

RELIGION AND SOCIAL CHANGE:
CLASSICAL THEORIES AND NEW
FORMULATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN
LATIN AMERICA*

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INTRODUCTION

Theories on the relationship between religion and social change over the past decade have received significant new empirical inputs from developments in Latin America where religious symbols and institutions have undergone some dramatic alterations under the influence of various modernization processes. Sociologists and anthropologists in late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Europe stressed the basically conservative effect of religion on society, and concluded that religious institutions are normally obstacles to change as a result of their traditionalistic orientation and association with established social structures. However, there is a growing uneasiness with the conclusions of these major theorists (Spencer, Malinowski, Durkheim, Marx, Weber) in the light of developments in major religions in some areas of the Third World, particularly Roman Catholicism in Latin America. Popular reporting as well as recent scholarly research have noted significant shifts to the left in parts of the Latin American Church, exemplified by strong episcopal condemnations of social injustice, growing political activism of militant clergy groups, and the emergence of new pastoral and social programs aimed at religious and societal reform. The conclusion in much of this literature is that the Church is undergoing a major transformation and this

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new phenomenon will provide a powerful stimulus for social change throughout the continent.

As important as these developments are in some sectors of the Church in Latin America, to date the existing literature has tended to focus upon the more dramatic examples or on only one dimension of change, without assessing adequately the complex interaction of both progressive and traditional forces that operate simultaneously within and across various levels of the Church (normative, structural, behavioral), and which produce different configurations depending upon the nature of the national church and the social and political context in each country. A more comprehensive and multidimensional assessment is needed of the range of accomplishments as well as of the extent of the obstacles facing the Church in its efforts aimed at internal renewal and the exercise of a new positive influence in the process of social change.

This article is an attempt to evaluate the significance of some of the major changes highlighted in the literature thus far and to give a realistic appraisal of both the long-range potential and the limits that shape the parameters of the Church's new role in Latin American society. On the basis of recent changes in the Church, it is clear that there is much evidence to challenge the validity of the theoretical and empirical foundations of the classic formulations regarding the predominantly conservative impact of religious institutions on society. It is also clear, however, that there are definite limitations on the nature and extent of the Church's contribution towards the transformation of social structures in Latin America.

THE CLASSICAL THEORIES: CONTENT AND CONTEXT

Classic studies of the impact of religion on society, written in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, arrived at the same general conclusion: Religion is predominantly an integrating and legitimizing force for the prevailing values and structures in society and is not a motivating force for social change. Spencer emphasized the "social continuity" provided by religion for societal values, and Malinowski stressed the contribution of religious ritual and sanctions to the preservation of a "reverence for tradition" and for "law and order." Durkheim believed that the essential character of religion was its inspirational force, by which a "society sacralizes its basic customs and holds them together." Marx was much more critical and considered religion an "opium" which, although fulfilling a real need, prevented believers from confronting and changing the actual social forces causing human suffering. Of all the

classical theorists, Weber showed the most sensitivity to the unique contribution of religion to those areas of private concern left untouched by a change in social structures—interior suffering, personal tragedy or failure, and death. Precisely because of this appreciation, however, Weber recognized that the goals of the major religions of the world did not ordinarily include the transformation of social organizations.¹

The European religiopolitical context in which these studies were written, the research concerns of social scientists at the time, and the types of societies examined in much of the literature, all shaped the mindset of intellectuals and influenced their conclusions about the role of religion in society. European Catholicism had clearly aligned itself with conservative political forces to fight the continuing erosion of its spiritual and temporal power begun in the sixteenth century and carried on throughout the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of Marxism. In addition, traditional Catholic moral teachings against unlimited profits and vigorous individualism did not coincide with the needs and values of an expanding capitalist system. Furthermore, the research concerns of sociologists and anthropologists at the turn of the century were influenced by positivism and social Darwinism; values were seen as reflections of social relationships and structures; and the study of religion was shaped by an interest in its functional contribution to the maintenance of society.

In light of these assumptions and concerns, many scholars drew upon evidence provided by primitive cultures for clues to the most elementary and pure forms of interaction between values and structures. Religion in these traditional societies was found to be the main integrating force, providing bonds of loyalty and continuity as societies evolved into more complex forms over time.

EROSION OF THE CLASSICAL THEORIES

Several changes since World War II have emerged in various developing societies, in religious systems, and subsequently in the research concerns of social scientists regarding religion, all of which challenge the assumptions and conclusions prevalent in the classic works on the role of religion in society. Religious forces in several colonial territories of postwar Asia and Africa played crucial catalytic roles in nationalistic movements, providing organizational resources as well as moral affirmation for independence efforts.² Furthermore, during the subsequent process of modernization, political leaders in many of these new nations have realized that religious values and institutions can contribute positively to the

emergence of new social structures. Not all the elements in these ancient religions are obstacles to social change in secular institutions. In fact, some of the traditional religious values in developing nations are closer to the styles and goals of the various forms of socialism desired by political leaders than are the individualistic and capitalist-oriented values associated with the development of modern Europe and the United States.³

Perhaps the most significant recent change in a major world religion, having far-reaching social consequences, has occurred within Roman Catholicism—ironically, a force which one hundred years ago helped convince the classical theorists that religion was basically a conservative, even a reactionary element in society. In attempting to come to terms with modern social structures, the fathers of the Second Vatican Council (1962–65), as well as Pope John XXIII (1958–63) and Pope Paul VI (1963–), have begun a major normative shift in Catholic teaching—away from a purely spiritual understanding of salvation towards a more concrete sense of God’s action in history and man’s corresponding responsibility to work for social justice and structural change as a constitutive part of his response to the Gospel. Documents from Vatican II and several papal encyclicals throughout the 1960s have all affirmed the moral necessity for greater restriction on economic competition, increased state planning and public ownership of key resources, worker participation in enterprises, adjustment of international trade agreements, and a more equitable distribution of world resources, to favor the developing countries. These themes emerge from a long Catholic tradition based upon belief in the corporate solidarity of mankind, the need for just distribution of material goods to establish harmonious social relationships, and the necessity for the state to promote actively the common welfare of all citizens. Such principles once appeared reactionary in an era of expanding capitalism, but are now seen as positive forces contributing to the development of new social and economic structures needed in many parts of the world as alternatives to capitalism.⁴

In addition, the official Church attitude towards various socialist and communist movements has mellowed in recent years, thus opening the door to dialogue and even cooperation between Christian and secular humanist groups sharing common social concerns and values. The Church’s statements about these groups have become less bitter as violent aspects associated with some earlier strains of Communism and Socialism have subsided. In an age of mutual tolerance traditional Catholic principles, always at odds with many capitalist assumptions, have now become more sympathetic to various socialist values and strategies for development.⁵

Thus, in the light of the rapid changes in developing nations, the crucial impact of norms and values on the modernizing process, and the evidence of changes in religious systems, much of the literature in social science in the past decade concerned with development problems has concentrated more on social change than on stability and continuity, and has given more attention to the role of religious values and institutions in the process of the normative and structural transformation of societies.⁶

ELEMENTS FOR A NEW FORMULATION: THE LATIN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Clearly the area of the world where there has been the greatest change in religious symbols and structures over the past ten years has been Latin America. Some sectors of the Latin American Church have taken the new directives of Vatican II and the modern social encyclicals the farthest by reexamining religious values in the context of the social and economic problems of society, by reorienting many Church structures to support social action programs among the poor, and by designing new forms of pastoral ministry to effect changes in the attitudes and behavior of Church members.

Acting in response to challenges from Marxism and Protestantism, which were making gains in Latin America in the late 1950s and early 1960s (especially among the working classes), and to new stimuli from Rome (Vatican II documents, social encyclicals, appointments of several progressive bishops and papal nuncios in Latin America), the Latin American hierarchy throughout the last decade has set in motion processes within the Church and in society which have very positive implications for social change.

The second general conference of the Latin American Episcopal Council (Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano—CELAM) at its meeting in Medellin, Colombia, in August 1968, issued several pronouncements denouncing the "institutionalized violence" prevalent in many of the economic and political structures in Latin America and pointing out their linkages with the "international imperialism of money." The bishops placed responsibility for injustice squarely on those with the "greater share of wealth, culture and power" who "jealously retain their privileges thus provoking 'explosive reactions of despair.'" The bishops openly condemned the oppression of the poor by the dominant sectors of society and the use by the rich of "anticommunism" as a rationalization to

repress legitimate reactions by the poor against injustice. The hierarchy, in following the line of argument in *Populorum Progressio*, deplored the use of violence to redress grievances but indicated that "revolutionary insurrection can be legitimate in the case of prolonged 'tyranny that seriously works against the fundamental rights of man, and which damages the common good of the country.'" Such widespread injustices, they concluded, demanded "global, bold, urgent and profoundly renovating transformations."⁸

The Medellin conference was a watershed in Latin American Catholicism. The Church, which from colonial times had enjoyed significant material privileges resulting from a close association with the established order, officially and publicly went on record condemning the injustices inherent in existing social and economic structures and placed its moral weight on the side of those seeking major reforms to benefit the poor. Since 1968, several national conferences of bishops in Latin America have followed the leadership of Medellin and have issued strong denunciations of the local injustices in their own countries and the repressive measures taken by the state against human rights.⁹

In addition, many theologians in the Latin American Church since Medellin have written extensively on the meaning of sin and salvation in the context of the injustices prevalent in contemporary society. Sin in these new theological writings is understood in a more collective sense than in the past, assuming a social form in unjust structures, exploitation of the poor, and the domination of one class by another. Salvation in such a context involves, and even requires, social action to liberate the oppressed, and real Christian love is interpreted as sometimes sanctioning class conflict and organizing the poor for effective political action.¹⁰

Besides strong prophetic statements and theological reformulations, groups within the Church have taken concrete steps to change societal structures. The Chilean hierarchy throughout the 1960s sponsored agrarian reform programs and divested the Church of many of its landholdings, thus setting an example and precedent for the rest of Chilean society;¹¹ the Brazilian bishops in the pre-1964 period supported rural labor unions and basic education programs, linking literacy training with the awakening of political consciousness and the awareness of human rights;¹² in many Latin American countries priests have been involved in open conflict with repressive governments;¹³ and Marxists and Christians have co-

operated to form parties and movements aimed at undermining existing power structures.¹⁴ In the 1960s, massive amounts of financial and manpower resources poured into the continent from the North American and Western European churches to bolster the Latin American Church's various pastoral and social efforts to minister more effectively to the needs of the urban and rural poor.¹⁵ Latest methods in social science were used to survey the social and spiritual needs of each country and to outline new strategies to alleviate them.¹⁶ New forms of ministry were devised based upon French pastoral theology emphasizing small, tightly-knit Christian base communities and greater lay participation and leadership training.¹⁷ These new pastoral concepts have been given a particularly Latin American character by priests and nuns trained in the Paulo Freire method of conscientization, combining Biblical themes of Exodus and liberation with techniques for self-determination and community organization.¹⁸

In light of this recent experience, several major scholars of religion in Latin America have attempted to explore the components of a new formulation describing the role of religion in the process of social change. The late Ivan Vallier stressed the Church's unique contribution to development by creating a socioethical framework to legitimate change in Latin American society.¹⁹ Houtart and Pin have emphasized the role of the church as an inspirational force for development.²⁰ Einaudi, Maullin, Stepan, and Fleet see the most effective role for the Church as helping to form a moral consciousness in the polity regarding issues of justice.²¹ Bruneau's study of the Brazilian Church has led him to the conclusion that the Church is becoming more prophetic and acting as a powerful moral force opposing repressive regimes.²² Sanders and deKadt see specific social and political movements within the Church as forging mutually-supportive structural linkages with progressive and even radical secular groups and serving as models or training grounds for new leaders in Latin American society.²³ Vallier also believed that pastoral renewal programs in small communities were effecting changes in the attitudes and behavior of Church members, providing them with a new social conscience and the spiritual resources needed to meet their difficult responsibilities in complex transitional societies.²⁴ A weakness, however, in almost all the recent literature has been the predominant focus on only one aspect or dimension of the Church—such as recent historical developments and changes in official Church documents and pronouncements,²⁵ goals and attitudes of cer-

tain elites,²⁶ or specific programs or movements that have developed within parts of the institution or in some countries.²⁷ None of the literature thus far has made an adequate study of the complexity and interactions across all three levels of the Latin American Church—normative, structural, and behavioral.²⁸

It is clear that the developments in certain sectors of the Church—which vary from country to country—are making important inputs into the process of social change. The classic formulations of the conservative role of religion in this process are no longer adequate as they stand. It is also evident, however, that the Church as a whole cannot act as a dynamic and consistent leader in the transformation of social structures throughout the continent and that there are certain limitations and contradictions within the Church that require closer analysis if a new formulation of the role of religion in social change is to be balanced and accurate.

NORMATIVE DILEMMAS

Latin American Church pronouncements articulating a moral imperative for major social changes and critiquing various forms of oppression have clearly set a new official course for the Church in Latin American society. The moral weight of the Church can no longer be used by the upper class elites to rationalize their resistance to structural reforms, and in many countries progressive secular leaders have appealed to the Medellín documents and various national episcopal pronouncements to legitimate efforts to promote the distribution of income, agrarian reform, and more equitable labor policies. Nevertheless, the level of generality of official pronouncements, the disagreement within the Church itself over the concrete application of its moral norms and over the role of the Church in society, and the varying degree of influence available to the Church in each country, limit the impact of the Church's efforts to act as the conscience for a public morality or as a prophetic force against repression.

The Ambiguity of Moral Pronouncements

Many of the new normative evaluations emphasizing justice are made in very broad terms because the bishops do not feel they should provide specific answers binding in conscience in areas where the Church has no competence or expertise. The 150 bishops who signed the various documents at Medellín prefaced them with a "Message to the People of Latin America" in which they stated: "We do not have technical solutions or

infallible remedies. We wish to feel the problems, perceive the demands, share the agonies, discover the ways and cooperate in solutions."²⁹ This emphasis is similar to that of the Church Fathers of Vatican II regarding the applicability of general guidelines for social justice in concrete situations. The bishops at the Council stressed the importance of the Church's role in articulating basic values that pertain to the full development of man in society, but they also recognized that honest differences of opinion can exist among sincere individuals and groups over the choice of the best practical means to realize these values. They warned against identifying the gospel too closely with any particular social program or political strategy:

Often enough the Christian view of things will itself suggest some specific solution in certain circumstances. Yet it happens rather frequently, and legitimately so, that with equal sincerity some of the faithful will disagree with others on a given matter. Even against the intentions of their proponents, however, solutions proposed on one side or another may be easily confused by many people with the gospel message. Hence, it is necessary for people to remember that no one is allowed in the aforementioned situations to appropriate the Church's authority for his opinion.³⁰

The result of such caution by the official Church regarding social morality has often been that strong motivations for structural changes or consistent action (both within and outside the Church) do not emerge from normative pronouncements made at such a general level. As Sanders has observed, many of the very Latin American bishops who signed the Medellin statements continue to function as they always have despite their formal acceptance of new goals for the Church and society: "They accept without tension the older theology and practice and do not question the Church's linkages with the powerful, its estrangement from the majority of the population. They yield to the innovations of the Vatican Council out of respect for the voice of the Church but they make little effort to apply them. They usually sign progressive statements of regional and national bishops' conferences . . . because they do not sense the contradictions between them and their own ideas."³¹

Many of the more radical, younger clergy are aware of this contradiction between Church teaching and behavior, and strongly urge the hierarchy to be more specific in their denunciations. However, when clerical and lay groups have attempted to justify concrete actions in controversial areas on the basis of Medellin's call for justice, the bishops in various countries have often taken public stands against the use of Church pronouncements to support what they consider to be partisan political movements. In 1969, for example, priests and laymen in Bolivia issued a letter criticizing the working conditions of miners and the lack of

respect for their trade unions by the government. They cited the Medellín documents as justification for their protest of this specific injustice. After the government severely criticized the letter, the Bolivian bishops issued a declaration warning against excessive political activities by clergy and Church personnel and reminded them of the universality of their spiritual ministry to all groups.³² In early 1971, after eighty priests serving in working-class areas (who later founded Christians for Socialism [Cristianos por el Socialismo]) gave public support to the new socialist process initiated under the Popular Unity (Unidad Popular—UP) government, the Chilean hierarchy repudiated this action, criticizing these priests for a misuse of the priestly office, since it appeared to the bishops to be an endorsement not merely of a process but of a partisan political program. The hierarchy further indicated that the Church had no competence to offer concrete political or economic solutions for complex social problems.³³

Differing Ecclesiological Perspectives

There are also serious normative disagreements within the Church as to what is its proper role in society. Differing ecclesiologies (theologies of the nature of the Church) are operative in Latin America—as well as in the Church throughout the world during this time of transition and reform—which are at odds with one another regarding the definition of the character of the Church, its involvement in the struggles of the world, and its moral responsibilities as a gospel community.

The thrust of Vatican II was toward a closer relationship between the Church and the world, and called for all members of the Church to become more involved with the agonies and struggles of modern man so as to make their own faith more credible and real, and thus act as catalysts for the full liberation of all men and women in body and soul. In the perspective of the Council, the boundaries between Church and world, between religious and secular, are viewed in relatively fluid terms, and a life of faith takes on definite social and secular dimensions. There is, however, an older ecclesiology still operative in traditional sectors of the Church, including many parts of the Latin American Church, which makes clear divisions between Church and world, sanctions the distinction of planes between sacred and secular, and underscores the necessity for the official Church to avoid interference in temporal affairs. In this framework, faith and religious commitment are seen in more personal and individualistic terms and the Church is viewed not as a communal sign of justice and liberation in the midst of the world but rather as a

haven or sanctuary for those seeking refuge from the problems and cares of secular society.

The debate over the nature and function of the Church, although carried on at the normative level among theologians, bishops, and priests, is rooted in and influenced by definite structural relationships characterizing different sectors of the institution. Those opting for the "distinction of planes" model are usually closely associated with the established social order and comfortable with the benefits accruing to the Church from this relationship. Those proposing the model of the Church as a "community of liberation" are frequently more directly involved with the problems of the poor and want the Church to present a more critical challenge at every level against the repressive aspects of existing regimes. Hence, there is often an implicit political position already associated with the ecclesiological option one chooses.

Gutiérrez, the leading spokesman of the "theology of liberation" school in Latin America, emphasizes that a posture of non-intervention in politics by the Church in the framework of this "distinction of planes" model can definitely mask a partisan political position:

Is the Church fulfilling a purely religious role when by its silence or friendly relationships it lends legitimacy to a dictatorial and oppressive government? We discover . . . that the policy of non-intervention in political affairs holds for certain actions which involve ecclesiastical authorities, but not for others. In other words, the principle is not applied when it is a question of maintaining the status quo, but it is wielded when, for example, a lay apostolic movement or group of priests holds an attitude considered subversive to the established order. Concretely, in Latin America the distinction of planes model has the effect of concealing the real political option of a large sector of the Church—that is, support of the established order. . . . The dominant groups, who have always used the Church to defend their interests and maintain their privileged position, today—as they see 'subversive' tendencies gaining ground in the heart of the Christian community—call for a return to the purely religious and spiritual functions of the Church.³⁴

Hence, it is almost impossible to separate the dynamics operating at the normative level of the Church from their structural components. In fact, the resolution of the theological debate over the nature of the Church and its proper role in society will depend in large part on the outcome of the efforts by progressive sectors in the Church to create new organizational linkages with the lower classes in Latin America.³⁵

There is much evidence, therefore, indicating serious divergence of opinion among bishops, priests, and laity as to what the structural and behavioral implications of newly articulated norms of Vatican II and Medellín should be. Some understand the Church's role in this socio-

ethical area as providing a voice above the clamor of politics, calling upon all members of society to become more sensitive to basic human values. Others are uneasy with what they consider the implicitly conservative political thrust of this position, and want the Church to use its influence to support concrete actions and movements for change amid controversy in order to make the gospel message of salvation credible and effective in the real world of suffering and struggle. So long as these differences continue to exist between the “progressives” and the “radicals” (as Sanders describes them),³⁶ there will be no uniformity of opinion as to the operational force of these norms and the Church’s moral impact will be diffuse both on its own members and on society at large.

Varying Religiopolitical Contexts From Country to Country

The context of each national society will also shape the parameters within which the Church can act as a social critic or articulator of values for change. Where there has been a history of close association between Church and State (as in Colombia, Argentina, and Venezuela), there is frequently a reluctance on the part of the hierarchy to speak critically and forcefully against established social norms and practices. In other societies where there has been serious antagonism between Church and State, however, (as in Mexico and Cuba), the moral leadership in the country has been preempted by secular institutions and the role of the Church in this area very limited. Chile and Brazil during the 1960s were the two countries in which the religiopolitical context provided an atmosphere in which the moral and prophetic influence of the Church has been the most dramatic, although there have also been factors limiting the extent of its impact.

Chile: Progressive Church in a Changing Society / The Chilean experience throughout the 1960s and early 1970s indicates that when a fairly independent Church with a consistent record in favor of social change shares prominently with a progressive government in the articulation of the goals of society, the influence of the Church at the normative level of development is quite significant. Both the Christian Democratic party (Partido Demócrata Cristiano—PDC) and the Popular Unity administrations publicly acknowledged, and even depended upon, the Church as an ally in strengthening the consensus in society for needed structural reforms. During the past decade several episcopal pronouncements denouncing chronic social and economic imbalances were given wide publication; they created the conditions in which many Christians could

explore possible areas of agreement and cooperation at the normative and strategic levels of change with secular and even Marxist groups moving in the same direction.³⁷

In attempting to act as a moderating force amid the increasing polarization of society during the Allende regime, the Chilean hierarchy tried to mediate differences among opposing factions without endorsing any specific partisan position or political solution to the nation's chronic socioeconomic problems. The bishops, however, were caught in a very difficult position between the Catholic Left (as exemplified by *Cristianos por el Socialismo*), who criticized them for not officially endorsing the Chilean road to Socialism as proposed by the Popular Unity administration, and the Catholic Right (including many in the conservative National party and the ultra right-wing movement, *Patria y Libertad*), who attacked Cardinal Raúl Silva Henríquez for the cordial relations he maintained with Allende to the very end. The hierarchy, however, continued efforts to act as a conciliatory force, and in June 1973, the bishops of the Central Provinces called upon citizens of all political persuasions not to allow ideological differences and the struggle for power to divide the nation to such an extent that respect for human life would be forgotten: "Nos parece necesario servir más a los hombres concretos con nombres y con rostros, antes que jugar con definiciones o palabras. Valen más los hombres que los sistemas; importan más personas que las ideologías. Las ideologías dividen; la historia, la sangre, la lengua común, el amor humano y la tarea semejante que los chilenos tenemos hoy deben ayudarnos a formar una familia."³⁸

However, by this time polarization had become so great that the Church's influence was not strong enough to effect a reconciliation. The Cardinal personally made a last-minute effort to avoid a coup by bringing together President Allende and Patricio Aylwin, president of the Christian Democratic party. The purpose of the meetings in mid-August 1973, was to reach an agreement on the distinction between the public and private areas of the economy and to work out a greater role for the military, both in the government and in the enforcement of the laws forbidding the illegal hoarding of arms. The PDC leadership was adamant about a greater role for the armed forces in the administration, but sectors of the UP (especially in the Socialist party) were reluctant to agree. Before differences could be resolved, time ran out and groups in the military who had long been preparing the coup carried the day on 11 September.³⁹

Important, then, as were the moral contributions of the Church to legitimizing social change and stimulating new combinations of secular and religious values, the Chilean experience indicates that the Church by

itself can neither create nor maintain a basic consensus for change in a country or set the priorities underlying reforms. The Chilean political system independent of Church influence had long been moving in a direction of reform resulting from vigorous public debate and the growing strength of center and leftist parties. The Church could effectively exercise supportive moral assistance as long as such a context was developing and being sustained by a fundamental agreement of all parties as to the rules of the game for change. Once this consensus began to break down and polarization along economic and political lines hardened, the Church's voice as conscience of society was no longer heeded.

Brazil: Prophetic Church in a Repressive Society / As more and more Latin American nations come under military regimes, the Church will have greater difficulty in articulating a socioethical framework for social change since the great majority of these governments are now attempting to define the norms and goals for development unilaterally (e.g., Brazil, Bolivia, Panama, post-coup Chile). The experience from these nations indicates that when the Church and an authoritarian state compete to define the normative values and goals for society, with differing evaluations of the meaning of justice and human rights, there will be considerable efforts made by the government to limit the Church's public voice. Bruneau has described how this is occurring in Brazil:

There is a growing awareness within the government that a modern state does not require the legitimation traditionally provided by the Church. The Brazilian government can rely on its ideology of National Security for legitimation and has been actively promoting public support for it through both the schools and the mass media. Moreover, the "economic miracle" of the past years has so elated the government that the Church can almost be forgotten in the process.⁴⁰

It will be difficult for the Church in such societies to be an effective moral guardian against the growing power of the regime. Where the government can continue to monopolize coercive power and the means of communication, and combine this with the achievement of economic advancement for middle and upper-income sectors of the population, there will be a restricted voice for the Church and an increasing unwillingness among decision-makers to take its message seriously when it is proclaimed.

What is occurring in countries with harsh military regimes, such as Brazil, is that certain sectors of the Church are becoming more prophetic both in their public judgments and style of life, bringing them into direct confrontation with the government. A good number of the Brazilian hierarchy, as well as priests and laity, have become openly critical of the regime's economic development policy skewed in favor of the rich, its

severe repression of human rights, and its widespread use of torture.⁴¹ Furthermore, many of the small Christian *comunidades de base* in urban and rural areas are providing training grounds for new leaders and opportunities for local communities to come together on a regular basis to discuss their religious as well as socioeconomic problems.⁴² These developments in the Brazilian church have brought about government surveillance of sermons, Church publications, and radio programs; harassment of local parish leaders; and even imprisonment, torture, and sometimes murder of several outspoken priests and laymen. Bruneau sees this prophetic character gaining acceptance in several parts of the Brazilian Church:

Many sectors in the institution are adopting a role which seems to be the only possible one. This is the prophetic function, as in the Old Testament, of interpreting the word of God in concrete situations and thereby denouncing injustice. Prophecy was—and still is—revolutionary, and if it continues to be adopted at the present rate the Church institution as we know it today in Brazil, with schools, seminaries, newspapers, radio stations, and all the other paraphernalia acquired over the years, will be jettisoned.⁴³

Historically, repressive governments have precipitated the emergence of prophetic groups in Judeo-Christian communities opposing inhumane policies, but such open defiance has traditionally been made by individuals or sects willing to pay heavily for their actions by ostracism and persecution. It is not characteristic of an entire institution as large as the Roman Catholic Church to engage in such dangerous activities, particularly when it has a vast institutional network to protect serving the spiritual needs of so many members.⁴⁴ Furthermore, surrender of all of its major structural forms of influence (such as schools, newspapers, etc.) not only endangers the ability of the Church to continue its pastoral ministries effectively, but also severely limits what influence it does have in confronting injustices in society and educating the public conscience. Sectors of the Church will become more prophetic and defiant as regimes, such as the one in Brazil, grow more repressive in Latin America. These courageous groups will cause embarrassment for governments at home and tarnish their images abroad, but the bishops are not likely to allow constant confrontation with such regimes to become the overriding policy of the Church as a whole.

In fact, Bishop Samuel Ruíz Garcia of Mexico described the debilitating effect of repressive government reactions on the prophetic voice of the Church since the Medellín meeting in 1968:

Among the Catholic hierarchy, Medellín's prophetic voice seems to be fading away. Tortures and sheer weariness are stifling, or at least quieting down, some of the bishops' voices. . . . The menace of Brazilianization hangs over the Church in a number of countries: Bolivia and Paraguay have been so threatened for some years, and now Argentina, Panama and Mexico seem likely to go that same route.

There is a genuine danger that the Church's prophetic voice and all its social relevance may be neutralized, that the Church may shrink from confrontation, collaborating instead to preserve a misnamed "order" and an unstable "peace."⁴⁵

Hence, the effectiveness of the role the Church can play at the normative level of development—either as articulator of a socioethical framework for change or as prophetic critic opposing injustices—is shaped by: The strength of agreement within a particular national church on the operational consequences of general moral values; varying ecclesiological perspectives on the nature of the Church and its role in society; the strength of consensus for social change within a nation; the opportunity for other institutions besides the State and the military to share in the formulation of societal goals; and the price the leadership of each national church is willing to pay for confrontation with a hostile government.

STRUCTURAL CONTRADICTIONS

In addition to the normative predicaments, both within the Church and between the Church and repressive governments, there are also serious limitations facing the Church at the structural level. These exacerbate the normative dilemmas and restrict the Church's potential for moving consistently as an effective institutional force for social change. Such structural problems include the financial base of the Church, its personnel recruitment patterns and their impact on the Church's ministries, and the various international pressures exerted by the Vatican and other national churches outside Latin America.

The Costs of Dependency

Many of the Church-sponsored programs and movements of the 1960s, highlighted in the literature as exciting indications that the Church was being transformed and was in turn transforming society, are now on the decline—literacy-training projects involving political education, peasant unions, political cooperation between Christians and Marxists, groups of politically active priests, and social research into key issues of justice and public policy. These programs have brought the Church into direct conflict with conservative governments in several countries, and in recent years have had to be discontinued or at least drastically reduced and reoriented.⁴⁶

A major reason why the Church cannot long sustain controversial social and political programs in face of government opposition is that it is heavily dependent upon public finances for a variety of its ministries.

Unlike the North American experience, where separation of Church and State automatically required the development of internal sources of ecclesiastical support, many of the Latin American constitutions which declared varying degrees of Church-State separation provided for the continuance of public support to Church ministries, especially in the area of education. This factor, however, has placed serious obstacles on the Church's ability to implement programs that do not meet government approval. Thus far in the literature not enough attention has been given to researching the sources of Church funds, and more documentation in this area is needed in future research designs. Unpublished data from Brazil in the 1960s, however, indicate an overwhelming dependence by the Church on the government for both its temporal and spiritual ministries.⁴⁷ This has been a determinative factor in preventing the Church from continuing many of its politically sensitive basic education programs in rural areas of Brazil after the 1964 military coup.⁴⁸

In addition to public support, the Church relies heavily on foreign missionary and financial assistance for its various religious and social ministries. Appeals from the Latin American hierarchy in the late 1950s and early 1960s to North American and European churches for manpower and money made it possible to expand its pastoral works, especially among the poor. However, this reliance carries with it serious organizational problems which limit the Latin American Church's independence and sometimes makes it vulnerable to accusations of foreign interventionism.

Foreign-born priests constitute a rather high proportion of the clerical population throughout Latin America—43 percent in Brazil, 60 percent in Chile, 78 percent in Bolivia.⁴⁹ In several countries over the past five years many foreign missionaries have become radicalized in the face of the increasing misery and repression of the poor. Their works and ministries have incurred the wrath of established political powers and many have been imprisoned or exiled in Brazil, Paraguay, Guatemala, Bolivia, and Nicaragua. Some of the most innovative programs among the urban and rural poor have been organized or supported by foreign priests and nuns; this has made such projects vulnerable since conservative governments can and do deport the leaders of these projects, accusing them of introducing alien and harmful ideas and methods into their culture. The most blatant recent example of this strategy and reasoning has been the accusation by the military junta in Chile that many foreign priests and religious were responsible for bringing Marxism and class struggle into the country. During the first two months of the junta's rule, fifty foreign priests had to leave the country under direct pressure or

because of physical danger, and now, nearly two years later, the number has exceeded one hundred.⁵⁰

Recruitment Patterns

The Church is the oldest institution on the continent, and traditional attitudes and styles still characterize many of the local clergy. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life are declining, and new recruits still come predominantly from the middle and upper sectors of society, many of whom prefer to serve the needs of their own class. Financial and educational disadvantages, as well as the disciplinary requirement of celibacy, are major obstacles to the recruitment of clergy from the working and lower classes.⁵¹

Ministry is understood by many of these priests and nuns as involving mainly personal spiritual dimensions (based upon the "distinction of planes" model of the Church), with no direct reference to, or involvement in, social action. Furthermore, the theory that still characterizes much of their approach to education is very elitist—namely, training children of the upper and middle classes is the most effective way to change the major institutions in a nation.⁵² The normative emphases of Medellín on the necessity for the Church to side with the poor and confront head on the long-standing injustices of those with wealth and power do not easily and quickly penetrate these traditional attitudes and behavioral patterns.⁵³

Even for many of those who work among the poor (most of whom are foreign-born), the spiritual and psychological problems of their parishioners are so overwhelming, and the churches in these areas so understaffed, that the major thrust of their work is strictly pastoral and has little immediate bearing on social or political action. This phenomenon underscores the validity of Weber's observation that the means of salvation for most major religions does not directly involve changing social structures. Many Church ministries are still geared in the direction of meeting the spiritual needs of the poor, and the best efforts of the Church must be in this realm if it is to remain true to its primary mission.⁵⁴

Relations with the International Church

The Latin American Church is part of an international organization and maintains strong ideological links with national churches throughout the world and with the Vatican as well. Churches in the United States and Western Europe assist their Latin American brethren through manpower

and finances, but also shape the style of the programs they sponsor. Sometimes the bishops in the North Atlantic regions are not willing to maintain projects in Latin America which have controversial social or political effects and thus alienate sectors of the middle and upper classes.⁵⁵

Rome also exercises considerable influence on the internal affairs of the Latin Church. Despite recent structural reforms since Vatican II, emphasizing decentralization in decision-making and greater power for national and international bishops' conferences, the Vatican can still wield effective authority over the direction of a particular national church through key appointments or removals of bishops, visits by papal emissaries, and directives and warnings about the thrust or style of ministries. Over the past three years Rome has become concerned about what it feels is a growing politicization in grassroots pastoral and educational programs since Medellín. Warnings against the implications of liberation theology have been issued by the Curia to bishops and papal nuncios, and in early 1973 an apostolic visitor went to investigate criticisms against Leonidas Proaño, one of the most committed bishops in terms of Christian community base work among the poor of Andean Ecuador.⁵⁶

A letter was sent in December 1972, by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome to the Latin American hierarchy, criticizing the "increased politicization of Catholic education" and the tendencies of CELAM-sponsored projects of "being oriented consciously or unconsciously in many cases towards questioning, criticism and flirting with negative ideologies." Furthermore, Roman influence seems to have been at work in the November 1972 meeting of the Latin American bishops in Sucre, Bolivia, when Vatican-approved conservative candidates were elected to the two key posts of president and secretary general of CELAM—Eduardo R. Pironio of Mar del Plata, Argentina, and Alfonso López Trujillo of Bogotá, Colombia.⁵⁷

Ironically, it was the Vatican throughout the 1950s and 1960s which injected many ingredients for change into the Latin American Church by urging the creation of CELAM in 1955, through the appointment by Pope John of several progressive prelates in the early 1960s, and by the promulgation of rather progressive social encyclicals throughout the last decade—*Mater et Magistra* in 1961, *Pacem in Terris* in 1963, and *Populorum Progressio* in 1967. Now the Vatican has become concerned over the controversial results of some of these changes which have caused division within the Church and placed sectors of it on a collision course with the governments in several countries. The Curia has therefore made recent attempts to exert its authority and establish tighter control over the

direction some structural reforms in the Latin American Church have taken. The very machinery which makes it possible to introduce and transmit effectively new goals and values for the Church throughout the world also permits those at the center of the bureaucracy in Rome to influence the practical application of these norms, especially when they consider certain consequences or interpretations to be a threat to the organizational interests of the Church as they define them.

The external controls over the organizational autonomy of the Latin American Church, the class composition of its native clergy, the traditional apostolates it still maintains, and the necessity to pursue as its primary goal the spiritual care of people in every social class, all place definite parameters on a rapid and consistent implementation of the new normative orientations articulated at Vatican II, Medellin, and in the social encyclicals of the last decade. As significant as Church-sponsored social and educational programs were in the 1960s (as highlighted by Sanders, deKadt, and others), they created serious institutional pressures and problems for the Church in many countries, and are not likely to receive strong endorsement by any national hierarchy for some time to come, given the nature of the political environment in Latin America.

THE DIFFICULTY OF CHANGING ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR

Recent analysis of the Latin American Church has focused almost exclusively on doctrinal and organizational developments. The implication and hope expressed throughout the literature, however, is that these changes will have a transforming effect on the attitudes and behavior of citizens, the overwhelming majority of whom are at least nominal Catholics. Vallier, for example, has stressed that new pastoral approaches, emphasizing small worship communities and greater lay participation and leadership, will provide the atmosphere and stimulus for new religious and, in turn, social attitudes to mature among Catholics.⁵⁸

The Limited Nature of Religious Practice

Thus far there has been no systematic empirical research on the extent or effectiveness of these programs, nor on their impact on the moral attitudes and choices of the laity. Furthermore, the number of practicing Catholics who have regular contacts with the Church ranges anywhere from 5 to 20 percent of the total population, depending upon geographical area and social class.⁵⁹ As renewal of doctrine, catechesis, and worship progresses, the most concentrated impact will be felt primarily by the

relatively small number of Catholics who practice their faith—the great majority of whom are from the upper and middle classes.

However, the evidence from European and North American countries indicates that those who practice their religion tend to be more conservative than others on social and political issues, and do not readily change their views or behavior regarding social justice merely because they are exposed to sermons with a social content or to more intimate and informal structures of religious worship and prayer.⁶⁰ The social and political convictions of churchgoers in the United States and Europe are influenced far more by the economic, personal, or family concerns which impinge most directly and persistently on their daily lives than by the fairly general pronouncements of the Church or the guidance of their pastors on social morality.⁶¹

Despite the different cultural and religious context of Latin America, there is reason to expect that research on the attitudes and behavioral patterns of the upper- and middle-income groups in these societies will show them to be slow to change, especially since there has been a long-entrenched tradition of social irresponsibility and narrow class concern among these sectors.⁶²

Pervasiveness of "Popular Catholicism"

Over against a small number of socially progressive and radical clergy and laity, and a somewhat larger number of people who at least maintain some regular contact with the official Church, there exists the vast majority of Latin American Catholics from the lower classes who are immersed in various types of "popular Catholicism," characterized by a mixture of magic, syncretism, saint worship, and private devotionism. This brand of religiosity does not depend directly upon changes in the official Church; it possesses a tradition and dynamic which is fairly independent of the Church as an institution, and it tends in its orientation to be other-worldly, private, and not conducive to the emergence of social awareness.⁶³ A major task facing the Church is to reach these people in its evangelization and renewal programs, since awakening in them a sense of personal dignity, hope, and confidence that they can change their fate will be crucial not only for the vitality and integrity of the Church as a gospel community, but also for the future shape of Latin American societies.

Segundo Galilea, a Chilean priest who has done extensive work attempting to reconcile trends in liberation theology with strategies of pastoral ministry, has summarized this problem as follows:

The question is how to recuperate Christian values which are in the depths of popular Catholicism wrapped up in alienating attitudes, feelings, customs, and rites. How to purify what is Christian so that it may come to be a liberating force which will take its place with authenticity in the process of liberation. A grave challenge because of the difficulty of the task and because of its utter importance for the Latin American Church, given the great proportion of Christians who are in this popular Catholicism.⁶⁴

One form of evangelization to achieve this has been the Christian base communities (*comunidades de base*) among the urban and rural poor, involving small-group meetings for prayer and discussion, which encourage the emergence of lay leaders to shape their direction.⁶⁵ New interior resources and a growing sense of communal identity will hopefully have positive consequences for a deepening awareness among the poor that they can be active agents rather than passive recipients in society.

However, given the monumental nature of this task, the scarcity of trained and committed personnel, and the increasingly repressive atmosphere that now characterizes many Latin American countries, the links between pastoral renewal and the emergence of new community leaders and organizations powerful enough to challenge effectively local establishments are not expected to be direct and immediate. To date, there has been insufficient study of these base communities among the poor, either within the religious realm or in their relationships to other social structures. This is another major area in the Church which needs careful research in coming years.

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident that the significant changes in the Church in Latin America challenge the assumptions of classic formulations regarding the predominantly conservative impact of religion on society and the inevitable replacement of religious values and functions by secular forces in the development process. Latin American societies steeped in religious traditions shall continue to be influenced by religious symbols and structures, and as these undergo major reforms they cannot but have a positive impact on social change. The Church can play an important role by serving as a bridge between old and new values, reshaping cultural symbols, critiquing structural inequities from a moral perspective, encouraging limited social experiments, and providing interior resources and communal solidarity for marginal groups in society.

However, it is equally clear that one should not expect the Church to act as a dynamic and consistent force for the social and political transformation of Latin America. The Church has ceased to sacralize the status

quo, and its official position can no longer be used to rationalize support for established interests. But the ambiguities and tensions operating within and across normative, structural, and behavioral levels in the Church prevent the emergence of a clear line of direction for its future role in society.

The dialectic operating at the normative level—between old and new theological systems, other-worldly versus inner-worldly religious perspectives, pastoral versus social goals, prophetic denunciation of specific structures or groups versus general value articulation—will probably not easily be resolved into a coherent synthesis, given the dual orientation of the Church to this world and the next, the universal scope of its membership, and the multifaceted dimension of its ministries. Its theological pronouncements and moral influence on society will reflect these inner tensions, and therefore will lack consistency in structural and behavioral consequences.

Due to new structural flexibility in certain sectors of the Church, some very creative programs and experiments have begun which have had positive implications for secular forces working for change. Nevertheless, there are also dynamics operating at the structural level which affect the contribution the Church as an institution can make towards social change. It must survive, and it will adapt itself to circumstances in each society to achieve this. The historical weight of its traditions makes it difficult to undergo rapid internal transformations and divestiture of long-standing patterns of procedure. It remains predominantly a dependent Church in terms of money and manpower, and also in terms of its relationship with the Vatican.

Structural changes in the Church and in the Church's ties to secular groups will continue to occur, but their nature, scope, and pace will be influenced as much by institutional as by normative conditions—the number and social composition of native vocations, new sources of financing, the type of emerging lay leadership, more amicable or conflictual encounters with governments. These factors will act as determinative influences on the Church as an institution and, although the impact of their configurations will not always make the Church a conservative force as Weber and others expected, they will in many instances place definite restraints on its innovative capacities and on the immediate and concrete effect of new normative directions articulated by progressive Church leaders.

Perhaps the most critical contribution to social change by the Church will result from its ability to persist and to experience gradual but continual change itself. The organizational breadth of the Church, which affects the entire gamut of human activity—worship, education, health,

politics, community organization, collective bargaining, culture, recreation—provides a network of mechanisms unparalleled even by the state or the military, and the range of Church influence extends far beyond the pale of just practicing Catholics. In addition to its formal parish structures, it maintains predominant control or influence over schools and universities, trade unions, employees' associations, Catholic family groups, community centers, periodicals, radio and television stations; and all these give the Church an outreach into society which allows it to express its views and exercise long-range formative influence over public attitudes and opinions.⁶⁶

The Church has staying power; and in the light of the growing trend towards military regimes in Latin America, the organizational extent and depth of the Church, although at times cumbersome and resistant to rapid change, becomes an important asset in the face of growing oppression. Many of these governments are sensitive about their international image, and the communications network of the Church throughout the world offers significant opportunities for churchmen in Latin America to influence international public opinion regarding moral and material support for these regimes. Within many of these countries, where the structural bases of opposition have been systematically destroyed, the Church remains the last institution that can offer any form of resistance to governmental disregard for human rights. The Church by itself cannot prevent all repressive policies, but it can keep pointing to their existence, in some instances can blunt their effects, is gradually becoming more radicalized by them, and at times can offer material support and protection to those seeking alternatives to these regimes.

Furthermore, if over time the Church can use its existing organizational resources to revitalize the communal bases of religious life among all classes, fulfill some of the primary group needs which no longer can be met in family and occupational settings in modernizing or military-dominated societies, create moral and structural conditions in which future grassroots leaders of the poor can emerge and survive until their time comes, and continue to allow within its fold—despite all the tensions and ambiguities—the presence of creatively prophetic and politically controversial groups, then the indirect but long-term impact of the Church on the direction of Latin American societies may be very significant.

Although the evidence to date does not indicate that the Church can be a powerful leader in the transformation of social structures, the changes it has undergone result in a profile very different from that of thirty years ago. The indirect impact on social change already has been important, and will continue to be so over the next generation as the Church carries on its own internal process of renewal.

NOTES

1. Herbert Spencer, *The Principles of Sociology*, 3 vols. (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1896), 3:104–6; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1948), pp. 63–69, 87; Emile Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Collier, 1947), p. 257; Karl Marx, “Contribution to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right: Introduction,” in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, ed. T. B. Bottomore (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), pp. 43–44; Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), *passim*.
2. Vittorio Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed: A Study of Modern Messianic Cults*, trans. Lisa Sergio (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963).
3. Burma and Tanzania are two of the more striking examples. In Burma in the 1960s, U Nu attempted to construct socialist economic and political structures on the basis of the traditional Buddhist values of egalitarianism and communal sharing (Donald E. Smith, *Religion and Politics in Burma* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965], pp. 132–33; Edmund Leach, “Buddhism in the Post-Colonial Order in Burma and Ceylon,” *Daedalus* [Winter 1973], pp. 29–54). In Tanzania, Julius Nyerere is attempting to construct socialism at the grassroots level, combining traditional African values of *ujamaa*, or familyhood, with Christian ideals of community. For an extended treatment of Nyerere’s goals and strategies as a Christian socialist, see his *Ujamaa—Essays on Socialism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968).
4. While it is true that many of these Catholic values have traditionally been associated with corporatist structures—especially in the social encyclicals of Leo XIII (*Rerum Novarum*, 1891) and Pius XI (*Quadragesimo Anno*, 1931)—the form and tone of their more recent articulation in the papal documents, such as *Mater et Magistra* (1961), *Pacem in Terris* (1963), *Populorum Progressio* (1967), and *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), and in Conciliar and Synod statements such as *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* (1965) and *Justice in the World* (1971), have rendered these principles much less antagonistic to various socialist models of development. For an excellent analysis of the historical evolution of the Church’s social teaching over the past century, see Jean-Marie Aubert, *Pour une théologie de l’âge industriel* (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1971), 1:81–146. This work also includes extremely useful bibliographical references.
5. For an analysis of the significance of this “opening to the left” begun by John XXIII, and the impact of this phenomenon on Christian-Marxist cooperation throughout the world, see E. E. Y. Hales, *Pope John and His Revolution* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965). Paul VI has followed up the work of John XXIII in promoting Christian-Marxist understanding and has publicly recognized that Marxism is no longer a “unitary ideology” but one with “various levels of expression”: “Some Christians are today attracted by socialist currents and their various developments. They try to recognize therein a certain number of aspirations which they carry within themselves in the name of their faith. They feel that they are part of that historical current and wish to play a part within it.” (Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI to Cardinal Roy, *Octogesima Adveniens*, art. 31–32. [Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1971]). While stressing the need for discernment and a certain amount of caution, Pope Paul in no way has condemned these Christians seeking closer collaboration with socialists. The thrust of this letter is conciliatory and free of doctrinaire and polemical overtones.
6. Some examples of this growing interest among social scientists over the past decade in the role of religion in political development are the following: Robert Bellah, ed., *Religion and Progress in Modern Asia* (New York: Free Press, 1965); Kalman Silvert, ed., *Churches and States: The Religious Institution and Modernization* (New York: American Universities Field Staff, Inc., 1967); Clifford Geertz, *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); Donald E. Smith, *Religion and Political Development* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1970); Donald E. Smith, ed., *Religion, Politics, and Social Change in the Third World: A Sourcebook* (New York: Free Press, 1971).

7. Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), "Peace," *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in Light of the Council*, 2 vols. (Bogotá: General Secretariat of CELAM, 1970), 2:74, 78, 79.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 78–80.
9. The best collection of texts of episcopal pronouncements on social justice in Latin America has been done by Ronaldo Muñoz, *Nueva conciencia de la iglesia en América Latina* (Santiago: Talleres Gráficos Corporación, Ltda., 1973).
10. Recent examples of new theological reflection related to the experience of social conflict and injustice in Latin America have been: Gustavo Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: Perspectivas* (Lima, CEP, 1971); Hugo Assmann, S.J., *Opresión-liberación: Desafío a los cristianos* (Montevideo, 1971); Juan Luis Segundo, S.J., *A Theology for Artisans of a New Humanity*, 5 vols. (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973). The best analytical survey in English to date of the "theology of liberation" literature has been done by Phillip E. Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," *Theological Studies* 34 (September 1973): 357–95.
11. William C. Theisenhusen, *Reforma agraria en Chile: Experimento en cuatro fundos de la iglesia* (Santiago: Instituto de Economía y Planificación, Universidad de Chile, 1968).
12. Emanuel deKadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 122ff.
13. For a summary of recent conflicts and the harassment and imprisonment of Church personnel, see "The Missionary and Social Justice: Latin America," *IDOC—North America* (New York) 51 (March 1973): 1–61.
14. This cooperation has been most extensive and dramatic in Brazil and Chile. French missionary chaplains had a significant formative impact on Catholic Action organizations among Brazilian university students in the 1940s and 1950s such as the Catholic University Youth (Juventud Universitária Católica—JUC), introducing them to the existentialist and anticapitalist thought of such European scholars as Emmanuel Mounier, and encouraging the students to become more directly involved in grassroots projects among the Brazilian urban and rural poor. These philosophical and practical experiences opened many of Brazil's Catholic youth to a Marxist analysis of economic problems, and by the early 1960s they formed a radical political organization, Popular Action (Ação Popular—AP), which was independent of Church control and cooperated with Marxist groups in conducting basic literacy training programs and organizing peasant unions in Northeast Brazil (Emanuel deKadt, "JUC and AP: The Rise of Catholic Radicalism in Brazil," *The Church and Social Change in Latin America*, ed. Henry A. Landsberger [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970], pp. 191–219; Thomas G. Sanders, "Catholicism and Development: The Catholic Left in Brazil," in Silvert, *Churches and States*, pp. 81–99).

Chile has had the longest tradition of an institutionalized left in Latin America, with Communist and Socialist parties dating back to the early part of the twentieth century. Chile was also the first Latin American country in which a reform-oriented Christian Democratic party won executive power (1964). After capturing the presidency, significant numbers of the younger Christian Democrats pressed for more comprehensive reforms than the official leadership of the PDC was willing to pursue, and they moved closer to the position of the Marxist left. Consequently, in the late 1960s and early 1970s there occurred several examples of Christian-Marxist rapprochement in Chile, concretized in the following political and religious movements: (1) The Popular Unitary Action Movement (MAPU) appeared in 1969, formed by dissident leftist members of the PDC. The MAPU supported Allende's 1970 presidential candidacy and some of its members served as cabinet ministers during his administration; (2) the Christian Left Movement (MIC) emerged in 1971, founded by a group of mostly young Catholic intellectuals who bolted out of the PDC. The MIC joined the governing Marxist coalition and received representation in the cabinet; (3) Christians for Socialism (Cristianos por el Socialismo) evolved out of informal meetings of about eighty priests in early 1971 seeking to free the Gospel from too close an association with capitalist ideologies and

- structures. Throughout the Allende years this group grew in number and moral influence, and publicly urged Church leaders to support efforts to construct a socialist process in Chile, while always disclaiming any party affiliation or endorsement. For an account of these movements, see: George Grayson, "Chile's Christian Democratic Party: Power, Factions and Ideology," *Review of Politics* 31 (April 1969): 147–71; "El Pensamiento de la Izquierda Cristiana," *Punto Final* (Santiago) 137 (1971): 2–4; Secretariado de Cristianos por el Socialismo, *Primer encuentro latinoamericano de cristianos por el socialismo: Documento final* (Santiago, 1972).
15. By the end of 1965, for example, there were more than four thousand religious from North America alone serving in Latin America, an increase of 50 percent in three years (*Noticias Aliadas* [Lima], 29/12/65–M). For a detailed breakdown of foreign clerical, religious, and lay personnel working in Latin America in the mid-1960s, see Ivan Labelle and Adriana Estrada, *Latin America in Maps, Charts, Tables*, vol. 2, *Socio-Religious Data (Catholicism)* (Cuernavaca: CIF, 1964), pp. 168–69.
 16. Comprehensive studies of Church resources and personnel were made in the late 1950s and early 1960s by European and Latin American social scientists and published by the International Federation of Institutes for Socio-Religious and Social Research (FERES), located in Switzerland. The Jesuits also set up a series of research and social action centers throughout Latin America—Centros de Investigación y Acción Social (CIAS)—to study social and religious problems in each country and carry out projects to alleviate them (David E. Mutchler, *The Church as a Political Factor in Latin America: With Particular Reference to Colombia and Chile* [New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1971], pp. 17, 30).
 17. Thomas G. Sanders, *Catholic Innovation in a Changing Latin America* (Cuernavaca: CIDOC, 1969), pt. 2, pp. 55–79; Walter Reppges, "Latin America's Base Communities and Its Parishes," *Diakonia* (Vienna), November–December 1972, reprinted in *LADOC* (Washington, D.C.) 4 (October 1973): 10; Brian H. Smith, S.J., "Pastoral Strategy in the Third World," *America*, 18 May 1973, pp. 389–92.
 18. Paulo Freire, former minister of education in pre-1964 Brazil and currently a staff member of the World Council of Churches' Office of Education in Geneva, is internationally recognized for his work in developing new concepts of education which stress raising levels of consciousness (conscientization) through grassroots participatory methods. For a description of Freire's approach, see: Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, trans. Myra Bergman Ramos (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970); Sanders, *Catholic Innovation*, pt. 4, pp. 38–56; Ernani Fiori, "Education and Conscientization," *Conscientization for Liberation*, ed. Michael M. Colonnese (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1971), pp. 123–44.
 19. Ivan Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization in Latin America* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1970), pp. 71–76, 87–89, 153–54.
 20. François Houtart and Emile Pin, *The Church and the Latin American Revolution* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1965), pp. 256–57.
 21. Luigi Einaudi, Richard Maullin, Alfred Stepan, and Michael Fleet, *Latin American Institutional Development: The Changing Catholic Church* (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 1969), p. 76.
 22. Thomas C. Bruneau, "Power and Influence: Analysis of the Church in Latin America and the Case of Brazil," *LARR* 8, no. 2 (Summer 1973): 43.
 23. deKadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil*, p. 271ff; Sanders, *Catholic Innovation*, pt. 6, pp. 14–15.
 24. Ivan Vallier, "Radical Priests and the Revolution," *Changing Latin America: New Interpretations of Its Politics and Society*, ed. Douglas Chalmers (New York: Academy of Political Science, 1972), pp. 24–25.
 25. Landsberger, *Church and Social Change*; William D'Antonio and Frederick Pike, eds., *Religion, Revolution, and Reform: New Forces for Change in Latin America* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1964).
 26. Frederick C. Turner, *Catholicism and Political Development in Latin America* (Chapel Hill:

University of North Carolina Press, 1971); Paul E. Sigmund, "Latin American Catholicism's Opening to the Left," *Review of Politics* 35 (January 1973): 61–76.

Four recent unpublished studies provide excellent empirical data on the attitudes and behavior of specific groups of priests and bishops in several countries: Michael G. MacCaulay, "Ideological Change and Internal Cleavages in the Peruvian Church: Change, Status Quo and the Priest; The Case of ONIS" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1972); Michael Dodson, "Religious Innovation and the Politics of Argentina: A Study of the Movement of Priests for the Third World" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1973); Daniel H. Levine, "Career Patterns and Perspectives of Church Elites in Venezuela and Colombia" (Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Chicago, August 29–September 2, 1974); Claude Pomerleau, "The Missionary Dimension of the Latin American Church: A Study of French Diocesan Clergy from 1963–1971" (Ph.D. diss., University of Denver, 1975).

27. deKadt's *Catholic Radicals in Brazil* and Sanders's *Catholic Innovation* both focus upon specific projects of clerical and lay elites—basic education programs in Northeast Brazil, pastoral renewal efforts in slum areas of Santiago, family planning programs in certain parts of Chile, the development of the Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), and reform movements in Chilean Catholic education and research.

The monograph by Einaudi et al. is an attempt to situate some of the legal and organizational problems involved with reform efforts in an institution as complex and traditional as the Church. However, it presents only a brief overview of four national churches (Colombia, Peru, Chile, and Brazil), as well as a brief summary of some of the inherent difficulties at the structural level facing the Church throughout the continent.

The work by Houtart and Pin, *The Church*, is a good summary of the existing empirical research up to the mid-1960s on the types of religiosity characterizing different social classes and certain attitudinal patterns of some occupational groups in a few countries. However, much of the information is dated, and the behavioral data so limited in scope that it is not an adequate base from which to assess the patterns of religious behavior throughout the continent, or how they may be changing in recent years in light of Church and societal shifts.

Mutchler's book, *The Church as a Political Factor*, is a quasi-inside account of the institutional impact of social science research centers on the churches of Colombia and Chile in the 1960s. However, the greater part of the work is based upon materials which Mutchler removed from files and which are not publicly available for scholars to check. His book provides fascinating reading, but his selective paraphrasing of unpublished documents and letters makes it impossible to verify his conclusion, namely that the Latin American Church is an agent of United States and European conservative interests for the purpose of weakening leftist grassroots movements throughout the continent.

There have been two excellent and comprehensive political histories done on national churches with an emphasis on institutional dynamics: Thomas C. Bruneau, *The Political Transformation of the Brazilian Catholic Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974) and Alexander W. Wilde, "A Traditional Church and Politics: Colombia" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1972). These are very useful contributions but need duplication in other countries in order to amass more systematic data on the structural developments of the Church throughout the continent and to account for variations from one country to another.

28. The one other author who has attempted to come to terms most adequately with the multidimensional aspects involved in the process of change in the Latin American Church was the late Ivan Vallier. He stressed the necessity to take into account the "multiple levels of thought, activity, and organization" in any assessment of the significance of developments within the Church and of their import for society, warning of the danger of making direct causal inferences from formal elements in belief systems to a

"religion's obstructive or facilitative roles in social change." He emphasized rather the importance of studying the growth of new forms of religious control arising out of concrete historical circumstances and feeding back into society with new links and interdependencies, thus creating positive or negative contributions towards change and modernization (*Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization*, pp. 82, 160–62). The great strength of Vallier's work was his elaboration of theoretical models of evolutionary change in patterns of Church influence away from the traditional systems of religious control, and his identification of various typologies of Catholic elites (Ibid., p. 72ff.; "Religious Elites: Differentiations and Developments in Roman Catholicism," *Elites in Latin America*, eds. Seymour M. Lipset and Aldo Solari [New York: Oxford University Press, 1967], pp. 204–16).

However, Vallier's ideal types and models need more empirical evidence for verification and amplification, since the dearth of empirical data, survey information, and case studies on the Latin American Church make his conceptual framework rather schematic, too dichotomous, and somewhat lacking in operational power. Furthermore, he did not give sufficient attention to the dynamics of normative developments, nor to the constant interactions between normative dialectics and structural changes. In addition, his stress on the importance of elites tended to create the impression that progressive groups are far more representative of Latin American Catholics than is actually the case. Finally, his conjectures regarding the impact that changes in the Church will have on attitudinal and behavioral trends in society at large need extensive empirical testing, especially in light of the increasing power and prominence of military governments and a more restricted role for the Church since his book was published in 1970. His works, however, are the best overall analysis of the institutional capacities and limitations of the Latin American Church as a transforming agent in society, and provide many fruitful theoretical insights and hypotheses for further research.

29. Latin American Episcopal Council (CELAM), "Message to the People of Latin America," *The Church in the Present-Day Transformation of Latin America in Light of the Council*, 2:39.
30. "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," *The Documents of Vatican II*, ed. Walter M. Abbott, S.J. (New York: America Press, 1966), p. 244. For a systematic analysis of the history and reasons for the rather general and unspecific nature of the Church's teaching in many areas of social morality, see Michael Howard Fleet, "Ideological Tendencies Within Chilean Christian Democracy" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1971, chap. 4).
31. Thomas G. Sanders, "Types of Catholic Elites in Latin America," *Latin American Politics*, ed. Robert Tomasek, rev. ed. (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1970), pp. 186–87.
32. "Declaration de l'épiscopat bolivien, 10 Septembre 1969," *IDOC—International* (Rome) 15 (1 January 1970): 65–67.
33. "Declaración de la Conferencia Episcopal Chilena" (Temuco: 22 April 1971); "Evangelio, Política y Socialismos" (Santiago: June 1971). These documents are reprinted in *Vispera* (Montevideo), May–June 1971, pp. 75–76, 81–87.
34. Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, trans. and eds. Sister Caridad Inda and John Eagleson (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 65.
35. For a theological analysis of the various ecclesiologies at work within contemporary Catholicism and their structural and behavioral implications, see: Avery Dulles, S.J., *Models of the Church* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974); William B. Frazier, M.M., "Guidelines for a Theology of Mission," *Worldmission* 18 (Winter 1967–68): 16–24. For a discussion of the literature specifically related to the "distinction of planes" and the "community of liberation" models, with particular reference to the Latin American Catholic experience, see Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, pp. 53–77, 101–19.
36. Sanders, "Types of Catholic Elites in Latin America," in Tomasek, ed., *Latin American Politics*.
37. Three pastoral letters by the Chilean hierarchy urging social change which received

wide attention both in Chile and throughout Latin America in the 1960s were: *Los Obispos de Chile hablan: El Deber social y político en la hora presente* (Santiago: Secretariado General del Episcopado de Chile, 1962); *La Iglesia y el problema del campesinado chileno* (Santiago: Secretariado General del Episcopado de Chile, 1962); *Chile, voluntad de ser: La Comunidad nacional y la Iglesia en Chile* (Santiago: Comité Permanente de los Obispos de Chile, 1968). For a description of the modernization forces at work in the Chilean Church over the last generation and the progressive influences these have created in Chilean society, see: Henry A. Landsberger, "Time, Persons, Doctrine: The Modernization of the Church in Chile," in Landsberger, ed., *The Church and Social Change*, pp. 77–94; Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization*, pp. 135–37, 141–46; Sergio Torres, *El Quehacer de la Iglesia en Chile* (Talca: Fundación Obispo Manuel Larraín, 1971); Cardenal Raúl Silva Henríquez, *La misión social del Cristiano: Conflicto de clases o solidaridad cristiana* (Santiago: Ediciones Paulinas, 1973).

38. Los Obispos de la Zona Central de Chile, "Solo con amor se es capaz de construir un país," (Santiago: June 1973); reprinted in *Mensaje* (Santiago), July 1973, pp. 335–36.
39. For an account of some of these last minute deliberations and the Church's role in efforts at reconciliation, see: Thomas G. Sanders, "The Process of Partisanship in Chile" (Letter to the Institute of Current World Affairs, New York, October 1973; *Latin America* [London], 23 November 1973).
40. Bruneau, "Pozer and Influence," p. 43.
41. General Assembly of the Brazilian National Bishops Conference (CNBB), "A Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (São Paulo: February 1973); reprinted in *LADOC* 4 (October 1973): 5.
42. Brian Smith, S.J., "Pastoral Strategy," p. 391.
43. Bruneau, "Power and Influence," p. 43.
44. For a treatment of the social context and the highly individualistic nature of prophecy in Judaism, see Max Weber, *Ancient Judaism* (New York: Free Press, 1952), pp. 267–335. Ernst Troeltsch gives a description of the very sectarian character of prophetic religious movements in the Christian tradition (*The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon, 2 vols. [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1960], 1:328–445; 2:691–729).

Historical evidence indicates that when the Roman Catholic Church has confronted authoritarian regimes in other eras (e.g., Nazi Germany), although individuals will emerge within the Church to play the prophetic role, Church leaders will attempt to adapt the Church to the existing regime as best they can in order to maintain some structural basis for influence in society and in order to continue pastoral ministries (Gunter Lewy, *The Catholic Church and Nazi Germany* [New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964], pp. 325–26, 331–32). Furthermore, Church leaders and the faithful as well are often divided in their political judgments under authoritarian regimes, with varying degrees of loyalty to the government. In such situations, consistent opposition to a repressive regime by the hierarchy as a whole is very unlikely, and, even if it were to occur, would deepen already existing divisions in the Church and not achieve a mobilization of Church members against the government. J. S. Conway concludes that the Church itself was infected with the German zeitgeist of national renewal and hope that brought the Nazis to power in 1933, and that "neither the hierarchy nor the laity had the courage or the means to mobilize the Church against the embattered might of Nazism, and thereby jeopardize the very existence of their own institutions" (*The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933–1945* [London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968], p. 331).

45. "Latin Americans Search for Justice" (Address delivered at the Tenth Annual Meeting of the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program [CICOP], Dallas, Texas, February 1973); reprinted in *LADOC* 3 (April 1973): 29.
46. Remarks by Ralph Della Cava, Department of History, Queens College, New York, at "Roundtable Discussion on the Church in Latin America" (Yale University, Council on Latin American Studies, 6 October 1973). See also Agostino Bono, "Five Years After

- Medellin: Social Action Fades in Latin America," *National Catholic Reporter*, 9 November 1973, pp. 1, 6, 11.
47. Della Cava has this data in unpublished form.
 48. deKadt, *Catholic Radicals in Brazil*, pp. 137–38.
 49. Bruneau, *Brazilian Catholic Church*, p. 129; *Between Honesty and Hope* (Maryknoll: Maryknoll Publications, 1970), p. 125; Turner, *Catholicism and Political Development*, p. 160.
 50. *New York Times*, 1 October 1973 and 31 October 1973. More recent information is based upon personal interviews by the author with several Chilean priests, both in Chile and in the United States.
 51. Sanders, *Catholic Innovation*, pt. 2, p. 68.
 52. Houtart and Pin, *The Church*, pp. 78, 129, 220, 224, 225.
 53. Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control and Modernization*, p. 48; Turner, "Catholicism and Political Development," pp. 14, 100ff.
 54. Both Sanders and Bruneau have stressed the importance of keeping this dimension of the Church in proper focus when any analysis is made of the Church's effectiveness in society. Much of the literature has tended to treat the Church as a wholly secular organization and has often overlooked careful consideration of the Church's efforts in fulfilling its primary mission—preaching the gospel and meeting the spiritual needs of the whole population (Thomas G. Sanders, "Religion and Modernization: Some Reflections" [Letter to the Institute of Current World Affairs, New York, 4 August 1968]; Bruneau, "Power and Influence," p. 29). This is not to imply that strictly spiritual ministries cannot have significant social and political consequences, but it does mean that the effectiveness of the Church's religious mission is not synonymous with its success in changing social structures (as Weber long ago emphasized).
 55. For example, in the late 1960s the German hierarchy threatened to cut off financial support for a Chilean Jesuit research and training institute, *Instituto Latinoamericano de Doctrina y Estudios Sociales* (ILADES), which related Church social teachings to problems of underdevelopment and current methods in social science. The German bishops had become very concerned about the leftist tendencies in this project, and demanded the expulsion of all those within the institute expressing sympathies with a Marxist critique of society (Yves Vaillancourt, "La Crisis de ILADES," *Vispera*, [April 1971], pp. 18–27).
- Another more recent case has been the decision of the United States Catholic Conference of bishops to drop support for the annual conference of the Catholic Inter-American Cooperation Program (CICOP), which brought hundreds of Latin Americans and North Americans together each year to discuss social, economic, and religious problems and design programs of mutual help. Speeches and discussions at CICOP meetings in recent years had become increasingly more critical of United States economic and political influence in Latin America, and they presented a forum in which radical groups could express their views (Gary MacEoin, "Bishops Kill Mutual Aid Program," *National Catholic Reporter*, 31 August 1973, pp. 1–2).
56. Berryman, "Latin American Liberation Theology," p. 395; Gary MacEoin, "Church Renewal on Trial in Ecuador," *America*, 4 August 1973, pp. 61–63.
 57. Bono, "Five Years After Medellin: Social Action Fades in Latin America," pp. 1, 11.
 58. Vallier, *Catholicism, Social Control, and Modernization*, p. 104ff; "Radical Priests and the Revolution," pp. 24–26.
 59. Houtart and Pin, *The Church*, pp. 167–68; Labelle and Estrada, *Latin America in Maps*, pp. 260–63.
 60. Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965), pp. 201–6; Gerhard Lenski, *The Religious Factor: A Sociological Study of Religion's Impact on Politics and Family Life* (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1963), p. 184ff.; Jeffrey K. Hadden, *The Gathering Storm in the Churches* (Garden City: Doubleday-Anchor, 1970), p. 110; Joseph H. Fichter, S.J., "Pentecostals: Comfort vs. Awareness," *America*, 1 September 1973, pp. 114–16.

61. N. J. Demerath and Phillip Hammond, *Religion in Social Context: Tradition and Transition* (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 229–30; Elizabeth K. Nottingham, *Religion: A Sociological View* (New York: Random House, 1971), p. 176; Glock and Stark, *Religion and Society*, p. 183.
62. William D'Antonio, "Democracy and Religion in Latin America," in D'Antonio and Pike, eds., *Religion, Revolution, and Reform*, pp. 252–53.
63. Phillip E. Berryman, "Popular Catholicism in Latin America," *Cross Currents* 21 (Summer 1971): 285–87; Houtart and Pin, *The Church*, pp. 159–61, 177–81.
64. Segundo Galilea, "Crisis y renovación de la fe," *Misión Abierta* (Madrid), September–October 1972, pp. 486–87.
65. Berryman, "Popular Catholicism in Latin America," pp. 299–301.
66. Landsberger, "Introduction," in Landsberger, ed., *Church and Social Change*, pp. 5–6. In the area of education alone, the Church's role is very crucial especially on the secondary level where it operates sixty percent of the schools (Houtart and Pin, *The Church*, p. 78).