university students then began to adopt very pronounced political postures. They were expelled by the

police from the Catholic University of São Paulo, and although Cardinal Rossi protested, he was not able to secure the freedom of the adviser to the students, Father Talp, who was held by the secret police (DEOPS). On April 1, 1965, seven hundred Brazilian intellectuals severely criticized “the revolution” promoted by the military government. These intellectuals accused the government of political persecution, violence, torture, and of being a cultural terror without exercising any discrimination. Amoroso Lima declared publicly, “With *Populorum Progressio* the Church began a new war, not against the barbarians or the Turks, but against hunger, misery, injustice, and against war itself.”³⁶⁴ In other Latin American Countries university students had already lost confidence in the development program of the Alliance for Progress. There followed the most significant meeting and document of this period, that of Buga.

The Second Vatican Council had spoken very clearly in regard to the university question.³⁶⁵ Then the Department of Education of CELAM convened a seminar of experts on “The Mission of the Catholic University in Latin America” which met in Buga, Colombia, February 12 to 18, 1967.³⁶⁶ The general tone of the document issued by the seminar was “developmentalist.” Nevertheless, it contained some important indications for a critico-liberating university; for example, the statement that “the Catholic university serves as a focus for conscientization regarding historical reality ...the disalienation of the generating postures of colonialist culture .”³⁶⁷ The developmental approach was clearly falling into disfavor as can be seen in the following text: “These [the social sciences] should aid in the search for integral development. Yet certain dangers are evident in the imposition of models unrelated to the Latin American reality. Although the social sciences could be, in certain official circles of Latin America, considered as correspondingly subversive, the Catholic University will assure an environment of free and open investigation.”³⁶⁸ The absolutely irreplaceable role of the Catholic universities should be to provide a “meeting between the Church and the world” and encourage theological and humanistic reflection whereby horizontal institutionalized dialogue between the scientific disciplines, the university and society, are open to those who want to enter, and vertical dialogue which “allow for participation by professors and students in the government of the institution, and in the election of its authorities. ...The autonomous university is an indispensable necessity ...for the study and promotion of popular culture.”³⁶⁹ The document, nonetheless, is limited, for although it speaks at the beginning of the “Christian view of culture” and interprets mankind in “a history which tends to liberate more and more the personal and community values,” it says nothing in regard to Latin American culture. All of the observations remain at an abstract level. The most serious deficiency is that, together with the affirmation that is the responsibility of “the university to make the transition from the old to the new Latin American system and to be the molding nucleus of the intelligentsia,” nothing is said as to how this intelligentsia can be effectively formed either at the university student level or at the level of the “intellectual,” be he graduate or university professor. In this sense the MIIC (the International Movement of Catholic Intellectuals) has not yet discovered its role in Latin America. Some of us organized a “Latin American Week”³⁷⁰ in December 1964 in which we attempted to discover a means for producing more concrete results, namely, an annual meeting of university professors and recognized Christian intellectuals to discuss and publish findings regarding the more crucial problems of the continent. Year after year a Christian interpretation —reflexive, scientific, at a high level— is needed not only to clarify but also to make history.

The Buga document provoked an immediate reaction first in Valparaíso and later

in Santiago, Chile, where there were violent confrontations resulting from the election of the university authorities. Buga had called for the participation of the students in these elections. The students, therefore, called upon the officials to modify the statutes of the Catholic universities in both of these cities. The Bishop of Valparaíso rejected the student ultimatum, and on June 19, 1967, a student strike began. In Santiago the students occupied university buildings. The movement terminated on August 22 when the Vatican named as mediator Cardinal Silva Henríquez of Santiago, who together with the President of the FEUC (Federation of Students of the Catholic University) of Santiago decided that an election would be held on November 25 to constitute a Council with seventy-five percent of its membership composed of professors, twenty percent of students, and five percent named by the Permanent Committee of the Episcopacy. This solution was also adopted in Valparaíso, and the statutes of both universities were reformed. The movement extended with even more vehemence to the national universities in Chile and from there to practically all of Latin America with differences, of course, in various areas. In La Paz, Catholic students rejected the 1967 project of Monseñor Rocco for founding a Catholic university. Later, for other reasons, but certainly related to the experiences in China and Latin America—for example, the university reaction against Onganía in 1966 in Argentina—there came the impetuous interruption of May 1968 in France. Meanwhile, in Latin America the most lamentable reaction by dissatisfied students was that which occurred in Mexico between the police, the army, and the students beginning July 26, 1968. It terminated tragically with the death of more than two hundred in the historic plaza of the Tres Culturas of Tlatelolco on October 2 after many hours of crossfire into thousands of defenseless students.³⁷¹ The Mexican episcopacy should have reacted with a document spelling out in no uncertain terms that there should be “neither impetuous destruction nor criminal exploitation” of the situation.³⁷²

Perhaps of equal or even greater importance than the Mexican tragedy was what took place in Córdoba, now called the “Cordobazo” in Argentina. On May 29, 1969, workers from the industrial plants of Córdoba attempted to unite with the students of the city. There were conflicts as never before in the history of that country. “It is necessary to go back ten years to encounter a national strike of the magnitude which took place on May 30” according to the CGT. Barricades isolated Córdoba. There were shootings by groups from everywhere. “On the university campus the Catholics were the principal protagonists in this process, and the majority of them were leaders in the National Student Union.”³⁷³ The movement shook the Onganía regime, which fell a year later.

Christian university students are making their presence increasingly felt in Latin America. When a professor of the Catholic University was shot and killed by the police in a demonstration, the university and secondary students in Santiago de los Caballeros demonstrated, and classes were suspended.³⁷⁴ A year after the tragic events of Tlatelolco, masses were celebrated in Mexico, but the only member of the episcopacy who participated was Monseñor Méndez Arceo of Cuemavaca.

The transition from a “developmentalist university” to a “critico-Liberating university”³⁷⁵ is a painful process in which partial ideologies are surpassed because “the ideological option,” as Don Fragoso said in November 1969, is partisan. It can be beautiful and generous, but it is partial. From a global perspective the principal objective is the liberation of mankind, and it can be realized with whatever is valid in other ideological options.” Final liberation is eschatological. Cultural liberation is, on

the other hand, the construction of an historically new person who overcomes the alienation of oppressive colonialism.

III. FROM SUCRE TO PUEBLA (1972-1979)

1. *The Situation in Sucre (1972)*

(1) The sociopolitical context

The national-security dependent model of capitalism was spreading throughout Latin America. The important dates and events were the military coups in Brazil (March 31, 1964) and Bolivia (August 21, 1971), the dissolution of the congress in Uruguay (June 27, 1973), Pinochet's coup in Chile against Allende (September 11, 1973), the rise of Francisco Morales Bermúdez in Peru (August 28, 1975), the fall of the nationalistic military government in Ecuador (January 13, 1976), and the deposition of Isabel Perón (March 24, 1976). The situation was indeed grim if one also considers the continuation of the dictatorship of Somoza in Nicaragua, Stroessner in Paraguay, Duvalier in Haiti, Balanguer in the Dominican Republic, and military dictatorships with democratic trappings in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador. All of this was in keeping with the counter-insurgency model of national security proposed by Henry Kissinger, Richard Nixon, and Gerald Ford.

From an economic point of view, the difficulties that began in 1967 lessened during a period of recuperation in 1972 and 1973, but then world capitalism suffered its worst crisis since 1929. Inflation along with recession produced a "stagflation" beginning in 1974. Neo-Fascist dictatorships applied the economic doctrine of Milton Friedman's Chicago School, and transnational corporations took complete control of the economies in several nations. Policies of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) caused national debts to soar to astronomic heights, and the center-periphery relationship was duplicated when certain countries designated as centers of development —Brazil, Mexico, India, and Iran for example —began economic incursions into less developed countries.

The expansion of international capital and a new technological domination required nations to adapt a compatible ideology. Augusto Pinochet expressed this sentiment in the Sixth Assembly of the OAS in Santiago, Chile, in 1976:

Western Christian civilization, of which we unquestionably form a part, is being weakened from within and attacked from without. The ideological warfare jeopardizing the sovereignty of free states and man's essential dignity leaves no room for comfortable neutrality. In the internal politics of several nations we observe the ideological and social aggression of a doctrine which under the guise of a supposed proletarian redemption aims to implant a communist tyranny.

A theory of total warfare was developed on the political, economic, psycho-social, and military levels. The doctrine of national security, which originated in the United States after the Second World War, was adopted by the Latin American military in order to insure a political structure allowing for economic expansion from capitalist centers. The economic goal, namely, profits for foreign capitalists, has determined the political policy of many Third World countries and has resulted in the systematic repression of the people.

(2) The Church context

The most important papal document of this period was the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* issued on December 8, 1975, which summarized previous state-

ments. The troubles of capitalism seemed to cause a widespread pessimism in Italy, and the appearance of Eurocommunism and the advance of the Communist Party frightened certain ecclesiastical groups. The Pope, however, stated clearly:

The words of many bishops from all continents, especially from the Third World, in the recent Synod [1974] are well known. ...Their peoples are energetically determined to overcome whatever condemns them to marginal existence. ...The Church has the duty to announce liberation to millions of human beings, [and] to aid in bringing this liberation about.³⁷⁶

In their Thirty-second Extraordinary Meeting in Rome (1973), the Jesuits agreed to place “the Company at the service of the Church during this period of rapid change and respond to the challenge the world presents.” For them justice was a decided priority.

Yet in the 1974 Synod, Latin American bishops no longer spoke as in the previous one. They arrived at no conclusion, but rather contented themselves with issuing a “message” of commitment. In the fifth Synod in Rome (1977) it was obvious that the CELAM Assembly in Sucre had produced some fruits, for a bishop from El Salvador declared to the Synod that “in my country, priests are becoming communists or Maoists.”³⁷⁷ A Spanish prelate remarked that the Church in Latin America was openly retreating from the position taken at Medellín.³⁷⁸ Monseñor Alfonso López Trujillo repeatedly insisted that “Christian liberation need not inevitably be politicizing.”³⁷⁹ Changes occurred in the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace, and “those responsible for the Commission decided to forego the service of forty international experts.”³⁸⁰ In substance the Congregations were manifesting preconciliar tendencies. In Germany the progressive and critical lay journal *Publik* was closed. Meanwhile in the United States, Father Joseph Colonnese was dismissed as director of the Catholic International Cooperation Program (CICOP), where he had kept the North Americans informed of the reality of the poverty of Latin America that was resulting from U .S. policy. Bishop Lefebvre’s movement was symptomatic of the tide of reaction against Council reform. This was the atmosphere in Latin America by the end of 1972.

(3) The Sucre assembly (November 15 -23, 1972)

The Fourteenth Ordinary Assembly of CELAM was held in Sucre, Bolivia, during the period of November 15-23, 1972. The agenda consisted of four main issues: “the general restructuring of CELAM, the reelection of officers, the future of its specialized institutes as to their financing, and guidelines for pastoral practice.”³⁸¹ The prediction was made and reported by the press that “after the Sucre Assembly, CELAM will run on a more conservative track since bishops in several countries have been questioning the activities and pastoral approaches in some of the CELAM departments. Bishops here [in Argentina] and in Colombia, among others, have not disguised their displeasure with initiatives taken by that organism.”³⁸² Héctor Borrat, journalist and Christian intellectual, wrote,

Recent attacks on Segundo Galilea, the Pastoral Institute of Latin America (IPLA), and the Commission for Latin American Church History (CEHILA) was only a prelude to a final, all-out assault made during the CELAM Assembly in Sucre. It is more than a meeting; for the right wing it is the opportunity they have been waiting for and working towards to defeat the followers of Medellín. Will they, by electing new officers, succeed in effecting the shift that would turn Latin American bishops aside from the road opened up in 1968?³⁸³

These remarks, written before and during the Sucre Assembly, indicate the prevailing mood. Conservatives were indeed elected. López Trujillo became the Secretary General of CELAM, Bishop Luciano Duarte became President of the Department of Social Action, and Bishop Antonio Quarracino became President of the Department of the Laity. The shift was effected, and a new period in the history of CELAM and the Latin American Church had begun.

A *Memorandum* was signed by dozens of German theologians referring to the campaign against liberation theology initiated by conservatives as part of their program for Sucre. The Germans stated that “a driving force behind this campaign is Roger Vekemans,” and “as far as the Latin American episcopate is concerned, the campaign against liberation theology is supported especially by the Colombian auxiliary bishops Alfonso López Trujillo and D. Castrillón.” And finally, “in Germany Bishop Hengsbach of Essen is prominent in this campaign against liberation theology.”³⁸⁴

Conservative theologians Weber, Rauscher, and Bossler sided with the “Church and Liberation” group in opposing Latin American liberation theology, which one of them referred to as “irrational obscurantism.” In fact, these criticisms of the trends that began with Medellín, trends such as emphases on liberation and solidarity with the poor, actually benefited the national-security states, and they abetted State Department plans to reshape the physiognomy of Latin America through violent coups against liberation movements. The Church remained blind and deaf to the many horrors committed in the name of “Western Christian civilization.”

The Chileans Galat and Ordóñez were typical of the growing reactionary spirit:

Material poverty cannot be confused with spiritual poverty. People may be poor in economic goods without being poor in spirit, or one can deify money and covet wealth one does not possess. Still one can be rich in material things and be truly ‘*anawim*’ or poor in spirit.³⁸⁵

Thus when a worker asks for more wages or when a peasant demands his land back from the landowner who has stolen it, he is coveting another's wealth and is doomed to fail. On the other hand, the wealthy landlord who feels liberated because of his millions is really poor in spirit. The gospel is now inverted —standing on its head — emptied of its real content and refilled with a dependent, capitalist ideology. Since 1972 the Church has had the choice of either condoning or opposing capitalistic designs on Latin America. In the Sucre Assembly, by opposing liberation theology and rebuking the Pastoral Institute, which produced saints and martyrs such as Rutilio Grande, the Latin American Church as a whole has muted its voice of protest on the international level, if not on the national and local levels.

2. *The Ecclesial Situation from Sucre to Puebla (1973-1979)*

During the last five years the Church has suffered from a veritable reign of terror. It has provided more martyrs to Christian communities and to the heavenly Jerusalem than in the almost five centuries of its existence. Through its members who work with the poor the Church has authenticated its witness to the gospel as the people of God and deepened in the understanding of the gospel's implications. Despite the pain, blood, and death, this half-decade has been a glorious period in the history of Latin American Christianity.

(1) The Church in militaristic states (Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, El Salvador)

As an indication of the situation existing in repressive states, mention should first be made of the imprisonment in Riobamba, Ecuador, of thirteen Latin American and four

Mexican-American bishops on August 12, 1976. They were returning from a conference in Brazil on base communities and had come to Ecuador to discuss the situation of the Church in Latin America. One bishop exclaimed, “If this can happen to us, what happens to peasants, workers, and Indians when they are arrested?”³⁸⁶

The “Brazilian model” of development suffered a setback in Brazil itself as well as elsewhere in Latin America because of the oil shortage and the monetary crisis in the capitalistic countries. Foreign debt rose in Brazil to three and a half billion dollars in 1974. President Giesel allowed more freedom since he needed better press, and the Church quickly took advantage of this relaxation by providing courageous leadership to the people and by standing up to the national-security state. The Brazilian Church did not forget its martyrs but held them up as examples of the gospel. The deaths of Fathers Henrique Pereira Neto, Rodolfo Lunkenbein, João Bosco Penido Burnier, and many others indicated the Church’s break with the neo-Christendom model. Many took part in this renewal: Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of São Paulo supported the urban student and workers’ front, Bishop Pedro Casaldáliga allied himself with the peasants of the Northeast, Bishop Tomás Balduino stood openly with the Indians, and Bishop Bliz Fernández coordinated thousands of base communities. Bishop Hélder Câmara continued his prophetic denunciations of the widespread injustices, and Bishop Aloisio Lorscheider became president of CELAM. Bishop Ivo Lorscheider directed the National Conference of Brazilian Bishops in establishing a new pattern of relations with the government and the dominating classes. Two documents issued on May 6, 1973 — “I Have Heard the Cry of My People” by the bishops of the Northeast and “The Margination of the People, Cry of the Churches” by the bishops of Central and Western Brazil—described the Church’s new position. The latter pastoral declared, “Only people of the countryside and the cities, in unity and in labor, in faith and hope, can be the Church of Christ, ...this Church which struggles for liberation. And it is only to the extent that we venture into the waters of the Gospel that we become the people-Church, the people of God.”³⁸⁷

Yet there is ambiguity in the Brazilian Church despite the fact that it follows the popular Church model and is freer from the national-security state and closer to the oppressed than elsewhere in Latin America. The ambiguity stems from the fact that the Church receives its support not only from the lower and middle classes, but also from the national bourgeois. Thus Church leaders speak of a “national” liberation but always within the confines of a capitalistic economic system. Is this attitude not just another Latin American populism?

In Argentina the situation has become more distressing since 1973 and especially after Perón’s death in 1974. Given the amount of dependency and repression under López Rega during Isabel Perón’s regime, the military coup of March 26, 1976, led to no basic changes.

A violent bloody repression of the people, among them many Christians, has characterized the period. Father Carlos Mugica was assassinated in the doorway of his little slum church on May 11, 1974, and Bishop Enrique Angelelli of Rioja was murdered August 4, 1976. The reason for the martyrdom of the Argentine people is to be found in an economy dependent upon North American capitalism, now directed by the government minister Martínez de Roz who defines Argentina as an agricultural producer and exporter of goods. As the buying power of earnings decreases allowing more profits to foreign transnational capital, the social pressure on the class-conscious workers increases, and institutional force or violence immediately represses any attempt by the workers to mobilize. Even more regrettable, the bishops still follow a neo-

Christendom model, and they remain allied to the state and the upper classes in spite of the crisis that exists among the upper class and the suffering endured by the lower classes. The hierarchy condemns the guerillas as the source of all evils and are oblivious to the fact that they are the product of previous and continued social and historical injustice. It is not hard to see why the Argentine episcopal delegation assumed the stance it did in Puebla or why it was considered by most observers and participants to be the most conservative group present.

In Chile the bloody coup of September 11, 1973, violently ended the only socialism ever established by a free democratic election. The repression that followed was unparalleled in all of Latin America. A veritable "massacre theology" has guided the military, many of whom claim to be Christians.³⁸⁸ Two days after the coup the Chilean hierarchy issued an unfortunate statement entitled "Christian Faith and Political Action," which condemned the Christians for the Socialism movement at the very time when many of those Christians were being killed, jailed, tortured, or exiled. The document was influenced by Christian Democracy, ever dear to many of the Chilean hierarchy. The bishops were then obligated to condemn Allende's Popular Unity in particular and Marxism in general in order to gain some autonomy from the new dictatorship.³⁸⁹ Some of the bishops, such as Tagle of Valparaíso, Fresno of La Serena, Vicuña of Puerto Montt, and Valdés of Osorno, publicly supported the military Junta, but others such as Camu, the episcopal secretary, and Hourton, Ariztía, González, and Piñera were more restrained. Cardinal Silva Henríquez held to a middle position, which displeased the new government a great deal since it needed and sought his support. But the Cardinal refrained from criticizing openly the Junta. The Cooperation Committee for Peace, directed by Bishop Ariztía in the name of the episcopacy, and the Lutheran Bishop Helmut Frenz, along with Father Salas, SJ, became irritating to the regime. After great pressure the Committee was dissolved and another body, the Vicarate of Solidarity, was formed. These institutions are a sign that the Church maintained a relative independence from the totalitarian state. But the Chilean Church desires its independence because it looks forward to a triumph of Christian Democracy over the dictatorship and because of its commitment to the poor. The same is true in Brazil, El Salvador, and Bolivia. In any criticism leveled against the Chilean regime the hierarchy has not moved beyond the traditional commitment to a "new Christendom." Thus the members of the old Popular Unity have changed their mind on the historical function of the Church in Latin American society.

In Peru the situation never degenerated to the atrocious level that was characteristic of Chile or El Salvador. Yet since 1975 the government has tended more and more toward a fascist dependent authoritarianism. The Forty-second Episcopal Assembly (January 1973) represented a weak attempt to promote the popular Church model: "The Church's liberating mission is the efficacious announcement of the Gospel. It means hope for all men, especially those who suffer injustice, for the poor and the oppressed."³⁹⁰

Peru suffered particularly from the crisis of capitalism, mainly because of the rigorous monetary policy of the International Monetary Fund, which served the interests of international finance. Velasco Alvarado had to submit to North American demands after his reformist revolution suffered a setback, and the people were repressed when they protested their suffering. The popular Church, even though it was a minority, was active in these struggles of the people. The hierarchy came under pressure from the State but declared: "We renew our commitment and fidelity at a time when

the Medellín tradition is in danger of being forgotten.”³⁹¹ Some Peruvian bishops, theologians, and laypeople were to take a progressive stand in Puebla.

In El Salvador, as in Nicaragua and Honduras, the military dictatorship became more repressive, and the condition of the people progressively worsened. The Episcopal Secretariate of Central America presided over by Bishop Obando Bravo, who incidentally was not chosen to attend the CELAM meeting in Puebla, stated on June 24, 1977: “We deeply regret that in order to silence the socially committed who are faithful to Christ and to the Gospel, the easy expedient is used of calling them communists, subversives, followers of exotic doctrines, ...all in flagrant violation of human rights.”³⁹²

Peasants were shot and killed in 1974 at San Francisco Chinamequita, La Cayetana, Tres Calles, Santa Bárbara, and in the main square of San Salvador, as well as in many other places. Archbishop Chávez exclaimed, “Here coffee consumes men,” referring to the exploitation of laborers by landlords. Father Rutilio Grande, pastor in Aguilares, was murdered on March 12, 1977. He is a symbol of this period in El Salvador’s history, but he was not the only martyr. The priests Alfonso Navarro, Barrera Motto, and Octavio Ortiz were also killed on May 11 and November 28 of the same year, and on January 20 of the following year. Many laypersons died with them: for example, along with Father Ortiz the army murdered David Caballero, age 14; Angel Morales, age 22; Roberto Orellana, age 15; and Jorge Gómez, age 22.³⁹³

Monseñor Oscar Romero was named Archbishop on February 22, 1977, and at once manifested a courage rarely seen in the Church in defense of his people against the military regime and its paramilitary forces. The bishops declared on March 5, 1977, “This situation is one of collective injustice and institutionalized violence.”³⁹⁴ Even so the contradictions should not be overlooked. On the day of Father Grande’s funeral, when Bishop Romero was asking the procession to proceed slowly toward soldiers blocking their way with bayonets, Bishop Pedro Aparicio was defending the government and criticizing his priests and laity in the meeting of the Synod in Rome. But in El Salvador both the model of neo-Christendom and that of the popular Church are operative. Bishop Romero has said that “the Church is being forced back to the time of the catacombs.” Indeed the primitive Church could not appeal to the state for pastoral aid nor ally itself with the upper classes. Neither can the Church in El Salvador.

(2) The Church under formal bourgeois democracies (Colombia, Mexico)

In Colombia the military has recently increased its influence on the civilian government, but the military power and control is not as evident there as it is in Uruguay. In accordance with the national agreement between the Colombian Conservative and Liberal parties, the office of president passed from Misael Pastrana to Alfonso López in 1974, and to Julio Turbay in 1978. The Church faithfully followed the guidelines of neo-Christendom and continued to legitimate the system. Only since 1978 has the Church become somewhat critical.

Polarization within the Church, however, has sharpened. Father Domingo Laín died in a guerrilla action with the National Liberation Army (ELN) in 1974, but on June 26, 1975, the Cardinal was awarded the Order of Antonio Nariño by the military during the declaration of a state of siege and was made an honorary general in the Colombian army in June 1976. The most condemnatory document of the decade was issued by the Colombian bishops: “Christian Identity in Action for Justice,” November 21, 1976, which named and denounced persons, journals, and movements. Some believe that it

was an essay preliminary to the Working Paper for the Puebla meeting. In "Christian Identity" the bishops attributed the many problems in the Colombian Church to the young priests and others who though working with the poor were being influenced by "outside forces."³⁹⁵ Are Colombian priests and theologians really so naive? Or does the real problem lie with foreigners who refuse to recognize structural injustice in the capitalist system as the cause of so much popular unrest and of the commitment of priests and laypeople to the poor?

Two Church models are obviously in conflict in Colombia. While most bishops maintain the perspective of neo-Christendom, some priests and religious have begun to implement the model of the popular Church. And even the hierarchy appears somewhat uneasy with its alliance with the upper classes. If the government becomes a military, national-security type dictatorship, many churchmen will support it. Colombia is less likely to become a more popular social democracy. At any rate, no easy future lies ahead for the Church, and the people receive no clear witness regarding the poor nor a commitment to their cause.

In Mexico the situation is quite different. The bishops' message on "Christian Commitment and Social and Political Choices," October 18, 1973, was surprisingly forthright.³⁹⁶ Unfortunately, however, nothing else resulted, primarily because of lack of concern for the situation of the workers and peasants. The only real conflict between the Church and State was over the obligatory use of textbooks provided without cost to all schools, including the Catholic schools, many of which educate children of the bourgeoisie. The controversy has subsided, and the texts are only in partial use in private schools.

The rapid construction of the new Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe with government aid and under the tutelage of the largest banks in Mexico was viewed by many as a tacit reconciliation between Church and State but by others as the co-opting of the popular Virgin by the upper classes. Many diocesan and religious priests were in trouble with their bishops, and this intraecclesial infighting again revealed the existence of two models of the Church. Currently there exists an unconstitutional but undeniable understanding between Church and State according to the typical neo-Christendom model. The popular Church is, however, springing up in thousands of communities and parishes in poor urban barrios and in the rural areas. The murder of Father Rodolfo Aguilar on March 21, 1977 is an example of another kind of Christian testimony in Mexico today. Some churchmen hope to effect their witness through the power of the State, while others are determined to announce a gospel of poverty and simplicity to the poor and oppressed.

(3) The Church in a socialist society (Cuba)

The Church in Cuba is understandably in a difficult situation. Following Batista, the idol of neo-Christendom, the Church found it hard to abandon class preferences and accept living in a socialist country. By 1973, however, it had faced up to the real situation but still had trouble adjusting. Direct relations were established between the Cuban bishops and the Holy See when in March 1974 Bishop Agostino Casaroli visited the island. Cesare Zacchi became the first papal nuncio, having been named toward the end of the year, and was succeeded in 1975 by Monseñor Mario Tagliaferri as pronuncio. This contact has been mostly diplomatic and political, not pastoral or theological. Since Rome is its only input, the Cuban Church was and is still cut off from communication and cooperation with the rest of the Church, even from Latin American liberation theology and the popular Church.

The Cuban Church is too insecure to adopt socialism and too weak to criticize it. An example of its anemia can be seen in the one-sidedness in the new Cuban constitution as related to religion. The Church knows it must first contribute something to the revolution before it has the right to make demands. In the opinion of “the president of the Cuban Episcopal Conference, José Domínguez, Bishop of Matanzas, justice will come to Cuba after the economic and diplomatic blockade has been lifted.”³⁹⁷ The Church did condemn the attack on a Cuban airliner on November 9, 1976.³⁹⁸

The Church in Cuba, however, still does not play any strategic role in the Latin American Church as a whole, nor is it functioning as a popular Church. Unlike any other ecclesiastical body on the continent, it has the ideal conditions to embody the popular Church model by working independently with the people in their revolutionary process. But it has not done this. The task demands much moral courage and commitment to utter poverty, and a faith in the future. For if the Church looks back, it will turn into a pillar of salt.

3. *The Situation in Puebla (1979)*

(1) The sociopolitical context

When five men were caught in the Watergate building the night of June 17, 1972, a scandal began that ultimately ended the political career of President Richard Nixon. The ensuing moral crisis, together with the defeat in Vietnam and the economic troubles of the capitalist system, created an atmosphere of confusion in the United States. For this reason the Rockefeller interests together with members of the Bilderberg group founded the Trilateral Commission in 1973, claiming that “the international order prevailing since the Second World War” was “no longer adequate to deal with the new conditions.”³⁹⁹ An ideology for a new imperialism was formulated: “Although the initial problems of international character have disappeared, the prevailing feature of the present situation is the constant expansion and readjustment of *interdependence*; the control of this interdependence has become essential for world order.”⁴⁰⁰

The Trilateral Commission “invented” Jimmy Carter and put him in power in 1975. At the time, Latin America was almost totally controlled by military dictatorships, for they were necessary to provide police security for transnational expansion after the failure of CEPAL developmentalism. But these military governments in a burst of hyper-nationalism plunged their countries into such poverty that they were no longer a viable international market. Trilateral Developmentalism (a new form of capitalist expansion for controlling a new unavoidable crisis) had clear ideas about some aspects of Latin America’s future.

As far as politics were concerned, social democracies were to be strengthened. Balanguer was prevented from succeeding himself as president in the Dominican Republic and was forced to respect democratic rules. In June 1978 he stepped aside for the election of Antonio Guzmán. Pereda Asbún in Bolivia was defeated in 1979 by a more nationalistic government calling for new elections. In Peru the International Monetary Fund changed the rules of the game for the first time in March 1979, and the American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) won a relative majority. Elections were promised in Ecuador. In Nicaragua attempts were made to substitute a social democracy for Somoza whose regime finally collapsed in July of the same year. Representatives of Christian Democracy in Chile began to speak out for the first time since 1973. Even Uruguay was thought to be stable enough for a return to democracy.

In Brazil the opposition to the military asserted itself more, and the U.S. State Department defended all this as a part of its program for human rights.

From the economic viewpoint, the capitalist system may be entering a new phase of expansion through the creation of wider national markets. This plan is seen as a respite, if only temporary, from its troubles. Jimmy Carter said during his electoral campaign in Chicago in March 1976: "We should replace [Kissinger's] policy of the balance of power with one of world order."

(2) The Church context

The history of the Third Bishops' Conference in Puebla may be said to have begun in 1973. Early in that year it was reported that "observers have noted statements made by Bishop López Trujillo, the new Secretary General of CELAM, in Río de Janeiro at the beginning of this year to mean there may be no Third Conference for the present."⁴⁰¹ During the same period there was talk about valid and invalid interpretations of Medellín. One Mexican bishop said: "The talk about Medellín is different from what really happened; if read carefully, Medellín commitments do not require the Church to side with the poor."⁴⁰² But a new ideological base had to be established in order to ignore Medellín.

On November 30, 1976, CELAM was charged with organizing the Third Bishops' Conference, the beginning of a long journey which would end February 13, 1979. The two-year period of preparation allowed the Church in Latin America—and later in Europe, North America, and even in Africa and Asia—to recognize the importance of the event. This preparatory period can be divided into four segments: (1) the convocation until the appearance of the Working Draft, November 1976 to November 1977; (2) the appearance of the Working Draft until the final countdown, November 1977 to September 1978; (3) the final countdown until the opening of the Conference, September 1978 to January 27, 1979; and (4) the Conference itself, January 27 to February 13, 1979. The third stage was unforeseen and was due to the deaths of Popes Paul VI and John Paul I (August 6 and September 29, 1978, respectively), and the election of John Paul II. If the delay had not occurred, allowing for the details of the organization to become public and be assessed, the results of the Conference might well have been different.

The Secretary General, Bishop López Trujillo, along with others, doubtless conceived a plan to give the meeting a conservative orientation, and they hoped that this direction would be maintained. During the first stage their intentions were not clear, but there were several indications. The document "Christian Identity" issued by Colombian bishops, November 1976, and the conclusions of a meeting of laypersons in Buenos Aires, July 2-8, 1977, revealed the prevailing motif, namely, that the change in Latin America from a rural society to an urban industrialized one would best follow the capitalistic pattern. Thus began the thread of Adriana. The "bases" began to organize when they discerned what was happening, and they awaited the publication of the Working Draft.

Their suspicions proved to be well-founded. The long, 1,159-paragraph text ran counter to the Medellín Conference, presupposed a developmentalistic, even trilateral, theoretical framework, and was quite restrained if not ambiguous in its condemnation of transnational firms, national-security regimes, and the violation of human rights. In January 1978 there began the most important counteroffensive in the history of Latin American theology. Not only did theologians take part, but also bishops, groups of bishops, priests, religious, base communities, peasants, and Indians. It was an un-

planned, spontaneous act of repudiation of the Working Draft. Two brief alternative documents appeared, "Contributions to Reflection" by a team in Northeast Brazil by Bishop Marcelo Pinto Carvalheira, and "Good News: Birth of the Church in Latin American People" by a group in Venezuela.

Also, important theologians, pastors, and lay Christians in Europe, North America, Africa, and Asia supported the direction initiated by the bishops in Medellín and cautioned against any deviation from it in Puebla, a unique experience for the prelates and the first of its kind in the history of the Latin American Church. The "Memorandum" by German theologians issued in November 1977 was the first of several to appear. Other French, Spanish, Italian, North American (including Chicano bishops), and Canadian theologians followed suit as did over seventy theologians from Asia and Africa meeting in Colombo, Sri Lanka, shortly before the Puebla meeting. The explanation for this worldwide reaction was that the decisions made in the Puebla Conference would affect, directly or indirectly, the orientation of the Church on other continents. Also, the Christian population is shifting toward Latin America. In 1975 America surpassed Europe in the number of Christians, and Latin America will soon contain over half of all the Catholics in the world.

The protests against the Working Draft produced results.⁴⁰³ Cardinal Aloisio Lorscheider personally assumed responsibility for the writing of the document, but with ample collaboration. Still, no liberation theologians were allowed to participate in the official preparation of the text. It was as if Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, and other prominent European theologians had been excluded from the Second Vatican Council. Of course, certain reactionary factions did try to exclude them, but John XXIII staunchly and prophetically defended the openness and freedom of the European Church. No such statesmanship was evidenced in Latin America. But the delay in opening the Puebla meeting resulted in numerous leaks and disclosures about the additions and exclusions that took place during the preparations.

Confrontation was, therefore, inevitable in Puebla. The bishops were divided by class loyalties, different ideologies, and even national blocs. Some wanted the Conference to condemn their version of the "popular Church," liberation theology, the so-called parallel magisterium, and Marxist social analysis. Others supported the Church's experience in the base communities and identification with the poor, and espoused the denunciation of national-security regimes, transnational economic expansion, and the violation of human rights. The delegations from Argentina, Colombia, Mexico, and finally Venezuela formed a conservative bloc in Puebla. The Brazilian bishops and those from Peru, Central America, the Caribbean, and Ecuador, as well as others, defended the Church's commitments to the repressed people of the continent.

(3) The Third General Conference of Puebla (January 17-February 13, 1979)⁴⁰⁴

The arrival of Pope John Paul II in Santo Domingo on January 25, two days prior to the beginning of the conference in Puebla, attracted worldwide attention. During his trip to and from Mexico the Pope gave over forty addresses, sometimes arousing heated commentaries and obliging the bishops to make a careful exegesis. Although officially excluded from the Conference, the liberation theologians were invited by several bishops as consultants, and their presence was felt at once. On the very afternoon of the first session, a sixteen-page commentary on the Pope's inaugural address was already available to the bishops.

In his speeches, the Pope gave no substantial support to the old idea of Christendom.

He said nothing to imply that the Church should be situated in political society, allied with the upper classes, or dependent on the state in its pastoral function. Naturally, the politicians and power brokers, the bankers and the Mexican bourgeoisie, were surprised and perhaps frightened by the Pope's popular appeal, and they interpreted his words as the neo-Christian model. Within a few days, however, it became clear that he was supporting neither capitalism nor condemning socialism, but rather demanding freedom for the Church and its mission under both systems. His meaning was not quickly grasped, but of the words that found their way into the final Puebla Document, those of John Paul II are the most pastoral passages and clearly express the support for the poor.

There will be no attempt in this summary to describe the events in Puebla day by day, to give the constituency and responsibility of each commission, to discuss the four distinct revisions of the Final Document, nor to mention the times of extreme tension —such as the publication of the letter of Monseñor Alfonso López Trujillo to Monseñor Luciano Méndez, a communication that caused something of a sensation and the authenticity of which has not been questioned. What we will attempt to give is a series of reflections on the final text of the Puebla Document, believing that it is possible to derive certain conclusions regarding the Document itself and at the same time make some observations regarding the development of the Conference.

The groups that attempted to condemn the popular Christian movements, the base communities, the “popular Church,” the Latin American theology of liberation, and the so-called parallel magisterium failed in their objective and were completely defeated —at least in the Conference. Those who attempted to muffle the voice of the Latin American Church in order to avoid being made uncomfortable by its denunciations achieved their ends, because in the last analysis little was said at Puebla that was not later neutralized to a large extent by compromise. The Puebla Document was, therefore, distinct from that of Medellín. For even though there were many sections of the Medellín statement that lacked clarity, none was weak, insipid, or inarticulate. Furthermore, the real losers, namely, the popular groups, the base communities, the theologians of liberation and the prophetic bishops, took control of the situation and evidenced a faithfulness to the Church that enabled them to leave Medellín strengthened and encouraged. One can observe, therefore, that in the last analysis Medellín was the point of departure and inspiration, and Puebla can be regarded as a continuation. Puebla was not nearly so original as the Second Bishops' Conference, but it followed the same direction, which in itself is significant and to a certain degree was unexpected. The door remains open, therefore, for Christians to continue supporting the interests of the people, the poor, and the oppressed.

One should note, for example, certain selections from the Final Document. These of course are only brief passages indicative of what took place. The material of the 22 commissions together with the Inaugural Message is now divided in the following way:⁴⁰⁵

Message to the Latin American People.

First Section. The Pastoral Perspective on the Latin American Reality (Commission 1) (Par. 1- 161).

Second Section. God's Purpose and the Latin American Reality (Par. 162-562).

Chapter I. The Content of Evangelization (Commissions 2,3, and 4) (Par. 165-339).

Chapter 2. What is Evangelization? (Commissions 5, 6, 7, and 8) (Par. 340-562).

Third Section. Evangelization in the Latin American Church: Communion and Participation (Par. 563-1127).

Chapter 1. Centers of Communion and Participation (Commissions 9 and 10) (Par. 567- 657).

Chapter 2. The Agents of Communion and Participation (Commissions 11, 12, 13, and 14) (Par. 658- 891).

Chapter 3. The Means of Communion and Participation (Commissions 15 and 16) (Par. 892- 1095).

Chapter 4. Dialogue for Communion and Participation {Commission 17} {Par. 1096-1127}.

Fourth Section. The Missionary Church as the Agent of Evangelization in Latin America (Par. 1128- 1293).

Chapter 1. The Preferential Option for the Poor (Commission 18) (Par. 1134- 1165).

Chapter 2. Option for the Youth (Commission 19) (Par. 1166- 1205).

Chapter 3. Cooperation with the Builders of a Pluralistic Society (Par. 1206- 1253).

Chapter 4. Individual Activity in National and International Life (Commission 21) (Par. 1254- 1293).

Fifth Section. Under the leadership of the Spirit: Pastoral Options (Commission 22) (Par. 1294-1310).

The Inaugural Message indicated the continuity already existing between Medellín and Puebla and clearly underlined the ecclesiastical responsibilities “to the People of God in Latin America.” “People” (*pueblo*) is the most frequently used word in the whole Document, together with the phrase “the Latin American People” or the “People of God,” both of which are characteristic of *Lumen Gentium* of Vatican II. The word “nation” is rarely used, an even less frequent is the word “state”. Because love, love for the poorest of God’s children, is the beginning of Christianity, the Conference opened with an act of repentance:

For all of our faults and limitations, we—even we pastors—beg forgiveness from God and from our fellow human beings in the faith and all of humanity. The values of our culture are being threatened. Basic human rights are being violated. We therefore invite everyone, without class distinction, to accept and to assume responsibility for the cause of the poor as if it were your own cause and the very cause of Christ himself. “I tell you solemnly, in so far as you did this to one of the least brothers of mine, you did it to me” (Mt. 25:40).⁴⁰⁶

One may observe that the bishops emphasize the *position* of class as taking up the cause of the oppressed, as over against every class *situation*, when they say “without class distinction.” The Message concluded with a hymn as it were to the “civilization of love”—an expression of Paul VI—the civilization that stands as the ideal for all historical civilization, the eschatological utopia of a community without divisions or contradictions. This was essentially a Christian proposition within the utopian tradition of the prophets and of Jesus, which was raised as an objection against antiutopian Christians and reformists who pinned their hopes on overhauling the current systems: “God is present and living—in Jesus Christ the liberator—in the heart of Latin America.”

In the introductory text, the triumphalism of the second revision allowed for a perspective somewhat more variegated:

Intrepid strugglers for justice, evangelists for peace such as Antonio de Montesinos, Bartolomé de las Casas, Juan de Zumárraga, Vasco de Quiroga, Juan del Valle, Julián Garcés, José de Anchieta, Manuel Nóbrega, and many others defended the Indians against the *encomenderos* and the conquistadores, even to the giving of their lives as did Bishop Antonio Valdivieso. (Par. 8.)

This is in reality a new perspective of our history. The often-repudiated Bartolomé de las Casas has now been consecrated, not only by Puebla, but earlier by the Pope himself. At last Father Bartolomé has been vindicated, and this was necessary before asking forgiveness for the Church's legitimating of the Conquest. And before recognizing the sin of the Conquest, it was possible to exalt the heroes and saints.

For the first time in history reference was made to the role of women in the life of the Church (Par.9). Of course there are certain ambiguous passages and phrases such as "our radical Catholic substratum" (Par.1). But when the current Latin American reality was discussed, the document clearly stated that "we discover that this poverty is not a transitory stage, but rather it is the result of economic, social, and political situations and structures which produce this state of poverty" (Par.30). Also for the first time the indigenous peoples along with the "Afro-Americans" were said to be suffering the most abject poverty; they are the poorest of the poor (Par.34). Their situation was described with new phrases that complemented those of Medellín, for example, "institutionalized injustice" (Par.46).

Of course the tertiary position, the economy of the free market, and "Marxist Ideologies" were evident.⁴⁰⁷ But the ideology of "national security" was repeatedly condemned (Par.49), together with a warning against the "economic, technological, political, and cultural *dependency*" (Par.66).⁴⁰⁸

The subjects of personal and social sin along with the mechanisms and structures that contribute to individual and collective evil were repeatedly referred to in very specific terms. "We should be aware that in the deepest of them [the roots of injustices] there exists the mystery of sin" (Par.70). "The *causes* of this unjust situation are multiple, but the root of all of them is to be found in sin, not only personal and individual evil, but also the evil of the unjust structures themselves" (Par. 1258).⁴⁰⁹ "The anguish, suffering, and frustration which have been caused— if we observe in the light of faith —by sin has personal as well as enormous social dimensions" (Par. 73). The bishops likewise called upon the Church to cease being a tool of the State or part of the political society, and to commit itself to the poor as part of civil society. "The Church should continually become more independent of the powers of the world in order to take advantage of the freedoms that exist which allow for the completion of her apostolic labor without interference" (Par.144). The model to be followed was that of the Brazilian Church and not that of the Colombian or Argentine Church.

Such independence can only be achieved, however, by recognizing and emulating "the evangelical value of poverty which makes us vulnerable to all people of God" (Par.8), and which allows us to commit ourselves to the dispossessed and disenfranchised sectors" of society (ibid.). The bishops condemned certain simplistic Christologies that have identified Christ as a revolutionary or political leader, as well as theoretical and hypothetical rereadings of the Gospels (Par.178ff.). In this regard the theology of liberation is not only in agreement with but has functioned as the vanguard of this very position. Unfortunately, however, the "political function" of the prophetic and priestly work of Christ was not made clear. In view of this fact and because this section of the Final Document was rather superficial, the better features of Latin American Christology were not examined. Yet certain familiar themes were repeated such as "the liberation of the people from Egyptian slavery" (Par. 187) and the declaration of Christ in Luke 4:18, along with others, were noted —passages that have become central in the formulation of the Latin American theology of liberation (cf. Par.190).

The bishops did not condemn the "popular Church" as certain theologians have

done previously. The theme is taken up in Paragraph 263 in which the following observation is made:

The problem with the *popular Church* —which has arisen from the People or through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit —has various ramifications. If by the term “popular Church” one understands it to be the Church which is attempting to identify with the popular movements of the continent—as has always been intended by the theology of liberation and the experience of the Conference of Bishops —then it arose as a response of faith on the part of these groups to the Lord.

The “popular Church” now has the green light if it reproduces the incarnation in popular ways. It should be condemned, however, if it proposes to be a Church distinct from the official and institutional Church. But it has never been thus understood by those who are committed to the poor in Brazil, Peru, or Mexico. The assertion that the “popular Church” is schismatic is simply a false accusation made by those who really desired to undermine this “incarnation in popular ways.” Paradoxically, it has been these accusers who have been condemned. As the saying goes, “They went out to shear, and they returned sheared.”

The theology of liberation is also free to continue and to develop. In the third revision of the Document there appears the statement: “We rejoice also that evangelization is not benefiting those constructive aspects of a theological reflection on liberation such as that which emerged in Medellín.”⁴¹⁰

Although this phrase was eliminated from the final text of Par. 375, another statement remained that was equally positive:

The theologians [of Liberation] offered an important service to the Church: systematizing the doctrine and the directions of the magisterium in a synthesis of the broader context, translating it into a language adapted to the times, submitting to a new investigation the acts and the words revealed by God in order to apply them to new sociocultural situations. The judging of their authenticity and the regulation of their endeavors belong to the authority of the Church, to those who are responsible for not quenching the Spirit, but for testing all and retaining that which is good (cf. *Lumen Gentium* 12) (Par.375).

This was not a condemnation, but rather the true consecration of the Latin American theology. Furthermore, Pope John Paul II in his sermon in Rome on Wednesday, February 21, 1979, declared: “We should call by its name whatever social injustice, whatever discrimination, whatever violence is inflicted on the body, spirit, or conscience of a human being. We should call by its name injustice, the exploitation of a person by another person, and the exploitation of a person by the state and the economic systems.” Subsequently the Pontiff said,

The theology of liberation insists that human beings not only should be instructed in the word of God, but also it speaks of their social, political, and economic rights. The theology of liberation refers at times exclusively to situations in Latin America, but we should recognize the demands of a theology of liberation for the whole world.⁴¹¹

Some of us expected these words from the Pope. The news media, and especially the rightists outside and inside the Church, had misrepresented his thinking, for he has an extraordinary sensitivity for the poor and will understand sooner or later the profound spiritual pathos of our theology. Bishop Bartolomé Carrasco of Oaxaca, commenting on the visit of the Pope to the diocese of Oaxaca, said to us:

At a private dinner which took place in the seminary, only the bishops from the area and the papal group were present. I was sitting next to the Pope on his right. We were talking

about the problems of the region, problems such as *caciquismo* (bossism), exploitation, and poverty. I sensed his feeling, what he was like as a person and as a brother. Later he asked me if I was content with my pastoral work. I replied that I was, but that the people were suffering a great deal.

At this time Bishop Carrasco became very emotional, his eyes filled with tears, and we all remained silent.

As the Pontiff was dressing for the celebration of the Holy Mass, Monseñor Samuel Ruíz, Bishop of San Cristóbal [one of the bishops absent at Puebla but who had been very much involved at Medellín] said to me that he would like to give a Bible in the Chol language to His Holiness. When Bishop Ruíz approached the Pontiff, I said to him, “The Bishop of San Cristóbal has come to present to you the first Bible translated into Chol.” When the Mass ended, and we were about to leave, the Pope said, “The Bible, the Bible in the indigenous language —where is it?”⁴¹²

The Pope said to the bishops, “This day in Oaxaca has been marvelous, and I will never forget it. I have been deeply moved because I have sensed a spiritual communion with the poor, with the Indians, with the peasants, with the simple people of God.”⁴¹³ With time the Pope will continue to learn from the humble, poor, and oppressed people of Latin America.

The same can be said regarding the question of the “parallel magisterium” —which was not clearly defined, and remained an irrelevant question between parenthesis in Paragraph 687, but it precedes the statement on the obligation of the bishops to promote “collaboration between the theologians who exercise their specific gift within the Church.” In a certain sense the bishops recognize that all is not ministry, and that the Spirit originates in the people of God charismatic acts —as innovative theology— that are not necessarily distinct from the episcopal ministry. This is not to say that the charismatic activity is invalid because it did not originate with the bishop. The text again confirmed the Latin American theology in its sound, relatively ecclesial autonomy.

The key text in the Final Document is the “preferential option for the poor.” It speaks of the poor who lack “the most basic *material* goods” (Par. 1135).⁴¹⁴ It avoids speaking of “spiritual” poverty, and rather deals more adequately with “evangelical” or “Christian” poverty (Par. 1148-1152). To the capitalistic world the bishops set forth the poverty of the prophets as a criticism: “In today’s world, this poverty is a challenge to materialism and sets forth alternative solutions to the consumer society” (Par. 1152).

What are these alternatives for a society of consumers? The text does not say, but at least capitalism is rejected, and a hope for noncapitalistic historical alternatives is set forth. The question of alternatives is, of course, fundamental.

The text demonstrates a healthy *universalism* of the option for the poor: “The testimony of a poor Church can evangelize the wealthy whose hearts are fixed on riches” (Par. 1156) in the same way as it evangelizes the poor.

In short, this text follows most closely the direction begun in Medellín, which actually saved the whole Puebla Conference from irrelevancy. The text on “Peace” historically manifested in its formulation the lucidity and the love for the Church and the poor —as though it had been written by the father of the theology of liberation, Gustavo Gutiérrez, who was excluded from Puebla, the reasons for which we will not speculate on here, nor about those who were responsible. Gutiérrez was more influential than many of those who were present.

In the text of Commission 20 there is a stringent reference to the military (Par. 1247),

a theme dear to the heart of one of the editors, but which in the last analysis moves beyond the Working Drafts.

The text of Commission 21 is also very forceful in stating that “there are obvious contradictions between the unjust social order and the demands of the Gospel” (Par. 1257), that the “broad hopes for development have not been realized” (Par. 1260), and it condemns the domination of the “rich nations over the poor nations” (Par. 1264), “the wealth and power of the multinational corporations” (Par. 1264), and the lamentable situation of “the isolated, the refugees, and the exiled” (Par. 1266). “In view of the sinful situation there arises the need for the Church to denounce evil objectively, valiantly, and evangelically” (Par. 1269).

One should not overlook the dozens of letters that bishops sent to their fellow ecclesiastics and Christian brothers who live under persecution and in constant danger. Bishops Santiago Benítez, Cándido Padín, Hélder Câmara, Fernando Aristía, Ovidio Pérez, Gerardo Flores, Paulo E. Arns, Moacyr Grechi, Jorge Manrique, Manuel Talamás, Adriano Hipólito, Luciano Metzinger, Luis Bambaren, Leonidas Proaño, Carlos Palmes, Luis Patiño, and many others wrote to Monseñor Oscar Romero:

We know that the Lord placed upon your shoulders the pastoral responsibility of the Archdiocese of San Salvador at the time in which the chastisement, the veritable persecution began. In the midst of all this, accused and defamed along with those who search for ways of justice, you have remained steadfast knowing that you have to obey God rather than men.⁴¹⁵

These same bishops wrote also to Monseñor Manuel Salazar, Bishop of León, who was present in Puebla, but with the obvious intention of supporting the Archbishop of Managua, Monseñor Obando, another prelate who was absent:

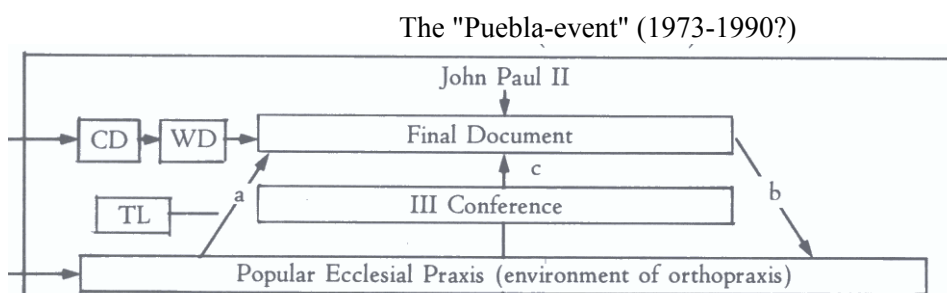
In these days of togetherness here in Puebla we have heard the clamor of anguish and hope from the Nicaraguan people. We still remember with profound sadness and righteous indignation the suffering, the injuries, and the death of so many men, women, children, and humble, generous young people, many of whom were innocent victims, offerings to justice and liberty for all. But in the midst of this terrible pain and suffering resulting from the injustice and hurt which they have experienced, we take comfort in seeing you and others of the Nicaraguan Church manifesting such solidarity with your people as exemplary pastors who have not abandoned the sheep. We are reassured by the fact that you have denounced with prophetic valor the horrors inflicted on these same people as earlier Jesus and the prophets condemned such injustices. (Signed in Puebla, February 10, 1979.)

The fact is that the meeting in Puebla has not ended; it has only begun. And the effects will be determined by what results from the Conference. If the Christian community appropriates the good that has come from Puebla, the Church will be purified, and Puebla will be a new Medellín. We will be the ones who determine the impact of Puebla.

4. *The “Letter of the Law” in the Puebla Text and the “Puebla-event”*

Frequently the mere text itself—especially an ecclesiastical text—is confused with the totality of the ecclesial event that includes much more than the words of any official document. In this case the “Puebla event” is much more important and comprehensive than the Final Document. If one forgets this fact there is the tendency to elevate the Document to a place of undue significance and overlook the event that produced the document.

In reality one can say that the “Puebla-event” has only begun, as far as its long-



CD = Consultative Draft
 WD -Working Draft
 TL -Theology of Liberation

term significance is concerned. The early antecedents began in 1973 when discussions first were held regarding the possibility of a Third Bishops' Conference. But the real impact of Puebla will only be seen during the decade of the 1980s. The same can be said of Medellín, which can be traced to 1959 with the beginning of the Second Vatican Council, but which continues even until today affecting the orientation of the Church. It is important, however, to understand that the Final Document, the product of the Third Conference (arrow *c*) is merely one moment and not the central feature of the whole "event."

The necessary point of reference of the ecclesial "event" is, in a positive or negative manner, the Latin American people, the Christian community, the popular ecclesial praxis. From this praxis emerged the discussion (arrow *a*), and the same "test" finally now reverts to praxis (arrow *b*). The "Puebla-event" was the product of the historical life of the popular ecclesial praxis—either for or against—but the praxis was always the point of reference.

It is for this reason that an analysis of the "text" of the Final Document can be made in two ways: an analysis of the "event" itself, that is, a thorough study of the document in order to understand, critique, and apply it; or an analysis of the Final Document as merely one segment in the historical process that has only begun.

If one follows this second alternative, the apparent contradictions in the text, rather than being stumbling blocks, will be signs of encouragement. The "text" then will become a *quarry* wherein one will know how to eliminate the inferior in popular ecclesial praxis. This popular praxis will serve as the underpinning of "discernment." It will be orthopraxis. This is not a Machiavellian misuse of the text nor an intentionally misrepresented rereading. On the contrary, it allows for the discriminate use of the better texts by the people of God and the utilization of these texts for the common good.

If this is accomplished, Puebla will then provide what the popular ecclesial praxis needs of her. When a peasant is jailed and in his defense says that the origin of his commitment is a text of Puebla, then the "Puebla-event" will be judged by those repressive groups as the cause of the subversion and as the reason for the popular emergency. This has been the historical importance of Medellín, not within the walls of the Medellín seminary, but in the thousands of ecclesial base communities, among the thousands of martyrs, in the torture chambers, and in the oppressive courts. Medellín became actualized, historical, and significant in the *popular ecclesial praxis*.

Many factors are woven into the "text" of Puebla: the innumerable meetings, the Consultative Document, the Working Document, the contribution of the Christian community, the words and intimations of the Pope, and many other important factors.

During the Puebla Conference itself, the theologians of liberation were also involved, and their voices —as the voice of the people —were heard. All the contradictions of the countries, of the classes that the Church in Latin America includes, are seen in open tension and are not resolved in the text. For some the Final Document of Puebla is a disaster, while for others it is a rich depository, a kind of mine containing an admixture of marble of superior and inferior quality, simple stone, dirt, and clay.

Since the conclusion of the Puebla Conference in February 1979, the most urgent need has been to initiate a “discernment” of what has taken place in order to formulate from the text itself the basis for a *valid discourse regarding popular ecclesial praxis* for the popular Church. Anthologies from the texts of Puebla should be published and distributed in order that the people can appropriate from the “event” what is theirs naturally even though perhaps it originated historically against the people, and even though some do not want it to be the people’s. This popular “appropriation” of Puebla is the most pressing task before us.

In this respect the difference between Medellín and Puebla stems from the view that this question of popular *appropriation* from the “text” will constitute the irreversible “event” of Puebla. In Medellín the originators —CELAM of 1968 —and the conservatives surrendered the sessions as well as the texts to the more prophetic groups in the Church. Consequently there was hardly any necessity for a popular appropriation of Medellín. Medellín was born in the hearts of the oppressed.

This was not the case in Puebla, which was given birth by those who appear to have resisted the idea that the Third Conference be a popular Christian “event.” The apparent intention was to bury Medellín and to consign to limbo many of the questions related to the Church committed to the poor. But this attempt failed. The “text” of Puebla, the *quarry-text*, contains many precious stones and an abundance of marble. We should avoid the historical mistake of allowing Puebla to be appropriated by the dominant classes, by the national-security governments, or by those elements in the Church that are not committed to the poor. It would be a crime to surrender the Puebla “text” for which so many in the Christian community have struggled and labored with their hundreds of meetings, demonstrations, writings, and sufferings. This “text” will not be willingly surrendered. The people have the right to the Puebla “text.” They should constitute the historical reality.

It is for this reason that, assuming the responsibility of being members of the Church of Christ, we should equally exercise the right and the responsibility of “keeping the faith” with Puebla. The “realization” of the “Puebla-event” will be the first fruits in the daily lives of the Latin American Christian community. Let the Christian community, therefore, discover its role as leader. Let us understand which “discourse” of those contained in the “text” of the Final Document is consistent with our interests, with those of the poor in Christ, and with those of the popular Church.