Church History in an Ecumenical Perspective

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1. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA: AN INTERPRETATION

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every historical event is unrepeatable and unique. Every account or description of a historical fact (the "fact" is not the event itself, but a way in which it manifests itself) cannot be transparent, neutral, immediate. Every account presupposes an "interpretation", be it conscious or unconscious, intended or not deliberately attempted. Every history of the Church (as a scientific account - Historie, not as the event itself - Geschehen) presupposes a certain handling of the ecclesial facts. The history one writes will depend on the concept (whether everyday or theological) one has of the Church. In Latin America we are attempting to write a Church history starting from a certain experience and theology of the institutional community founded by Jesus Christ.

The programme of the historical mission of Christianity's founder would seem to be at the same time the mission or essence of the Church. This programme is stated by Jesus Christ when he brings to life the book of Isaiah, in 61,1: "He went to Nazareth ... and found the passage where it is written: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach to the poor. He has sent me to announce the deliverance of the captives ...' Today, in your presence, this passage has been fulfilled." (Luke 4,16-21)

If "evangelizing the poor" (1) was his concrete historical aim and that of his Church, this must also be the absolute primary criterion for a Christian interpretation of the history of the Church. A scientific interpretation, but at the same time Christian (out of faith) and theological (out of a scientific discussion of faith). The "meaning" of the event, therefore, is inferred from its relationship (positive or negative) to the poor, to the oppressed, to the simple people. The criterion for writing a history of the Church is not the pomp of the great cathedrals or the splendour of the Papal coronation of emperors, but the love in the "breaking of the bread" of Christian communities, persecuted, poor, missionary, prophetic. A history from the people, for the people, of the people itself, with a pastoral, catechetic, evangelizing function.

In order to achieve this, as we have said, one had to construct the Biblical category of "poor", oppressed, underprivileged, as a category of historical science. One should study the whole of the society of a period as conditioned by a certain practical-productive whole (whether tributary, capitalist, etc.) which in turn would make it possible to define the social classes. The various ways in which these social classes are articulated in historical joints, "historical blocks",

enable one to discover the meaning of an era, a period, phase or event. Starting from the poor as a race, sex, class, ethnic group, and nation which is dominated, one can discover the Christian meaning of the event.

In the same way, the Church, its institutional history, may be meaningfully described if one discovers the articulation of this historical community with social society as a whole. The Church articulated with society organizing its structure and numbering its faithful only among the dominated groups (fringe peoples and oppressed classes) in the first three centuries of its existence. Church of the poor, persecuted Church, the Church of the martyrs. It was a "model" of the Church that could not be confused with the State, neither was it supported by the power of the ruling classes. The fourth century saw the appearance of another "model" for defining the articulation of the Church with society: it was the "model" of Christendom, in which the Church justifies the State's acts of coercion and the State carries out ecclesial functions (such as building its temples, protecting its missionaries, forcing dissenters to obey the authority of the Church, etc.).

The "model" of the Church of the poor, or the popular Church, and that of Christendom thus become hermeneutic categories operating as principles of interpretation. The aim would be to write, chiefly and especially, the history of the Church from the poor, for the poor, and - this is the ideal we would like to approach (?) - by the poor themselves.

This epistemological question could be the subject of a lengthy debate. We are aware of its importance and, above all, of its profound methodological requirements, which we have only begun to glimpse.

2. PROLEGOMENA - LATIN AMERICA IN WORLD HISTORY

As historians of the Church in Latin America, we found ourselves faced with a twofold problem. Not only that of writing a history of the Church, but also of reinterpreting a history of Latin America to provide a sufficient base for a history of the Church. It was necessary to resituate Latin American history in world history in order to re-evaluate the oppressed people: first the Indian, then the Negro slave, and finally the peasant and worker - and women in all eras and classes.

2.1. Amerindia as Prehistory of the Church

Amerindia was not the context of the discovery and conquest by Spain and Portugal, by the Europeans, which occurred after Columbus sailed from Europe. Amerindia is a human group of cultures whose centre of emigration is situated in Northeast Asia, across the Bering Straits. Its centre of neolithic influence is the Pacific Ocean. Therefore the American cultures come from the East. Indeed, if the neolithic revolution culminated in the confederation of cities in Mesopotamia in

the fourth millennium B.C., or in Egypt in the third millennium, as well as in cultures of the Indus Valley, or in the second millennium in China, then one should place the great American urban cultures within this huge civilizing current flowing West to East. From the Middle East to the Far East, and from the Polynesian cultures to America. In the first millennium A.D. (from 300-900 approximately) there flourished two great classical cultures. That of the Tiahuanaco next to Titicaca (now Bolivia) and the Teotihuacan not far from Lake Tezcoco (Mexico Valley). The splendour of these cultures, which attained their fullest development in the Inca Empire (in Peru) and the Aztec Empire (in Mexico) in the fifteenth century A.D., give Latin America a clear place in world history.

American man (whether the nomads of the North or South, or the planters from the Mississippi Valley and the Antilles to the Orinoco, Amazon and Plata Rivers, or the urban cultures already mentioned, to which one should add the Mayas and the Chibchas) was at the time responsible for advanced cultures, an original creator and civilizing force, and a religious world remarkable for its wealth and feeling (3).

It was upon this man and his race, culture and religion, that the Christian-European "invasion" hurled itself like "wolves and tigers and lions starved for many days", as Bartolome de las Casas was to say. The dignity, numbers and beauty of American man was the fertile and positive soil upon which Latin American history was built. A despised, forgotten and exploited soil.

2.2. Protohistory

In a history of the Church in Latin America, just as the history of the American cultures is its ecclesial prehistory, so the entire history of Christianity (from its origins, through its experience and assimilation of the Mediterranean, until it reaches the Iberian Peninsula) will be its protohistory, the primary process by which it is determined - both in its virtues and in its profound defects. A complete re-reading of the history of the Church as a whole and from its origins is necessary before we can understand our Latin American history.

Indeed, the ability of a historian of the Church in Latin America to interpret critically the Christendom which "reached us" from Europe in the sixteenth century, depends to a large extent on whether he has his own vision - starting from the criterion of "evangelizing the poor" - of the entire process of Christianity in world history. It is therefore the task of the Christian historian in the Third World to re-read the entire history of Christianity.

In the midst of the Indo-European states and cultures - from the Phrygians and Hittites, through the Greeks and Latins, Medes and Persians, to the Aryans and many others - there emerged out of the Syrian-Arabian desert the Semites: from the Accadians, Assyrians or Babylonians, the Phoenicians or Amorites, to the Hebrews and, centuries later, the Arabs. The history of Israel is written in the

context of the history of the Semites, notable for its struggles against the Mesopotamian kingdoms and Egypt, against Hellenes and the Romans. What is of interest to us is that the "religious community" of Israel (from patriarchs and prophets to the Synagogue in the Diaspora) is a "model" of Judaism differing widely from that of the monarchy, where the State was confused with the chosen people. In the same way, primitive Christianity of the first three centuries, the Church of the martyrs, was to be a "model" of the Church of the poor differing widely from the "model" of post-Constantinian Christendom. The Armenian, Byzantine, Latin and Coptic Christendoms, and later the Russian, Moravian, Polish etc., were to be historical developments in which Christianity would inevitably be identified with Western and European cultures.

Thus, Iberian Christendom, through its first Roman stage, entering the Visigothic period, that of the Muslim occupation and the long process of the Reconquista (ending in 1492 with the capture of Granada) is the context of Christian expansion in Latin America.

Hispano-Lusitanian Christianity was conditioned by a long history of Christendom, enabling the evangelizing process to be at the same time, equivocally, a civilizing process, that is, a process of cultural and political annihilation of the Amerindian peoples. The Gospel came with the oppressor's violent, conquering sword. America then suffered a Church which was identified with the State. The Americans came to know Christianity within a "model" of Latin, Iberian Christendom.

3. FIRST ERA - COLONIAL CHRISTENDOM (1492 -)

The history of the Church in Latin America falls clearly into three eras. Indian Christendom under Hispano-Lusitanian rule, an era of merchant capitalism and Catholic exclusivity. The crisis of Christendom in the Indies and the situation of the new neo-colonial pact under Anglo-Saxon domination (first English, then North American), of dependence on industrial capitalism, first free-trade, then imperialist, and of the growing presence of Protestantism (first European, then almost exclusively American, finally giving way to Pentecostalism and the Fundamentalist sects). The third era will be that of the crisis of dependence on capitalsim and the transition to a post-capitalist situation.

3.1. First Period: The Caribbean (1492 - 1519) and the Brazilian coast (1500 - 1549)

It seems that among Columbus' companions there was a priest, who celebrated the first Mass on the continent in 1492, on the "Isla de los Lucaios"; it was in fact Pedro de Arenas. At all events, the discovery (the dominating invasion of the American continent) by a merchant and navigators of the Mediterranean, was a moment of expansion of Iberian Christendom. Spain and Portugal were the centres

of the "world-empire", as Wallenstein would say. The eras of Isabel (1492-1504) and Ferdinand (1506-1516) provided the structure of Christendom in the Indies, extending the Patronato of the Canary Islands and Granada to the new conquered lands. The first Antillan cycle was that of gold and the Indian territories. Although the distribution of Indians in the "encomienda" was definitively completed in 1514, after the 1518 smallpox epidemic in Santo Domingo there were barely 3,000 natives left. It was the end of the gold cycle of sugar, black slavery and plantations.

With Fray Bernal Boyl came the separation of the ecclesiastical power from the civil power held by Columbus, in 1493, guaranteed by the bull Piis Fidelium. It was then that the Franciscan lay brothers arrived, it was then that the evangelization of America began. In 1505 the Franciscans created the first mission in the West Indies. In 1510 the Dominicans arrived, uttering in 1511 the first prophetic cry in the words of Anton de Montesinos: "I am the voice crying in the wilderness of this island."

On the 15th of November 1504 Julius II founded the first three American dioceses: Bayuense, Maguense and Ayguacense. Ferdinand was opposed to this and obtained the "Patronato" of the Indian Church. This was the official beginning of Christendom, in the bull Universalis Ecclesiae of 28 July 1508. On the King's nomination, the first three bishops of Santo Domingo, Concepcion de la Vega and Puerto Rico were appointed in 1511. At the Council of Burgos in 1512 the King was granted the right to levy the tithes.

Consciously or unconsciously, the Church, in its upper hierarchical structures, is allied with the conquering power. The native found the conquering class, and that of commissioners and traders intermixed with the missionaries and clergy. There were to be important exceptions.

In the same way, the cycle of the Brazilian coast, in its first stage (1500-1559), from the arrival of Pedro Alvarez Cabral to Tome de Sousa, a chaotic era of native exploitation, pau brasil and Capitanias' division of the territory, made no systematic progress in the mission. The presence of the odd Franciscan would not provide an ideal Christian presence. Brazil was a stopping place on the way to Africa, to the "Sea of the Arabs" (the Indian Ocean), and the Far East (towards Goa, Conchin, etc.).

3.2. Second Period: The Great Missions (1519 - 1551) and the Jesuits in Brazil (from 1549)

In 1519 the process of global evangelization began with the invasion of the Aztec Empire by Cortes, which started from Cuba. This marked the transition from evangelizing cycle I (of the Caribbean) to the Mexican, Central American and Inca and Chibcha cycles (cycles II, IV, V and VI). It was in these areas that most of the pre-Hispanic population of America lived. In the same way, the arrival of Tome de Sousa in Brazil on 7 January 1549, accompanied by the first Jesuits, marked the systematic beginning of cycle I, that of the Luso-American coast.

Spain under Charles V (1516 under regency until 1556) and Portugal under the great shipping empire were at the peak of their splendour. They were the centres of the "empire-world", although the mining boom had not yet occured. This was the time of "war Catholicism", where the model of Christianization of the Indies was based on evangelization by the tabula rasa method. Fray Bartolome de Olmedo went with Hernan Cortes to Mexico, Vicente de Valverde with Pizarro and Almagro. Cortes is defended from the Aztecs by Our Lady of Healing and "Nossa Senhora da Vitoria" supports Alvaro de Castro against the Brazilian natives in 1555. A Christian religion which justifies domination.

Evangelization begins in earnest on May 14th, 1524 with the arrival of the Franciscan "Twelve Apostles" in San Juan de Ulua. On July 2nd, 1526 twelve Dominicans disembarked; on May 22, 1533 the Augustinians arrived. The missionaries soon went from preaching through interpreters to studying a great many languages themselves, producing dictionaries, grammars, catechisms, and books of confessions and sermons.

Santa Maria la Antigua del Darien (later Panama) was founded as a diocese in 1513, Cuba in 1517 and Tierra Florida in 1520, the continental bishoprics were Carolense (later Puebla) in 1519, Mexico in 1530, Honduras, Nicaragua and Coro (later Caracas) in 1531, Santa Maria, Cartagena and Guatemala in 1534, Oaxaca in 1535, Michoacan in 1536, Chiapas in 1539 and Guadalajara in 1548.

In the South, in accordance with the Capitulation of Toledo of July 26th, 1529, Pizarro started from Panama. In 1537 the diocese of Cuzco was founded, that of Lima in 1541, Quito and Popayan in 1546 and in 1547 Asuncion in Paraguay (this time not from Peru, but from the South Atlantic).

In Brazil, from Paraiba to Sao Vicente, first the Jesuits, then the Franciscans and other orders continued their evangelizing work on the Coast.

Thus the "Christian people" began slowly to emerge. Against the will of the Spanish and Portuguese Christians began the original and creative acceptance of the Gospel by the mixed Latin American people, an oppressed people, exploited classes, an emerging culture: natives, half-castes, black slaves, and impoverished Spanish and Portuguese. The first rebellions - of the Incas especially, who were never thoroughly defeated - were to inaugurate the long road to liberation. As early as 1537 there were black slave uprisings in Mexico, and in 1539 the Huaynomota and Guazamota rebelled in the North. Ruling Christendom was confronted with another model of the Church: a "popular Church" reaching beyond the Spanish republic to the country, to the poor quarters of the cities, identifying itself with the suffering, patient, bleeding Christ portrayed in the "tremendismo" art (violently bloody paintings of the popular churches) of the Latin American people waiting for liberation.

This period also saw the beginning of the struggle for justice centred in the New Laws of 1542, and although Las Casas' position was to be thoroughly defeated it remains as an example to us today. Christendom in the Indies was thus built on the blood of the Indian and the suffering of the black slave.

3.3. Third Period: Organization of the Church (1551 -)

In 1551 the first Brazilian diocese, San Salvador de Bahia, was founded and the first Provincial American Council held in Lima. In addition, in 1546 the first three archdioceses were set up (Santo Domingo, Mexico and Lima). In 1556 Charles V abdicated and the demanding Philip II ascended to the throne. In 1548 silver was discovered in Northern Mexico (thus marking the beginning of evangelizing cycle III) and almost simultaneously in Peru (evangelizing cycle VIII).

"War Catholicism" begins to give way to a ruling class, an oligarchy of landowners, sugar planters ("ingenios") and miners: the "patriarchal Catholicism" of the "master of the big house" who rules the senzala (slaves' quarters). Under the Great Council of 1548 the Church is wholly subjected to State control, in the "Patronato" system, where everyone from the most insignificant church sexton to the most important Archbishops is presented for nomination by the civil and political authorities.

In addition to the many provincial councils (11 in all) and diocesan councils (over 70 until the seventeenth century) and to the universities (those of Lima and Mexico founded in 1553, but over thirty centres awarding degrees in theology) and higher seminaries, the following dioceses were founded: in the North, only Vera Paz and Yucatan in 1561; in the South, Caracas in 1552, Santiago de Chile in 1561, Bogota in 1562, Concepcion in 1564, Cordoba del Tucuman in 1570, Arequipa and Trujillo in 1577, and La Paz, Santa Cruz and Humanga in 1609. There remained only Durango in Mexico and Buenos Aires in 1620 for the organization of the Church in the period of Spanish colonial Christendom to be virtually complete.

It is the period of the Jesuits' arrival in Spanish America, but also that of the establishment of the Inquisition in Mexico, Cartagena and Lima.

"Popular Catholicism" continues to develop: the lay brotherhoods, charitable works, hospitals and assistance and loan systems, associations and tertiary orders, and "doctrinas" of Indians. This was the time of the first quilombos (villages of free black slaves) and their resistance to oppression. Native Christian rebellions multiply in frequency. The "Christian people" does not accept European and white Creole Christendom.

Nevertheless the Church, in its hierarchical structures, gradually transformed itself, with honourable exceptions, into the State apparatus dictating consensus in civil society. The hegemony of the ruling classes required the help of the Church in order to achieve its coercive aims in Indian Christendom.

3.4. Fourth Period: The Church in the Seventeenth Century

Philip IV was crowned in 1621; in 1623 Rome plans to establish Propaganda fide against the Spanish "Patronato". It is the end of Hispanic supremacy, the beginning of its decadence and of the rise of Holland - and later, of England. The peace treaty of Westphalia is the end of Spain and Portugal, of merchant capitalism, of the mining boom.

For Brazil, it is the time of the "entradas" (the bandeiras), following the rivers towards Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso and Goyas. It is the time when the missions of Maranhao and Para begin (Luso-American cycle III). In the same way, in Hispano-America it is the time of the Reducciones: from the Orinoco and the Colombia Plains, to Maynas, the Moxos and Chiquitos, Chiriguanos and finally the "reducciones" of Paraguay - a prototype of socialism.

It is the time of Jesuit Baroque culture, a complex, gilded art, subjective and emotional, with its impressive temples, sculptures and altars and its works of literature. It is a time of increasing Creole autonomy from Spain - this is the protohistory of the emancipation. The "Creole Church" joins the "popular Church" of the classes which have been oppressed for almost two centuries, against the Spanish, the Europeans, those who were not born in America.

It is the time of provincial quarrels. Of Franciscans against Dominicans, and of the latter against the Jesuits and their universities. The friars against the secular clergy, and the Church in general against the civil authority. They concern tithes and offerings, donations of the Crown and commissioners, parochial duties and the bad behaviour of priests. The "daily life" of an American Christendom which is implanted, hemmed in, far away. It is a time when the Church amasses enormous wealth (left to it in legacies): large tracts of land ("latifundias"), urban property, money in the "montes pios" (the banks of the period).

In the whole of the seventeenth century, not a single year passed without an uprising of natives, blacks or half-castes occurring in some part of Luso-America. When on March 22nd, 1660, an Easter Monday, thousands of natives celebrating Easter Week rebelled in Tehuantapec Province, where there were more than 150'000 tribute-paying males, in only five hours more than two hundred villages rose in arms. Only the Creole Bishop Cuevas Davalos of Oaxaca was able to suppress the war. The "Christian people" were still wating for liberation.

In Spanish America Protestantism was persecuted by the Inquisition. The crime of being a "Lutheran" was one of the most heavily persecuted (with whipping, prison and confiscation of land in the Indies). Apart from the brief presence of the German colony of the Welsers in the conquest of Colombia, it was in Brazil that their presence was most stable, if only because of the Huguenot colony of Nicolas Durand de Villegagnon in Rio de Janeiro since 1555, and especially the Dutch colony of Pernambuco, whose short stay was to last until 1654, when Northeastern Brazil was reconquered by the Portuguese.

But Protestantism was to assert itself clearly in the Caribbean. England was to occupy Barbados in 1625, and arrived in Jamaica in 1655, thus marking the beginning of the theology of Cromwell's Western Design, which was to continue centuries later in the form of Manifest Destiny. In 1694 the Bahamas were occupied. Holland was in Surinam in 1625 and in Curacao in 1634. France was to take Guadelupe and Martinique in 1635, Haiti in 1659 and La Cayenne in 1664. Thus, if Catholicism came to Latin America with the conquering violence of merchant capitalism, Protestantism came to our land with the expansion of emerging Anglo-Saxon industrial capitalism. Neither of the two is clear of blame. Both had in mind a model of Christendom: Hispano-Lusitanian Catholic Christendom, Anglican, Calvinist or others of Central Europe. A "Christian people" that was also oppressed, also began to receive the Gospel in an original and creative way, in this case against ruling capitalist Protestantism.

3.5. Fifth Period: Crisis of Christendom in the Indies (Eighteenth Century)

In 1700 the War of Succession began in Spain, ending with the triumph of a French Bourbon as King of Spain. Under the Treaty of Methuen in 1703 Portugal became dependent on England. The Iberian Peninsula at the centre of the "empire-world" is now relegated to a semiperipheral position vis à vis the central states of industrial capitalism. The emergence in Spain and Portugal of a commercial bourgeoisie - dependent on the Anglo-Saxon bourgeoisie - results in a shift in the "historical block" in power, also in the Indies, where the oligarchies and bureaucracies of the Habsburgers were replaced by a commercial bourgeoisie dependent on Cadiz (and no longer on Seville). Moreover, renewed exploitation of gold and silver (both in Mexico and in Brazil), reforms in the administrative bureaucracy, and the agricultural revolution already begun in England and now spread to the Iberian world, make this a century of vast growth in America, but also one of profound crisis.

The fundamental developments of the first half of the eighteenth century take place in Brazil; it is the "catolicismo mineiro" of Ouro Preto (Luso-American evangelizing cycle IV, later V). The gold boom causes the population to multiply several times. But it is a lay evangelization, almost devoid of the religious, brotherhoods and hermit saints. The dioceses of Olinda, Rio and Sao Luis de Maracanhao in 1676, with the Archbishopric of Bahia in the same year, are followed by the founding of Para in 1719 and Mariana and Sao Paolo in 1745. In addition the First Synod of Bahia is held in 1707. It is the beginning of "the great Brazil". This first part of the eighteenth century ends in 1757 with the expulsion of nearly 500 Jesuits from Brazil and Maranhao on the order of Pombal, who represents the Catholicism of the Enlightenment. This is a real rupture in history.

In Hispanic America, on the other hand, it is the second half of the eighteenth century which is most significant. It begins in fact in 1757 with the ascension of Charles III to the throne and the policy of Ananda in Spain, Tanuci in Naples and Choiseul in France. The expulsion of the Jesuits (nearly 2 000 of them in America alone, with the result of the decline of the "Reducciones" as a prototype missionary experiment) takes place in 1767 (the measure had been carried out in France in 1764). Indian Christendom is now defined as a colony. Taxes are raised and

Creoles, natives and slaves now experience increased oppression. On November 20th, 1761, the Maya leader of Cisteil, Santos Canek, an Indian, exclaims at the beginning of the rebellion:
"My dearly beloved children: I do not know what you expect from the heavy yoke and toilsome servitude imposed on you by Spanish domination: I have travelled throughout the province and taken note of all its villages, and having carefully considered what use or benefit Spanish domination has brought us, I can find nothing but hard and inviolable servitude".

Now the "Christian people" oppressed by Bourbon Christendom consists not only of natives, slaves and half-castes, but also of the intermediate Creole classes. The Virgin of Guadalupe, worshipped exclusively by Indians (like that of Copacabana on Titicaca) is now venerated also by Creoles against the Spanish. In the battles for independence the Spanish carried a banner of the Vergin of Healing of Hernan Cortes and the Americans, the Virgin of Guadalupe. A war between Virgins, a class war!

"Enlightenment Catholicism" aimed to reform the Church, the Tomo regios, and the religious orders. The Royalist Episcopate was strengthening itself against the religious, reading of the Bible against scholarship, the return to the Church Fathers and support for the secular clergy. The Provincial Councils were propitiated in the 1770's in order to assist Bourbon policy.

Nevertheless, internal tensions were rising: the ecclesiastical leadership owed allegiance to the "Patronato" and the lower clergy; the Creoles and the oppressed "Christian people" tended more and more towards autonomy. On the basis of the traditions of "popular Catholicism" liberation was a common aspiration. The rebellion of the "comuneros" in Nueva Granada, and the uprising throughout the vice-Kingdom of Peru by the Inca Tupac Amaru, executed in 1781, were to shatter the model of Christendom patiently built up over three centuries.

4. SECOND ERA - THE CHURCH IN NEO-COLONIAL DEPENDENCE (1807 -)

While it is true that Latin America was to gain independence from Spain and Portugal at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is no less true that it in fact passed into a situation of neocolonialism vis à vis Anglo-Saxon industrial capitalism (first English, then North American). It is for this reason that if there is talk of "liberation" in Latin America today, this refers, strictly speaking, to liberation from dependence on Anglo-Saxon capitalism, and this is, in strict terms, a situation which neither Africa nor Asia experience in this precise sense, as Latin America was assaulted in a special way by the Anglo-Saxon powers.

4.1. First Period: The Church in National Emancipation (1807-1831)

From the time of Napoleon's invasion of Portugal (1807) and, shortly afterwards, of Spain (marking the beginning of the process of American liberation) to Gregory XVI's nomination of the first six resident Bishops on February 28th, 1831, the struggle for freedom of the Latin American nationalities took place. Christendom found itself divided from within: The Royalist Bishops are against the patriotic, anti-Spanish lower clergy. The religious take up arms and produce a theology of emancipation. However, in order to understand the process, one should remember that there were five emancipation cycles with different characteristics and at three different synchronic moments.

At the first moment (1807-1814) the uprising is against Napoleon and in favour of Ferdinand VII. Nevertheless, the Creoles seize power and expel many Royalist Bishops. At the second moment Ferdinand regains power in Spain and wins back Royal sovereignty over the colonies. Pope Pius VII condemns emancipation in the encyclical Etsi longissimo of January 3rd, 1816. The third movement, this time against the King himself, leads to definitive independence in about 1821. Again there is a Papal encyclical, Etsi iam diu, of September 24th, 1824, demanding obedience to the Spanish King. There were historical errors with serious consequences, resulting in an irreversible crisis in colonial Christendom.

The Plata (I) and Nueva Granada (II) emancipation cycles behave in a similar way. Starting from the Plata river, San Martin, supported by the lower clergy and religious - and without the support of most of the Bishops - liberates Argentina, Chile and Peru. Starting from Venezuela, Bolivar frees Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia towards the South (1810-1821). The priest Hidalgo and later another priest, Morelos, fight against Creoles and Spanish and are defeated in Mexico (1810-1815). In 1821, with Hurbida, Mexico and Central America gain their independence. This is emancipation cycle III.

Brazil follows a different pattern. As the King of Portugal flees Napoleon and establishes the capital of his kingdom in Rio, Brazil does not have a war of independence proper, although heroes such as Tiradientes anticipate the people's fight for liberation. When Peter I announces his fico! (1822) Brazil is independent from Portugal, but remains under a monarchical system, until 1889, when the Republic is established. The Church, compared to the Hispanic region, suffers less in the process and does not undergo such a violent internal contradiction.

Emancipation cycle V, that of the Caribbean, is more complex and, while it began at the beginning of the nineteenth century, is still not complete (as Belice has yet to become a free nation). Santo Domingo is the first - after Haiti, which is ahead of all the Latin American countries, being the first independent black nation - to gain independence from Spain, but is occupied by Haiti (1822-1844). Cuba and Puerto Rico remain Spanish colonies until 1898, when they are handed over to the United States. The other islands of the Caribbean have to suffer for a long time English, French, Dutch and even Danish domination (if one includes the Guayanas, Surinam, etc.).

At all events, the new governments immediately attempted to set up national "Patronatos" over the Church, which they achieved in most cases, despite opposition from Rome.

The national war of independence disarticulated Christendom, closed seminaries, burned down libraries, dissolved convents and prevented the arrival of new missionaries. At any rate, the "Christian people" identified the fight for emancipation with their own faith and customs of popular Catholicism. There was no conflict in their conscience. Not so the new Creole class which came into power: the liberals, a commercial class articulated with Anglo-Saxon industrial capitalism.

4.2. Second Period: The Church and National Organisation

The liberal class, chiefly a commercial oligarchy articulating with dependence, together with the conservative landowning class - which exported products of tropical agriculture and mining - constitute the new neocolonial states, fulfilling the neocolonial pacts: they sell raw materials and buy manufactured products.

It is the time of Peter II in Brazil (1840-1889), of Santa Ana and other short-lived governments in Mexico (1824-1857), of the destruction of the Central American Confederation (1831), of instability of Colombia following the death of Bolivar (1830), of Jose Antonio Peres in Venezuela (1829-1846), of Rosas in Argentina (1835-1852), of Flores and later Rocafuerte in Ecuador, to be followed by Garcia Moreno; the time of the pipiolos (local name for liberals) in Chile until 1861.

For the Church, after the Tejada Embassy in Gran Colombia had obtained contact with Rome, after the failure of the Muzi mission in 1823 - on which account Rome made direct contact with Latin America for the first time - and despite the later nomination of the Resident Bishops, the situation was becoming increasingly difficult. While in a sense on the side of the conservatives, defending her gigantic wealth of land (obtained by "mortmain" or traditional, non-capitalistic exploitation), she became the object of secularization or increasing expropriation of her property by the liberals, who had a more capitalist concept of national development. At the end of this period (since 1850, to give an approximate date), the liberals are securely in power (in Colombia they came to power in 1849 until 1866, in Brazil in the '70's, in Argentina since Mitre and the victory of Buenos Aires since 1860, in Mexico with Juarez in 1857, with Perez in 1861 in Chile, the "colorados" - local name for liberals - in Uruguay in 1952). That is, the state no longer allows the Church to carry out the model of Christendom; quite the contrary, it strives to establish an anti-ecclesial ideological hegemony.

In addition to this, there is a missionary crisis in Europe in face of the rising social revolution, and it is only with the Restoration that a new era begins. Indeed, in 1858 in Rome, Pius IX founded the Latin American Pious College, where a good many bishops at the end of the nineteenth century were to be educated. In addition the Religious Congregations of Education begin to send their members in the mid-nineteenth century. A certain "Romanization" begins in the Latin American Church, which up to now had been more Iberian than Roman.

It is at this time that Northern Mexico (Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California) is occupied violently in 1848 by the United States, on its way to the Far West. Thus was born a "chicano" Church, dominated by Anglo-American Catholicism, under French or Anglo-Saxon bishops, the Mexican bishops having been excommunicated, and unable to express itself in its own language or culture until after the 1960's.

4.3. Third Period: The Church and Dependence on Imperialism (1880-1930)

The years 1870-1880 saw a fundamental change in the central powers of capitalism, which articulated in a new way with Latin American reality and influenced the Church, allowing, moreover, a gradual but constant Protestant presence.

Imperialism, a new phase in the development of capitalism, as a concentration of financial and industrial capital in monopolies, now spreads systematically in Latin America. Along with the railways, the new "enterprising spirit" spreads. Liberalism, as a fundamentally dependent class, achieves undisputed supremacy and builds the new neocolonialist state. The popular masses, conservatism, "internal market liberalism" (and not that of importation, which ruled only temporarily in Paraguay, to be destroyed in 1970) and the Church itself are on the defensive, resisting, waiting for the next historical stage.

It must be understood that "positivism" - such as that of Comte or Darwin or that of Spencer - has become the combat ideology of the new ruling class. The Church has no adequate pastoral or theological response to the advance of the new ideology.

These are the years of the "porfiriato" in Mexico (1876-1910), of the Brazilian Liberal Republic (from 1889), of Roca's government in Argentina (from 1880) - to name the three countries most effectively articulated with Anglo-Saxon imperialist expansion.

It is true that during these years the Latin American Plenary Council was held in Rome (1899), attended by 13 archbishops and 41 bishops. However, the very place where it was held, the excessive influence of Roman Canon Law, and the fact that the Council was prepared exclusively by European theologians, meant that this great occasion was more of a formal act than one which was pastorally effective. The spirit was to "preserve the faith", to defend it and protect it. It was a conservative, a rear guard,position.

Nevertheless, a new missionary moment occurred. From 1860 Franciscans and Capuchins evangelized the Amazon. The Dominicans since 1880, and the Salesians since 1895. In Peru, Leon XIII backs the Andean missions from 1895. In Argentina the Salesians arrive in 1879 to evangelize Patagonia - as Roca's "desert invasion" advances, massacring Indians. In Colombia renewal had already begun in 1840; the Augustinians arrive in 1890, the Montfortians in 1903, the Lazarites in 1905, the Claretians in 1908, and the Carmelites and Jesuits in 1918.

The Protestants for their part were to become firmly settled. Three stages may be distinguished: up to 1880, scattered groups; from 1880 to 1916, increased settling; from 1916 to 1930 they become firmly rooted in Latin America.

In Argentina Diego Thomson celebrated the first Protestant service on November 19, 1820. Various Anglican chapters settle in Buenos Aires, when 250 Scots arrive in 1825. In 1836 the Methodists arrive, this time from the United States. In Brazil the first Anglican chapel is built in 1819. In 1824 German Lutheran communities arrive, settling in Santa Catarina. Soon afterwards the Waldensians arrive in Uruguay. And gradually their presence extends throughout Latin America.

But it is with the arrival of the first Missionary Societies, such as those of the Methodists in Mexico in 1871, in Brazil in 1876, in the Antilles in 1890, and later in other countries, that Protestantism enters the expansion stage. The Presbyterians arrive in Brazil in 1860, in Argentina in 1866, in Mexico in 1872, and in Guatemala in 1882. The Baptists in Brazil in 1881, in Argentina in 1886, in Chile in 1888. By the turn of the century there are already some 100,000 members. With the Panama Congress (1916) and those of Montevideo (1925) and Havana (1929) Protestantism becomes part of Latin American reality.

4.4. Fourth Period: The Church and Populism (1930 -)

The economic crisis of 1929, the sturggle for supremacy in the capitalist centre (of the United States against England, although it was the Axis powers that started both wars), partially destroys the English neocolonial pact and weakens the liberal importing class. It was at this time that a new class emerged: the Latin American national industrial bourgeoisie, the heir of the "internal market" liberals, of the artisan groups and the non-exporting landowning conservatives. A new "historical block" comes to power: Latin American populism. This nationalist bourgeoisie was not anti-clerical, as its enemies in this situation were the Angol-Saxon industrial powers. Therefore they see the Church as a natural ally (as the Church was anti-liberal and nationalistic). Latin American populism (Vargas in Brazil from 1930, Irigoyen from 1918 and Peron from 1945 in Argentina, with the exception of a Cardenas since 1934 in Mexico, where the "Cristerio" uprising in 1926 places Church and State in opposition) suggest a new model of Christendom to the Church. Therefore we speak of the period of "new Christendom". Indeed, the populist State (so called because, while it has a capitalist plan it is for national autonomy and progressive with regard to workers and peasants) allows the Church to "take to the streets" with huge Eucharistic Congresses, and to teach Catholic religion in the State schools (prohibited by liberalism since the "non-religious education" of 1880).

The salient religious phenomenon of the "new Christendom" was the expansion of Catholic Action (organised in Italy in a similar situation, as Mussolini had set up the framework of Italian populism). In 1929 Catholic Action was established in Cuba, in 1930 in Argentina, in 1934 in Uruguay, in 1935 in Costa Rica and Peru, and in 1938 in Bolivia. The Church concentrated its attention on the petty bourgeoisie, which plays a central role in Latin American populism or in European Fascism.

As a result there was a significant intellectual renewal, partially inspired by Jacques Maritain, marked in Brazil by the presence of Tristao de Ataide (Amoroso Lima), who succeeded Jackson de Figueiredo (who died in 1930). In Argentina, anti-positivist intellectuals (such as Manuel Estrada, 1842-1894) had abandoned a generation of privileged education (such as Martinez Villada, 1886-1959), making way for a new post-war generation which brings Christian thought into the general intellectual life of the country. The same is true in Mexico of Vasconcelos or Antonio Caso. What is certain is that new Catholic universities were founded (the colonial universities having been nationalized by the liberals in the nineteenth century). The Xavierian University in Bogota (1937), that of Medellin (1945), Sao Paolo (1947), Porto Alegre (1950), Campinas (1956), Buenos Aires and Cordoba (1960), Valparaiso (1961), and a great number of new educational centres.

The social struggle also trains new cadres. Christian trade-unionism, centres of social investigation are set up after the Second World War. In particular, the founding of the JOC, which in Brazil in 1961 numbered 500 sections and nearly 100,000 members. The same occurred with the JAC (Catholic Agrarian Youth).

4.5. Fifth Period: The Church, Development Policy and National Security (1955 -)

This present period, being the most recent and of particular importance, will be examined more carefully dividing it into three phases. The first of these (1955-1964), that of development policy proper, or the model of development which presupposed the introduction of North American and European capital and technology. The second phase (1964-1976) of the crudest dictatorships with the military coups of the National Security. The third phase (since 1976) when, under the Trilateral doctrine, various models appear (neopopulist, social-democratic, return to the National Security, etc.).

4.5.1. Development Policy, Christian Democracy and Renewal of the Church

Ten years after the war (1945-1955) was enough time for the United States to impose her hegemony on Europe (the German "miracle") and Asia (the rise of Japan). Looking around, she found in Latin America nationalist capitalist governments. "Nationalism" was considered to be the chief enemy of the emerging expansion of what was to become the transnational corporation. The populist governments collapse (Vargas in 1954, Peron in 1955, Rojas Pinilla and Perez Gimenez in 1957, Batista in 1959, etc.). They are replaced by the development governments articulating dependence on North American and European capitalism (Kubitschek in Brazil in 1956, Frondizi in Argentina in 1957, and beside them, the Christian Democrtas E. Frei in Chile in 1964 and Calderas in Venezuela in 1969). These governments are all formally democratic.

The Church has begun its post-war renewal and has a model to carry out. A liturgical and catechetic, pastoral renewal; a European theological renewal; on the lay level, Catholic Action; on the political level, Christian Democracy. The Church in Chile is the example and guide, Mons. Manuel Larrain the prototype bishop. It is a time of growth, of organization. From July 25 to August 4, 1955 the First General Conference of the Latin American Episcopate was held in Rio de Janeiro and CELAM was founded (Latin American Episcopal Council).

It was the time of the foundation of the Latin American Confederation of the Religious CLAR, 1958), the Latin American Seminary Organization (OSLAM, 1958), the Conference of the International Federation of Catholic Youth (1953), the JOC Information Centre (1959), the Delegation of Latin American Businessmen (UNIAPAC, 1958), the Christian Family Movement (1951), the Latin American Institute of Catechesis (1961), the Latin American Catholic Press Union (ULAPC, 1959), the Latin American Confederation of Christian Trade Unionists (CLASC, 1954), the Organization of Catholic Universities in Latin America (ODUCAL, 1953), American Christian Union of Educators (1955), etc. That is, it was a time of raising awareness throughout the continent, with an optimistic belief in development and the possibility of Christian involvement. Moreover, it was a time of participation in the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), still as spectators, as "observers" - not yet as actors and creators. There is an awareness that out of 186 million Catholics there are only 39 thousand priests (4'700 faithful per pastor). The most pressing questions are therefore the lack of priests, the advance of Communism, and the spread of Evangelical Protestantism (among Catholics).

For their part, the Protestants had begun to advance significantly since 1930. In 1936 there were some 2,400,000 faithful of the Protestant denominations and Churches. In 1960 they had already reached millions. It was the time of growth of ecumenical Protestantism and the emergence of coordinating organizations on the Latin American level.

4.5.2. The Church under the Dictatorships of the National Security

In the face of the inability of the formal democracies for development to demobilize the people increasingly repressed by capitalism dependent on North America, a new model was applied: that of the military dictatorship, allowing capitalist development without democracy. On March 31, 1964 the coup d'etat occurred in Brazil; in 1971 in Bolivia; in 1973 the Uruguayan Congress dissolved; on September 11 of the same year Allende is assassinated and Pinochet rises to power; in 1975 Francisco Morales Bermudez seizes power in Peru; in 1976 the nationalist government in Ecuador falls; in the same year Videla comes to power in Argentina. Latin America sinks into repression and persecution. It is the time of captivity. The Church has one of her most profound experiences since settling in America. After the Second Vatican Council the Second General Conference of the Episcopate in Medellin (1968) marks a turning point: from the Church of development to the liberation. The theology of liberation is born at the same time as a great awareness of political involvement on behalf of the oppressed. Oppressed by development, by dependent capitalism, but now by brutal and bloody dictatorships.

The years 1964/65 to 1968 are a time of growth and preparation. From 1968 to 1972 (from Medellin to the XIVth Assembly of CELAM in Sucre, Bolivia) there is a time of profound creativity, involvement of many Christians with the people, prophetic movements showing a new experience of living the Christian life. The Basis Church Communities are born and grow, the Pastoral Institute (IPLA) of CELAM flourishes. In 1969 there is the first experience - and since then there are hundreds and hundreds of witnesses of the Gospel - of martyrdom: Antonio Pereira Neta dies a martyr in Recife (Brazil), tortured, riddled with shots and hung from a tree by paramilitary forces. He is the first martyr priest. On March 24, 1980 Mons. Oscar Romero was martyred; a bishop this time. The laymen and Christian workers and peasants who have died for their faith are countless. Thus a new model of the Church emerges slowly.

In 1973 the bishops of Northeastern Brazil wrote a document: "I have heard the cry of my people!" It is about the formation of a popular Church, a Church born of the people by the movement of the Spirit. Now the people has spoken, it has its pastoral work, its theology, its bishops and pastors (4).

Therefore, in the most difficult stage (from Sucre to the rise of Carter in 1976), the Church has gone through a conversion experience, where the spirituality of martyrdom is accompanied by realism. Thus the Latin American Church manifests itself at the 1971 Synod in Rome, and later, in 1974, when it speaks for itself. But, at the same time, it is the long way of the cross.

4.5.3. The Church and New Models of Dependent Capitalism

Since the fall of the populist governments (1955) Latin American capitalism can only be dependent and repressive. The "hard" dictatorships (Brazilian, Chilean, etc.) are wearing out. Carter proposes a "softening", the defence of human rights, a return to democracy. This, however, does not last long. Reagan (1980-) suggests a return to repression of the people. These are fluctuating models of a historical period where capitalist dependence prevents the people from developing through continual removal of capital, which mobilizes the oppressed classes. The problem of the right to work, to life - the central theological theme of our time - indicates a structural crisis in Latin American capitalism.

The Church is divided. On the one hand, the development model of New Christendom attempts by means of Christian Democracy or Social Democracy a renewal of the Latin American Church along European lines, with the latter's theology, pastoral work, etc. On the other hand, the model of the Church of the poor, or the popular Church, attempts to take the part of the people itself, the poor, oppressed, hungry people, and to create for this purpose new pastoral work, a new theology, etc. These two positions were clearly manifested at the Third Conference of the Episcopate in Puebla (1979) and have continued up to the present.

Now the Church leading the way is that of Brazil, with its more than 100,000 Basic Church Communities, with its bishops taking up the defence

of the peasants' lands, of native rights, of support of strikes and workers' claims (especially in Sao Paulo), giving a place to political organization and intellectual criticism. The Church in Brazil accomplishes a special prophetic work.

As for Protestantism - with organizations such as ISAL, ULAJE and CELADEC - it has reached a moment of decision with the Latin American Congress on Evangelization (CLADE, Bogota, 1969), where there is a call for a responsible attitude in the face of crisis. At the third Latin American Evangelical Conference (CELA III) a clear definition is reached on the political, economic and social levels. Protestantism is now Latin American, with its own personality within world Protestantism. The Assembly of Churches of Oaxtepec (1978) marks the transition from the Latin American Evangelical Union (UNELAM) to the Latin American Conference of Churches (CLAI), indicating, as on the Catholic side, a growing number of conservative members in the face of the prophetic ecumenical movements.

5. THIRD ERA - BEYOND CAPITALISM (1959 -)

Any division into periods is to some extent ad placitum: there is always something artificial about it. Moreover, historical phenomena do not occur simultaneously in all areas. The process of national emancipation began in Haiti at the beginning of the nineteenth century and is now ending in Belice in 1981. The same is true of the historical era in which the Christians, the Churches, begin to live in a context which is no longer capitalist, but post-capitalist, with problems, situations and structures unknown until now, new and disconcerting.

In fact, in Latin America Christians are involved in a revolution throughout the continent - gradual, growing, sporadic and hidden - against dependent capitalism. The most immediate experience of this occurred in the Caribbean and in Central America. Therefore, to conclude, we will take two prototype examples of this third era, in which very few Churches and Christians now live an ordinary daily life.

5.1. The Church in Cuba

This Caribbean island was discovered by Columbus on October 27, 1492. It was a Spanish colony until 1898. In 1954 Fulgencio Batista was elected President, having governed de facto since 1933. In 1956 Fidel Castro began the struggle against the dictator, in Sierra Maestra. In July 1953 Mons. Perez Serantes, Archbishop of Santiago de Cuba, interceded on behalf of the fugitives who had attacked the Moncada barracks. At the moment of his death, Mons. Serantes exclaimed, referring to the victorious revolution led by Fidel Castro himself: "Everything happening to us is providential. We believed more in our colleges than in Jesus Christ." On January 2, 1959 Castro entered Santiago and on January 8 was given a triumphant welcome in Havana. In the same month Pope John XXIII announced the convocation of a Council. The Cuban Church was certainly unaware that it was entering - without sufficient preparation - a new historical era.

The first phase of the revolution could be called "democratic and humanistic". Nonetheless the Archbishop of Santiago launched an emphatic circular "Against the Executions" on January 29. On May 17 the Agrarian Reform Law was decreed, affecting the interests of North American private property (Americans owned 40 % of the arable land in Cuba). In November 1959 the Catholic Congress held in Havana said in chorus: "We want a Catholic Cuba" and "Cuba - yes; Russia - no". The head-on confrontation had begun.

On June 27 Castro made his decisive speech: "Whoever is anti-Communist is anti-Revolution." We are in 1960. On April 17, 1961 the Bay of Pigs was invaded - by anti-Castro exiles supported by the CIA and on the instigation of J.F. Kennedy. The Church joins the anti-Socialist side en masse. Castro exclaims: "The priests are allied to robbery, crime and lies; today they are the Fifth Column of the counter-revolution."

From 1961 to 1968 there was a split, a total lack of understanding on both sides. The Church, in unjustifiable capitalist conservatism. A large proportion of the party in power, in dogmatic Marxism, imported and equally unjustifiable. Mons. Cesar Zacchi, apostolic delegate of Rome, begins to put out bridges. What is certain is that the Council and especially Medellin put a new face on the Church. Fidel himself said in 1968 to 500 intellectuals in Havana: "It cannot be denied that we are faced with new facts. These are the paradoxes of history: How can we, seeing sections of the clergy become revolutionary forces - referring to Camilo Torres in particular - resign ourselves to seeing sections of Marxism become conservative forces?" Mons. Zacchi declares: "The Church should start thinking of the place it is to occupy in the new Socialist society".

On April 10, 1969 the Episcopate criticizes the North American blockade against Cuba: "Seeking the good of our people, and faithful to the service of the poorer people, according to the commandment of Jesus Christ and to the commitment recently stated in Medellin, we denounce this unjust blockade situation which contributes to the increase of suffering." And on September 3 of the same year another communiqué is issued: "This is an hour when, as in all other hours, we must know how to discover the Kingdom of God in the positive aspects of the crisis ... Therefore there is an enormous movement of common purpose among men, be they atheists or believers." Victory over the crisis has begun!

5.2. The Church in the Central American Revolution. The Religion Question

Central America, violently conquered in the sixteenth century, exploited throughout its history, divided by Anglo-Saxon capitalist interests, occupied and finally emptied by the transnationals and a landowning oligarchy devoid of social awareness, has rebelled, and the Christians with her. From the bishops Saint Antonio Valdivieso OP, martyred in 1550 for defending the natives against the conquistador Contreras in León (Nicaragua), to the thousands of martyrs of our time, Central America is now an example of Christianity committed to the people's struggle for liberation.

Since the beginning of the '70's an experience began which was hidden from the eyes of the most watchful observers. A group of young people, among them the commanders of the Sandinist "Proletarian" group (Luis Carrión, Joaquín Cuadra and many others, including the commander Monica Baltodano), who, as students with a Christian commitment, worked in the fringe parish of Managua, Santa María de los Angeles, join the Sandinist National Liberation Front (FSLN). It was something new for Christians to join the liberation struggle. Together with the others they made a triumphant entry on July 19, 1979 at the head of a victorious people. The Basic Communities, the bishops themselves, the Church as a whole had openly fought against the Somoza dictatorship (although the Papal Nuncio had drunk a toast with the dictator days before the bombing of León).

On November 17 of the same year the Nicaraguan Episcopate launches a historic pastoral letter on "Christian Commitment to a New Nicaragua". It says that "if socialism means, as it should mean, giving priority to the interests of the Nicaraguan majority, and a model of economy which is planned on the national level, with solidarity and progressive participation, we have no objection... If socialism means power exercised from the viewpoint of the vast majority and increasingly shared by the organized people, again it will find nothing but support and encouragement in the faith. If socialism leads to cultural processes awakening the dignity of our masses, it is a process of humanization in agreement with the human dignity proclaimed by our faith. We are confident that the revolutionary process will be something original, creative, profoundly national and in no way imitative."

A year later, on October 7, 1980, the National Directorate of the Sandinist Front issued an "Official Communiqué of the FSLN National Directorate on Religion", the central text of which stated that: "We Sandinists affirm that our experience shows that when Christians, relying on their faith, are capable of responding to the needs of the people and of history, their very beliefs compel them to militant revolutionary action. Our experience shows us that one can be at the same time a believer and a consistent revolutionary and that there is no irreconcilable contradiction between the two." It is the end of an era and the beginning of another! It is the first time in world history that a post-capitalist revolutionary movement states in practical and theoretical terms this position on religion. It is a giant step forwards, and it was not long before repercussions were felt in Cuba, Mozambique and other socialist countries.

Starting from the Nicaraguan experience, but also from the early presence of Christians, priests, religious and laymen, and up to the martyr Mons. Oscar Romero - hero of the people and already proclaimed a saint by the multitude - in the liberation processes of Salvador and Guatemala, and also in Honduras, one can say that the popular Church is growing irresistibly from the people itself.

The chief leader of the FDR (Revolutionary Democratic Front) in Salvador commented to us that since the peasant massacre of 1932 the peasant population had been scattered. It was the Church, through her Basic Communities - the first apostle was Fr Rutilio Grande SJ, a martyr murdered like Mons. Romero, one of the more than 20 priests

murdered in Central America in the past five years - that gave the Salvadorian peasants unity, consciousness and mobilization. The Church is thus at the root, at the origin of the very process of liberation. She is no longer a guest at the hour of victory. She is a servant at the very birth of popular liberation.

Evangelization, with the blood of the martyrs and the work of ordinary Christians, progresses even further despite the actions of many Christians responsible for Church structures. Now it is the people itself, humble, simple, poor, the people violently dominated during the Conquest, oppressed by landowners and miners, by oligarchies and liberals, by landowning masters and capitalist transnationals, this Christian people is now the maker of its own revolution, identifying with Christ the carpenter, tortured and crucified, bleeding in front of the soldiers of the Empire.

6. CONCLUSIONS

As you may have noticed, this "interpretation" is based on theoretical and theological assumptions. The idea is to assess the historical event starting from defined categories. The interpretative category of "Christendom" allows us to differentiate the Church from a highly ambiguous historical model, on the side of the oppressive power. It allows us to discover the Christian people as dominated within the model of Christendom, as evangelized despite the conditions in which the Gospel was preached (in the Catholic position, under the Iberian power of merchant capitalism; in the Protestant position, under the Anglo-Saxon power of industrial capitalism).

The first era, that of colonial dominated Christendom, has its structural flaws, but also its undeniable values: the generosity of thousands of missionaries, from Spanish laymen, Portuguese, half-caste, natives and slaves, to women as great builders of the Church.

The second era, which still applies to the vast majority of the Latin American Christians, began with the crisis of Christendom, the war of independence, ending with the neocolonial pact. The Church, while conservative, finds herself nonetheless together with the people oppressed by the liberals. In the nineteenth century there is a real "popular Church", often lay, without priests, a redoubt of resistance against positivist capitalist ideology, against anti-Nationalist dependence. Contrary to liberal history, the Church was not only oligarchic: she was also - paradoxically - popular.

It is this recollection of the people and the presence of one part of the Church in the resistance struggles of the people itself which have led to the situation where now, in the third era, there are Christians taking active part in the liberation.

NOTES

1. The concept of "poor" (ptokhois in Luke, hanavim in Isaiah) was stated as the fundamental interpretative light of the project to write a General History of the Church in Latin America by CEHILA (Commission for the Study of the History of the Church in Latin America) in 1973 (cf. CEHILA, Para una historia de la Iglesia en America Latina, Nova Terra, Barcelona, 1975, pp. 23ff.). The initiative first originated in conversations held in Nazareth in 1959 with Paul Gauthier (Jésus, l'Eglise et les pauvres, Ed. Universitaires, Tournai, 1962), where we conceived the idea of writing a history of the Church "backwards": starting from the poor (cf. Hipotesis para una historia de la Iglesia en America Latina, Estela, Barcelona, 1967). However, with the years it became apparent that there was a hermeneutic problem in constructing the concept of "poor" as a category which could be used in a scientific-historical description. In 1979 CEHILA held its Seventh Symposium in San Juan, Puerto Rico, with a view to solving this methodological problem. On this subject see what we have written in Chapter I, Volume I/1 of General History of the Church in Latin America (to be published in English by Orbis Books, New York). You are referred to this eleven-volume work for all bibliographical information on the history of the Church in Latin America (also published by Vozes, Petropolis, since 1977, and by Sigueme, Salamanca, since 1981). See also F. Zubillaga-L. Lopetegi-A. de Egana, Historia de la Iglesia en America Latina, Vols. I-II, BAC, Madrid, 1965-1966; Hans-J. Prien, Die Geschichte des Christentums in Lateinamerika, Vandenhoeck, Göttingen, 1978, and my work History of the Church in Latin America, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1981.

2. In CEHILA, in its recent assembly in Manaus (Ninth Annual Symposium), an experimental type of "historico-popular production workshop" was set up, where the historian provides the basic elements (often pictures, or merely the contexts of the events known to the popular memory of the "old folk", "wise men", or popular poets), so that the people itself can express, in its own categories, language and symbols, the history of the Church. Thus the people redefines the "discovery" of America by Columbus and the Christians as the "invasion" of America (vis a vis the Amerindians living in this land), as it was expressed in a popular history workshop in Recife (Brazil). Cf. Eduardo Hoornaert, "A questão do destinador e do destinatario", in Boletin CEHILA 14-15 (1978), pp. 19ff.

3. Cf. W. Krickeberg-H. Trimborn-W. Müller-O. Zerries, Die Religionen des alten Amerika, Kohlhammer, Stuttgart, 1961.

4. See my work De Medellín a Puebla, Una década de sangre y esperanza (1968-1979), Edicol, Mexico, 1979, 618 pp. On a bibliography of Protestantism see John Sinclair, Protestantism in Latin America: A Bibliographical Guide, W. Carey Library, South Pasadena, 1979. On Catholicism an initial bibliography in my work History and Theology of Liberation, Orbis Books, New York, 1979, pp. 183-189.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN THE PACIFIC

John Garrett

Writing Church History in the Pacific - A Complex Task

The churches of the Pacific are surrounded by the world's largest sea. Historians must cope with this atypical oceanic setting. Many presuppositions have to be revised. For example, most accounts of the expansion of Europe use the term discovery for what was only contact. For Pacific islanders the events involved a discovery in reverse; there were human beings with pink skins who obviously did not understand island customs and skills, even though they brought with them many attractive tools and drugs. Since they were naïve newcomers in the island setting, white people could be manipulated to local advantage. Christian missionaries, who believed they were conferring superior truth, were often regarded by their catechumens as an alternative source of convenient supernatural power, a substitute magic based on a different cosmology. As it went hand-in-hand with the power of writing, the use of steel, and the force of cannons and manual arms, the religion of the whites was accounted to be more potent than local belief. The personal letters and diaries of many early missionaries show that they recognized that all this was so, even though it did not appear prominently in printed works written for report and fund-raising. Due allowance for the uncomfortable facts is a prerequisite of the historiography of the Pacific's churches.

Standard mission histories have to be corrected to arrive at perspectives less patronizing and deficient. The volume dealing with the Pacific in Latourette's celebrated History of the Expansion of Christianity relied largely on printed missionary history and memorabilia (1). More recently Ralph Wiltgen, a Roman Catholic scholar, has traversed a wealth of European sources in his Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania 1825 to 1850 (2). The book includes only slender indications of what was happening in the islands, historically and culturally, when the Roman Catholic missionaries arrived. Local explanations of the processes of rejection and voluntary acceptance of the mission are lacking. Balanced ecumenical history needs to supplement the information and interpretation in Wiltgen's book by working through island local history and surviving accounts by Pacific islanders and white settlers who were observers or participants (3). Islanders among our own contemporaries can often guide non-islander historians to useful oral informants; some are now writing the history of their own churches with the advantage of local understanding from within their societies. Many disciplines have to be combined in arriving at thorough and many-faceted analysis: geography (4), the study of boats and ships (5), ethnography and ethnohistory (6), island economics and trade (7), the history of settlements and migrations before contact (8), comparative linguistics (9), imperial and colonial history (10), all carefully weighed.

Awareness of this complexity is a requirement for a properly catholic, an ecumenical, approach (11). A watery tract of the oikumene, the surrounding inhabitied world, establishes part of the agenda of Pacific Christian history. Thus, when British Protestants came into conflict with French Catholics in Oceania the background was more complicated than colonial historians sometimes allow. Obviously both parties to the quarrels knew that warships could and did intervene (12). It is less widely admitted or even known that these ecclesiastical and nationalist encounters were used by local people to provide alliances for settling the outcome of current wars between rival island chiefs. In Tonga (13), Rotuma (14), and the Loyalty Islands of New Caledonia (15), melancholy battles between Christians had these ingredients. Prior non-theological motives underlay the strife. The honour of European navies mingled with missionary teaching about the Lord of Hosts. The island combatants only dimly understood Christian doctrine.

In historical perspective the extreme isolation of church from church in the Pacific may also be treated as a special parable of Christian disunity (16). Island groups are remote from each other; theological, cultural, liturgical and legal-canonical differences accentuated the distance. Physical communication between divided Christians on large land masses is possible; until the coming of the aeroplane such contacts in the south Pacific were comparatively rare; when they came, the shock of novelty was compounded by introduced denominational discord. In Fiji, to take an example, most Christians were surprised, when British colonial administrators arrived later than Methodist and Roman Catholic missionaries, to find there were people called Anglicans who acknowledged neither John Wesley nor the Pope. Islander historians setting out to write the story of their own countries are facing the task of coming to understand in greater depth the idiosyncrasies of Christian confessions other than their own. Those who have received advanced professional training for the work have often been taught by professors who specialize in social, political and ethnohistorical reconstruction, but may be under-informed or openly prejudiced about the theological and related niceties of church history. Younger Pacific historians are tempted to discard these essential finer points. The result can be a misleading picture. Christian thinking and theology have become integrated into the thinking of many of the islands in all three major sub-regions of Oceania - Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia. Christian history, theology and worship have come to belong to the local cultures. They cannot be downplayed as either peripheral or epiphenomenal. Over-reaction to the theological triumphalism of much mission history can lead to serious distortion of the total picture.

Teachers and undergraduates at the regional and ecumenical Pacific Theological College (PTC), Fiji, in contact with the nearby Roman Catholic Pacific Regional Seminary, have tried for the last fifteen years to cope with some of the problems we have been tracing. Many students at the PTC have written theses and final-year projects about aspects of the history of their own island churches (17).

The chapel at the PTC commemorates 1200 islander families which went on mission to other parts of the Pacific. The migration of this remarkable force of missionaries ensured that the Pacific was won for the Christian faith by a majority from the island churches under the minority leadership of missionaries of abroad. The movement spread broadly from east to west. Some of the islander missionaries were Catholic, though most belonged to other traditions. Most are listed in a book on the Holy Table in the chapel. They are linked by continuing family solidarity with present students. Christianity, when it came to people's forebears, had usually already taken island form and took root in the villages through the work of island teachers from other parts of the region. Family memory and oral information, the disinterment of long-forgotten letters in local languages, and manuscript journals and reminiscences have become essentials for research (18). The life of small churches, growing in their own way from the time of the first baptisms, is exposed in a new and fresh way, enriched by modern knowledge of relationships between extended families and balances of power between chiefly groups. As micro-history reconstitutes the scene, researchers and writers become aware of the present ecumenical encounter in the Pacific. The process of writing history offers a suggestive model of the ecumenical situation, in space and in time.

Fortunately those attempting to write church history in this way within the island world can count on help from several centres of advanced work in or near their region. At the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University, Canberra (19), high standards are accompanied by excellent archival and library resources - and generous funding. Schools of Pacific history have appeared in other universities in Australia and New Zealand. The two largest collections of materials on the Pacific - the Mitchell Library, Sidney, and the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington - are within reach. The University of Hawaii and collections in Honolulu have special resources on Polynesian and Micronesian history (20). In Fiji the Institute of Pacific Studies at the University of the South Pacific encourages and publishes monographs by island writers (21). The Journal of Pacific History, published in Canberra, the long-established Journal of the Polynesian Society, Wellington, and the Journal de la Société des Océanistes, Paris, constantly add to our knowledge. The material coming to hand is "treasure from the deep".

Theologically speaking, the complexity of Pacific history can be a numbing exercise in awareness. To this theological aspect we now turn. Many diverse forms of Christianity and related cults have entered the region. One is reminded of a tropical lagoon, where anemones, starfish, sea-urchins, large sharks, and thousands of multicoloured smaller fish have tried to settle together. How describe, let alone enter, the inner life of so many related, but distinct life-forms? Let us spend some time illustrating a few features of confessional disunity in Oceania, remembering that island environments have acculturated and changed the original missionary phenomena.

Roman Catholic Missions

The Roman Catholics, to begin there, have an internal diversity of their own. Their missionary orders and communities present a picture almost as varied as the Protestant missionary societies and boards. The fathers of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary (SSCC) (22), named Picpusians (for the street where their mother house stood in Paris) produced a type of piety not less distinctive than Wesleyanism. Their postulants tended to come from France's maritime provinces; they felt at home in the salty winds and high seas of eastern Polynesia, where they became the pioneers of Tahitian and Hawaiian Catholicism (23). The Marist fathers and brothers of the Society of Mary (SM) who followed them and settled in Central Oceania and New Zealand, shared their attachment to Mary as Star of the Sea, but found adaption more difficult. The Marists tended to come from the comforting inland landscapes of Lyon and the Pays de Bresse (24), where they had known no scent of brine or hint of seasickness. The personalities of the third major nineteenth century group, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart (MSC), show the peculiarities, at times the excessive penitential austerities, associated with the visions of Issoudun, their home base. They share the febrile ardor engendered by persecution and exile under the Ferry laws of the French third republic (25).

In all three of these Roman Catholic missionary organizations we find important, more or less transient, conditions at work. These aspects of French local post-Tridentine Catholicism co-exist with shared loyalty to Church and Pope. All three groups sprang from Catholic ultramontane revival. When revivals cool they have a way of shedding their temporary and accidental manifestations. In the Pacific the accidental aspects often became embedded in the life of the young churches as though they were essentials. The three main pioneer groups have been followed by many other Catholic missionary agencies created to meet special needs or to make special emphases. We may cite the Maryknollers, French and Canadian Josephite sisters, Columbans from Ireland, America and Australia, Divine Word missionaries (SVD) from Germany, the Netherlands, the United States and Australia, Franciscans, Jesuits (especially in Micronesia). The three pioneering missions were in touch with each other, though the Marists, whose line of command ran direct through their general to the Pope, were sometimes involved in conflict with local bishops, the Vicars Apostolic, in the field. Protestants had preceded Catholics in Oceania during the Napoleonic wars. The Catholic aim was partly to reclaim occupied territory from Protestants. Some of the consequent struggles were sharp - in Tahiti, the Gilbert Islands (now Kiribati) and the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu); they poisoned future relationships. Catholics tended to refer collectively to Protestants as Methodists; Protestants, equally ill-informed, said all Catholics were Jesuits. Tension was occasionally relieved by touching meetings, when common humanity under duress in the tropics seemed more important than re-living the European seventeenth century (26).

Protestant Missions

Protestant loyalties, theologies and ways of worship were even more diversified. The London Missionary Society, which came to Tahiti in 1798, was formed by English, Welsh and Scots dissenters belonging to

Calvinist (27) non-established churches practising infant baptism. They had easier access to ships than Catholics could find. As their work prevailed over early obstacles they implemented a policy of training converted islanders to be missionaries - many ordained - to other parts of the Pacific (28). By contrast, Catholic training for the priesthood languished throughout the nineteenth century (29). Talkative and sociable islanders, whose peoples had endured centuries of solitude imposed by sea, did not adapt easily to individual ascetic disciplines. Clerical celibacy was also found hard to nurture in sexually exuberant Pacific societies.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions arrived in Hawaii in 1820 (30). They also were Calvinists and paedobaptists. Some of their representatives led missionaries of the Hawaiian church to the Marquesas islands and Micronesia in the 1850s. Wesleyans from Britain moved through sub-bases in Australia and New Zealand into Tonga, Fiji and Samoa. They were involved in Samoa in embarrassing conflicts with the London Missionary Society, traceable partly to old animosities between the Tongan missionary teachers they employed and influential circles in Samoan society already aligned with the LMS (31).

As French naval power challenged the British in the Pacific, first in Tahiti, later in New Caledonia, the London Missionary Society handed over these two fields by agreement to the Paris Mission. By the time of the transfer the local churches in both places had become culturally implanted in their own soils. The Bible in the languages of the people became almost like apocalyptic literature, a repository in code for the defence of their languages and ways of life against the inroads of the French colonial mission civilisatrice. At the present time Protestant majority churches in both places have spoken in favour of independence from France (32).

The London and Paris missionary societies permitted their converts to choose their form of church government. A more explicitly Presbyterian mode of church government came to the New Hebrides, in Melanesia, in the 1850s. Its arrival had been prepared by Samoan and Cook islander teachers of the London Missionary Society. The Presbyterians who promoted the New Hebrides mission were themselves divided by rifts in Scotland's churches. John Geddie (33), the pioneer, set out from Nova Scotia in Canada's eastern provinces. The background of his missionary call was in the Scottish Secession and Relief Churches, some of whose members also had a hand in the LMS. Other Canadians of similar church loyalty followed him to the Pacific. He came out to work with help from the LMS in Samoa.

On the island of Aneityum, where he settled, he was joined by John Inglis (34), a Scot belonging to the larger Free Church. Inglis had worked already among white settlers in New Zealand. The two men, in view of their different home-church jurisdictions, kept a slight dif-

ference and tended separate "stations", but they worked well together to create a united church order for converts on Aneityum. When John G. Paton (35), who had closer links with the established Church of Scotland, came from Australia to the New Hebrides, the intra-Presbyterian situation was further complicated. Paton became the most voluble and energetic promoter of the mission. He brought new notes of raw colonial vigour and unashamed imperialism - and clashed badly with the more self-effacing approach of Geddie, who cherished his earlier association with the LMS and considered his work as an extension of theirs (36). As the first white Protestant missionary to live for any length of time in Melanesia Geddie depended on the prior experience of his islander forerunners. The contacts between these Polynesian LMS teachers and New Hebridean spirit worshippers, who were Melanesians, contributed special qualities to the Presbyterian Church that eventually emerged. Polynesian societies are generally pyramidal, with hereditary descent patterns, by contrast with Melanesian tribes, which recognize the authority of dynamic non-hereditary Big Men who gain their power by a display of wits, wealth and weapons. This, with the other contributing aspects outlined already, needs bearing in mind in historical assessment of the Presbyterian Church of the New Hebrides (Vanuatu) (37).

In this same island group ecumenical understanding was made more difficult when the French Roman Catholic Marist mission arrived from nearby New Caledonia in 1887 (38). The Marists were urged on by a jaunty Francophile Anglo-Irishman - John Higginson (39). He was a life-long Anglican, spoke bad French, and operated cattle ranches in the New Hebrides. In New Caledonia his business ventures were intermeshed with the French nickel mines and the banking house of Rothschild. The New Hebrides Presbyterian Mission was as vehemently aligned with the British imperium as was Higginson with the French (40). Most of the Presbyterian missionaries were fiercely anti-Catholic. The possibilities for ecumenical interpretation of this scene - with special attention to original sin all round - speak for themselves.

Anglican Missions

Higginson was an Anglican admirer of Marist missions. What of Anglican missions as such in the Pacific and their encounter with Protestant evangelicals and Roman Catholics?

The first Anglican missionary venture among Polynesians was led by Samuel Marsden (41), the evangelical Anglican chaplain to the small convict colony of Sydney, Australia early in the nineteenth century. Though an ordained Anglican, Marsden was closely associated with the Calvinistic Methodists, the followers of George Whitefield (42), who had contributed important pioneers to London Missionary Society ranks. New Zealanders regard Marsden, who conducted the first Christian service in New Zealand on Christmas Day 1814, as a founding father of their country's colonial development. He led the Church Missionary Society (Anglican) in its early work among the Maori people (43), who are Polynesians, making seven voyages across the stormy Tasman

Sea in this cause. Despite divergence of views with the Wesleyan Methodists - he was Calvinist, they Arminian - he also actively aided their settlement in New Zealand, and later, in the 1820s, in Tonga. Marsden practised ecumenical fellowship on account of what he saw as common apostolate. His career is a minor, but significant, ecumenical case study in Oceania.

All Anglicans of his period were not theologically in tune with Marsden. By mid-century a Tractarian bishop, theologically favourable to the early Oxford Movement, had been appointed as the first Anglican Bishop of New Zealand. George Augustus Selwyn (44) believed in an undisturbed succession of the threefold ministry from the time of the apostles. Newman's friend Edward Bouverie Pusey was among his spiritual guides. Selwyn and his brilliant young assistant John Coleridge Patteson, the first missionary Bishop of Melanesia, who was murdered in the islands in 1871, were romantically affected by the story of the British eighth century missions to Germany and the Netherlands under Boniface and Willibrord. They enlisted young Melanesian men for training in New Zealand and later on Norfolk Island, sending them back afterwards as Christian teachers to their home islands. The London Missionary Society, the Presbyterians, and the Wesleyans watched the progress of the Anglican Melanesian Mission (45) with caution. They spoke of its leaders as Puseyite and feared the Church of England had lost its grip on the Reformation. Comity agreements prevented overlap between Anglicans and the Protestant societies in the Pacific, but social relationships between them were not always easy. Selwyn and Patteson were trained scholars; many of the non-Anglicans, though frequently able and intelligent, were not. When Patteson met another trained linguist and classicist, the Marist father Xavier Montrouzier (46), on the New Caledonien outer island of Lifou, they spoke French together as gentlemen and scholars. Montrouzier found Patteson civilized, though schismatic. Patteson deprecated Montrouzier's advanced Mariology, but detected underlying Catholicity. In the Pacific, as in some other parts of the world, the predominantly middle-of-the-road tradition of Anglican missions attempted to build bridges toward both Rome and the Reformation; but neither Rome nor the evangelical dissenters seemed eager to build permanent bridges toward them.

Faith Missions in the Twentieth Century

In the twentieth century the churches we have so far been describing have been increasingly affected by the spread of smaller faith missions in the Pacific. One of the earliest of these, the South Sea Evangelical Mission (SSEM) in the Solomon Islands grew out of the concern of Florence Young, a formidable maiden lady (47) who had previously served in China with Hudson Taylor's China Inland Mission. She recruited pioneer workers among Melanesians who had been induced by the islands labour traders to work on sugar plantations in Queensland, Australia (48). She and her family were members of the open wing of the Plymouth Brethren (49), but the mission's Australian-based committee included other conservative evangelicals who adhered to the theology of the Keswick Convention, including some Anglicans. A further mission practising baptism by immersion and inspired by

the conversion of Melanesian plantation workers in Queensland, the Churches of Christ, entered the northern New Hebrides in 1901 through the work of Toby Man Con, a returning labourer. The Churches of Christ in the New Hebrides follow the teachings of the Disciples of Christ (50) and their distinctive teaching, more particularly, concerning adult baptismal regeneration. The Seventh-day Adventists, a church more marginal ecumenically than the SSEM or the Churches of Christ, have brought their doctrines and dietary rules to the Pacific. Their extension to Melanesia accompanied their growth in Australia, where their American founding mother, Ellen G. White (51), lived for several years in the 1890s. In eastern Oceania they converted the whole population of minuscule Pitcairn Island, home of the descendants of the mutineers on the Bounty.

Still more divergent groups, notably the Latter-Day Saints, call for open-minded study. The Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, based in Independence, Missouri, and standing closer to the Christian mainstreams than the Mormons, have established themselves in French Polynesia, especially the Tuamotu archipelago. The larger church based in Salt Lake City, Utah, came to Hawaii in 1850 as the American frontier expanded westward. One of the most intriguing representatives of the Mormons, Walter Murray Gibson (52), founded an island Zion for the beleaguered saints on Lanai, Hawaii. After falling out with Brigham Young, who had supported his adventure, he lived on in Hawaii to become its prime minister under the colourful monarch Kalakaua, but he died in comparative obscurity as an admirer and suppliant among Hawaii's Roman Catholics. This was not the only contact between Mormons and the churches in the Pacific calling for investigation. Attentive historians will seek a calm assessment and understanding of the Mormon system and story. Why has a movement as American as mother's apple pie (53) put down roots in Pacific soil - especially in Tonga, Samoa, and among the Maori people of New Zealand? A study of interaction between Mormons and Free Wesleyan Methodists in the Kingdom of Tonga would involve research into cultural, economic and social contacts in Tonga and the western states of the USA (54).

Local Cults

Many home-made cults under bold and original leaders have co-existed with official forms of Christianity in the Pacific since the early decades of the nineteenth century. Their appearance has many causes: "lack of love" (55) toward local people on the part of missionaries and colonial administrators, appropriation and adaptation of Christian apocalypse, reaffirmation of suppressed elements in pre-Christian religions. These cults have flourished from time to time in all three main sub-regions of Oceania. One of the earliest was the Mamaia religion in Tahiti, 1826-1841 (56).Soon afterwards, in Samoa, the Sio Vili cult (57) preceded the arrival of Christianity and was for a time its competitor. In Fiji, on the border between Polynesia and Melanesia, the Tuka cult (58) combined local Fijian with colonial-military content. In Melanesia so-called cargo cults have kept anthropologists and historians busy (59). Cargo, the expectation of an imminent material millennium, is one among many interwoven themes in

these religious reactions, which are still with us. One of recent date, in the western Solomons, is the Christian Fellowship Church of the prophet Silas Eto (60), a movement designed by its founder to blend pre-Christian custom with introduced methodism. A younger historian from Eto's district suggests that Eto's worship has parallels with the spirit of the Orthodox liturgy in European villages - a curious thought in view of the absence of Eastern Orthodoxy from Oceania (61). Among Micronesian cults we may mention the short-lived protest of the Swords of Gabriel (62) among Protestants of southern Kiribati in 1930 on the island of Onotoa - a strong expression of opposition to Roman Catholics.

The Ecumenical Challenge

The cults, like heresies and schisms everywhere, offer clues to historians in the Pacific. They point to novelty and latent protest which challenge the self-understanding of the pilgrim people, the Una Sancta. The present and future esse of the whole Church lies open to all possible questions now that it has become the Church of the whole world. The present reality of the Church in the twentieth century needs to be examined as standing in critical, and theologically fruitful, contrast with all the Church has hitherto been. Decline in numbers of committed Christians relative to total population in Europe and North America has been offset by the dramatic growth of Christianity in many new forms in Africa, Latin America and Oceania - with numerically less spectacular change in Asia. The depositum fidei has up to now been expressed in Hebraic, then Greek, then Latin terms. Since the sixteenth century other languages, cultures and philosophical presuppositions have increasingly knocked on the gates of the City of God. To hear liturgies sung in Tongan, or in one of the varieties of pidgin, Melanesia's thriving koine, is to be reminded that thousands of third-world Christian thought-forms stand in relation to European and North American Christianity as those of Paul's churches stood to Jerusalem in the post-Apostolic period.

Historians have an obligation to sit where Asian, African, Latin American, Caribbean and Oceanian Christians sit, to view the One Church of God through their eyes and properly evaluate their liturgical and theological forms of expression. The past of the whole people of God will then necessarily fall into a different total shape. The Christians of the third world, as they look loyally toward Rome, Athens, Moscow, Wittenberg, Geneva, or Canterbury are already saying:"God has decided on an even better plan for us. His purpose was that only in company with us would they be made perfect" (Hebrews 11.40, TEV).

Seen from a different angle, this openness to the third world may be considered as submitting ourselves progressively to the light of a revised last judgment. The historical reality of the modern ecumenical movement reaches us with disturbing power. What are we to say about the right celebration of the Eucharist on islands still visited by ships at intervals of months, where the inhabitants have never seen a grape or a sheaf of wheat? Altar wine and reserved fragments

of bread run out; there is no resident priest. In tropical humidity and heat even the consecrated Host decays and becomes unusable. Protestants and Catholics increasingly cheerfully make their communion with baked taro and with liquids from the coconut tree, their familiar sources of life. Who will rebuke their faith that He who makes water wine meets their needs through their daily food? The Risen Christ appears, a Real Presence in new places under different skies.

Nor will canonically changeable rules about priestly celibacy, or Protestant prohibitions against the invocation of the ancestors in prayer go unchallenged in the younger churches. The Pacific, an enormous wilderness of sea, has already called for re-assessment of the wholeness of the Church in the light of its unique geography and history. Prophets come out of wildernesses. They put questions to scribes, including historians, who think of their home cities as the normal sources of sound teaching. Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est? The third world, including the Pacific, foreshadows a fresh understanding of the Vincentian Canon.

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